



# VETERANS FOR PEACE

Spring 2001

## *Importance of the Korea Truth Commission*

by S. Brian Willson

The U.S. decision to divide Korea upon the surrender of the Japanese on August 15, 1945, and the subsequent U.S.-directed reign of terror that led directly to the civil, and then, consequently, the hot war, to be followed by extensive periods of military dictatorships supported by the U.S. government, surely must rank as one of the cruelest tragedies of the Twentieth Century. This is virtually unknown history in the West.

U.S. President Clinton's refusal in January 2001 to explicitly apologize for the murder of Korean civilians by U.S. military forces during the Korean War was another lost moment of desperately needed "American" honesty.

The United States inquiry, and Clinton's statement of mere "regret," was focused on only one crime scene at a particular location. It implied that the deaths were unfortunate rather than part of a **systematic pattern to murder**

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## **Iraq Water Project Phase II Completed**

*Michael Carley, Phase II Co-leader*

VFP's Iraq Water Project, long the subject of many of our correspondences with you, is nearing completion. And while the future is up in the air as to whether or not the Iraq Water Project (IWP) will ride the present momentum and attempt to repair additional Iraqi water-treatment facilities (rendered inoperable by sanctions), our endeavor's success appears sealed.

From March 12-27, we sent our second team of VFP members into Iraq to

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## **ZOCS Funding Secured**

Membership response to the request for matching contributions to the Zones of Concern and Struggle grant has resulted in around \$10,000 to date. This great generosity met the requirements for obtaining an additional \$18,000 in foundation funding. Well done, members and friends! And thanks once again to Hari Scordo, who originally secured the grant.

This \$28,000—now in the bank—will be used to help chapters in their efforts to expose and counter U.S. militarism here at home. A committee, chaired by VFP Board member and Treasurer Lee Vander Laan, will be established at the August VFP Convention to determine and articulate the criteria, guidelines and mechanisms for the dispersal of the funds. Non-Board VFP members interested in serving on the committee should contact Lee at **eastcom@gis.net** or talk with him at the convention.

## **September Veterans Delegation Planned**

In March 2000, a veterans support delegation made up of members of Veterans for Peace, the Alliance of Atomic Veterans, Black Vets for Social Justice and Vietnam Veterans Against the War stayed in the civil disobedience camps then on the bombing ranges. That trip was highly successful in promoting solidarity with the struggle there.

Now another delegation is being planned for this September, hosted by Veteranos Por La Paz de Puerto Rico. Tentative plans include meetings with legislators and activists along with spending several days at the protest camps located at the gates of the Camp Garcia naval base.

If you are interested in joining this delegation, contact Veterans Support Vieques at 201- 876-0430 or **vetsconvieques@aol.com**.

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witness the effects of sanctions firsthand, but also to physically help out with the actual work being done on these facilities. The Team, to the person, behaved themselves wondrously. Co-facilitator Alan Pogue, Emmy Barth, Ed Bowser, Bud Deraps, Lisa Gizzi, Vickie Goodwin, Candy Lovett, Alphonsos Pangas, and Tom Sager had an effect on others that was eminently, and visibly, positive. They dove into the work on the water plants—building foundations, cutting stone, shoveling dirt and gravel, taking apart old pumps, valves, and gaskets . . . And their savvy, patience, and heart were simply exemplary.

We worked on the three smaller plants, but we also saw the finished Labbanni plant (now providing clean water to 55,000 people) that Team One had worked so hard on last October. If ever we need confirmation as to the good of this organization, we need look no further than this plant. Every VFP member should take pride in the difference that we made.

Before entering Iraq, we held two days of seminars in Jordan, the most informative of which was arguably Dr. Yarub Al-Shiraida's candid talk on what doing relief work in Iraq really entails. Once in Baghdad, we met with the Director of the Organization for Peace and Solidarity, visited the history museum, the war museum, the ancient city of Babylon, and also the ever-wrenching Ameriyeh shelter (where we bombed hundreds of children during the Gulf War), and the equally painful Al-Monsour Children's Hospital. At this hospital, multitudes of children still lie dying of curable ailments.

In Basrah we visited Basrah Pediatric Hospital (where conditions are even worse than in the previously described hospital), 2 schools, the mayor of Basrah, and the bombing victims of Al-Joumiriyeh.

Driving back to Baghdad I alone took a look at the completely devastated water-treatment facility at the city of Qurna. Qurna, it should be noted, is where the Garden of Eden reportedly was. We are investigating a possible continuance of the IWP in order to repair this facility that (quite inadequately) serves 15,000 people.

## **Global Network Action on October 13**

On October 13, 2001 the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space is holding an international day of local protests to keep space for peace. As of this writing, 140 endorsing organizations in Europe, Asia, North America and elsewhere are supporting this action.

VFP Chapters 45 (MA) and 78 (FL) are among the organizations listed, and other chapters and at-large members are strongly urged to become involved in this timely and important action. Participation can be done either under local VFP initiation or in collaboration with other local peace groups.

Chapters and at large members in the vicinity of Cleveland are encouraged to take part in an October 12-14 conference and protest in that Ohio city in cooperation with Cleveland Peace Action. Cleveland is the headquarters of the TRW Corporation that is working on the space-based laser and other "missile defense" technologies.

Please contact Bruce Gagnon, Global Network Coordinator, at [globalnet@mindspring.com](mailto:globalnet@mindspring.com) to inform him of your intentions. The Global Network web site

[www.space4peace.org](http://www.space4peace.org)

contains a wealth of information relevant to the issues involved.

## **Huntsville National Space Organizing Report**

*By Clare Hanrahan*

*The author is an Asheville, NC, writer and war tax resister. She serves on the National Committee of the War Resisters League and is a member of the National Writers Union. She is one of 24 recently sentenced as an SOA resister at Ft. Benning and will soon start a six-month incarceration in federal prison.*

While scientists warned of the Russian MIR Space station's imminent plummet to Earth, citizens gathered in Huntsville, Alabama March 16-18 for the National Space Organizing Conference and Protest. The event was sponsored by the Global Network against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, the War Resisters League, and the North Alabama chapter of Veterans for Peace. "We have to stop our country from turning the heavens into a war zone," Professor Karl Grossman told nearly one hundred citizens from 20 states. Grossman, a professor of journalism at the State University of New York, spoke to an impressive gathering of scholars, lobbyists, activists, war veterans, Plowshares resisters, whistle blowers, war tax resisters, movement musicians, and community organizers.

"Action! Action! Action! Organize political action. Information alone isn't going to do it," Grossman stressed. "You can't put this back in the bottle once it is out," he cautioned. "Once they have the orbiting platform you can kiss democracy good-bye."

