

# RETURNING FIRE

## Interventions in Video Game Culture

[transcript]

[Voices over walkie talkie]

- 6-70?
- Stand by.
- Got three personnel.
- Shoot 'em.

[Machine gun fire]

- Put it on him. That's what I'm talkin' about.
- Alright, get that other guy.
- They ain't comin' back.
- Stand by.
- Alright, they're dead. Where's the other guy at?

[Machine gun fire]

- We got three dead.
- Roger.

**Call of Duty Representative:** It's a great training product. I've had 'em link the Xboxes together and the sergeant will actually train his teams with the Modern Warfare game.

- Roger that. Good job, Charlie Mike.

**News clip:** A twelve million dollar game center at the local mall. The Army Experience center allows teenagers 13 and older to play video games as they learn about the military.

- Once you get on 'em, just open 'em up.

[Machine gun fire]

- We're looking for weapons.
- I hit 'em. [Laughing]
- You shoot, I'll talk.
- Come on, let us shoot. Come on, let us shoot.

**R. Lee Ermey:** How is the military going to train the soldier of tomorrow? Well, the

answer's pretty simple: video games.

[Title Screen]

**Roger Stahl (RS):** In the past decade, we've all witnessed an undeniable trend: the appearance of war now increasingly corresponds with the ability to play war at home on the couch.

The most popular games are those that can reproduce, in as close to real time as possible, events on the news.

These are games like *America's Army*, which is produced by the U.S. military itself, and commercial franchises like *Call of Duty*, *Medal of Honor* and *Battlefield*. In terms of revenue, war games now far outpace even the biggest Hollywood blockbusters.

[Text]

Video game profits in the U.S. totaled \$19.6 billion in 2010.

**CBS News clip:** *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2* exploded on the video game scene last month, and hasn't looked back. The publishers claim it's the biggest launch in any entertainment genre. To compare that \$310 million dollars with other one-day launches, *Modern Warfare 2* easily beat the top selling book from the Harry Potter series, and the top-selling movie *The Dark Knight*.

**RS:** Moreover, this is an industry that has grown up alongside a military that increasingly resorts to long-distance remote controlled push-button warfare.

The question before us, then, is what does this immersion in high-tech war mean for our political culture, as well as those directly affected by state violence? What does it mean when the technological sophistication and of modern militarism go mainstream? When the tools of real-world killing become forms of mass entertainment?

This is a film about a new breed of activists who decided that these questions needed to be answered. A group of culture jammers who traded their picket signs for pixels in order to penetrate our hypnotic screens. Forcing us to think about the often unthinking, machine-like nature of modern warfare. And in the process they demanded that we consider both the limits and the possibilities of civic activism in our brave new virtual world.

## **DEAD IN IRAQ**

**RS:** We begin with Joseph Delappe's "Dead in Iraq" project, which imported the names of the war dead into the video game *America's Army*. Ultimately forcing a reconsideration of the relationship between realism and reality.

**Joseph Delappe (JD):** I can tell you from experience that most of the people that I will talk about this project ... You know, what's this game? What? The military is using a computer game to recruit people? ... They're kind of surprised.

**CNN news clip:** West Point Military Academy has developed a new weapon for the army's arsenal, a high tech recruiting tool. It's a video game called *America's Army*. A state-of-the-art shoot 'em up video game. Since mid-August the game has grown by 100,000 players every 20 days, which may be one of the fastest video game growth curves ever.

**JD:** It was on my radar. I mean, as soon as it came out as soon as I heard about it, I was very curious about the game and downloaded it soon after and kind of checked it out. It just sat with me for a while. You know – whoa, wait a minute. You know, there's a real, there's a very real war going on here and we're running around shooting each other in these virtual environments, which was very strange. I knew that there was something I had to do in that space and I wasn't entirely sure what it was.

[Text]

Around the same time *America's Army* was released, a widely publicized competition to design the 9/11 Ground Zero memorial caught DeLappe's attention.

Inspired by the designs, DeLappe came up with the idea of creating a virtual war memorial within the game space of *America's Army*.

Under the username "Dead In Iraq," he began typing the name, rank, and date of death of fallen Americans into the game's text message system for all players to see.

**JD:** The typical strategy of most war memorials, and even 9/11, like so many of the proposals had a roll call of names, this kind of listing of the people who have died. Somewhere that just sort of clicked. That notion of inserting the growing list of American casualties into the *America's Army* game, that's where that came from.

