

# Tim Walz for U.S. Congress

Press Packet

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Prepared and paid for by Tim Walz for U.S. Congress  
www.timwalz.org

## **Biography – Tim Walz**

The son of a public school administrator and community activist, Tim Walz was born in West Point, Nebraska on April 6, 1964. Raised in a rural community, Walz spent his summers farming with his extended family. In 1982, Tim Walz graduated from Butte High School along side his 24 classmates.

During his adolescence, Tim's parents instilled in him the Catholic values that propelled him into a life of service. When Walz enlisted in the Army National Guard at the young age of 17, he had no way of knowing he would spend more than two decades serving America as a member of the Guard. After high school, Walz worked a number of odd jobs before accepting a temporary teaching position at the Native American Reservation in Pine Ridge, South Dakota. It was his experience at the Pine Ridge reservation that convinced Tim to follow his father's lead and become an educator.

In 1989, Walz earned a B.S. in social science education from Chadron State College in Nebraska. That year he earned the title of Nebraska Citizen-Soldier of the Year.

With his teaching degree complete, Harvard University offered Walz an opportunity to gain a new perspective on global education by teaching in the People's Republic of China. Working in China during 1989-1990, Walz was a member of one of the first government sanctioned groups of American educators to teach in Chinese high schools.

Following his return, Tim seized the opportunity to develop a program of cooperation between American and Chinese students that continues to this day. Walz established a small business called Educational Travel Adventures, Inc. through which he conducts annual educational trips to China for high school students. The business includes a scholarship program that allows students to travel and study in China regardless of their financial situation.

Over the years, Walz has also served as a visiting Fellow of International Relations at the Macau Polytechnic University, a position that helped develop his knowledge of China's unique international status.

Upon his return to the U.S. in 1990, Walz served full-time in the Army National Guard. He subsequently accepted a position teaching and coaching in Nebraska where he met his wife, Gwen Whipple. In 1993, Walz was named the Outstanding Young Nebraskan by the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce for his service in the education, military, and small business communities.

Married in 1994, Tim and Gwen Walz moved to Mankato, Minnesota two years later. The couple accepted positions teaching and coaching at Mankato West High School where Tim continues to teach today.

Tim Walz's inspiring approach to teaching has gained him recognition as the 2002 Minnesota Ethics in Education award winner, 2003 Mankato Teacher of the Year, and the 2003 Minnesota Teacher of Excellence. Walz completed his master's degree in educational leadership in 2001 and is currently working on his doctorate at St. Mary's University in Winona, Minnesota.

After 24 years in the Army National Guard, Command Sergeant Major Walz retired from the 1-125th Field Artillery Battalion in the spring of 2005. Prior to retiring, Walz served overseas with his battalion in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Tim and Gwen have one daughter, Hope, who was born in 2001. They are expecting their second child in October of 2006.

Unify in Support of Vets  
Tim Walz | June 19, 2006  
Military.com

During this period of intense partisan divisiveness, the need to unify this nation has never been greater and no issues should be more unifying than the support and care of our veterans. Providing for our veterans is an absolute moral imperative. Moral imperatives are not debatable and yet every year we see the Veterans Affairs budget debated, negotiated and used as a bargaining chip in the U.S. [Congress](#). Time and again we witness partisan politics trump principle, a paradigm exemplified by the removal of Rep. [Chris Smith](#) as the Chair of the House Veterans Affairs committee. Rep. Smith was a true friend and supporter of our nation's veterans. He commanded sweeping respect and support from all major veterans' service organizations not only because he is a brother-in-arms, but because he is a champion for our active and retired military personnel as well as their families.

Despite his achievements on the behalf of veterans, Rep. Smith lost his leadership position to Rep. [Steven Buyer](#). Many suggest that it was not despite his achievements, but rather because of his achievements that he was replaced. We as veterans must stand up and say, "Enough!" We as veterans must make Congress understand that there is no more pressing issue than taking care of this nation's veterans. When promises to veterans are broken, national security is compromised because the credibility of our government is damaged and our ability to recruit new soldiers is diminished.

American Legion National Commander Thomas Bock distributed a letter this week in which he made it clear that Rep. Buyer is no friend of veterans. Chairman Buyer consistently votes against veterans, shuts veterans out of decision making, and arrogantly ignores our national leaders like Commander Bock. The Chairman's attitude mirrors the attitude of this Congress; it is one of total disrespect for veterans and it must not stand. The most recent example of this disturbing trend is the changes enacted to the long standing rules that allowed our VSOs to testify before Congress on issues relating to veterans. Republican or Democrat, we should all be appalled by the thought that our veteran leadership is being marginalized when it comes to the most critical issues facing our soldiers and veterans.

Shortly after the removal of Rep. Smith I filed paperwork to [run for Congress](#). Many issues influenced my decision, but none were stronger than my commitment to bring a needed voice for veterans to Congress. As a 24-year veteran of the Army National Guard I spent my entire adult life actively serving this nation and now I feel it is my duty to continue serving my fellow [veterans in Congress](#).

My brothers-in-arms have endured multiple [deployments](#) since 9/11 and through every one they served with great distinction. But those deployments come at a price. I have seen businesses bankrupted because of deployments. I have seen college careers halted and families destroyed by deployment. And sadly, I've seen some that truly want to serve be turned away because when they show up at their mobilization station they have health issues. Many of these health

complications could have been prevented if they had been seen by a physician regularly. Today, nearly 30 percent of National Guard troops are without health insurance. We assume that these men and women will serve when called upon, but that assumption is only as good as the health care we provide them.

Under the control of Rep. Buyer our VA is failing veterans. In my community, veterans struggle to find transportation to the nearest VA medical facility because their local primary care clinic closed. Our local VSOs fundraise year-round to provide a transport van for veterans to the nearest facility, but only those who meet the priority level requirements are eligible to take the 90-minute ride. It does not have to be this way -- we can and should allow all veterans to use the VA system.

My commitment to the issues facing our veterans is unwavering. My personal sense of service was instilled upon me by my father, a Korean War era Army veteran and a public educator. He taught me that we have a moral obligation to care for our veterans and that we have a duty to keep this nation safe.

Our [elected officials](#) are ultimately responsible for the state of the VA system and the safety of our nation. It is time that we hold them accountable. The people of the United States are saying loudly and clearly that we want to keep our promises to our active duty soldiers and our veterans. By keeping these promises today, we demonstrate to future generations who wish to serve this nation in uniform that we will keep our promises to them. From the veterans of WWII to the veterans of the post 9/11 era, we must honor each and every veteran by ensuring they are always a priority. Anything less is unacceptable.

*To learn about the upcoming elections and the veterans running for Congress, visit the [2006 Election Center](#).*

Sound Off...What do you think? [Join the discussion](#).

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August 15th, 2004

## **My View - We're all working for the same things**

**By Tim Walz**

I am your neighbor.

I am the guy who lives down the street from you. We wave at each other as we sleepily roll our garbage cans out to the curb on Friday morning. I am the guy that shuts down the mower to say a few words over the back yard fence. I am the guy that you see swinging his 3-year-old daughter at the neighborhood park. I am the guy that teaches your children at the local public school.

I am the guy you know who got called to serve his country by deploying overseas with the local National Guard unit. I am your neighbor.