The Conference included speakers and discussions on the "Nuclearization and Weaponization of Space," "Military Satellites for Warfighting, Intelligence, and Counterinsurgency," and "Strategies and Movement Building Under a New Administration." A full day of information was sandwiched between a demonstration Friday afternoon at the gates of the Redstone Nuclear arsenal, where 70% of the Nuclear Missile Defense and Theatre Missile Defense programs occur, and on Sunday morning at the Space and

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## Fuera la Marina de Vieques A Navy Vet Looks at Vieques

By Ben Chitty, VVAW and Veterans Support Vieques

Last summer people turned out to see the ships of Operation Sail 2000 as they sailed up the east coast of the United States, the biggest peacetime flotilla ever assembled. It arrived in New York harbor in time for the country's largest Independence Day celebration, including a fireworks show of millennial proportions.



Veterans at bombing site protest camp

On June 25, as the fleet lay off Philadelphia, the Navy staged its own display of fireworks, resuming the bombing of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. The Navy has bombed Vieques repeatedly since then. When the Navy bombed Vieques on April 19, 1999, an F-18 dropped two 500-pound bombs about a mile short of its target, killing David Sanes Rodriguez, a Viequense employed as a guard and injuring a sailor and three civilian workers. The new bombing may not kill anyone outright, but sooner or later it will contribute to the deaths of more civilians.

Vieques has been used for firing exercises for sixty years. Over those decades, the land and surrounding waters have been littered with unexploded ordnance and toxic residues.

Some of these materials have long been associated with various health problems. People on Vieques suffer from hypertension, diabetes, asthma, arthritis, heart problems, and a variety of cancers at a rate 27% higher than the rest of Puerto Rico. Lab tests have found elevated levels of arsenic, barium, zinc, cobalt, mercury, and lead. Several former civilian Navy workers have tested positive for heavy metals toxicity, including uranium. Depleted uranium is so dangerous its peacetime use in populated areas is forbidden by Federal law and Navy regulations. Last year the Navy admitted firing 263 rounds tipped with depleted uranium onto Vieques, recovering only 57. And the Navy has yet to reveal the truth about the nuclear "device" it lost off Vieques in 1966.

The Navy claims the Vieques facility is necessary for national security. But the Navy has had more than twenty years and four administrations to find an alternative to

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## STATEMENT ON BOB KERREY

Ben Chitty, VVAW and Dave Cline, VVAW and VFP

Recent news reports and the admissions of former US Senator and Medal of Honor recipient Robert Kerrey that in 1969, he led a six man SEAL team that killed 21 women, children and old men in the village of Thanh Phong has once again focused public attention on the ugly realities of the US war in Vietnam.

Knowledge of atrocities is not news to many Vietnam veterans. When returning GIs began telling people what was happening, many Americans didn't want to believe it. In January 1971 the Winter Soldier Investigation was organized by Vietnam Veterans Against the War and held in Detroit. Over 100 combat vets testified there about atrocities they had been involved in or witnessed as a direct result of the US military policy of free fire zones, search and destroy missions and body count as the measure of success.

The government's response was denial. They tried to discredit the Winter Soldier hearings, calling the veterans who testified imposters and liars. In those cases they couldn't cover up, like the notorious My Lai massacre, they put the blame on a few "bad apples" while protecting those higher up the chain of command and in Washington.

The hard truth is that what happened that night in Thanh Phong was approved in advance by US military's rules of engagement. Much of the Mekong Delta had been designated as a free fire zone. The peasants who lived there were considered the enemy and dead Vietnamese became "VC killed" whether they were armed guerillas or unarmed civilians. Although Kerrey's Raiders failed in their mission to "take out" a village leader, the Pentagon considered it successful. He was even awarded a Bronze Star and whatever he may think of that medal, he got it according to standard operating procedure in Vietnam.

Kerrey's admissions challenge attempts to rewrite the history and distort people's memories of that time. After the war ended, right wing forces began a long term effort to convince the American people that despite a few mistakes that were made, they were for the right reasons. The unjust and criminal nature of the war was being transformed into what Ronald Reagan called a "noble cause".

The purpose of this revisionism was to confuse people and weaken opposition to new military interventions. Strategies were developed to manipulate public opinion, duck accountability and minimize US casualties while waging war in Latin America and the Middle East.

Now a small portion of the brutal facts are again before the American public. Some have responded to Kerrey's revelations by painting him as the victim, ignoring the Vietnamese dead. Others have pointed fingers at him, a bad soldier in a good war. In some quarters, the differing versions of events have even been used to justify the killings.

There can be no justification for what happened but the culpability lies primarily with the politicians and generals who initiated, planned and ran the war, not those who were sent to fight it. Until we honestly face up to what happened in Vietnam and those who are responsible, especially Johnson, Nixon, McNamara, Laird, Rusk, Kissinger, Westmoreland and Abrams, are held accountable, the past will continue to haunt us.

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cumulatively as many as 3 million civilians. Careful examination of the empirical record reveals multiple dozens, perhaps a couple hundred, massacre sites at various locations throughout the entire Korean Peninsula. The evidence of malicious **intent** is incontrovertible. There was an overwhelming pattern of systematic targeting the Korean people, with no serious effort to distinguish "civilians" from "combatants."

This should come as no surprise! Beginning in 1945 the U.S. record in Korea is horrendous! It would behoove our political leaders, and academicians, to learn an authentic history of Korea. Simply relying on popular comic book demonization of North Koreans without recognizing the *U.S. role* in creating the conditions that led to the war in the first place, continues a tragic disservice to history. When the Japanese were finally defeated on August 15, 1945, the vast majority of the people who resided on the Korean Peninsula immediately began to celebrate, then organize for a return to Korean sovereignty after 40 years of hated foreign occupation. When the U.S. immediately insisted on creating the Peninsula as a Cold War arena with the Russians, people throughout Korea organized resistance, at first nonviolent, later in the form of a guerrilla war. The U.S. created a puppet government, similar to what it later did in Vietnam, and oversaw between 1945-50 the systematic repression and murder of *hundreds of thousands* of Koreans who rightfully demanded independence. That U.S. military and political policy to this day does not understand this fundamental Korean history continues one of the most tragic chapters of the Twentieth Century.

During the Korean "hot" war, General Douglas MacArthur ordered that U.S. Air Forces "destroy every means of communication, every installation, factory, city, and village" south of the Yalu River boundary with China. Massive saturation bombings, especially with napalm and other incendiaries, alone murdered perhaps 2.5 million civilians. Major General William B. Kean of the 25th Infantry Division ordered "civilians in the combat zone" to be considered as enemy. The famous July 25, 1950 Fifth Air Force memorandum to General Timberlake declared that adherence to Army orders to "strafe all civilian refugees" have been "complied with." *USA Today* (Oct. 1, 1999) and the *New York Times* (Dec. 29, 1999) reported from declassified U.S. Air Force documents the "deliberate" strafings and bombings of Korean "civilians" and "people in white." In the August 21, 1950 issue of *Life*, John Osborne reported that U.S. officers ordered troops to fire into clusters of civilians.