I started just quietly, kind of on my own, just going into *America's Army* I had established an avatar. I registered with the *America's Army* game as Dead in Iraq. And I tried several iterations to get to something that would be meaningful, because I wanted my name as my character to be representative of kind of what I was trying to do. So once I get in, I started just doing it. I started with the first name on the list that was published on [icasualties.org](http://icasualties.org).

When I go into the game, essentially you log in. You get this introductory *America's Army* screen with this soundtrack that is very sort of marshal kind of, you know 'dun-de-dun'. You then go to a server kind of selector, where there's thousands of servers online at any given time of people playing the game. And there's a couple of particular maps that are very, you know, for all intents and purposes, they're Baghdad or a small

town in Iraq, they're desert environments. So you land with your platoon, the game starts and there's a little timer saying match will start in 10, 9, duh, duh, duh .... I hit a little key that drops my weapon, so my weapon falls down in front of me. I'm unarmed. And then I usually move to a spot, just nearby where I actually have just sort of a point of view that kind of looks out into the space. And there's gunfire going on, and explosions and grenades and all that. And I start typing. I use the text messaging system and I put in the name, service branch, and the date of death of each soldier.

It comes across each screen player's screen that's within that particular server at that time.

Generally, after about five, ten seconds, I'm killed by one of the opposing players.

You die, and then you magically land up, kind of hovering above your dead avatar, kind of like a spirit. I focus my view down on my dead avatar and I continue typing.

What eventually starts happening is people will start saying, "What the f\_, what are you saying? What is this? Go away, shut up, this is just a game." That's kind of, I get that over and over again "This is a game, this is a game, we come here to get away from those kind of ideas, thoughts, and politics."

These kinds of games have been amazing I think in terms of their cinematic quality, their ability to depict very seductive images of the destruction of war. But it's candy-coated, it's not the real thing at any stretch. I think in particularly with the America's Army project the level of violence was intentionally designed into the game to allow it to get a rating where any 13-year-old could download it without getting parental permissions, so it's really sanitized.

**America's Army Promotional Video:** To date I don't think there's really been a successful video game that, representation I should say, of what close quarters combat is like. This game has a level of authenticity that's brought to it by our subject matter experts. Most games you have a medic who comes over and bless you my child and he suddenly heals you and moves on. Whereas, our medic game play is down to the very details of practical treatments. This is high realism at its best in a video game.

**JD:** Realism. God, you're not put in the hospital, you're not disabled for life, you're not dealing with the VA for the rest of your life. You're not, you know...you come back the next round to do it again. That's not real. That's pretend. I look at what I'm doing in there as a way of kind of closing the loop.

Word started getting around. It started getting out there and there were a couple of stories were written online. That really started, seeing people saying really inflammatory things about what I was doing, and falsehoods, and really kind of accusing me of being, you know, the worst kind of traitor and all these kinds of things. It's been a 50-50 thing of people being really, really angry at me, or being extremely supportive. And it

really reflects that divide that still exists in our country.

About two and a half, three months into the project I got an email from the brother of a soldier who had died. And it was a long email, and it was one of those things where I was like, okay I was waiting for that to happen, something like that to happen. He sent a very respectful email saying that I understand what you're doing. I don't agree with what you're doing, and I don't think my brother would agree with what you're doing. I was contacted by a radio show on NPR.

**NPR's Barbara Bogaev (BB):** Lee Hutchinson joins us now along with Joseph Delappe. Gentlemen welcome to Weekend America.

**JD:** Thank you.

**LH:** Thank you.

**BB:** Lee, you heard about what Joseph is doing on a blog, what was your first reaction?

**LH:** I wanted to contact Joseph and so I sent him a cordial e-mail and asked very respectfully for him to please remove my brother's name from this. He would probably disagree with the suggestion, even the unintentional suggestion, that his death was anything other than purposeful. The subject of the war dead is a very touchy one.

**JD:** Can I jump in there? Your e-mail really helped me solidify my reasonings for doing this work and in fact, I've been thinking about it really ever since.

**JD:** He expressed his concerns over what I was doing, looked at it as kind of a trivialization of the death of our soldiers, and I would then say well this game trivializes death, I mean that's part of the point. It trivializes what it means to be a soldier, what it means to be in war. I'm adding a level of seriousness by doing what I'm doing etcetera. That contact really focused me on completely justifying what I was doing to him, you know, who had lost his loved one. I mean it was, you know, heartbreaking.

