



NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2003

VETERANS FOR PEACE

OPERATION DIRE DISTRESS - A SUCCESS AND A BEGINNING

by *Woody Powell*

THE TEACH-IN - Saturday, March 22

The Kay Chapel at the American University, Washington, D.C., teach-in was packed all afternoon as speaker after speaker, with solid knowledge and passionate eloquence, expertly laid out the fallacies and falsehoods driving the war in Iraq, the ways it could have been averted, with honor, and the need to end it quickly.

I was impressed by the sanity with which people who have earned the right to speak as soldiers and citizens and patriots of the highest order confronted the insanity of the actions of the Bush administration. It was a long and illustrious list of combat nurses, intelligence experts, academics, clerics, citizens of all stripes - people like Bobby Muller, Daniel Ellsberg, Ray McGovern, Charles Sheehan-Miles, Jamie Vasquez, Jonathan Schell, Charley Richardson and Nancy Lessing of Military Families Speak Out, our president, David Cline. CNN saw fit to broadcast it for four solid hours.

Back at the national office in St. Louis, the phone rang continuously, as reporters looked for interviews and veterans called to join. Website membership applications jumped to a high of more than thirty within a few hours.

The phone calls kept coming in, most voicing support - and, yes, a sad few who were angry and did not yet understand our brand of patriotism.

Some calls were from mothers and fathers of youngsters serving in Iraq - or who were slated to serve soon. They wanted to know more about Military Families Speak Out (MFSO).

THE PROCESSION - Sunday, March 23

The day of the march was brisk and sunny. Veterans and Military Families from all over the country collected on a knoll near the Vietnam Memorial. We listened to a few, short speeches. Most of us had our messages firmly placed in our hearts and minds. In solemn procession we made our way from one war memorial to another.

At each, a small delegation of veterans walked in and placed a wreath in memory of those we knew and didn't know that were lost to their families.

Peter Shaw played his bagpipes on each occasion but one; when he joined the delegation to the Korean War memorial.

There we laid our arms on each others' shoulders and kept a short silence.

We visited the Office of Veterans Affairs. The Gulf War I vets, of a war not yet memorialized, laid their wreath at the doorstep. In a short speech, Erik Gustafson of EPIC and a member of VFP, noted how the Congress voted out a resolution supporting the troops, yet, at three the next morning, voted to cut billions from the budget of the Office of Veterans Affairs over the next ten years.

The final official delegation delivered the VAIW statement of purpose, signed by over 3000 veterans, ranking from Admirals and Generals to PFCs, Airmen and Seamen, to the Whitehouse.

The President's people refused to accept it.

COMING AWAY

The press was all over us. Television, radio, newspapers, journals. Statements were freely given by all who were asked. People spoke from their hearts, their experiences and from their conviction that our country is on a very wrong course. We made these points:

- That just because this war had started, did not mean that it should now be supported. A bad war is a bad war.
- Supporting our troops has more to do with providing healing services when they come home, spiritually battered by what they have had to do, than supporting one more day of horror for them.
- Each veteran of each war had hoped against hope that their war would be the last; that somehow our nation would have learned, would have matured, would have concluded, as we have, that one war only leads to another and that where there is the will a better way of resolving differences can certainly be found.
- We are determined to have our representation restored in government.
- We are prepared to educate the people of this country; help them to understand how much wealth, how much international good will, how many lives the present administration is squandering, with its militaristic policies.
- We believe our citizens can be made to realize that the real threat to our national security is our threatening posture to the rest of the world, and that we have an important part to play in bringing that about.



Peter Shaw playing bagpipes at Operation Dire Distress.

Photo by James Starowicz

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by *David Cline, VFP President*

When I returned from Viet Nam 35 years ago, Memorial Day took on a new, painful meaning for me. Instead of a time for parades, barbecues and sales, it became a time to remember friends and comrades lost, to remember all the American GIs and Vietnamese soldiers and civilians killed, to remember the carnage and brutality of war. As someone who survived the war, I knew it was my duty to remember those who didn't make it back and to attempt to give some purpose and meaning to all those deaths.