U.S. racism has been an unfortunate but tragic feature (along with arrogant ethnocentrism) of the origins of the U. S. American Republic and has substantially contributed to the cruelty of its long imperial history under the rubric of "American Manifest Destiny" that has engineered well over 400 overt military, and as many as 6,000-10,000 covert, interventions in over 100 countries. Directed toward the Korean (and later Vietnamese) people, who we regularly called "gooks," racism helped justify commission of a

gruesome, almost unlimited and careless war. In Korea this included use of germ warfare and the regular threat of dropping nuclear bombs. The highest law officer in the land, President Truman's second Attorney General, J. Howard McGrath, referred to the Koreans as "rodents." The massive, saturation bombings in World War II in Germany and Japan had been conducted with no pretense of striking only military targets. They legitimized bombing with no concern for civilians, despite explicit prohibition by the U.S. *Field Manual 27-10 Rules of Land Warfare*. **These indiscriminate saturation bombings were routine, and relentlessly continued in Korea.**

When news of the July 1950 Nogun-ri massacre finally reached the U.S. mass media via the Associated Press in September 1999, it opened up the floodgates in Korea. Koreans in many villages began to publicly talk about the brutal role of the U.S. Military during the 1950/53 Korean War in their village. The cries of victims, relatives and witnesses to the atrocities against Korean civilians, were finally being heard after years of silence and fear.

In May 2000, in Beijing, social justice, human rights and peace organizations from both (north and south) Korea and representatives from overseas Korean communities formed an international organization to conduct a full, comprehensive investigation of war crimes committed or directed by the U.S. military.

The **Korea Truth Commission** was created from this meeting, and now has chapters in both Korea and several overseas' chapters, including in U.S., Canada, Japan, Europe and China. The KTC opened its Office of Joint Secretariat in Washington, D.C. in June 2000 in order to coordinate internationally and to build solidarity with Korean people. Working on behalf of 70 million Koreans, the KTC hopes its work will lead to the U.S. government launching a comprehensive investigation of the numerous massacres of Korean civilians, a formal admission and apology to the Korean people, and full reparations to the victims and their family members!

The work intends to bring the 'suppressed, buried, and forgotten truth' about the U.S. military massacres of civilians to light, but also to restore the trampled sense of Korean national dignity and the stolen right of self-determination of Korean people.

It has already begun the investigation of U.S. military massacres of civilians: first, the period during the 1950-53 Korean War; second, the period from the arrival of MacArthur's U.S. Occupation Army in southern part of Korea on September 8, 1945 until June 25, 1950; and third, more than 100,000 crimes committed by U.S. troops stationed in south Korea since July 23, 1953. It will publish a report on massacres in order to reveal the extent and nature of war crimes committed during the Korean War and reveal a more people's version of the truth of the Korean War. It has already sent international delegations to both (north and south) Korea in order to gather evidence that will be presented at the Tribunal.

On June 23, 2001, it will be conducting the first Korea International War Crimes Tribunal, at the Interchurch Center, 475 Riverside Drive in New York City where representatives from Korea and overseas Korean communities will participate, along with representatives of the nations that participated in prosecuting the war. Following the Tribunal, there will be an International Peace (and bus) March (June 24-25, 2001) to Washington, D.C., which will call for the U.S. government's formal admission of their numerous atrocities against Koreans, a formal apology to Korean people, full reparation to the victims and their family members, and the immediate removal of U.S. troops from south Korea.

The KTC also intends to bring the case to appropriate international legal bodies such as the International Court of Justice in Hague, to international commissions such as the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva, and eventually to the US legal system itself.

Korea has been evolving as a unified culture for 5-6,000 years. Only artificially divided for the past 56 years, it is time for Koreans to once again be in charge of their own destiny. The continued presence of 37,000 U.S. military forces and their weapons systems (including depleted uranium U-238) at 42 major bases (four Air Force, two Navy, and thirty-six Army) and nearly sixty smaller installations, along with their two practice bombing ranges (at Mt. Taebaek, more than 100 miles southeast of Seoul, on the coast near Wondok; and at Koon Ni, 50 miles south of Seoul, at the west coast village of Maehyang Ri), continues to be a grotesque and provocative assault on Korean sovereignty. No other "free" country in the world is so occupied as is Korea.

Korea deserves its authentic independence from the United States and its continued military occupation.. Only by reckoning honestly with this tragic history, can there be healing and reunification. The KTC intends to strive to this end. ☹

## Dave Neifeld

by John Grant

The Philadelphia chapter was in the final stretch of planning a fundraiser banquet to honor some of its members, past and present, when founding president Dave Neifeld passed away. Dave was 87 and had struggled with heart problems for some years. He died in his sleep Saturday, April 28th.

Dave commanded an anti-tank unit during the Battle of The Bulge, where he was wounded from shrapnel on Christmas Eve 1944. He received the purple heart and bronze star. He joined the service soon after Pearl Harbor and was injured during officers training school, which led to a bone marrow infection. He refused the option of a medical discharge.

"He didn't want a ticket out," his wife Rae told the obituary

writer for the Philadelphia Inquirer. "He had a high tolerance for pain."

After the war and back in Philadelphia, where he had been raised, Dave got involved in the union movement, specifically with the United Food and Commercial Workers. He was a union organizer until his retirement in 1979.

Throughout his life, Dave fought for a host of progressive causes. Whether it was in the union movement or just in general day-to-day living, he never turned away from a fight. Civil rights, the Vietnam War, the Reagan wars in Central America and on to the Gulf War and the School of the Americas in the 90s -- Dave was there lobbying or demonstrating for peace and justice and the rights of the little guy. After he retired, he and Rae traveled to Russia, China and Nicaragua, the latter at the height of the Contra War.

One story from a demonstration in Washington had Dave ready to take on a group of young hooligans on the street who didn't like the sentiments expressed on his poster. The fact he was nearly 80 didn't phase him; he had always been ready to fight for this stuff and nothing had changed. Fortunately for everyone, the confrontation passed, and it became a good story.

Until just a few months ago, Philadelphia chapter meetings were held each month at Dave and Rae's house, where they had been held since the chapter was co-founded by Dave in 1985. Dave & Rae were chapter anchors. Rae's hospitality is legend in Philly. For many of us Vietnam veterans, Dave was a sort of surrogate Dad. In my case, having come from a right-wing Republican family, it was good to be friends with an



older man with deep progressive views, a gentle temperament and a tough backbone. He will be missed.