We have much in common. We deeply value our families and want the best for our children. We celebrate together on the Fourth of July and take the time to be thankful for what we have. We talk about the Vikings finally winning the big one (and really believe it can happen, at least in August). We also talk passionately about what can be done to make our town, our state, our country and our world a better place. We don't always agree on the means, but we almost always agree on the ends: a safe, peaceful, and prosperous world for everyone. We share the common bond of neighbors and fellow Americans.

Recently, I went to be a part of a once-in-50-years event in Mankato: a visit by a sitting president. The event generated quite a buzz around town and it was the center of conversation. I had waited my turn in the ticket line right alongside you. We talked mostly about the weather: It looked like rain.

I got my tickets and started thinking about what I would do on Aug. 4 when President Bush arrived. I got together with some of you and we painted some homemade signs. My sign indicated a veteran's support for the man I thought could best help our dream for a better America be realized. I held my sign up for awhile and then left it behind as the rules indicated no signs were allowed. I walked the mile to the parking area with you to board the buses that would take us to the quarry, the site of the president's speech.

As we off loaded the buses, two of President Bush's campaign workers asked two young men I was accompanying to come with them. These two young men are active politically, as we wish all young people were. Earlier in the week these same two young men had been denied tickets after waiting in line for five hours. The reason given for denying the boys their tickets was that they were not supporters of President Bush. The boys politely left, but could not understand how they could be denied entry to an open and public event.

One of the boy's mothers went back the next day and was given tickets for the boys. The parents asked if I would accompany the boys to see President Bush. That is how I ended up with my neighbor's kids getting ready to attend a speech by the president of the United States.

Things quickly became far from neighborly.

Upon our arrival at the quarry, a Bush-Cheney campaign worker flipped through a list of names and addresses, asked the boys to open their camera bags, and lift up their shirts. They were then asked to show their identifications. The boys complied with all requests as complete gentlemen.

As one of the boys opened his wallet, a faded John Kerry sticker could be seen. The campaign worker then indicated the boys had been flagged by the Secret Service as possible threats and would not be allowed to enter. They were told they would be put on the next bus returning to the parking area.

I had been standing and observing this interaction and at this point I said that I would vouch that there would be no incident. The Bush campaign worker asked who I was and if I had a ticket. I told him my name and gave him my ticket. He then indicated that I would also have to leave the area. I was speechless. I told him I was a teacher in Mankato and had just returned from an overseas deployment with my National Guard unit.

He said he did not care about any of that and that I was guilty by association and would either leave on the bus or be detained by the Secret Service. This all happened in front of my neighbors.

He said I did not support President Bush and was, therefore, not welcome. I told him I did not say whether I did or did not support President Bush and it was none of his business either way. I was then told that the bus was leaving and to make up my mind if I was leaving on the bus or staying with the threat of being detained. I kept my word to my neighbors and sent the boys back on the bus; I stayed.

I no more started the day wishing to become a martyr than I did to be arrested by my own government. I am your neighbor and this was the choice I was given.

I indicated to the campaign worker that he should be absolutely sure he wanted to proceed with having me detained. I asked him to consider that his supervisors were probably farsighted enough to think about an embarrassing newspaper headline that would follow this arrest. Another worker was summoned who was willing to give me a break as long as I promised to behave. Here I am a 40-year-old professional and veteran being asked to behave "or else ..." at a speech by the president of the United States.

I was told that the Secret Service had been alerted to who I was and that any sign of dissent in the rally would result in me being detained. After all of this, I was allowed to rejoin my neighbors to listen to President Bush speak of his love of liberty and freedom.

Why are we acting this way to one another? Why the fear and alienation? President Bush's new campaign ads say that the way to defeat terrorism is by being strong together. Actions speak louder than words and those actions having nothing to do with working together as a nation.

I have traveled to Europe and across Asia this summer only to feel the most hostility toward me at the opportunity to see and hear our president. I have read and researched throughout my adult life. I read three newspapers a day and have at least five books on the night stand at all times.

I have made a thoughtful and careful choice of who I believe will make the best leader of our country during this critical time period as I am sure all of us will. We may not come to the same conclusion on who that person is, but I know we all want the same outcome: a better community, state, country, and world. We solve nothing by undermining our neighbors simply because they reach a different conclusion. We need to be able to share our opinions with one another without fear of reprisal or anger.

I am open to all opinions and I will promise you to fully research each issue and decide based on these facts. We may not come to the same conclusion, but can we not always respect each other?

I am the guy who lives down the block and I too love this country and want what is best for all of us.

*Timothy J. Walz is a teacher at West High School. He lives in Mankato.*

Source: Mankato Free Press, August 15, 2004  
<http://www.mankatofreepress.com/news/story.php?storyid=90680>

## ***National Guard Vet Seeks Minn. House Seat***

### **National Guard veteran puts up a fight in Minnesota House race**

ALBERT LEA, Minn., Jul. 17, 2006

By MARTIGA LOHN Associated Press Writer

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**(AP)** Tim Walz waded into the crowds lining the parade route in this industrial town of 18,000 and shouted his 20-second pitch: teacher, retired Army National Guard, ready and willing to go to Washington.

Backed by chanting supporters in yellow "Walz '06" shirts, his voice was raw as he yelled, "Give me four months to earn that vote!"

In his first bid for elected office, the Democrat is turning heads as he tries to unseat an entrenched incumbent who came to power with the wave of Newt Gingrich Republicans in 1994. He combines a coach's beefy enthusiasm with a resolute gaze that shows how this command sergeant major climbed to the top of the ranks for enlisted men.

Republican strategist Tom Horner calls Walz the Democrats' best hope to pick up a House seat in Minnesota. Still, incumbent Rep. Gil Gutknecht didn't seem overly worried as he walked the same parade route earlier this month.

"The people here in Albert Lea are very good to me. They voted for me for six times," Gutknecht said. "It will take a real strong message for them to say, 'You know, I think we better fire Gil.'"

Walz has about \$250,000 for his campaign, and Gutknecht holds a 3-to-1 advantage in fundraising.

The district is rural and farm-oriented, stretching across southern Minnesota from the border with South Dakota to the Mississippi River. Gutknecht, chairman of a House Agriculture subcommittee, hasn't had to break a sweat in his most recent campaigns, winning with nearly 60 percent of the vote in 2004.

This year could be different. The Iraq war, rising gasoline prices and other national concerns weigh on the party in power \_ Republicans. President Bush won the district with 51 percent of the 2004 vote, but sections, including Albert Lea, went for Democratic Sen. John Kerry.

Among the shifts in this traditionally blue-collar district are more people settling in cities such as Rochester, once a Republican stronghold. Pockets of immigrants have taken jobs on farms and in food-processing plants, changing the face of an area where almost a third of the population claims German roots.

Horner said Walz could benefit from voters' misgivings about Bush more than any other challenger among Minnesota Democrats. The GOP holds half of Minnesota's eight House seats.

"He comes across pretty well," said Horner, who saw Walz address the state Democratic-Farmer-Labor convention last month. "He has the ability to really get people up off their feet."

By his account, Walz became active in politics after being stopped, questioned and threatened with detainment as he tried to enter a Bush rally in 2004. Campaign workers turned away two of his students \_ one of whom had a Kerry sticker on his wallet \_ and Walz attended only after he promised to behave.