**CNN news clip:** Video games, military recruitment and war protests all on the same computer screen. What's going on?

**JD:** The strangest was CNN. I mean it was like, I had never done that before, but you're sitting in a massive studio and they set up a camera and I'm in a dark room with lights blasting at me and I see nothing. All I do is hear. They sent me a whole list of questions beforehand; this is what we're going to talk about, and so I was like really sort of practically rehearsed just because I was so freaked out.

**CNN's Carol Lin:** Joining us is Joseph Delappe, he is chairman of the University of Nevada's art department and he is a media artist in his own right. Joseph, good to have you.

**JD** (on CNN): Thank you, Carol.

**JD**: So I came and sat down and of course the questions were entirely different and mostly of a very sort of hostile nature.

**CL**: Well you're not preaching to the choir are you? I mean these gamers can get pretty nasty with you and you've even heard from one whose friend died in Iraq.

**JD**: Actually it was the brother of a soldier who had died.

**CL**: Do you honor their sense of privacy though? These families who don't want their loved ones name up there? Joe, what do your students think about what you're doing?

**JD**: I still haven't watched the CNN one because I was so freaked out (laughs).

One of the most thorough stories that was written on this was by a student at the University out in Reno. He has the wherewithal to create a blog post on the America's Army website, and said "I'm looking for any players who have come into contact with this Dead in Iraq." And before the moderator deleted it, he got contacted by a player who basically told him, "Oh yeah, me and my buddy were in a game and we saw what he was doing and we decided to protect him."

It's one of the things that has intrigued people about this work is that it is in this online context. Is that it is essentially military territory online. It's a kind of base if you will. People who have kind of complained to me about this, like "this is not the place to protest go do this on the federal building steps." And I'll respond to them, I've actually responded actually on some of the blogs, and I said look I'm taking this to the source. There's a reason why in the '60s blacks went to lunch counters. They created meaning by actually going into that context. It's the same thing I'm doing here. I mean I could go to the federal building and stand there and read a list of these names but who's going to pay attention to that?

This got your attention. The military industrial and entertainment complex—whatever you want to call it. You know, to actually engage it on its own terms, I think, is sometimes extremely important.

What's been really quite rewarding about it, and kind of unexpected, was how much a good contrarian idea that's very simple like this can actually get into the kind of cultural mainstream. You know, and certainly I'm like a little speck against this gigantic juggernaut of kind of military influence on our culture, but I think those kind of things can perhaps be effective. It shows the possibility of using the media in kind of the same way that the army exploits that media.

I am very close to being current at this point; I think I'm maybe within 200 names of

being at the end of the list. It's not easy to get attacked constantly over something you're doing creatively, conceptually, conscientiously. But I think it's, I think it's important to do and no regrets.

**RS:** If "Dead in Iraq" sought to question the game's relationship to actual death and misery, our next intervention question the game's ability to reconfigure public space. Ann-Marie Schliener's project "Velvet Strike" repurposed the game Counter Strike as a kind of virtual street corner. The project sought to alter the game's internal environment, and to draw attention to the external realities that surround it.

**Ann-Marie Schliener (AMS):** My name's Ann-Marie Schliener, I am an artist, game designer, and also writer.

## VELVET STRIKE

**AMS:** There was an interesting demo for America's Army that happened in the E3, it's a big game convention in Los Angeles, where they had a helicopter fly over downtown Hollywood and drop soldiers on to the street who repelled from the helicopter as a promotion for the game. But people who were around didn't understand that this was a promotion for a game and they were actually kind of afraid. Like they didn't know what was happening, why these soldiers were coming down into their, you know, everyday city space.

I think there's this kind of disturbing kind of blurring of boundaries going on. And it's not so much about computer game violence per se, but it's more about mixing up military space, fictional space, and civilian space.

Especially in the U.S., we've lost a lot of our public spaces. Everyone is sort of at home with their entertainment center, you don't really congregate as much in public spaces. So one way to reach them is in these, kind of online and public spaces, which you can see as kind of a digital street, or digital plaza. So I had this sort of negative connotation with what activism was about.

Right on the morning that the U.S. started bombing Afghanistan, I was at a workshop in Spain; I was giving a workshop on game modifications. Then there was all these shooting games in this big echoing warehouse space and it was just this strange congruence of violence the from the shooter games happening at the same time as there was this real life war starting in the outside world.

[Text]

Against the backdrop of the war in Afghanistan, Schliener and a friend decided to infiltrate the popular shooter game Counter-Strike.