Dave also had the amazing capacity to take fifteen minutes to deliver a five minute talk. But even that was ironically one of Dave's strengths, possibly learned from years of union meetings. There were times when holding the floor oblivious to threats or taunts was what counted. You got the sense Dave had been tested in that arena. Without question, he had the respect of the more progressive union leaders in the city. It was Dave's union connections, in fact, that landed the chapter use of the beautiful ornate Victorian banquet hall in the Hospital Workers Union headquarters for our annual banquet.

Besides his wonderful wife Rae, Dave is survived by two daughters, Amy and Ruth, two grandchildren, Paul and Stefan, and a sister, Evelyn Beilan.

His warmth and wise counsel will be greatly missed in the Philly VFP chapter.

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Rocket Center Museum, where busloads of America's children are subjected to space weapons propaganda.

Citizens from as far as California and Minnesota, Florida and New York joined Huntsville residents and others from throughout the southeast at the Holiday Inn Space Center. Participants shared information and strategies to defeat the US Space Command plan to control and own space as a "U.S. 4th frontier," as outlined in a the recently released Rumsfeld Space Commission Report: "In the coming period, the U.S. will conduct operations to, from, in and through space in support of its national interests both on earth and in space."

"I've been following the nuclear trail for a long time," said David Swain of Lake Junaluska, NC. Swain is an Asheville native. He lived in Japan for four decades and collected and translated stories of Hiroshima Atom bomb survivors as a peace researcher and educator. "I was very impressed," he said following the conference. "There were so many people there who are involved in effective groups. They are professional, committed, linked up, and integrated. It was quite satisfying."

Keynote speaker Dr. Michio Kaku's Paris flight was canceled due to bad weather. Instead of the keynote address, military veterans, whistle blowers, former weapons industry engineers, and elder and youth activists shared stories of their work around the country and the circumstances that led them to lives of committed resistance to US militarism. The time was well spent in making the vital, person-to-person connections critical to the success of the rapidly growing movement to halt the militarization of space.

Kitty Boniske of Asheville, a member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, said the personal stories shared by participants were particularly inspiring. Boniske believes that "using the heavens for war is not acceptable for anyone, on any level, who has any sense of ethics. It is just wrong."

Paloma Galindo, an organizer with the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance, said she felt "even more committed," after the conference. She intends to incorporate the information into her work to end nuclear weapons production at the Y-12 Plant in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

"The peace in space movement is growing rapidly," said Global Network coordinator Bruce Gagnon, whose tireless and dedicated work has taken him throughout the world to alert citizens to the dangers of weapons in space. "We all have a piece of the puzzle. We must continue to build this national and international movement because we need each other," he said. "The south is vital to this plan for the weaponization and nuclearization of space," Gagnon said. "It is vital to integrate the south into the national and international movements to stop the arms race."

The United States Space Command's own document entitled "Vision For 2020" leaves no doubt about the sinister intent: "Integrating Space Forces into warfighting capabilities across the full spectrum of conflict," with an ability "to

deny others the use of space." A motto of the Air Force Space Command is "Master of Space." The designation is displayed in large letters over the entrance to the 50th Space Wing in Colorado. It has chilling echoes to the Nazi ideology of the German scientist Wernher von Braun, who found work in the Redstone Army arsenal at Huntsville, AL, in 1949 producing the Army's first operational ballistic missile. He was one of nearly one thousand Nazi scientists who were taken in by the US military and corporations after the war.

Peter Lumsdaine of the Vandenberg Action Coalition in California warned that the US Space Command is increasingly "the coordinating hub of the military terror and space-age counterinsurgency war used to enforce the economic and environmental violence of corporate globalization." Lumsdaine called for direct action of the magnitude that occurred in Seattle. "I believe that the US Space Command is the WTO of military control and terror in the 21st century." He also underscored the connection between the US Space Command activities and the war in Colombia.

The New York Times recently confirmed that "US military satellites are now guiding the defoliation planes, helicopter gunships and elite military strike teams as they accelerate their offensive in southern Colombia."

"If we don't challenge the garrison state head on we may be deceived by incremental changes the pentagon may make, deceived into thinking we are getting something when in fact we are losing ground," said Chris Ney, Disarmament Coordinator with the War Resisters League. "It is time for activists to put out a call from this country for international activism and solidarity."

The US Space Command's plan to militarize space violates The Outer Space Treaty of 1967, which the US signed along with more than 90 other countries. The treaty bans nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction from space, and stipulates that the "exploration of outer space be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries and shall be the province of all (hu)mankind". US Space Command plans also violate the 1972 ABM Treaty, which prohibits building a system to counter strategic ballistic missiles or their elements, The US signed the treaty with the then-Soviet Union.

"Last year, at the United Nations, 157 countries, including China, Canada, and Russia, passed a resolution calling for a global ban on weapons in space," according Gagnon. "The U.S., Israel and Micronesia abstained from the vote."

Angela Schindler, 26, came with three others from the Nashville Greenlands Catholic Worker Community and the Nashville War Resisters League. "I want to make sure that we don't waste money on things that will continue the cold war or will break anti-proliferation treaties," she said. "Anything that is pushing us to continue conflict with some of the major powers in the world is not pushing us in a direction that I want to see. I'm concerned about the underlying issues. Who the profits will go to from this and how power will be consolidated from this kind of system, as well as the absolute waste of dollars that could be spent

on programs to take care of our own children."

Bill O'Connell an adult education teacher from Birmingham, AL and a member of the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee said, "Star Wars is building pyramids to the sky on top of my students. Our books are falling apart. We're already 50th in education." O'Connell explained that the tax dollars he withholds from the Pentagon will go to purchase books, computers, supplies and equipment for his students.

Judy Cumbee, from Lanett, AL, wore an ornate jacket, a gift from her friend, Brian Baldwin, a man executed by the state of Alabama. Cumbee is a death-penalty abolitionist and member of the War Resisters League. She sang a hauntingly beautiful song about her homeplace in the "Red Hills of Georgia." Other musicians included Holly Gwinn Graham of Olympia, WA and Joel Landry from New York. Both wrote special songs for the movement against weapons in space.

Huntsville City Councilman and Food Bank Director Dick Hyatt, welcomed the conference to Huntsville. "I know how the fight goes and I understand what you're up against," he told the assembly. "We profess to have a democracy," he said. "A democracy is based on an informed populace. Without that a democracy cannot exist. Without hearing the other side of this issue we cannot have democracy. If you go back into your communities and inform them about the other side of this issue, I firmly believe that the people, people like you and me can make this country move into the new millennium in a way that is good for all of us," Hyatt said.

"In our country today, people are becoming too much like good soldiers, following, following what we know to be evil. Before you become good soldiers it is time to become good citizens," Gagnon said. "Our job is to create a global debate."