He said that experience distilled his dissatisfaction with the Bush administration and prompted his congressional bid. He criticized the GOP-controlled Congress \_ and Gutknecht \_ for failing to act as a check on Bush.

"He's the cog in the machine that lets the things go by," Walz said of Gutknecht.

Walz, 42, who served in the Army National Guard from 1981-2005, has criticized Gutknecht on Iraq, saying the incumbent has ignored the war and has rarely spoken about it on the House floor.

Walz said 300 to 400 National Guard soldiers he helped train are now serving in Iraq, along with about half a dozen of his former students at Mankato West High School. He said he wants a national discussion about what to do in Iraq, and favors moving U.S. troops to Kuwait so a regional security force can take over in Iraq.

Gutknecht said he talks about the war regularly on his radio show, and that part of Congress' job is to keep the pressure on Iraqis to assume their own security. He added that the United States has an obligation to stabilize Iraq before leaving.

Iraq seemed a world away at the parade, marked by old-time bands and Shriners in fezzes. The mood shifted when a group of soldiers walked by holding the edges of a massive American flag.

"We can't cut and run," said Art Ludtke, a retiree who served in the Navy during World War II and supports Gutknecht. "That's the way I felt about World War II and I feel the same way now."

Across the street, Mary and Les Tufte warmed up to Walz after hearing his pitch. They said their top concerns include Social Security, property taxes, illegal immigration and the economy.

"I support the boys, but not the war," said Mary Tufte, a retired retail manager.\

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On the Net:

Tim Walz: <http://www.timwalz.org/>

Gil Gutknecht: <http://www.gilg.org/>



**Source: City Pages**

<http://citypages.com/databank/27/1333/article14453.asp>

**Meet the top enlisted soldier—and top lunchroom monitor—who's battling to dislodge Gil Gutknecht**

***The Republican Nightmare***



Tim Walz with his daughter: "My wife and I spent many years having this little girl and that was a decision made at the fertility clinic and Mayo between my wife and myself. I don't want the government involved in that." Image by [Michael Dvorak](#)

by [Britt Robson](#)

June 21, 2006

To pass the time between the seven ballots it required for the DFL to endorse Mike Hatch for governor at its convention in Rochester last month, the party brought up each one of its congressional candidates for brief introductory remarks. In a bit of an upset, the one who most wowed the crowd was not the gifted orator from the Fifth District, State Representative Keith Ellison, or nationally known child safety advocate Patty Wetterling from the Sixth District, or popular incumbent Betty McCollum from the Fourth District. It was pint-sized fireplug Tim Walz, a military veteran, schoolteacher, and coach from Mankato making his first-ever run for office against incumbent Gil Gutknecht in the First District.

The highlight of his brief address occurred when he talked about losing his hearing as a result of his military service, only to get it back through laser surgery paid for by his teacher-related health plan. One morning he woke up to a beautiful sound he had never heard before and asked his wife what it was. *That's your four-year-old daughter, singing to herself to wake up, the way she usually does*, his wife replied.

Pausing briefly for effect, Walz then roared into the microphone, *Every citizen deserves to have enough health coverage to be able to hear his or her child sing themselves awake in the morning!*

City Pages caught up with the 42-year-old candidate the Wall Street Journal describes as "the Republican nightmare in the First District" last week when he visited the Twin Cities to meet with supporters.

**City Pages:** *How did you decide to run for office?*

**Tim Walz:** I never intended to be in this position. My wife and I both took the philosophy that the public schools are a little microcosm of society, so you can get involved in everything there. We were doing football, basketball, speech, debate. We were the sponsors for the junior class, taking the trips with the kids, a little of everything.

My time in the military, same thing—heavy involvement. As the command sergeant major I was the top enlisted guy so I was taking a lot of time doing that. I was approached by a group of people in January of '05, although many of them, until the Kerry race, probably didn't know my political affiliation.

**CP:** *You worked for Kerry then?*

**Walz:** I did. The reason I got into it was I had just gotten back from my deployment with the National Guard and Bush was in Mankato in the summer of '04. I tried to go to an event out there with some kids. And I went to this thing and they wouldn't let the kids in. They were a threat to the president, according to the Secret Service.

I said, "Well, they're with me." And they said, "Well you're not going in either." And I said, "Yes I am going in." And they said, "Well you are going to be arrested then." And I said, "My wife isn't going to be real happy about that. This is ridiculous." And they said, "Do you support the president? You don't, do you?" I said, "None of your business. And I'm going in."

So they sent somebody in with me and put the kids back on the bus. I got done that day and went home and called somebody up and said, "What do I need to do?" We just totally ripped them in Blue Earth County and got a huge amount of veterans involved.

Suddenly I no longer had the luxury to sit on the sidelines. Somebody asked why I was doing this. Maybe if things were being done right, I wouldn't be. I know I can teach and I know I do it well. I know I served well in the military. Those are things I have done. I have come to realize the people who are supposed to be leading us are not. And if they are, it is the wrong direction.

**CP:** *What do you regard as the signal issues of the campaign?*

**Walz:** The lack of real leadership and the lack of addressing the issues in the first place. My opponent continues to say he won't talk about the war in Iraq—he openly says this—and instead wants to talk about immigration. Now, today, he said he wants to author a bill on gay marriage, which is totally cynical and a total charade.

I look at people in my district and I say, I don't have the luxury of doing that. I sit across the table from people and look in their eyes, people whose children are over there. Many of them, their children were in my classes, I coached them in football. They joined my Guard unit, and I trained them. They deployed with me, and now they are in Iraq. I don't have the luxury to ignore them.

The war in Iraq is an issue. We have the fourth-largest deployment in the nation coming from Minnesota, and the concentration of those is coming from southern Minnesota, and the congressman doesn't want to talk about it.

Health care. All politicians are talking about it now but we think we're talking about it with a sense of courage. I am saying that if we don't do something about this as Democrats—I don't know about the Senate, but I really believe we are going to win the House. When we do, this country is going to want us to act, boldly and immediately. And I would say in January, if you don't see a bill introduced to cover all children in this country, I would be very cynical about the Democrats, too.

The economy is fragile. I know they keep telling us about all the jobs being created. Well, they pay less. It's like the line from the waiter who says, "Yeah, I know they created 10,000 new jobs. I've got four of them." They say the GDP is up and my line always is that the GDP never filled up a gas tank and never sent a kid to college. We know things are out of whack. We see the CEO salaries going up and we see bills crafted that allow large corporations to dump their pension responsibilities. And yet we can't get a break for a returning soldier who is in trouble; he has to pay everything off, whether it is health-related or not? There is just that ludicrous shifting going on.

**CP:** *You are a member of the Minnesota National Guard. How long was your active service?*

**Walz:** I did two stints where I was full-time. I did it in 1989 and then again in 1992. Then in '03 and '04 I did 10 months with Operation Enduring Freedom, where, by luck of the draw, I served in Italy. It was originally Turkey or Iraq and then they changed it to Enduring Freedom and I said, "That's Afghanistan." But they said, "You guys are going to do the supply lines between Turkey and England." We provided total base security and the training for soldiers coming in.