This year Memorial Day took on an even more poignant meaning with the US invasion and occupation of Iraq. Several hundred GIs and thousands of Iraqi soldiers and civilians have been killed or maimed. Almost daily news reports tell of more dead as the Bush administration moves ahead with its dream of global empire.

Over the last year, members of Veterans for Peace have waged a national campaign to oppose this preemptive and unilateral war. We saw administration spokesmen make false claims promoted through the corporate media to cynically confuse and manipulate public opinion. Claiming to be liberators searching for weapons of mass destruction, the real purpose was to gain regional dominance and control of natural resources.

In cities and towns throughout America, veterans along with churches, labor, minorities, women, students and others have spoken out in opposition to war. We participated in five national demonstrations and as hostilities began in March, over 500 veterans gathered in Washington, DC to conduct Operation Dire Distress.

Despite our best efforts, despite the protests of a substantial portion of the American people and despite the clear opposition of the overwhelming majority of people and nations throughout the world, those in charge of our government today launched an unprovoked and unjustified military attack.

Today a new generation of soldiers has reason to mourn on Memorial Day, more mothers and fathers have lost sons or daughters, more veterans will come home physically and emotionally scarred.

We have seen pro-war rallies claiming to "support our troops" as our fighting men and women are sent to kill and die without just cause. Will right-wing "patriots" still wave yellow ribbons when returning servicemen come home sick from military toxins, suffering from war trauma, looking for work and without social services?

The very day that Congress passed a resolution supporting the troops, House Republicans waited till late in the night to passed legislation mandating a \$14 billion dollar cut over the next ten years in veterans health care and disability compensation. These cuts in veterans programs were defeated for now but what will happen when next year or the year after when the yellow ribbons come down? As one of the cadences we chanted at Operation

Dire Distress said, "they wave the flag when you attack, when you come home they turn their back"

And where will America's guns be aimed next—Iran, Syria, North Korea, China? During the Indochina War, Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon attempted to impose American domination on a region. Now it appears that Bush, Cheney and Rumsfeld are trying to do the same on a global scale.

Our work is cut out for us at this critical time in our history. A popular mass movement arose to oppose this war and although we were unsuccessful in stopping those bent on military conquest we cannot give up or retreat into cynicism. We must still hold onto our vision of a nation that stands for peace and freedom, real democracy, liberty and justice for all. We must still work together to turn America away from the course being forced on us by those now in power. That is the challenge

before us and we will not shirk from our duty to our country and the world.



Dave Cline and Daniel Ellsbergh

Photo courtesy of VAIW

David Cline

Hey, VFPers!!

Interested in the United Nations and our relationship to it?? The annual conference of the UN Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organizations is scheduled for September 8-10 at the UN in New York City. This event is typically attended by several thousand people from more than 50 countries. It includes great workshops presented by the NGOs about their good work, as well as plenaries with high-level speakers. Only five people from each NGO can attend, and it looks like 4 VFPers are already planning to go, but it would be good to fill our slots. Please contact our chief UN Rep, Ellen Barfield, for info and registration material, at 410-243-5876, ellene4pj@yahoo.com.

BACK FROM BAGHDAD. WHERE NEXT FOR THE PEACE MOVEMENT?

2003 by Mike Ferner

As “teachable moments” go, Baghdad and Basra a month before George Bush ordered those cities bombed was indeed memorable.

I saw the resilient human spirit alive and well after two decades of privation, war and repression. I experienced only warmth and graciousness, when my nationality might have elicited only hatred. I relearned the simple truth of universal humanity. Introduced to a budding, radical offshoot of the peace movement, I had a vision of how this, combined with the dawning democracy movement, might allow our species to finally leave behind the mire of war.

People have demanded peace for as long as their governments have waged warfare. The popular cry for peace, often stifled and typically left out of history books, echoes down the generations. For 30 years I’ve added my own voice for peace, with little hope we could do more than delay the next war. But last month in Iraq I saw something new and singularly hopeful.

While there, I met some 50 people associated with the Christian Peacemaker Teams and the Iraq Peace Team. These uncommon global citizens taught me much, including their attempt to revive a strategy dormant since the untimely death of Gandhi.