Ilene Sparks was among the several whistle blowers and former weapons industry workers at the conference. "My greatest accolade was being placed on Nixon's enemies list for my involvement in the civil rights movement," the Huntsville resident said. Sparks began work at the Redstone Arsenal when she divorced at age 41.

"I felt fortunate having a good paying job working for the Army," she said. "I was a pacifist and I had guilt, but I tried to justify my work because I needed to support my son. Sparks told how she became a whistle blower on the Iran-Contra issue. "They abolished my job," she said. "Then they sent me off to work in a different area where I learned more." She spoke out again and was again demoted. "I was a whistle blower for which I have suffered greatly," she told the assembly.

Another mother spoke up, "I worked in Huntsville on development of the "smart" missile. I helped build 14 prototypes. When my children asked me, 'Mommy, are you really building things that will kill people,' It made me think. I had to stop," she said.

The weapons makers Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and TRW have received billions of US taxpayer dollars already. Sixty percent of all Pentagon missile defense research and development contracts went to these four companies during 1998 and 1999, according to the World Policy Institute. They stand to make billions more if a national missile defense system is deployed.

A version of this article appeared in the **Asheville Global Report** and on the Global web site, and will be in the **Nonviolent Activist**. ☘

## **"Smart Sanctions" Inadequate**

by Lewis Green, VFP and FOR

The Campaign of Conscience—which is supported by the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), and Pax Christi USA, and is endorsed by more than 2,000 individuals and 100 organizations—continues to call for an end to all economic sanctions against Iraq.

Neither "Smart Sanctions," which the United Kingdom introduced in the United Nations on Tuesday, May 22, nor alternative proposals offered by Russia and France, solve the Iraqi humanitarian crisis. Though a discussion of the current sanctions in the UN represents a move in the right direction, these initiatives do not address the root causes of the Iraqi crisis.

The sale of oil is Iraq's major source of income. However, under "Smart Sanctions," oil revenues continue to be deposited in an escrow account managed by the UN. Without control of its income, Iraq remains unable to decide when, where and whether it can purchase goods to meet its people's needs.

In addition, the Gulf War and sanctions savaged Iraq's infrastructure. Today, water treatment and sewage treatment plants lie in ruins, leaving water unsafe to drink and deadly to children, and an unreliable electric power grid means that food and medicine cannot be safely refrigerated.

"Smart Sanctions" do nothing to stop children from dying of bad water nor do they address the needs of an oil-based economy, whose infrastructure and economy are in ruins. In the end, these initiatives may serve only as a cynical foil to justify a continuation of these destructive sanctions. Non-military sanctions against Iraq must be lifted, so that Iraq can begin to meet the needs of its people and rejoin the community of nations.

Until we respond to Iraq's devastated economy and infrastructure, Iraqis will continue to die and suffer. The coming weeks are critical, as the UN discusses Iraqi sanctions. Please voice your outrage over this continuing war on the Iraqi people.

*If you have questions, concerns or comments about the Campaign of Conscience or "Smart Sanctions," feel free to call: Lewis Green, FOR National Organizing Coordinator, Campaign of Conscience for the Iraqi People, 3403 166th Place SW, Lynnwood, WA 98037, 425-743-5914 or [Igreen8@ix.netcom.com](mailto:Igreen8@ix.netcom.com); or Peter Lems, Program Assistant for Iraq, Middle East Peace Education, American Friends Service Committee, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102, (215) 241-7170, [plems@AFSC.org](mailto:plems@AFSC.org).*

*VIEQUES continued from page 3*

Vieques. After local fishermen protested the loss of their livelihood, the Ford administration returned the nearby island of Culebra to civilian use in 1975. Then the Pacific Fleet gave up its 40-year-old combined use facility on Hawaii's Kahoolawe Island in 1980, without compromising its battle-readiness (though the Navy agreed to clean up unexploded ordnance only under Congressional mandate in 1993). The Navy even concedes it can give up the indispensable and irreplaceable Vieques facility - just not yet, not for three more years.



...arrests were made...

If Puerto Rico was a state like Hawaii or an independent nation like the Philippines, the Vieques facility would probably already be closed. But Puerto Rico is a "commonwealth" (what some call a "colony"). Puerto Ricans are subject to federal laws including the draft and military service but have no voting representatives in Washington. Without consulting the people of Vieques, and overriding the recommendations of his own Special Commission, the former Governor of Puerto Rico accepted a deal to permit exercises with "inert" munitions for \$40 million, and a referendum (to be scheduled at the Navy's convenience), with another \$50 million if the Viequeses vote to permit live-fire exercises. (The Navy made almost \$90 million renting the firing ranges out to allied forces in 1998.) The Navy's strategy is transparent - bribe and stall and hope the reckoning never comes.

The Navy's record on toxic exposure is not so clean. Leaving aside the environmental mess abandoned at Subic Bay in the Philippines, the Navy doesn't even take care of its own. The Navy sent ships to observe nuclear tests in the South Pacific in the 1940s and 50s, exposing sailors to radioactive fall-out. Some ships were so contaminated they were called "death ships." For its biochemical warfare simulations in the 60s on ships like the USS Navarro, the Navy used zinc cadmium sulfide and BG bacteria, both known to cause respiratory and other health problems.

Brown-water sailors in Vietnam's Mekong Delta were sprayed with Agent Orange, which may have saved some lives then, but lost more later.

With Liberty and Justice for All



The crews which did the grinding on carrier decks are dying of silicosis (though the Veterans Administration suggested the illness might be a rare genetic defect found mainly in people of African ancestry - guess who was grinding decks). In the first three years after Naval Reserve Mobile Construction Battalion 24 returned from the Gulf War, over half its complement had to be discharged as medically unfit for duty - but the Navy's not saying what happened to them.

Of course the Navy is not just doing to the people of Vieques only what it has already done to its own men and

women. Viequeses have lost more than half their land, much of their livelihood, and for too many years their futures, their hopes for their children and grandchildren, all without any say in the matter whatsoever except through massive civil disobedience.

The real national security question is this: if the U.S. military is supposed to protect U.S. citizens, why does the U.S. Navy harm them on Vieques? Does letting a few battle groups practice shooting off all their weapons all at one time constitute a "national emergency"? The Navy's actions are a disgrace, and a constitutional perversion.

The Navy has corrupted its mission into the opposite. It lacks credibility on the issue of toxic contamination. I'm a Navy vet and I support the people of Vieques. The bombing must stop and the Navy should get out.

*Ben Chitty served in the U.S. Navy from 1965-69, including two deployments to Vietnam. He is a coordinator for the Clarence Fitch Chapter of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. **Veterans Support Vieques!** Can be contacted at PO Box 7053, Jersey City, NJ 07307. Phone 201-876-*

## Vieques Struggle Intensifies

*Dave Cline, VFP and VVAW*

At the end of April, newspapers and TV stations nationwide reported large scale arrests of protestors on Vieques demonstrating against renewed bombing by the US Navy. This new upsurge reflect the movement's growing strength and determination to bring peace to that island municipality.