**CP:** *Is your opponent a veteran?*

**Walz:** No. But quite honestly, I don't think it is a prerequisite for political service. I have been told that of this group of "Fighting Dems" running for office, I am the only one who doesn't have pictures of myself in uniform on my website. I am a little uncomfortable with the militarization of everything. I think there is great leadership that is not in the military, as well.

I don't downplay it, and I don't bite the hand that feeds me, because it has gotten me a lot of press. But I also have always looked at it as just one piece of character. The National Guard is a very honorable thing to do, but I am also honored that I have survived 20 years of lunchroom supervision at school.

**CP:** *So what is your specific position on the war?*

**Walz:** People in Afghanistan were responsible for 9/11, bin Laden was in the country. As a geography guy, I had had a whole lot of problems with the Taliban years before 9/11, on human rights issues. I thought they were incredibly dangerous. [I] am still convinced, that that war needed to be prosecuted to the fullest extent. I am very disappointed with what has happened there and very disappointed that the people responsible for 9/11 haven't been brought to justice.

I was never convinced the war in Iraq had anything to do with our national security. It had nothing to do with 9/11. It was poorly planned and it was poorly executed. Since that time we have been sold on it the way you would sell a car. They bring out the dog and pony show and tell us this is the way it should be—Bush's trip [last week] is the same type of thing.

That being said, we need to solve it and we need to solve it in the best way possible. I don't get to see all the information that Congress is getting, and whether Representative Murtha is right that we are the catalyst for violence. And that if you remove that catalyst you remove the violence. I am not sure if it is Senator Kerry's version—stay until the end of the year—or if it is something in between. My take on it is that the first thing I know is that it is never going to get solved unless we openly debate it. And this Congress's unwillingness to have any checks and balances or any criticism on this is absolutely as wrong as you can get.

I'm not talking about opening debate on the floor to criticize the planning and criticize the president. There will be a time for that: We have to go back and look and make sure we don't make the same mistake again. Say, What can we do? What will it take to get this infrastructure stuff done? In all these

other conflicts—Bosnia, or wherever—once you saw these benchmarks of success being reached, like the capacity to generate water or electricity, sewage, job creation, those types of things, you started to see a drop off in the violence. But nearly all of our money right now is going into security.

This idea that when the Iraqis stand up, we'll stand down? Their government has no intention of standing up. We're propping up that government and American men and women are doing the fighting.

It irritates me no end when Republicans say that all the Democrats can do is complain about what is out there—like that's difficult to do right now. But what I am saying is that while it is egotistical to think one person has the answer or that any answer will be a quick and easy fix, I do think there are some solutions out there. [Former Carter administration National Security Advisor Zbigniew] Brzezinski talked about a regional security force that is still willing to do that, whether it is the Egyptians or the Jordanians. We could start to bring them in and pull us back to Kuwait.

My fear is that if you just leave immediately—and there are a lot of people who want that—I am not convinced we are not going to see some type of genocide. The way I look at it, it is our responsibility. I know that is not the answer people want to hear.

**CP:** *The First District runs along the entire border of southern Minnesota and is viewed as being socially conservative. There is a reference to your "Catholic values" on your website. Are you pro-choice or pro-life on abortion?*

**Walz:** I am pro choice, openly pro choice. And the reason for that is that if our goal is to get women true opportunities, true choice, and to reduce the number of abortions, criminalization is not the way to go. That is just based on fact. The second part is the privacy issue: me extending my values and my beliefs into somebody else's values and beliefs on something as personal as that. Guess the Catholic values thing was more the social justice thing. When I went to the CYO camps, the message always was, Don't be too big for your britches; look out for people less fortunate because it could be you. There was a real sense that we are all this together. I reference those values because I feel strongly about it.

On the abortion issue, reports show that 71 percent of women who have abortions one year later say it was strictly because of economic means. So in the Clinton years when we were having the ability to provide health care and the ability to provide daycare and food, the WIC program, and those things, the abortion numbers went way down. And in the Bush administration they have gone way up. I think there are some people who are maybe searching for a little personal salvation on this and I know they feel really strongly about it. But I say, if you really want to reduce the number of abortions you make sure there are opportunities for women and that our education system is strong.

**CP:** *Do you worry about being too socially liberal for your district?*

**Walz:** No. Because I think I am consistent on the subject of personal freedoms and where the line of government ends. I am a strong advocate for people's right to hunt and own guns. It is a state's rights issue for one thing—Guiliani and the Republicans are the gun-control people in New York. I am about government doing the things that we can't do alone; it is an extension of things we can best do together. But when it comes to those personal freedoms, I am very much conservative in saying hands-off those things.

I never really saw how it was a conservative value for people to let government reach in and change your positions on health care. My wife and I spent many years having this little girl and that was a decision made at the fertility clinic and Mayo between my wife and myself and I don't want the government involved in that—no more than I want them to control my hunting decisions.

**CP:** *Fiscally, if you want to spend money to improve education, the tax cuts can't be locked in the way Bush is now proposing, can they?*

**Walz:** I will not be nearly as willing to give tax cuts to that top percentage of people. We've got a war going on, energy prices as high as they've been, 46 million Americans without health care. And what did the U.S. Senate do this week? They debated a bill on the inheritance tax that affects 0.27 percent of the population—80 percent of that in 18 families. Those 18 families won't be helping me or supporting me, because I think there needs to be a sense of progressiveness in our tax code.

I think there are ways to save money that we are wasting. I think the \$9.8 billion that disappeared in the provisional authority in Iraq might be something to look at. Because if they did that, they could bring special ed funding up to where it nearly needs to be. I am a stickler on waste. I am the guy who still uses the same textbook in my classroom that still has the Soviet Union in it because I can supplement it with new things from the computer and GIS programs. You don't need to spend \$45,000 on those new textbooks.

People accuse me of being just tax and spend, with no evidence for that. The actuaries have shown, here in Minnesota, that our 68,000 children who are uninsured, if we get them on to some form of basic health care, it will actually lower everyone's premium and we'll save money. My opponent and this far-right group of Republicans always [advance] the false dichotomy: "Well, this guy is an environmentalist; he must be against business." Where the truth is, the more environmentally friendly you are, the more opportunities you have in business.

I am not this neoclassical Chicago school of economics person, because I have never seen it work. I understand the theory: Give it to the entrepreneurial class and they'll build and they'll create jobs. The problem with that way of thinking now is they'll create those jobs in China without working conditions that provide worker protections, while it takes jobs away from Americans and lowers wages. The way to build a free and open and stable society is by making sure that as many people can enter the middle class as possible. And we know that the numbers aren't showing that.

Again, my opponent would claim that he wants a national sales tax and is not for the progressive income tax and he wants to privatize Social Security. What would have happened to my family in that case? I'm 17 and just getting out of high school. My father is dying of cancer and the family is broke. I join the army and get in on the G.I. Bill. My little brother uses Social Security survivor benefits to go to college and get his degree. My mother uses Social Security benefits to retrain as a nurse and enters the work force. The Republicans say that what you need is personal responsibility to pull yourself up by your bootstraps. We did that; we just had no boots. They were loaned to us by Social Security to pull ourselves up—and guess what? We paid it back with interest. I say that is the way to a better society.