Using virtual spray paint and other tactics, they confronted players with a range of provocative messages.

They called their intervention Velvet-Strike.

**AMS:** There were basically two streams of interventions in Velvet Strike.

One which was the graffiti, which was basically just going around and spraying on the wall, floor, ceilings, different images. Sometimes just logos protesting the war, other times Brody Condon did a series, called “Loving,” of enemy soldiers loving each other – which, given the environment of many shooter games, this was especially provocative for them and they wrote us a lot of hate mails.

But then the other stream was this section we called intervention recipes, which were not just digital images in the game but were recipes for how to intervene in how people were playing the game, and to kind of break the flow of game play.

There was one that the recipe was for you to enter a server with a number of players and stand in the shape of a heart in a, kind of, wide open plaza area in the game and then to just stand there and let people shoot at you.

Of course, many gamers do not appreciate having their games diverted to these ends. And my point with Velvet Strike was that we’re already mixing in contemporary Middle Eastern politics with a game anyway, and people who play Counter Strike were always saying one of the appeals was that it was so realistic. So why not make a bit more real, and bring activists in there and protesting the war?

I don’t believe that Counter Strike players are in any way responsible for the war that the U.S. was waging in Iraq, but I do think that those games are part of the overall military entertainment culture that became much more strong in the U.S. since the war in Iraq and the War on Terror.

Actually, hate mails were one of my favorite things about Velvet Strike. It did spark all this controversy in the game community and they started sending us some death threats and some hate mails. I was actually quite upset and disturbed when this first started happening, because I had never made an art project that anyone wanted to kill me for. Then when I was talking to my collaborators they started to help me see the more humorous side of the hate mails, and you could tell that a lot of them must have been about 12 years old, and they were just blowing off some steam telling us to stop playing games and go back to playing with Barbies.

There was one from someone who watched the Twin Towers burn in New York, and he wrote a very emotional, long mail about how dare we do this project and don’t take away Counter Strike, the experience of playing Counter Strike, because this was his only outlet – to feel like he was getting some kind of revenge on the perpetrators of

9/11. So that was a very sort of, like, strange connection of those two worlds that I didn't even foresee.

It created all this controversy, which then publicized the project in a way. Initially I think it was covered in the New York Times. There was an article in Salon, National Public Radio. All the interviews just blur together in my mind I'm sorry.

One of the things that happens sometimes with these interviews is that they want to portray me as this peacenik hippie, which really pisses me off (laughing) because it wasn't just like make love, no war, no violence. We were using the game as a kind of platform to speak about certain issues. But we weren't trying to say that people shouldn't play violent games or military-inspired games. And we actually had a lot of fun working on this project playing those games, so (laughing) it would be pretty hypocritical if we were to tell people that they shouldn't play these games.

But I think there's been a change in the approach to activism. It's become more open to a more playful approach and it becomes a game in itself to try and think of fun ways to divert the flow.

My grandmother would tell me stories about the horrible aftermath of the war in Germany, and she's always like "bloß keinen Krieg," "Just don't have war." Just hearing about the culture of war, the kind of war games that Nazi youth would play in the forest during the Nazi build up, maybe allowed me to see a sort of connection between play, games, the culture of war, and the culture of play.

I still get reactions, both negative and positive and the project is not active anymore but it seems to still provoke a response in people even now.

**RS:** Rather than do its work in virtual space, our next intervention, "Domestic Tension," rooted itself in the real world. Iraqi ex-patriot Wafaa Bilal drew players into a different sort of game: one that provoked them to consider the ways that our media culture divides the conflict zone from the comfort zone.

**Wafaa Bilal (WB):** There is a guy in Chicago locking himself in a room, stupid, and you could just go online and shoot him from anywhere. In fact, I mean, that's what I had in mind.

## **DOMESTIC TENSION**

**WB:** I grew up in Iraq after and during the dictatorship regime of Sadaam Hussein, and I was the only Ba'athist who idolized the regime, and idolized the Ba'ath party, because of what it presented to us as an alternative life and freedom and democracy. But then slowly things start shifting, slowly the government start taking over.

So, with that awareness comes inspiration to act against the regime. But, acting against the regime is life threatening. If you act, if you project your voice, you are gone. So there are many ways we start to oppose the regime, including art.

I start putting one-man show, that is critical of the regime, whether it's direct or indirect, and every time I have one of these shows I get in trouble for it.