When Puerto Rico's new Governor, Sila Calderon, took office in January, she quickly took steps to fulfill a campaign promise to end the bombing. Several delegations traveled to Washington and met with the Bush administration. At that time Defense Secretary Rumsfeld announced he would suspend training exercises while studies of cancer and heart disease among Viequeses were conducted.

These studies had just begun when the Pentagon brass "fast tracked" a report from John Hopkins University claiming there was no connection between these diseases and 60 years of bombing and shelling. Several days later the Navy announced the resumption of training exercises on April 27.

Throughout Puerto Rico people prepared to resist. Many went to Vieques and entered the bombing ranges as human shields against the bombs. Training had to be stopped several times because of demonstrators in the target area and the exercises were ended early. Some 185 people were arrested including the Reverend Al Sharpton, environmental lawyer Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Congressman Luis Gutierrez (D-III), and Vieques Mayor Damaso Serrano.

One group of demonstrators got to the former site of the Cayo La Yayi protest camp at the mouth of the bombing

range. Among them was VFP member William Nemcik, a Vietnam veteran and film maker from San Juan. When he was detained by two African-American Marines, one of them asked him "How many more are coming behind you?". William replied "4 million" (the population of Puerto Rico), then asked the Marine "How many black people were behind Martin Luther King?" The Marine replied "All of us were". William said "Now you know where we're coming from".

Those arrested have been jailed, many receiving 45 day sentences. Al Sharpton was even sentenced to 90 days. This repression has caused outrage and even calls for a Congressional investigation. A new round of Naval exercises is scheduled for early July and they are expected to be met with another wave of non-violent resistance. In response, Governor Calderon has said she will call for a vote by Vieques residents within 90 days to decide whether they want the island used by the U.S. military as a bombing range.

The Navy's days on Vieques are numbered. Support for the struggle continues to grow in the US and around the world. Veterans remain an important part of this movement and VFP members should stand up today and become more active in demanding NO MORE BOMBS—NAVY OUT—PEACE FOR VIEQUES!

## *Center for Security Policy*

The Washington, DC-based Center for Security Policy (CSP) is a well funded organization dedicated to the continual growth and empowerment of the United States as a national security state. Founded by former Reagan-era Pentagon official Frank J. Gaffney, Jr. in 1988, the CSP currently has some 115 advisors from major defense corporations, foundations, financial institutions, the military and government to help press its agenda to have the Center's policy become national policy. Numbered among these advisors are Richard Perle, Elliott Abrams, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, William Bennett, Rep. Henry Hyde, Rep. Curt Weldon, Sen. Bob Smith, Edward Teller and other notables.

At an annual fundraising dinner CSP bestows its "Keeper of the Flame Award" upon a person who has propagated "democracy and individual rights around the world." Past recipients include Caspar Weinberger, Steve Forbes, Ronald Reagan, Newt Gingrich and (in 1998) Donald Rumsfeld.

Within the CSP there is the William J. Casey Institute, which serves as the Center's research and public education organ on "international economics, trade, finance, energy and technology developments, and traditional U.S. national security policy"—all areas that mix together in the CSP agenda vessel, thereby bestowing honor on the Reagan-era CIA Director. The CSP has also recently created a new Military Committee whose function is to infuse

the views of high-ranking U.S. military officers directly into the minds of the public and all levels of government.

The CSP is a major force in the resurrection of "Star Wars." CSP also opposes a ban on landmines, arms treaties generally and "engagement" with China except on U.S. (meaning CSP) terms. To learn more about the CSP, check out its web site at [www.security-policy.org](http://www.security-policy.org). More on CSP in the next issue.

## ***If It Takes Lies To Start A War, Only Truth Can End It***

*Wilson (Woody) Powell, VFP Chapter 62*

*After fifty-one years, a state of war still exists on the Korean peninsula, dividing a country that traces its history back over 5000 years; a country that prides itself on being the cultural seat of Asian civilization. There is a strong movement within that country to re-assert its independence from foreign domination and unite under its own terms.*

*The Korea Truth Commission is conducting a tribunal in New York City on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2001, wherein testimony will be heard that will expose the historical truth of the repressive and brutal origins of a wholly artificial state of separation under a tattered flag of truce.*

*This is a brief account of a mission to become familiar with the current situation in Korea, meet jurists and a few victims and survivors with the courage to testify; and see, for ourselves, evidence of human rights abuses past and present.*

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of March, 2001, I arrived in Seoul South Korea. I was honored to be the Veterans For Peace representative to a delegation of the Korea Truth Commission (KTC). As a veteran of the Korean War, I had a special interest in doing what I could to help illuminate truths that could heal wounds still gaping after more than fifty years, and unite this sundered country. We were a small delegation, composed of Brian Becker, co-founder, with Former U. S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, of the International Action Center, Gloria La Riva, award-winning documentary producer and also a member of the IAC, and myself. We were led by Kiyul Chung, a U.S. citizen of Korean extraction and top organizer of the KTC.

The Korea Truth Commission was formed last May in Beijing, by social justice, human rights and peace organizations from both (north and south) Koreas and representatives from overseas Korean communities throughout the world, to conduct a full, scientific and objective investigation of war crimes committed by the U.S. military and its client, the government of South Korea. It has chapters in both Koreas and several overseas chapters in U.S., Canada, Japan, Europe, and China and maintains an office in Washington, D.C.

### **We Meet the Organizers**

Several Korean political organizations are involved in the process of bringing to light the historical facts that have defined Korea as it is today. They are combined under an umbrella organization known as the National Alliance for Democracy and Reunification of Korea (NADRK).

*KTC DELEGATION Continued on page 10*

*KTC DELEGATION continued from page 9*

NADRK National Chairman, Oh Jong-Ryul, retired teacher and former political prisoner, and his deputy, Ahn Seung Uhan, were the first to officially greet our delegation. From them we learned something of the scope of the movement and the dedication of the people involved.

### **We meet the Jurists**

We met two of the eminently-qualified and distinguished people who will sit as jurists during the Tribunal to be held in New York City this coming June: Mr. Pyang, former Republic of Korea (ROK) Constitutional Court Justice (same as U.S. Supreme Court) and Mr. Kang Chul Sun, former Chief Prosecutor for the Republic of Korea (ROK) and a former legislator. I was impressed, not only with their credentials, but with their courage to participate in a process that will illuminate the repressive roles played by their own government, and mine, since 1945. It takes courage, in Korea, to contradict official policies.