### **War is not the only issue on political stump**

Congressional challengers remain critical of the war, but they are broadening their message as they move from courting the DFL faithful to engaging the general public.

**Anthony Lonetree and Aaron Blake**, Star Tribune Last update: April 27, 2006 – 11:11 PM

ROCHESTER - Watch the military veterans, hands across their hearts, as the national anthem plays, and it seems easy to guess the issue they'll be tracking in this year's congressional races.

Yes, there's Iraq, but there is more.

For Russell Mahaffey, a World War II veteran and retired school superintendent attending a seminar for veterans in Rochester last Sunday, there is the price of gas -- he paid \$87 recently to visit his grandson in Grinnell, Iowa.

For Nick Carter, a Vietnam War veteran and past supporter of Republican U.S. Rep. Gil Gutknecht, there is what he considers the "rudderless" leadership of President Bush. "The Republican mantle is going to be the 'Scarlet A' " in 2006, he said.

As congressional campaigns head into spring endorsing conventions in coming weeks, two southern Minnesota races seemingly custom-made for war debate are taking on added texture.

Tim Walz, a Democrat whose standing as retired veteran and war critic has won him national notice in a bid to unseat Gutknecht in the First Congressional District, vows "passion and leadership," he said, on education, labor and environmental concerns. DFLers are expected to endorse him Saturday.

Walz said he cannot win on the war alone. Candidates, he said, "owe it to our soldiers" to make the war a prominent part of the debate, but to be victorious, he said, requires strength on other issues as well.

Coleen Rowley, a Democrat and former FBI agent whose questioning of the war pre-dated the 2003 invasion, and who is challenging U.S. Rep. John Kline, a Republican, in the Second District, said once she secures party endorsement May 6 she will begin pitching a broader message focusing on how the middle class has been hurt by the war and the nation's debt.

Helping spread Rowley's message, initially through a revamping of her website, she said, will be the ad agency headed by Bill Hillsman, known for his work with former Gov. Jesse Ventura and the late Sen. Paul Wellstone.

Gutknecht and Kline, meanwhile, who have been consistent supporters of the war, had little to say last week about Iraq and the election.

Kline declined to comment. His spokesman Troy Young said: "We're not going to continuously air our political election views through the press. That's not the way we operate. That's not the way any incumbent operates."

Gutknecht said Iraq is a big issue, but many people don't know what to think of it -- "a muddled frustration" is what he called it.

Many more people, the congressman said, have told him that the border with Mexico needs to be secured than have told him troops should be withdrawn immediately. Clear-cut issues generally mean more in elections, he said.

"I think, from a political standpoint, [for] the Democrats who believe [Iraq] is going to be the silver bullet, it's not enough to say mistakes were made," Gutknecht said.

Steven Schier, a political science professor at Carleton College in Northfield, said Gutknecht and Kline are the favorites in their races, but the war is a variable: "What's going to be the condition on the ground in November?" he said. If it's the same then as it is now, he added, it would be a "significant negative" for the incumbents.

### **In the districts**

This week, interviews with seven current or former elected officials from across the southern suburbs to the Minnesota-Iowa border backed the notion that races will be more complicated than the war.

Prior Lake Mayor Jack Haugen said it was hard to say, in fact, what voters may be thinking about Iraq: "People feel good about it or they feel bad about it, but there are not a lot of people communicating about it," he said.

In Rochester, City Council Member Amy Blenker said she hears most about education, health care and federal spending, "bread and butter issues" that people say "aren't being addressed by anyone at the national level."

A backlash against those in power is possible, some observers say.

"I think the Republican Party has got some work to do for this election," said Scott County Commissioner Barbara Marschall, a self-described conservative. A Kline-Rowley matchup, she said, "could be very interesting."

Asked whether he detected an anti-incumbent mood, John Kane, a former Credit River Township chairman, said: "I would think so, and I would hope so."

But Matt Flynn, an Olmsted County commissioner and farmer from Stewartville, and Roy Srp, mayor of Waseca, said Gutknecht still could be tough to beat. Said Srp: "That's not to say Walz wouldn't do a good job ... but [Gil's] learned the ropes."

Many of these officials agree on one thing -- the public has yet to become fully engaged.

Dakota County Commissioner Joe Harris, who helps arrange speakers for the Hastings Rotary Club, said that after recent appearances by Reps. Denny McNamara, R-Hastings, and Katie Sieben, DFL-Newport, and Sen. Sharon Marko, DFL-Cottage Grove, who briefly challenged Rowley, some members said: "Enough, enough."

Now, he said, laughing, he is giving them a month-and-a-half off.

### **Reaching out**

At the Aquarius nightclub in Rochester last Sunday, a chapter of the Disabled American Veterans hosted a benefits seminar that drew about 110 people, including Walz, a retired Army National Guard command sergeant major and a high school teacher.

In a previous interview, Walz had criticized Congress, both parties included, for having failed to ask tough questions about the war.

But in a brief speech Sunday, unity was the message.

Safeguarding benefits for those who have served, Walz told veterans, "is not a left or right issue. It's a right or wrong issue. We need to take care of our veterans."

In the audience, Mahaffey, 80, a self-described lifelong Republican, leaned over to his wife and said, "I like the way he talks."

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# Candidates compete for cash in congressional races

Pat Doyle, Star Tribune - April 18, 2006

[www.startribune.com/587/v-print/story/376673.html](http://www.startribune.com/587/v-print/story/376673.html)

**ST. PAUL** - The six major congressional candidates running for an open seat in Minnesota's 6th District have raised more than \$2 million total, according to campaign finance filings.

Candidates have been busy fundraising in other congressional districts, too. Tim Walz, the DFL challenger to GOP 1st District U.S. Rep. Gil Gutknecht, unexpectedly raised more than Gutknecht in the first quarter of 2006, though the incumbent still has more than five times more money overall than Walz.

Still, Walz, a Mankato high school teacher and Army veteran raised more than twice his 2005 total in the first quarter of 2006 alone.

In the 2nd District, former FBI agent Coleen Rowley is trying to unseat Republican U.S. Rep. John Kline, but Kline continues to outpace Rowley's fundraising efforts. He raised \$191,042 in January through March, compared to Rowley's \$98,877.

Kline also has more than five times the cash on hand as Rowley, \$552,389 compared to \$101,779.

It's in the 6th District where the most candidates are vying for donors' cash. Four Republicans and two Democrats want to claim the congressional seat being vacated by Republican U.S. Rep. Mark Kennedy, who is leaving to run for U.S. Senate.

The district runs from Afton and Woodbury east of St. Paul, through the northern suburbs of the Twin Cities and continues north past St. Cloud.

Three of the Republicans - state Sen. Michele Bachmann, and state Reps. Jim Knoblauch and Phil Krinkie, are closely bunched in how much they both raised and the amount they have left.

Knoblauch is currently in the best shape with \$328,000 on hand, though he also loaned his campaign \$200,000 out of his own pocket. Krinkie has \$255,000 on hand, part of which is a \$50,000 loan from himself, while Bachmann has \$196,000 in the bank.

The other Republican, businessman Jay Esmay, trailed behind the other three in both amount raised and available cash.