Then come the '90s when Sadaam invaded Kuwait. At that time, the regime comes and asks us to volunteer to go to the war with Kuwait. I was one of the ones who refused to be part of invasion or aftermath of it. As a result I was blacklisted. By the government of Sadaam, and I was on the run.

**Dave Ross (CBS Radio Network):** "Wafaa Bilal came to the U.S. in 1992, after being arrested and tortured in his native Iraq for his political artwork in which he had unwisely decided to criticize Sadaam Hussein."

**WB:** I moved to Chicago right after September 11. And it was really tough for a Middle Eastern, I guess in every city, but particularly in the large cities. That pushed me even furthermore to engage in political art.

In 2007, I saw a TV interview with a soldier sitting in Colorado directing these drone planes, dropping bombs in Iraq, and it hit me how the soldier was so disconnected emotionally from the conflict in Iraq. It had become intensely personal because that's how my brother Haji was killed in Iraq.

[Text]

Wafaa's brother, Haji, was killed by an American drone missile in their hometown of Kufa, Iraq in 2004.

Soon after his brother's death, Wafaa's father was killed at a U.S. military checkpoint.

Their deaths inspired him to explore the relationship between technology and war.

**WB:** I was interested in a very small angle in technology. How can the technology that could destroy engage people in a meaningful dialogue about that destruction?

The original name was "Shoot an Iraqi," but when I presented it to my gallerist she said, "No you can't use this one it's too direct, people might take it as a direct invitation." "Domestic Tension" was the alternative name for it. I chose that one just because it talks about the conflict within culture.

I took a paintball gun and rigged it to shift it and shoot. You as the viewer, you could log in to the website from anywhere in the world. And you'd be able to control, like, take it left, take it right, and shoot at any time. The interface has very simple buttons, left/right and then shoot.

It's kind of the state fair dunking board as well. It's the very same idea. You have the guy who is just in the dunking booth agitating people to hit him.

I wanted to disconnect people, have them see the project just the way we see the images come from the conflict zone, these grainy images which are designed to disconnect us from the conflict. Look back at the 1991 war night shots in Baghdad. And then you have the trace of bullets, that's the image we got. We did not get, we did not see what happened on the ground. In fact I designed the interface to be very similar, and also on purpose degraded the quality of the image to look like a video game, or to look like war images that we see on TV. And I think by disconnecting them I am, in a bigger picture, drawing their attention to how the video game designed to disengage from reality.

When I decided to do the project I decided I'm just going to move my living room into the gallery space. I want it to be public. I took no food, no water. My bed and my desk faced the camera.

It's like fighting back. And I think I was naïve to think that probably will get one hit a day or two. So the first day I walked in with two boxes of paintballs, that's all I took. Soon I realized from the first hour it's going to be much more brutal than I thought.

Paintball players, hunters, curious people, they were having drinking party and shooting.

They did that 65,000 times.

The project I think didn't make much national exposure until the *Tribune* decided to put it on the front page and that brought stream of national/international media.

**Robert Siegel [radio]:** An Iraqi born artist has put himself into an installation in Chicago.

**Sam Hudzik [radio]:** Everything seems normal, quiet until you start hearing [bang] the paintball gun.

Over a period of one month we got about 80 million hits on the site.

**Father:** "You ready?"

**Child:** "Wow."

**Father:** "Are they okay? Are they okay?"

**Woman:** *Very intense.*

**WB:** *Do you feel like you are in a war zone?*

**Woman:** *Yes.*

**WB:** *Guys, see the Soviet jumps too.*

**Woman:** *Yes, I've been jumping every time the gun shoots. The noise is very intense. It really causes your heart rate to elevate. You enter this state of constant anxiety. I really admire what Wafaa is doing in this piece.*

**WB:** *It's lack of sleep it's the combination of the lack of sleep and the stress. I start hating seeing yellow. I start hating that sound. This become a dumpsite very much. Just come in and dump all this negative energy and leave. And I don't know why that bothers me because it's very logical people will come and shoot. But I think that on some level, and I have not understand it yet, I'm trying to grab onto why this is bothering me.*

**Reporter:** *Tell me what happened to your father.*

**Woman:** *His leg broken, and his hand, and all face, no face, his lips, his nose, everything, his eyes.*

**WB:** *Since the death of my brother and my father I built these emotional walls and I remember the first day I confronted this is on Day 10. For 10 days I was strong, but only when the gun broke down I broke down as well. And the first that come to is to face life, or to admit losses I been through. That's I think what scared me the most. But all of a sudden it become very personal.*