By their presence

- In Colombia they accompany farmers going to market to help protect them from paramilitary thugs bent on extortion and murder.
- In the occupied territories of the West Bank these retired ministers and nuns, church deacons and young activists place themselves literally in the path of Israeli bulldozers preparing to level Arab homes. Indeed, while I was in Iraq, Rachel Corrie, a U.S. activist from a similar organization, was run over and killed by an Israeli-driven, American-made bulldozer.
- They respond to Arab suicide bombings on Israeli buses not just with statements, but by riding the buses.
- In Iraq they live alongside ordinary citizens and learn about their lives, thereby putting a human face on Ahmed the shoeshine boy, Mohammed the engineer, Fatima the clerk and thousands more about to become faceless statistics.

By way of lending encouragement to this brave band I reflected aloud that a hundred years on, people will look back on their efforts and remark, “So that was how humanity finally learned to abolish war!” I expressed confidence that this new direction of the peace movement will be favorably compared with early attempts to abolish slavery and win women’s rights.

But considering the staggering odds they face, what will prevent

their heroic work from becoming just another noble footnote?

Consider these examples:

- The safe energy movement of the 1970’s, for all its expertise and actual success at curtailing the nuclear power industry, was never able to usher in a sensible, sustainable energy policy, let alone establish citizen authority over the utility industry.
- After a century of struggle by the our labor movement, the U.S. still has some of the weakest unions in the industrialized world—unions that in the present crisis urge their members to write Congress instead of laying down their tools or shutting down munitions transport.
- Despite the legions of dedicated activists striving for universal health care, we are stuck trying to make a disease-care system a little less bad.

In these and many other cases, dedication, hard work and being right were not enough to counter the massive private power that consistently marshals our own government against us.

Will this promising, qualitatively different branch of the peace movement fare any better than the above efforts? When this war against Iraq finally ends, what will the peacemakers do? Make the

occupation of Iraq a little more humane? Watch the heads of oil companies march the nation to Gulf War III and then take to the streets again? Or can we graft this new branch of the peace movement to the sapling democracy movement, thereby forging the political power we need to create the life we want?

As a Spanish activist told a packed news conference in Baghdad: “This isn’t only about peace, it’s about democracy. Our governments are going to war against the will of their own people!”



Iraq Peace Team sits down for peace at the Iraq-Kuwait border.

Photo courtesy of POCLAD

POCLAD (Program on Corporations, Law and Democracy) and others seek

to strike at the root of why we keep organizing against one chemical, one plant closing, and one war at a time. It defines the missing thread running through citizen movements of the last century thusly: we labored mightily to lessen a corporate harm, achieve fewer parts per million or shorten a war, but we have not addressed the fundamental powers and privileges that allow corporate directors to write policy, define our values or plunge us into another round of butchery to increase their power and wealth.

Get the corporations out

We are saying, for one thing, that we must get corporations out of our Constitution. To the extent that legal fictions enjoy the rights of persons such as free speech, due process and equal protection, real flesh-and-blood persons are denied these rights and cannot have a democracy. Property rights of the few will always trump human

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by *Woody Powell*

MEMBERSHIP

Our paid membership now exceeds 3000 people (almost all veterans). Growth rate has increased from 3.7 to 8.12 members per day, new and renewed over the last four months.

Growth is definitely deriving from new members, over 800 since the first of the year. However, many older members from before 1999 are coming back to us as well. It is worth noting that we are gathering many Gulf War vets to us, especially since the attack on Iraq. We fully expect to get some of the vets returning from that war, since so many had called us before they left, not wanting to go.

Eleven new chapters have formed since the conference in Duluth:

- 88 - Southern Vermont
- 89 - Nashville, TN
- 90 - Broome County, NY
- 91 - San Diego, CA
- 92 - Western Washington
- 93 - Washtenaw County, MI
- 94 - Northwest Arkansas
- 95 - Wally Nelson Chapter, MA
- 96 - Southern New Jersey
- 98 - Taos, NM.
- 100 - Alaska
- 101 - San Jose, CA.

Six more chapters are forming in Las Vegas, NV, Lawrence, Kansas (97), Northern Arizona, North Carolina (99), Mendocino, CA, and Bangor, ME.

