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Rutgers students march on Marine recruiting office

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Marine Capt. Sharon Dubow sat calmly doing paperwork yesterday afternoon in her New Brunswick recruitment office.

It was just another day on the job. Almost.

A group of 50 or so Rutgers University students and anti-war activists were howling "Liar" and holding signs that said "Killing Iraqis is Not a Career" just a few feet behind her. A pane of glass separated the Marine from protesters.

"I think that it's their right, and we respect it," Dubow said afterward. She said there have been "no big changes" in recruiting numbers from last year to this year.

But the revved-up group of anti-war campaigners wanted to change that.

Rafael Greenblatt, a Rutgers graduate student and event organizer, told a crowd that marched from the school to downtown Monument Square the solution is "to starve the military of the recruits they need to keep this war going."

Speaking in front of a Christmas tree, Greenblatt said, "The only way to resolve these human rights abuses in Iraq is to bring the troops home."

Two activists were arrested last week on Rutgers' New Brunswick campus for disrupting a government recruiting session, and protesters said yesterday they were energized by that event.

One of those arrested last week, Tom Howard, 27, a writer from Mendham Township, said it had been "time to take a principled stand" against what he believed was a CIA recruitment event. He was the final speaker at yesterday's rally, where he and other members of a workers' solidarity group led anti-war chants.

President Bush and administration officials were the ultimate targets of the day's speeches.

"They are filling their pockets on the blood of our children," said Sue Niederer, a Mercer County resident whose only son, Army 2nd Lt. Seth Jeremy Dvorin, 24, was killed in Iraq while defusing a roadside bomb on Feb. 3, 2004. "We must ask them, 'Why aren't your children fighting?'"

The protesters were seeking everything from an end to the war to a change in the military's policy on gays. The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments last week on whether universities receiving federal funds could ban military recruiters because of the Pentagon's "don't ask, don't tell" rule.

One of the Rutgers protesters' chief gripes yesterday was an advertisement Dubow and the Marines had placed in the student newspaper in October offering "free helicopter rides" to students.

Alex Van Schaick, a senior at the university, said it was an attempt "to get people to feel real macho" to seduce them into joining the Marines.

Dubow said the newspaper notice merely had informational value.

"A lot of people don't know Marines fly. That's why we do it," she said. "When we're up in the air, it's not as if we tie you up and make you sign something."

Two counter-protesters showed up waving American and Iraqi flags and a banner that read "Support Our

Troops." One wore sunglasses and gave his name as Tom Dolan. Police told him to leave the area because he did not have a parade permit.

"We're just having a peaceful protest, and they're here trying to block us," Dolan said of an anti-war activist who batted at his flags.

Bruno Corry, a 58-year-old former Marine Corps reservist, said he saw the Iraq war as "a repeat of Vietnam." He and Dolan's compatriot engaged in a shouting match.

"He's trying to tell me they're not using dirty tactics to recruit," Corry said. "I know it's a damn lie."

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