On the DFL side, Patty Wetterling raised \$219,754 through the end of March, including a transfer of more than \$40,000 from her abandoned U.S. Senate campaign. The other DFL candidate, former state transportation commissioner Elwyn Tinklenberg, raised \$61,471 in the same period.

Wetterling has \$168,000 in available cash, while Tinklenberg has \$146,000.

The Republican Party will make its 6th District endorsement on May 6, and Democrats on May 13.

## POLITICS & ECONOMICS

# Minnesota May Be Tip of Political Iceberg

*Democrats See Chance to Gain Three House Seats as Republicans Fight Back*

ROCHESTER, Minn. -- From the governor's mansion to Congress, everything's up for grabs in Minnesota this year, and if a political tidal wave is coming in November it will surely be felt here.

With the lakes still frozen white from winter, Republican and Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party candidates already have begun the spring ritual of nominating conventions in school auditoriums across the state. In three races in Republican House districts that Mr. Bush carried in 2004, Democrats hope for upsets given the president's faltering ratings.

To understand the currents ahead, forget about staid Scandinavians; remember this is the state that elected Jesse Ventura governor.

The Republican nightmare here in the First District is a burly, high-school teacher and coach who is running as a Democrat but evokes House Speaker Dennis Hastert as a younger man. The Democratic candidate in the Second District is a former Federal Bureau of Investigation agent with the maiden name of Cheney who is waging an antiwar campaign. Her Republican opponent, a Marine veteran, opined on radical Islam and attacks on the Easter Bunny while on the campaign trail recently at a Lutheran school whose sports teams are the "Crusaders."



**Tim Walz**

As Minnesota suggests, the 2006 campaign is a power struggle but also a moment for Congress to renew itself after wearing thin its welcome with voters. For Democrats, who need to gain 15 seats to win the House, spring is the season for testing campaign pitches. For Republicans, who hold power, it is a time to take stock after dominating Congress for the past 12 years.

K.J. McDonald, a former Republican state legislator who now is mayor of Watertown in Carver County, recites a litany of party woes from "the ineptness of the Bush administration" to the national debt and the Iraq war. "We are due for a fall," he worries. "We're a disgrace."

Iraq hangs over the landscape: 2,600 Minnesota National Guard troops began deploying to the Mideast and the war last week; Republican Gov. Tim Pawlenty, up for re-election, made headlines with a trip to the region. Progress for America, a conservative political organization, in February chose Minnesota to test more than \$1 million in television ads and mailings in support of the war. And in picking its candidates in May, the DFL must decide if it wants to press for troop withdrawals by a fixed date.

For the Senate seat being vacated by retiring Democratic Sen. Mark Dayton, the DFL leans heavily toward Amy Klobuchar, Hennepin County prosecutor and daughter of legendary Minneapolis newspaper

columnist Jim Klobuchar who is out of retirement to stump for his daughter -- but sometimes has to be reminded to mention her name when he gets wound up.

"She's got moxie," says Barry Bowden, a farm insurance agent and Republican. Enough so that the Republican candidate, Rep. Mark Kennedy, is no longer the favorite in the Senate race.

But most revealing are the House races. In the First and Second districts, incumbent Republicans are challenged. In the Sixth, the seat is held by Mr. Kennedy, but the race has sparked party infighting as conservatives jockey to try to succeed him as he runs for the Senate.

In all three cases, Democrats will need a lot of luck and more money. "If you can't pay the band, you can't do the boogaloo," said Patty Wetterling, a child-rights advocate and Democratic candidate running in the Sixth.

Equally important is how the party will try to win back independent voters in largely suburban and rural areas.

At the spring caucuses, party activists pick delegates to nominating conventions in May. Primaries are held in September but both Republicans and the DFL make it difficult for any loser to challenge the candidate the party endorses.

Within the DFL, divisions over the war have surfaced. Ms. Wetterling, for example, proposed last fall that the troops be brought home by Thanksgiving 2006. But another Democrat seeking the Sixth District seat, Elwyn Tinklenberg, a Methodist minister and former member of Mr. Ventura's cabinet, warns that Democrats will fail if they move too far left. "If we provide them with only two options, far right, far left, they will still pick far right," he says. "For us to be able to win, we have to provide an alternative to the extremes."



Gil Gutknecht

In the Second District, Coleen Rowley, a former FBI agent who criticized the agency's performance before the 9/11 attacks, is outspoken in her opposition to the war. "I think most of the problems we are in right now are because people are playing politics instead of doing the right thing," she says.

But as Ms. Rowley's campaign has faltered, another Democrat, State Sen. Sharon Marko, jumped in recently to offer a more moderate approach -- and to put greater emphasis on traditional economic issues.

Here in the First District, Tim Walz, the high-school teacher and coach and ringer for Speaker Hastert, has the Democratic field to himself. A retired master sergeant in the Army National Guard, he served overseas during the early war in Afghanistan.

When his old artillery battalion deployed to Iraq last week, Mr. Walz's emotions showed after traveling down to Mississippi to say goodbye.

"There were soldiers down there that I taught in school. They were my students in my classroom, I coached them," he said. "This is not something that is a political game or a political loss."

Mr. Walz's opponent, Rep. Gil Gutknecht, a former auctioneer, served 12 years in the Minnesota legislature before joining Congress in 1995. He emails progress reports on Iraq to constituents but prefers to talk up immigration, where he is taking a tougher line in response the influx of illegal immigrants working in agriculture-processing facilities in the district. "It's a hotter issue and it's more clear-cut," he says. Unlike Iraq, "people know which side they're on."

In the Second District, Republican Rep. John Kline is a former Marine helicopter pilot in Vietnam whose son now serves in Iraq. "We never thought the Viet Cong would leave the Ho Chi Minh trail and come here," he says. "This time we're engaged in a war where I believe absolutely they will come here."



Yet, after compiling a near-perfect party unity rating in recent years, he now describes himself as a "conservative but independent" Republican and faults the White House for resisting pension-relief provisions important to bankrupt [Northwest Airlines](#) in his district. "They're wrong," he says of the administration.

Both Republican incumbents worry about voter concerns, even with Minnesota's low unemployment. "You think, 'What if I lost my job when I'm 55 or 56 or 57?'" Mr. Kline says.

Mr. Gutknecht asks: "Why is there still economic angst in the United States? The answer is the average working American hasn't had a real pay raise."

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Politics  
**Company, Left**

There's something different about the latest crop of military veterans running for Congress

by Joshua Green

Command Sergeant Major Tim Walz is a twenty-four-year veteran of the Army National Guard, now retired but still on active duty when a visit from President George W. Bush shortly before the 2004 election coincided with Walz's homecoming to Mankato, Minnesota. A high school teacher and football coach, he had left to serve overseas in Operation Enduring Freedom. Southern Minnesota is home to a large Guard contingent that includes Walz's unit, the First 125th Field Artillery Battalion, so the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are naturally a pressing local concern—particularly to high school students headed into the armed services.

The president's visit struck Walz as a teachable moment, and he and two students boarded a Bush campaign bus that took them to a quarry where the president was to speak. But after they had passed through a metal detector and their tickets and IDs were checked, they were denied admittance and ordered back onto the bus. One of the boys had a John Kerry sticker on his wallet.