OUTREACH

Speaking - We have fielded over fifty speaking requests in the last four months from all over the country. Requests for endorsements from like-minded organizations are a weekly event. We have been able to build a speaker's list for almost

anywhere in the country. Chapter contacts have been very good about accepting responsibility for responding to requests in their areas. Jozef Hand-Boniakowski and Lee Vander Laan, our webmasters, have been doing an outstanding job of keeping our website lively, attractive and timely with an up-dated list of "Talking Points".

On-line Communications - The vfp-all and vfp-chapter contacts e-group has enabled us to communicate instantly with the bulk of the membership on important issues, broadcast appeals for help, distribute timely announcements.

Media has found us. Each week we receive calls from national and local news media for information on our activities, our policies and concerns.

We even get calls from active-duty military people, needing guidance, someone to talk to about what they are being required to

do. We've been able to put them in touch with the resources of the many organizations reachable through the GI Rights Hotline (CCCO, AFSC, NISBCO). Members of this office and the local chapter in St. Louis have recently received Draft Counseling training to enable us to respond as helpfully as possible.

FINANCIALS

We are solvent and realizing our ability to finance ourselves through membership contributions alone. THANK YOU ONE AND ALL! Merchandise sales continue to grow - especially as new chapters come on line with requirements for literature, T-shirts, Caps, etc. We find ourselves scrambling to keep up with the orders and the purchasing to support them.



Woody Powell

CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS

"Resolutions proposed for consideration during the Annual Convention should be submitted to the Board of Directors in writing at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting. All resolutions opposed by the Board of Directors or not submitted by the ten-day deadline shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the convention for adoption. Members proposing any resolutions are required to provide copies, in advance, in sufficient number for reasonable distribution to members attending the Annual Convention." Article X, Section 4 of the Veterans For Peace bylaws. [Note: The VFP Board at its May meeting has set July 15 as the date by which resolutions should arrive at the national office for consideration by the Board at the August 7 pre-convention Board meeting.]

A DREAM WORTH PURSUING

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rights of the many. The vast decency, wisdom and compassion of the American people will never be able to govern. And we are fated to suffer the consequences of plutocracy and growing fascism.

What if...

But what if...what if the peace movement, broadened by an influx of citizens outraged at this war and deepened by nonviolent activists interposing themselves in defense of endangered civilians, combined with the democracy movement to strike at the very roots

of war? What if together we created new strategies and tactics not only to stop this war, but also to strip corporations of the privileges they have usurped from us; dismantle their power to govern; end forever their ability to direct our hard-earned wealth into armaments and empire? What if in so doing we also found the key to building an actual culture of democracy, a sense of real community to fill the void in our souls that can never be filled by the Shopping Channel or Blue Light Specials?

This is truly a dream worth pursuing. Reaching it is worth rethinking the way we organize. We may yet set a course that 100 years from now will finally achieve democracy and abolish war.

IRAQ WATER PROJECT DORMANT

Because of the recent Iraq War, the Iraq Water Project committee, with sadness, has announced that the project has become inactive and that the U.S. Government-as the aggressor-must now rebuild Iraq. Any funds that are currently in the IWP account or that continue to come in as a result of the work of IWP members will be used to support Iraqi victims of this war wherever the money can be most useful. It is possible, now that the war is over, that the committee may be able to use these funds for purposes of water improvement, consistent with IWP's original goals. Those decisions will be made at the appropriate time.

Genesis

The Iraq Water Project was created by VFP members Fredy Champagne and Edilith Eckart in 1999 in response to the ongoing crisis in Iraq. Fredy and Edilith were members of the first team to travel to Iraq to begin work on rebuilding water treatment plants in a country devastated first by war, and then by UN economic sanctions and continued bombing by the U.S. The goal of the IWP was, first, to save lives and, second, to educate the American public about the devastating effects that a decade of economic sanctions had on average Iraqi citizens and to force an end to these sanctions against Iraq.

Altogether, three teams of veterans and other activists traveled to Iraq over a span of three years to work alongside Iraqi workers, and to monitor the work on six water treatment plants in southern Iraq. Several of those team members were veterans of the first Gulf War.