**Radio Voice:** *It's free for all Fridays here with the Mancow on the Free Speech Radio Network.*

**"Mancow" Muller (MM):** *Wafaa, hello.*

**WB** *(on FSRN): Hello.*

**MM:** *Hi Wafaa, how are you?*

**WB:** *I m good. And you?*

**MM:** *I'd like to come over and have some pancakes, you know I like to do that over at the Wafaa house (laughter). That's a little infidel humor. Okay. Wafaa, you have a very interesting website, people can either give you money or shoot you. I wanna do this right now live on the radio, can we?*

**WB:** *Ah, sure.*

**(another voice):** *He sounds thrilled about it.*

**MM:** *The deal is he thought he would get money, and the majority of the people are shooting him. Pull it up I want to see it, okay? I want you to wave to all the Mancow*

*listeners right now, just wave to everybody. It says our trigger will be active in 15 seconds, okay I see you waving, and everyone sees you. All right, now Wafaa you are a Shia, do you want America to have Shia law?*

**WB** (on FSRN): *No, why do you...?*

**MM**: *No, okay there we go.*

**(another voice)**: *Got you Waafa!*

**MM**: *That was, that was us firing at him? That was, this is DJ CrazyLens this is bizarre.*

**(another voice)**: *Sorry about that!*

**MM**: *You want people to give you money you don't want to be shot at.*

**WB**: *It's not necessarily about the money it's about making a point.*

**MM**: *What is the point?*

**WB**: *Remember, my family has been under fire in Iraq for four years, I have my brother got killed at his doorstep in 2005.*

**MM**: *Oh God, I'm sorry.*

**WB**: *And the point here is, Iraqis just sitting like me right here, trying to dodge bullets.*

**MM**: *Wafaa, I'm sorry, I'm still missing the point.*

**WB**: *Well, the point is there is an injustice war has been waged against a nation who has done nothing to the United States.*

**MM**: *I mean it's very sad. You're some lonely guy sitting around getting (laughing) shot at. That's people shooting at this guy right now. Hold on, hold on we can shoot at you. Here we go five, four, three, two, one, go! That was us.*

**Voice in background**: *Got you, Wafaa!*

**MM**: *(laughing) Come on, this is insane.*

**Radio Voice**: *It's free for all Fridays here with the Mancow on the Free Speech Radio Network. It's free for all Fridays here with the Mancow on the Free Speech Radio Network.*

**WB**: *On Memorial Day, when so many people were shooting and I have no idea why that many people were shooting. I notice the gun, it just keep shifting left, and stays left. And other people tried to take it right but it goes left. There are a group of people, about 39 of them, who they clicking the left button to move the gun left and keep it left to prevent other people from directing the gun and shooting it. I jump on in the chat room and I say, "All right, who are you people?" They said, "We started a group called the Virtual Human Shield." And we are going to stay with you until the end of the project. And I assume they chose the left side for a purpose.*

When, talk to any activist, war activist, there is a blame game – that's alienation from the start. We shut down. They become, as an act, as good as holding a sign in an intersection and saying "no war." It has no effect because we are bombarded with these images, and we face an image overexposure. So how can we engage people? You have to filter your message, whatever it is, through their local language and open the narrative. When you open the narrative, you allow them to insert their own narrative, you allow them to invest in it, then you engage them. It has to be not

calculated but it has to be a smart activism, a smart art.

If you start from the ground and build knowledge, inform people, I think the change might take a longer time, but it's a true change.

I remember one day somebody destroyed a light I have in the room. Not only a light, that's kind of a hope for me. But then a few hours later, somebody walked in with the light and light bulbs and presented them and said, "I saw your light get destroyed on the Internet and I brought you light." And he presented himself as Matt and he is a US Marine.

This small effort is dedicated to all the Iraqis who lost their life in the war and all American soldiers.

## **CONCLUSION**

**RS:** Given current trends, our future will likely be one where playing war at home increasingly accompanies waging war on someone else's home overseas. These three interventions, Dead in Iraq, Velvet Strike, and Domestic Tension only begin to scratch the surface of the contradictions involved in our new war game culture. They do however suggest where the future battle lines are being drawn between realism and reality, between game space and public space, between the comfort zone and the conflict zone, between politics and entertainment. They also suggest strategies for getting us to think more critically about our role in the authorization of state violence. In doing so, they begin to map out paths to a more just and humane world.

[end]