



June 2009

Dear Friends,

Under the Hood Outreach Center and Café in Killeen needs your support. The Center opened in February as a space for service members and their families to socialize, exchange information, and access services such as GI Rights counseling. With new soldiers arriving daily, we have the opportunity to build this community and continue giving a voice to those in need. We cannot do this alone. In order to keep this free speech zone open and viable, we need your help. Though we know that times are difficult financially for everyone, we ask that you open your hearts and pocketbooks.

Under the Hood is the culmination of months of work by veterans and their allies. Fort Hood GIs and their families, devastated by repeated deployments, find the center to be a refuge for free speech, where they are inspired to ask difficult questions about war, peace, and the rights and responsibilities of GIs. Recently, the center has been a great source of support for soldiers who are resisting deployment to Afghanistan.

Under the Hood is a project of the Fort Hood Support Network, a Texas non-profit corporation with 501(c) (3) tax-exempt status. Our website www.underthehoodcafe.org has information about making a tax exempt donation. Checks can be made out to the Fort Hood Support Network, P.O. Box 16174, Austin, TX 78761-6174. Regular, sustaining contributions would be welcome. In addition to financial contributions, we have a “wish-list” and welcome donations of labor, goods and entertainment.

Here is a link to a short video on Under the Hood:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSnqIHhwWIQ>

Please take a few moments to read the following testimonials, and then consider giving generously to help us continue this important work.

In gratitude,
Fort Hood Support Network Board
Cynthia Thomas, Fran Hanlon, Alice Embree, Ronn Cantu, Tom Cleaver, Jeff Segal



Two Under the Hood patrons, both active duty soldiers, wrote these testimonials.

October 31st 2007 I made one of the biggest mistakes of my life. Though I knew it would change my life, I never expected it to change for the worse. After completing basic combat training I was shipped out to my new unit in the 4th Infantry Division 1st brigade combat team 66th Armor Regiment. After a year of training and living the army life in Ft. Hood, TX, I received deployment orders to FOB Rustamiyah, just east of Baghdad, IQ. After my arrival in Iraq, my eyes quickly opened, and I began to oppose the “mission”. While I was over there I discovered Casey Porter, a dedicated filmmaker seeking to reveal the truths of Iraq, and we became friends. I did everything I could to assist him in his work, including a video interview. My tour finally ended after months of emotional struggle and I came back to the United States empty, with nothing inside me but hopelessness and regret.

After mere days of being home and “free” I began drinking heavily to forget the destruction and death I witnessed in Iraq. My life began to slowly disintegrate, and I found myself lost. Finally, Casey called and told me to come with him to Under the Hood Café. Though intoxicated at the time, I made my way down and immediately felt at home. Now two months later I feel my life is getting back on track and I have goals. I have completely quit drinking, and have remained sober for almost two months. I no longer rely on alcohol to suppress my feelings. I feel that I am part of a support group who I can contact at any time, day or night. Now I can safely say that I feel better about myself, and I feel if it wasn’t for the coffee shop and the people I have met there, I feel I wouldn’t be here today. Under The Hood has saved my life and it needs to stay open for more people like me.

Michael Kern

I lived a miserable existence since I turned against the war in Iraq in 2007. I have frequented Under the Hood Café since its grand opening in March of 2009. The café has become my refuge from a closed-minded and dehumanizing military culture. I have seen it bring joy to every soldier and civilian that has become a regular here. The civilian staff is dedicated to helping soldiers deal with personal and legal issues. I have attained a sense of purpose that I have never had in my life. I am now committed to the success of both Under the Hood and the anti-war movement. I have spent countless hours discussing and thinking about ways to end these wars. The support I have received from my family at Under the Hood has helped me take the liberating leap from obedient soldier to war resister. I cannot remember the last time I was this happy. Under the Hood has changed my life forever.

SPC Victor Agosto,
Afghanistan War Resister