Accomplishment

The project raised over \$156,000 and most importantly brought clean water to 88,000 children, women and men. All funds raised were used strictly to buy materials, pay workers and cover the administrative costs of the project. Team members and others who traveled to Iraq did so at their own expense.

The IWP was co-sponsored with LIFE for Relief and Development (LIFE) and later also with the Committee in Solidarity with the People of Iraq, an organization that had exemplary success raising community awareness of issues and substantial funds for the project.

VFP members and others interested in continuing aid to the Iraqi people are invited to go to the VFP web site at www.veteransforpeace.org and check out links to other organizations working in Iraq. *(This article is based on one sent in by IWP committee member and fundraiser Vicky Goodwin.)*

IN PASSING

Tribute to Larry Carver-Cape Cod Chapter Sparkplug

Larry Carver, a longtime member of the Cape Cod Chapter 041 in Massachusetts passed away in January 2003. Larry, a WW II Air Force veteran and life-long community activist and leader, became a member of the Cape Cod Chapter 041 ten years ago and immediately fell in love with the organization. Although he remained very active in a number of political and progressive organizations including the Green and the Democratic Parties, the World Federalists and CPPAX, a Boston-based peace and justice group, he gave his heart and soul to VFP. He was our "sparkplug." He was tireless in his work for the chapter and will be remembered for always reminding us of our "Abolish War" mission. He loved to participate in VFP on the national level and always brought back all the news from the annual convention. Before his passing, Larry was happy to see VFP growing and becoming stronger. We miss his enthusiasm and humor and will carry on in his spirit.

— *William (Duke) Ellis, Chapter 41*

Tribute to David Silk-Boardmember, Central American Envoy Extraordinaire

Dave Silk, who served Veterans for Peace as an organizer, an activist in Central America, a national Board member and Treasurer, an interpreter, a major contributor, and an inspirational leader, died March 14, 2003 in Stonington, Connecticut. Dave, a member of the Merchant Marine in World War II, went on to found and operate a successful international trading firm. Fluent in Spanish, he became active in the struggle for democracy in El Salvador, early in that guerrilla war. Time in the field with the FMLN guerrilla forces in that desperate period won him the respect and friendship of commandantes and combatants, and relationships developed during those years made possible the Veterans for Peace programs after the war.

When wounded FMLN veterans established an association (ASALDIG) after the war, Dave opened the door for VFP to assist the group's efforts to set up a prosthetics workshop in San Salvador and clinics in mountain communities. Dave also promoted reconciliation between ASALDIG and opposing Salvadoran Army veterans, eventually leading to cooperation between the two groups. He encouraged cooperative farming, marketing crops in the

United States and serving as an elections observer. Dave's many trips to El Salvador's back country with ASALDIG members, his generous financial contributions, his sage and proven counsel, his negotiations with authorities in the FMLN and with U.S. agencies, the personal hardships he endured with patience and even gusto contributed to the success of his ventures.

— *from comments by Ed Hart, Chapter 64*

Myer "PJ" Pettyjohn, Leader and Healer

Myer "PJ" Pettyjohn, organizer and president of the only prison chapter of Veterans for Peace, and the only member of such a chapter to serve on the national board of directors, died Tuesday, May 6, 2003 in Nashville, Tennessee. He succumbed to liver cancer after a short illness. PJ grew up on a farm in northern Kentucky, and went to war with the 101st Airborne in Vietnam right after high school graduation. Experiences there left him with PTSD and the effects of self-medication. The residue of those experiences led to a killing in which he was not a direct participant, but a jury found him guilty as an accomplice and he received a life sentence. PJ earned bachelor's, master's and doctorates in divinity and counseling while in prison and used his education to benefit fellow inmates. He developed Conflict Resolution and Alternatives to Violence programs, created and facilitated programs in Domestic Violence Prevention and Parenting Skills. For nearly 15 years he participated in Straight Talk Panels, working with children at risk of criminal activity and subsequent incarceration. During his years at the helm of the Wartburg chapter, the group sent underprivileged children to summer camp, made donations to the children's hospital in Memphis, provided school supplies to low-income children and, later, made monthly contributions to VFP's national office. He was always appreciative of support provided by his VFP comrades, especially Phil Butler, the POW from Monterey, who understood better than most what it meant to be confined. Alabama's General David M. Shoup Chapter 64 adopted PJ and the Wartburg chapter when the latter group was formed. It's hard to know which group benefited more from the arrangement.

