

WWW.

# Thank You Lt. org

**Ehren  
Watada**



June 7, 2006

Family, friends, members of the religious community, members of the press, and my fellow Americans—thank you for coming today.

My name is Ehren Watada. I am a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Army and I have served for 3 years.

It is my duty as a commissioned officer of the United States Army to speak out against grave injustices. My moral and legal obligation is to the Constitution and not those who would issue unlawful orders. I stand before you today because it is my job to serve and protect those soldiers, the American people, and innocent Iraqis with no voice.

It is my conclusion as an officer of the Armed Forces that the war in Iraq is not only morally wrong but a horrible breach of American law. Although I have tried to resign out of protest, I am forced to participate in a war that is manifestly illegal. As the order to take part in an illegal act is ultimately unlawful as well, I must as an officer of honor and integrity refuse that order.

The war in Iraq violates our democratic system of checks and balances. It usurps international treaties and conventions that by virtue of the Constitution become American law. The wholesale slaughter and mistreatment of the Iraqi people with only limited accountability is not only a terrible moral injustice, but a contradiction to the Army's own Law of Land Warfare. My participation would make me party to war crimes.

Normally, those in the military have allowed others to speak for them and act on their behalf. That time has come to an end. I have appealed to my commanders to see the larger issues of our actions. But justice has not been forthcoming. My oath of office is to protect and defend America's laws and its people. By refusing unlawful orders for an illegal war, I fulfill that oath today.

Thank you.

**Refuse  
Illegal  
War**

*"I hope that my example shows other soldiers that they too have the power to choose right over wrong and that freedom is something that can never be taken away."*

—Lt. Ehren Watada

## Biography of Lt. Ehren Watada

*1st Lt. Ehren Watada, 28, was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii.*

*Following his graduation from Hawaii Pacific University in 2003, Lt. Watada enlisted in the Army as an officer candidate. He received no financial assistance for college or repaying loans from the Army.*

*On June 18, 2003 he reported to basic training.*

*After he received his officer's commission, Lt. Watada was obligated to serve on active duty as an Army officer for a term of three years concluding on December 3, 2006.*

*Lt. Watada was stationed in Korea during late 2004 to early 2005.*

*Lt. Watada was stationed at Ft. Lewis in June 2005.*

*In January 2006 he first asked for permission to resign his commission based on his understanding that the war in Iraq is illegal, and that any order to participate would be an illegal order.*

*He did not apply for a conscientious objector discharge and does not intend to do so, as he is not opposed to all wars, but believes this war in Iraq is illegal.*

*After his initial request and a later formal application to resign were denied by the Army, Lt. Watada informed*

*his superiors that he will refuse to deploy with his unit when it is scheduled to leave Ft. Lewis later this month.*

*On June 7, 2006 Lt. Ehren Watada stood before the national media and announced his intent to refuse any order to participate in the Iraq war. Lt. Watada faces possible court-martial charges unless the Army allows him to resign his commission or assigns him to duties that are not directly connected to the Iraq war.*

*On June 8, 2006 Lt. Watada's commanding officer informed him that an investigation was underway into possible violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice based on his protected speech in opposition to the illegal war.*

*His father Bob Watada of Hawaii Kai is the former Executive Director of the State Campaign Spending Commission of Hawaii. His mother Carolyn Ho of Kaneohe, Hawaii is a high school guidance counselor. Both parents have expressed their support for their son's actions.*