Indignant, Walz refused. "As a soldier, I told them I had a right to see my commander-in-chief," the normally jovial forty-one-year-old recently explained to a Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party dinner in the small town of Albert Lea, Minnesota.

His challenge prompted a KGB-style interrogation that was sadly characteristic of Bush campaign events. Do you support the president? Walz refused to answer. Do you oppose the president? Walz replied that it was no one's business but his own. (He later learned that his wife was informed that the Secret Service might arrest him.) Walz thought for a moment and asked the Bush staffers if they really wanted to arrest a command sergeant major who'd just returned from fighting the war on terrorism.

They did not.

Instead Walz was told to behave himself and permitted to attend the speech, albeit under heavy scrutiny. His students were not: they were sent home. Shortly after this Walz retired from the Guard. Then he did something that until recently was highly unusual for a military man. He announced he was running for Congress—as a Democrat.

Walz personifies two of this year's most interesting political trends, both of which appear to emanate from the country's growing dissatisfaction with the war in Iraq and the party most responsible for it. The midterm elections this fall will be the first in which a sizable number of veterans from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq run for Congress. At least fourteen have declared so far. But in an era when military and national-security issues have long been the province of the Republican Party—indeed, are thought to have strengthened the GOP's grip on the White House and Congress in the past two elections—the bigger surprise is under whose banner these veterans are choosing to run. Like Walz, nearly every one of them is a Democrat.

One reason for the surge of Democratic veterans on the campaign trail is the example of Paul Hackett, a forty-three-year-old major in the Marine Corps who returned from Iraq and became the Democratic

candidate in a special election last August for Ohio's second-district congressional seat. In a staunchly conservative district Hackett campaigned as an unabashed critic of the Bush administration and its handling of the Iraq War at a time when few elected Democrats were so bold, and he fell just a few thousand votes short of an upset victory. He became a media star in the process, and is now running to unseat Ohio's embattled senior senator, the Republican Mike DeWine, this fall.

The subsequent group of veterans very much resembles Hackett: they are generally young (most in their thirties and forties), new to electoral politics, and, with varying degrees of intensity, critics of the administration. At a time when the public's opinion of lawmakers in both parties is abysmal, these veterans are running on the attractively civic-minded notion that service in Congress is a patriotic extension of service in the military. They are spread throughout the country but concentrated in military-heavy states like Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Virginia, Ohio, and Texas, where the war and its effects are most keenly felt.

This fact was driven home on the day I arrived in Fayetteville, North Carolina, to meet Marine Lieutenant Colonel Tim Dunn, a lawyer and a veteran of the Gulf War and the Kosovo conflict. Dunn recently returned from a tour in Iraq, where he helped the Iraqi Special Tribunal investigate and prosecute former high officials of the regime, including Saddam Hussein himself. He is a Democratic candidate for the state's eighth congressional district, home to the Army's Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base. Just before we were to meet, Dunn was called away to attend a tragically familiar ritual around Fayetteville: a memorial service for an Army Special Forces soldier killed by an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan.

When we did meet, the next day, Dunn described local concerns that echoed what I'd already heard around town and also in Minnesota and Texas districts with high concentrations of military personnel—concerns about families left behind and about health care and economic assistance for returning veterans. Above all there was a diffuse and mounting frustration with Washington, most often summed up in military idiom as a "crisis of leadership."

"I pledge to be someone who will not only vote his convictions but voice his convictions," Dunn said. With his wraparound sunglasses and hair cut high and tight, he looked as if he had just hopped off a tank. "What's needed in Congress today is a dose of honor, courage, and commitment." This same sentiment is voiced, though possibly for different reasons, by the lone Republican veteran seeking a House seat: Van Taylor, a thirty-three-year-old Marine captain who is hoping to oust the incumbent Democrat in Texas's seventeenth district. "People want a congressman who's a proven leader in the war on terror," Taylor says.

That sort of raw authenticity—experience in combat—has declined steadily over the past three decades. According to research conducted by William Bianco, a professor at Penn State University who has studied the civilian-military divide, the number of veterans in the House reached its zenith in 1971, when more than 72 percent of congressmen had served. With the retirement of World War II veterans and the under-representation of veterans of later wars, that number has slipped below 20 percent. Experts attribute this decline to the paucity of large-scale combat operations, the shrinking of the armed services overall, and the change in 1975 to an all-volunteer military, which created a higher percentage of career-minded soldiers, less likely to take an interest in running for office. That could change. "What you're looking at now is fairly unusual," says Richard Kohn, a history professor and the chair of the Curriculum in Peace, War, and Defense at the University of North Carolina. "This is the first time post-1975 that you're seeing a group emerge that specifically wants to get involved in politics."

Every significant war produces a generation of politicians, and each generation reflects the war that forged it. Bill Clinton, a consummate student of politics, used to joke to his White House staff, with no small bit of truth, that "if you were a Civil War general from Ohio in the late nineteenth century, you

stood a fifty percent chance of becoming president." World War II yielded a bountiful crop of politicians, including seven presidents (Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, Jimmy Carter, and George H.W. Bush) and dozens of congressmen; ninety-two veterans were elected to the first Congress after the war's end. In contrast, seven years after the United States left Vietnam, only four Vietnam veterans were in Congress. Even these few, though, have made their presence felt: the first to be elected was John Murtha, the Pennsylvania Democrat who set off a storm in November when he called on the Bush administration to withdraw troops from Iraq.

What sort of impact might Iraq War veterans have on Congress? Raw numbers aside, it stands to reason that veterans of unpopular wars like Vietnam and Iraq can have a greater immediate effect in Washington than those of popular wars like World War II. Although veterans of any war tend to be held in high esteem, only wars that voters perceive the United States to be losing awaken the type of anti-Washington sentiment that is suddenly so widespread.

And yet that did little to put Vietnam veterans in office three decades ago. What's different about this war is how veterans perceive, and in turn are perceived by, the Democratic Party. The antiwar movement during Vietnam (and by extension the Democratic Party) was heavily anti-GI as well. But even the most strident antiwar faction of today's party is unquestionably pro-soldier. "An Iraq veteran doesn't carry the baggage that a Vietnam veteran carried in liberal circles," says Charles Moskos, a sociologist specializing in military issues. Judging by the willingness of today's veterans to run as Democrats, the feeling is mutual.

Rightly or wrongly, the current crop of veterans seems to be inoculated against the standard criticism of Democrats as weak on national security. And most of the voters I encountered appeared to look at service in Iraq or Afghanistan as not just a desirable credential but one that confers unchallengeable moral standing—no small thing at a time when ethical transgressions promise to be central to the fall elections.

It seems too neat to be mere coincidence—though it must be—that a few of the current Democratic veterans are pitted against some notorious Republican grotesques. In Pennsylvania's tenth district Don Sherwood, a sixty-four-year-old married Republican incumbent, made headlines last year for allegedly beating his twenty-nine-year-old mistress. (The case was settled.) He faces a challenge from Chris Carney, a lieutenant commander in the Naval Reserves who at the time was coordinating counterintelligence activities in the Middle East. In North Carolina, Tim Dunn is running against the incumbent Republican Robin Hayes, who managed the considerable feat of making John Kerry look Churchillian when he publicly vowed to vote against the Central American Free Trade Agreement, which would hurt the district's manufacturing sector, and then knuckled under to last-minute pressure from the administration. The most arresting example of a heroic veteran could be a Democratic candidate for the race in Illinois's sixth district, Tammy Duckworth, a Blackhawk helicopter pilot in the Iraq War who lost both legs and shattered an arm when she was shot down.