— *from a tribute by Ed Hart, Chapter 64 (see www.veteransforpeace.org.)*

CHAPTER ACTIVITY REPORT

There is never enough room to do justice to all the actions and activities of our members and the chapters they belong to. We can only report a few in an effort to represent the range of our efforts to wage peace. Increasingly, chapter actions are finding their way to the website. Soon we will be able to host all chapters with their very own websites under VFP control, according to Lee Vander Laan, Board member and computer professional. -ED

Chapter 15 FL (Tallahassee): Bud Combs, founding member of the Tallahassee chapter, is now a guest of the Federal Prison system as a "Prisoner of Conscience" for trespassing onto Fort Benning in witness against the School of Assassins. Send him a 'wish you were here' scenic postcard or a silly greeting card. William Combs #91402-020, FPC Eglin, Eglin Air Force Base, P.O. Box 600, Eglin, Florida 32542-7606

Chapter 27 MN (Twin Cities): The Minneapolis/St. Paul chapter has a video collection that includes titles such as "School of the Americas", "Beyond Viet Nam", "Voices of Veterans" and "Loss of the Liberty". To obtain descriptions and prices, see the chapter web site at www.twincitiesvfp.org or call (612) 841-9141 in Minneapolis.

Chapter 31 PA (Philadelphia) - members and friends (more than 75) attended annual banquet on May 10th at The Back Home Cafe, part of a homeless shelter in the city. They awarded the annual \$1000 Eugene Bloomfield (deceased VFP member) Peace And Justice Award to Farah Mokhtarei, an energetic, eloquent 20-year-old activist. John Burroughs, executive director of the Lawyers Committee On Nuclear Weapons spoke about the illegality of preemptive war and Melissa Halvorson, whose husband is an active duty Marine in Iraq, spoke about what it was like to be a Marine wife against the war. April and early May was spent organizing street demonstrations and arguing against the war on television or in any willing venue. Mike Felker continues work on the Landmine Committee. VFP members are working with other local activist leaders organizing a series of educational meetings at unions, churches and other institutions. We are working with the local antiwar network on protest activities and events for the July 4th festivities in Philly.

Chapter 47 PA (Pittsburgh): Sandy Kelson spoke at a number of Western and Central Pennsylvania colleges and universities on Iraq, Vietnam and his own military experiences. At one (the University of Pittsburgh Medical School) a professor told Sandy he had radicalized the attending student body! Sandy attended many anti-war rallies and participated in civil disobedience in the Pittsburgh streets during rush hour to protest the war with some 1200 others. Most recently Sandy debated the head JROTC instructor (a retired Army colonel) at an Oliver High School assembly in Pittsburgh that lasted close to two hours. While the debate and discussion went well, Sandy was startled at the degree to which the JROTC students have bought into the militaristic line they are being fed.

Chapter 54 CA (Santa Barbara) - participated in huge antiwar marches in Santa Barbara over the months leading up to the

war on Iraq, organized a weekly VFP Peace Vigil, and took part in a community Peace Congress which included a workshop on military recruiting. Chapter President Dan Seidenberg spoke at a well-attended peace rally on the UC, Santa Barbara campus. Chapter Vice President Bob Potter conducted a Veterans Forum at UCSB in which members Kate Lundy, Dan Seidenberg, Don Calamar and Lane Anderson shared their military experience and consequent views on war and peace. Potter also organized a workshop presenting the veterans' perspective on war at the University Center, UCSB, featuring a showing of the film "The New Patriots" and a presentation by chapter founder Lane Anderson. The same film was also shown at a forum, "Defining Patriotism", in conjunction with Santa Barbara City College faculty. Panel members included four VFP members and two non-members from the Viet Nam War and the Gulf War with opposing views. Invited military recruiters didn't show up. Members Sheila Cassidy Federman, Dottie McIntosh and Kate Lundy have been awarded a local grant for the chapter to educate the public, including the school system, about war and peace issues. Immediate goals are the compilation of a Speakers List, and of materials for anti-recruitment activities.