### **Testimony - Prisoners of Conscience**

We met men and women who served long prison sentences, up to 33 years, mostly in solitary confinement, without heat in winter or cooling in summer, for holding beliefs contrary to those sanctioned by their government. They spoke of the oppressive conditions imposed on free speech by the U.S. formulated National Security Act enacted by the ROK government in 1948. It appears to embrace all of the most egregiously repressive elements of McCarthyism, making seditious acts of statements favorable to North Korea's government, or just the country itself. That such an anachronistic law could have survived to this day is additional testimony, in my opinion, to the hypocritical U.S. tolerance of citizen-repression by client states.

Old men with quiet voices, like Mr. Chang Hyun Kim (80), Mr. Lim Bang Kyu (67), Mr. Lee Yng-Son, Mr. Kwon Nak K- and Mr. Song Kay Chae, described their tiny cells, too small to fully stretch their bodies, unheated, cold in winter, hot in summer, isolated from other prisoners. They were frequently tortured. They said they were able to maintain sanity by constant study and a powerful determination to be true to themselves and the ideal of a united Korea.

There were many more who could not physically withstand their treatment and died while still in prison. Only 94 out of 700 long-term (over 17 years) prisoners have survived imprisonment. Hwang Sun knowingly invited arrest and imprisonment by spending three months in North Korea. When we met her she had just finished serving a two-year prison sentence. Her demeanor was also humble and iron-willed. These men and women are quiet models of humility and strength of purpose.

### **Testimony - Massacre Survivors**

They came to give public testimony, after fifty years of silence, in a meeting room of the National Assembly in Seoul. They have been encouraged by the warming of relationships between North and South since last June's visit to North Korea by ROK President, Kim Dae Jung.

A succession of speakers, survivors and activists seeking truth and reunification, gave the results of investigations to-date. For example: Of approximately 3 million people killed, 2 million were civilians; more massacres committed by South Korean and U.S. forces than North Korean forces (none by Chinese forces); evidence of a U.S. military policy of considering all Koreans "the

enemy" on the basis that distinguishing between friend and foe was impossible.

Two old women removed their shoes and socks to show horribly mutilated feet; the result of strafing and bombing attacks on their villages. We listened to graphic descriptions of massive political prisoner massacres, such as the one near Taegu at an abandoned Cobalt mine, where 3500 were killed and tossed down a mineshaft, some still alive when covered by earth.

We learned of the 80,000 killed on the Island of Cheju for resisting the division of Korea and the formation of the U.S. sponsored South Korean government of Syngman Rhee.

While these massacres were carried out by the South Korean National Police and the ROK army, under Rhee, the U.S. military command was aware they were taking place and even, by report, had observers present at some sites.

### **Testimony – Labor Leaders**

They live in a tent, on a parking lot owned by the Nandong Catholic Church, near where they used to work, at the Daewoo plant in Incheon. They dare not leave this sanctuary, because their pictures are prominently displayed everywhere on a "Wanted Poster" as violators of the National Security Act (NSA). Their offense? Wanting to go back to work at Daewoo. They cannot, because Daewoo is in the process of being sold to General Motors for a fraction of its value, and cutbacks are part of the preparation for sale. These people believe their government is sacrificing Korean workers to an inhumane version of capitalism that puts maximized profits ahead of the health of a national economy.

The day we visited them, 200 workers had been arrested and jailed for attempting to reclaim their jobs. While 1700 remaining workers labor on inside the fences, 3000 armed riot police monitor every entrance. These young leaders are well aware that one day they will have to leave the compound. They know their action has guaranteed certain prison sentences under the NSA.

### **Testimony – Student Leaders**

Would anyone have believed that students elected to leadership positions by their fellow students would automatically become wanted criminals – again, under the draconian National Security Act? They live in small utility rooms on campus, where they organize protests and demonstrations against the U.S. military presence in their country and for the re-unification of North and South.

They dare not leave the university, which grants them sanctuary, for fear the police, who wait patiently at the gates, will arrest them and send them to prison. They accept their positions knowing the inevitability of prison.

### **Massacre Site Visited -- Victims Honored**

A jumbled mix of loose rocks and bones and skulls mark the location, deep within a mountain, where 3500 political prisoners were executed in 1948 and tossed into a mine shaft. We were told, that toward the end of that grisly procedure, which went on for days, the South Korean National Police ran short of bullets and resorted to tying prisoners into seven-member groups, shooting one and letting his falling body pull the rest into the shaft. Those still alive died slowly of suffocation as more bodies poured down upon them and were finally sealed away from his-

tory by tons of earth. We gave homage to those who died, in a ceremony on the side of the mountain, near where most remain buried from sight, but no longer from mind.

### Closing the Circle

This writer, against all expectations, in a remarkable turn of fate, found himself standing upon a platform amidst a sea of humanity, in downtown Taegu, where forty-nine years before I had walked the streets as an Air Policeman on town patrol.

I was facing, with my companions, a dedicated band of Korean Activists intent upon bringing the truth of their own history to a largely ignorant Korean public. With microphone in hand, and a big-lunged speaker at my side, I joined with others to voice my own conviction that the Korean people should be free to determine the fate of their own country, to re-unite with their families in the North, to be rid of the baleful U.S. military presence in their midst that festers as the ultimate expression of U.S. arrogance toward a people who have a universally-recognized right to be free of foreign occupation.

The passing public read posters depicting massacres and human rights abuses that have been visited upon their parents, their neighbors, perhaps even themselves, for over fifty years. They read the stories, examine the pictures with interest, then with horror.

I knew that many, like many of us in the U.S., would put those images out of their minds and go on. But some will not. Some will want to know more about their heritage, the true history of their country. They will ask questions. They will become part of a movement that is growing stronger and more vocal every day.

*Wilson Powell is co-author, with Zhou Ming-fu, of "Two Walk The Golden Road"; the interwoven true-life stories of two enemy soldiers of the Korean War. You may visit their website at <http://www.goldnroad.com/>.*

## Candy Lovett

*Michael Carley, IWP Phase II Co-leader*

Though it feels a crime to condense such a beautiful story . . .

Candy Lovett, one of our delegates on Phase II, is 39 years old. She is a Gulf War veteran confined to both crutches and a wheelchair due to severe Gulf War Syndrome (GWS). While in the army during Desert Storm, she was assigned to burial detail on the infamous "highway of death." As a result, Ms. Lovett suffers from a high level of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to add to her GWS. Well Ms. Lovett, now a devout Christian, braved not only a part of the world that is, comparably, less than wheelchair-accessible; but she also braved the intense nightmares, sleeplessness, and irrationality to face those intense fears and go back to Iraq. We accepted the risk.