Of course, veterans are no more immune than anyone else from the quotidian demands of a congressional challenge. Given their straitlaced demeanor and the service-and-sacrifice nature of their career, the ones I met seemed particularly ill at ease asking for money. Still, they have cause for hope. In the final hour Paul Hackett's Ohio campaign caught fire as Democrats across the country learned of his campaign and, with the aide of activist blogs and Web sites, pumped in nearly half a million dollars. The ability of his successors to repeat that performance will go a long way toward determining if this latest charge of candidate veterans is a skirmish or the first wave on the beach.

# Hearing Bush took some doing

*New Ulm Guardsman, back from abroad, got insulted first*



**Nick Coleman**

The president was visiting Mankato and Tim Walz wanted to see him. A teacher who has 23 years of service in the National Guard and who recently returned home from overseas, Walz wanted to hear his commander-in-chief.

He did. But only after being threatened with arrest and subjected to a political interrogation. Welcome home, good and faithful soldier. You may see the president. But keep your mouth shut. (Intolerance is nonpartisan, so I make a standing offer to President Bush backers: If you are quashed by Democrats, I will report it.)

Walz, 40, supports John Kerry. But you don't need to know what Walz believes, and neither did the Bush campaign workers who interrogated him when he went to see the president speak in a Mankato quarry on Aug. 4.

The Bush visit was a huge event in Mankato, which had not hosted a president since Harry Truman. Walz got a ticket without trouble, but others were refused because they

didn't seem rah-rah enough, including two teens rejected because they were baby Democrats.

One of the kids had his mom get tickets for the boys, in their names. The mom asked Walz to chaperone the boys. But the kids would not get to see the president.

Only supporters got into the quarry where Bush spoke to a sanitized crowd of 7,000. Not one person carried a sign in protest. But one — one — listened without applauding. It was Walz, and his thoughts were his own, unless someone was scanning his brain.

"It was uncomfortable," says Walz, who joined the Guard at 17 and teaches geography at Mankato West High School. "Where else in America will you find 7,000 people who agree on anything?"

Walz is a first sergeant in the 125th Field Artillery Battalion in New Ulm. He returned in April from duty providing security at a U.S. base in Italy. He has too much respect for the office of president to heckle one. But he almost got busted for escorting those baby Democrats.

After riding a Bush bus to the quarry, Walz and the kids got off to go through the metal detectors and have their IDs checked. Bush officials took the kids aside and thoroughly inspected them. When one was discovered to have a Kerry sticker on his wallet, they were ordered back onto the bus.

Walz objected, and he was asked to leave, too. "You're not welcome," a Bush guy said. "Get back on the bus."

Walz said he had a right to see the president.

So you support the president? a Bush guy asked. I didn't say that, said Walz. Then you're an opponent? I didn't say that, either, said Walz, thinking it was nobody's business.

"If you don't get on that bus," the guy said, "you'll be detained by the Secret Service for interfering with a presidential event."

"I don't want to get arrested," Walz said. "My wife will get mad because I'm supposed to pick up our daughter [Hope, 3] and make dinner. Do you really want to arrest someone who just got back from overseas, because he wants to see the president?"

The Bush guys backed down. They said they'd do him a favor if he behaved himself. He ignored the insult. They said the Secret Service was watching him. They let him in.

A week later, Walz is appalled by the freedom-loving citizens who say he shouldn't have gone to see the president. "The attitude is that if you're not a supporter, why would you go? It's really disappointing. What happened to being able to listen to the other side?"

Walz listened. And made up his mind. On Wednesday, he was named Blue Earth County manager of the Kerry campaign. In case you have forgotten how America works, that does not make him disloyal. And no one can say he is not informed.

Unlike many people, Tim Walz has gotten to see the president.

## Movers P.S.

My column about the movers who were prevented from making charity deliveries of furniture drew 200 e-mails. Many asked if the movers could charge a nominal fee, such as \$1, to evade the law.

No. Moving companies must list their rates in their license. State law does not permit them to discount those established rates. But stay tuned: Officials are looking into the law and there soon may be more to report about this absurd situation.

Nick Coleman is at [nccoleman@startribune.com](mailto:nccoleman@startribune.com).



June 18th, 2003

## Local Guard members to be activated in July

By Brian Ojanpa  
Free Press Staff Writer

**MANKATO** — More than 500 Minnesota Army National Guard soldiers, including troops based in the Mankato area, are expected to be activated in late July for deployment in Western Europe.

The six-month assignments will involve providing security for U.S. air bases as part of Operation Enduring Freedom, an ongoing mission to combat terrorism worldwide.

The troops represent four units from Minnesota, including the 1st Battalion, 125th Artillery, with units in New Ulm, St. Peter and St. James. The number of Mankato-area members was unavailable Tuesday.

Among those expecting to be deployed is 1st Sgt. Tim Walz of Mankato, a teacher at West High School. He and his wife Gwen, also a school district employee, have a 21½-year-old daughter.

Walz will learn of his specific assignment later this week.

"In the big scheme of deployments, this probably isn't too bad. I thought we might end up in Iraq," says Walz, whose rank in the Guard ensures him a salary commensurate with his teaching earnings.

He says he's one of the lucky ones; others of lower ranks will take monetary hits.

Staff Sgt. Jerry Sandmann, 40, of New Ulm says his income will drop about 50 percent during his deployment.

"It's really going to be tough. This is the first time I've had to go through this," says the 18-year Guard veteran, who owns a small roofing company.

Sandmann says he must shut down his business, lay off his two employees and turn all financial matters over to his wife while he's gone.

"I'm preparing for the worst. Basically, it's kind of like dying. I've had a gut-wrenching feeling since the middle of last week."

Minnesota National Guard public affairs officer Maj. Jarrod Krull said final deployment numbers will be known by the end of the week. He said as many as 700-plus soldiers could be activated from southern Minnesota units.

Krull said Guard personnel call-ups will be based upon occupational specialty and individual rank. He

expects that the majority of soldiers in the affected units will be deployed.

Other units affected include those based in Brooklyn Park, Anoka, Pipestone, Luverne, Jackson, Fairmont, Cambridge and Hutchinson.

The European security mission has been assigned to National Guard units since the terrorist attacks of 9-11-01. The Minnesota Guard will be relieving units from the Puerto Rico National Guard.



Tim Walz says he won't suffer financially from the deployment, but many others will.

# Summirshale Bizerhary



FROM THE FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

*This is to certify that*  
CSM Timothy J. Walls

*was honorably discharged from the*

**Army National Guard**

*of* \_\_\_\_\_  
Minnesota

*transferred to the United States Army Retired Reserve*

*on the* \_\_\_\_\_ *16th* \_\_\_\_\_ *day of* \_\_\_\_\_ *May 2005* *This certificate is awarded*

*as a testimonial of Honor and Faithful Service*

"This discharge does not relieve the individual named herein from any unfulfilled obligation to perform military service which may be imposed on him/her by law."



  
LTC GREGORY A. THINGVOLD