Lane Anderson, Chapter 54
Photo courtesy of Chapter 54

Chapter 55 NM (Santa Fe) - members were active during the months leading up to Iraq War II, with public film showings. ("Hidden Wars of Desert Storm", "The New Patriots", "Invisible War: Depleted Uranium and the Politics of Radiation.") and discussions with large audiences ranging from 200 to 400. Among the panelists were Craig Barnes, Charlie Clements, William Stewart, and Damacio Lopez. WWII vet, John Evans, gave a talk on his five-week trip to Iraq at an "Evening of Culture and Beauty" event. In early March Dr. Charlie Clements presented "Faces of Collateral Damage", an illustrated talk and question-and-answer session, subsequent to a ten-day emergency mission to Iraq to assess the potential consequences to Iraqi civilians of a war on Iraq. Three chapter members also participated in Operation Dire Distress, including former AF nurse Joan Duffy, who spoke at the American University Teach-In and at the ceremony on the Elipse. Chapter members have also participated heavily in the weekly protest at Santa Fe's busiest intersection, Cerrillos and St. Francis. The chapter generally meets every week when it is not holding a public event. There are now over 120 members, with chapter meetings generally attracting 25-35 members each week. The chapter is also in the process of developing a series of three weekly, facilitated dialogue sessions on issues of war and peace to be held in living rooms, churches, and synagogues. The chapter maintains an active website at www.vfp-santafe.org.

Chapter 56 CA (Humboldt) - drafted a long,

detailed resolution calling for the impeachment of President Bush, Vice President Cheney, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Attorney General Ashcroft. The resolution was sent to the VFP office with the request that it be adopted by VFP. The national VFP Board has recently worked on such an action and issued a press release on May 22 calling for these impeachments. The press release can be read on the VFP web site.

Chapter 91 CA (San Diego) - has more than doubled its dues paying members during the last three months. Members have been active in demonstrations, teach-ins, and in the media in many parts of San Diego County, notably in the Carlsbad/Oceanside area, Balboa Park and at the Federal Building in downtown San Diego. Speakers at these events were members Sean Bell, Jim Summers, Dr. Mike Byron and Jerry Stadtmiller. During this period leading up to the war Gary Waayers, Jerry Stadtmiller, and John Scanlon were guests on various local talk radio programs during the buildup for war presenting the VFP viewpoint. Jerry Stadtmiller also represented the Chapter at an April 12 teach-in on the University of San Diego campus. Sean Bell represented the chapter at an April 5 debate between Sean and the ex-Chairman of the California Republican Party on the campus of California State University San Marcos in front of a crowd of about 300 students and faculty. The debate was taped and written up in the newspaper the following day. On Saturday of the Memorial Day weekend the chapter joined together with the San Diego Coalition for Peace and Justice to hold a peace rally and march starting in front of the War Memorial Building in Balboa Park. Chapter president Gary Waayers was a co-master of ceremonies and chapter vice president Sean Bell was the first speaker. The keynote speaker was Fernando Suarez, the father of Jesus A. Suarez del Solar, a Marine killed in Iraq. In addition to giving a speech Mr. Suarez and the Suarez family laid a wreath at the base of the Memorial. The San Diego print media failed to cover the event; however, the San Francisco Chronicle had a short story.

Chapter 92 WA (Western Washington) - received its charter just days before launching its first event. In mid-

February, members gathered at the Bremerton Navy Yard where speakers railed against the President's shuffling deck of deception. Each speaker called attention to the iconic USS Turner Joy, which was berthed a dozen yards away. With the bar set high, Seattle vets have spoken at peace rallies, schools and teach-ins. Members have linked with VFP in Eastern Washington and also with peace groups near Puget Sound. C.O. instructional cards have been handed out to more than 500. One-time congressional candidate Mark Wilson has twice been the chapter's voice on local radio. Along with Mark, Seattle's rare liberal/progressive talk-host provides exposure and believability to both VFP and peace.

Baltimore VFP Chapter in Formation

With new energy from a recent retiree from the Dept of Defense Middle East Research Dept, Peter Molan, a Baltimore chapter is in formation. Mr Molan and national VFP Vice-President Ellen Barfield have signed Baltimore VFP up for several events lately. These include testifying at the Baltimore City Council meeting urging a Council Resolution condemning the attack on Iraq (subsequently passed), co-sponsoring a reading of the anti-war Greek play Lysistrata, the visit of an Israeli refusenik officer, and endorsing a peace march from Baltimore to Washington, DC with the theme that the poor pay for war.

Baltimore VFP also gets recognition from her bio whenever Ellen Barfield gives talks or writes articles about her recent trips to Iraq in December/January, and South Korea in May. Peter Molan's professional experience makes him a desirable commentator about Middle East issues with a somewhat more conservative audience. Peter and Ellen hope to host a chapter kickoff event when VFP national President David Cline does an upcoming speaking tour, gathering at least ten VFP members so Baltimore can formally charter itself. Interested Baltimore area members please contact Ellen Barfield, ellene4pj@yahoo.com. Reports on Ellen's trips to Iraq and South Korea can be found on the VFP web site at www.veteransforpeace.org

Nominations for Board of Directors

Current candidates:

- Ken Mayers, NM
- Barry Riesch, MN
- Pat Driscoll, CA
- Jozef Hand-Boniakowski, VT
- David Cline, NJ
- John Kim, NY
- Lincoln Grahlf, MO
- C.E. Jack Prince, TX
- Sharon Kuhfeldt, CA
- Lewis Spelich, NY
- Frank Ackles, MO



Article VII, Section 1, subsection (b) of the VFP By-laws reads:

Additional nominations for election to the Board of Directors may be made by petition. Nominating petitions shall name the nominee, be signed by at least ten (10) Full Members, and be submitted to the National Office by thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Convention.

This year the cutoff date is Tuesday, July 8. Only Full Members (veterans) of VFP are eligible to serve on the Board of Directors.

HIGHLIGHTS OF VFP BOARD MEETING - May 9-10, 2003

1. **Treasurer's report**, Lincoln Grahfs: New memberships are advancing but renewals are not up to budget as yet - will probably increase markedly close to August. Unexpected income coming from sales of goods. "Addicted to War", caps, etc.

2. **Zones of Concern and Struggle (ZOCS)** funds are still available. Brochure needed to help explain uses. Lee Vander Laan distributed Samantha Smith Chapter's sponsored "Peace Poetry" booklet supported by ZOCS funds. John Amidon reported on ZOCS-funded Anger Management sessions held in Albany.

3. Voted to grant **Rachel Corrie** posthumous honorary membership because of her martyrdom in non-violent action in Palestine. Official approval required at National Convention.

4. Voted to develop special awards for **Iraq Water Project** team members, Lincoln Brigade members, Vieques project participants.

5. Ellen Barfield and Harold Burbank reported on **UN-NGO** activities. Recommend supporting efforts to indict the leadership of the US and Great Britain for war crimes because of their violations of the UN Charter by engaging in an unsanctioned, pre-emptive war.

6. Passed a resolution in support of legitimate efforts to **impeach George Bush**.

7. **Korea report**, John Kim: Seven people have indicated an interest in going to Korea with his group. Board approved establishment of the group as an official VFP delegation.

8. **El Salvador report**, Wayne Wittman: Twelve reps went and monitored elections. Salvadorans appreciate the "Ballots without

bullets" effort. March 21, 2004 is the next election. Board voted to support next delegation.

9. David Cline reported on **Vieques celebration** to mark the relinquishment of that island by the navy after 61 years of violent occupation.

10. **The Iraq Water Project** committee was encouraged to send a fact-finding team to Iraq to determine what there may be for us to do for the people of Iraq that is not being done by the occupying forces.

11. Voted to **upgrade office computer network** to meet increasing demands.

12. Established deadline of July 15 for submission of resolutions to the board for review and approval prior to the August Convention. Resolutions Committee: John Kim, John Amidon, and Wayne Wittman.

13. President Cline suggested a **change in Statement of Purpose** to include a plank about just treatment for veterans and a replacement for the cold-war-inspired statement about ending "the arms race". Will prepare in time for convention. Discussed regionalizing VFP.

14. Voted to adopt Lee Thorn's **Jhai Foundation** as a VFP-supported project with funding access on the website.



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