Candy Lovett's arrival into a Muslim country, Jordan—the sand, the music—quickly triggered her PTSD, albeit slightly, and therein revealed to her that this was going to be a tough trip. She was scared; and with how easily she had lost her sense of independence, her early inclination was to shut herself off from activities and remain alone in her room. The group, however, didn't

allow her to do this to herself. Through both tough negotiation, and soothing coercion, she was reluctantly sold on the idea that she was going to have to be present for nearly everything on the itinerary.

When we crossed the border into Iraq the memories assaulted her without mercy. Now, it wasn't even about nightmares while sleeping. Now it was about nightmares if she just closed her eyes. This translated into a near-complete inability to sleep, which translated into irritability, which translated into incidents where she would wind herself up unnecessarily, and need to be calmed back down to normality. Keeping us hopeful through all this, though, was that she tended to perform with exceptional protocol when in a public forum.

Gradually, she began to get a hold on her fears, and especially after one good night's sleep, we started to see improvement. And then three days into Basrah came the turning point.

We were visiting the bombing victims in the neighborhood of Al-Joumeriyeh, and were inside the house of a woman whose child was killed in the Jan '99 attack that the US carried out on their community. Candy motioned for me to come over to her (as the woman was painfully reciting the story of her dead child into radio journalist Kathryn Herzog's microphone). I asked Candy what was up, and she said, "Michael, you remember that thing I was thinking of asking someone, about forgiveness?" I certainly did. Back home Candy had related to me her hopes that she might ask an unspecified Iraqi citizen if they could forgive her for her wartime acts. At the time, I advised Candy two things; One, that she shouldn't think of her healing process as being accomplished in one cure-all act—that it was rather instead a slow, painful, drawn-out process; and Two, that she didn't need forgiveness. Writing for VFP, as I do, I feel no need to elaborate on this last point.

But here she was, asking unqualified me if she could ask this woman. And though I was quite worried as to the answer she might get, I still felt I couldn't do anything but honor and heed Candy's request. So I semi-reluctantly brought the woman in question (who speaks fluent English) over to Candy's side.



The words stuck on the way up a bit, but Candy got the question out. In response, the woman dropped to her knees beside Candy's wheelchair, eventually beaming as she kept repeating; "Of course you're forgiven...Of course you are..."

Since then, Candy has seemingly flourished. She opened up, slept, seemed to take/need less medication, and evolved into an unstoppable smiler, talker, prankster, and joke-teller. She now is busily trying to work for VFP and the IWP.

We expected maybe a modicum of success. But none of us expected the dramatic turnaround that we saw transpire. Every delegate is shaking his or her head in disbelief at the change in this unmercifully courageous woman—while simultaneously feeling so blessed for the rich gift of having witnessed it.

Peace.

## VFP Board News

### President's Column

Dear VFP members,

I have already introduced myself to those of you with a computer, but for those without one, my name is Barry Resch. I am from Minnesota Chapter 27 and have been an active member of VFP since just prior to operation Desert Storm. I served in the U.S. Army from 1968 to 1970 and served for one year in Vietnam as a mortarman before completing my military career. I returned unharmed physically but with my own set of emotional scars. I have committed my life to the abolishment of war.

I am grateful for the opportunities not only to serve as a Board member but also as President of this great organization. I love Veterans For Peace and believe that we are a valued, important, powerful and necessary voice in our community.

I believe that our primary task as Board members is to obtain adequate funds and resources to maintain a responsive and functioning national office that will serve as the connection point and clearinghouse for all our local chapters and at-large members.

We also need to do our part to promote this organization so that we may grow in numbers. Obviously not all folks will want to join us just because we exist. We need to be doing things to promote peace and justice in the world and working to abolish war. That is where all of you at the local chapters come in. You are the ones that create the projects and do the work of VFP but you need our support at the national level. That is what we are here to do. When you bring to us the projects that you want to promote on a national scale, we will give you all the support and blessings we can to make them a reality. This has been the case with the current work being done in Vieques and the Iraq War Project. We have also endorsed projects in Korea and a Korean Truth Commission.

We have set a goal for the year of raising \$100,000 and 1,500 paid-up members. Grandiose plan? Maybe, but with everyone pitching in to help, it is achievable.

We are attempting to restore the trust in the national Board that seems to have eroded in recent years. One way we plan to do this is to be more open with the business we conduct through the use of the internet to post Board actions. We will soon decide the best way to do this and act upon it.

I look forward to serving you in the coming year and seeing you all at the national convention in Albuquerque, NM in August. If you have any questions of concern don't hesitate to call me, but please not all at once. My phone number is (651) 641-1087.

Yours in peace,

Barry

## Convention Resolutions

As the annual VFP convention approaches a number of members are gathering ideas, projects and actions to present to the meeting in the form of resolutions. According to the VFP Bylaws:

*"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 [August 23 this year]. 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."*

It is the sense of the VFP Board of Directors that resolutions are encouraged and that they should be accorded all due respect and the time necessary for deliberation. The Board of Directors believes that VFP is a membership-driven organization and that the Board is neither a body charged with following the direction of its members nor is it intended to dictate policy to the membership. Rather this Board views its mission as one that will work with the membership on all resolutions, programs and actions as determined by the Annual Meeting. Therefore the Board requests that all resolutions submitted to the Annual Meeting be presented in a spirit of ownership and the willingness of the author(s) to take a leadership role on behalf of the action being suggested.

Resolutions coupled with this organization's Statement of Purpose ultimately define the values of Veterans for Peace. Therefore the Board of Directors request that all proposed resolutions be well thought out, meaningful and comply with the spirit and direction of Veterans for Peace.

### By-Law Amendment

The following By-law Amendment was approved by the Board of Directors and will be voted on at the August convention.

**Article X, Section 2 Quorum.** "One hundred Full and Associate Members present at an Annual Convention shall constitute a quorum" **is replaced with** "A majority of Full and Associate Members who have registered at the Annual Convention shall constitute a quorum."

**Are You Paid Up For 2001?**  
**You can do this from the VFP web site**  
**[www.veteransforpeace.org](http://www.veteransforpeace.org)**  
**or send in your dues to VFP at**  
**Suite 928**  
**733 15th Street NW**  
**Washington DC 20005**

## Possible VFP Move to St. Louis

As members know, VFP has been without an Executive Director as of last September. Since that time the Washington office has been staffed by a part-time office coordinator and some part-time volunteer help who, with limited resources, have been keeping the office operational. Knowing that the part-time coordinator would be leaving some time around or after her graduation from college this spring, an announcement for her replacement was advertised. Several applicants had responded prior to the Board meeting at the end of April. A few days after the Board meeting, the situation changed considerably.

Wilson “Woody” Powell, VFP Board member and national Secretary, made an offer which most Board members thought was exactly what VFP needed; he offered to take on the position of VFP National Administrator—described as “more than an office coordinator but less than an Executive Director.” The sticking point was that the national office would have to move to St. Louis, MO, where Woody lives.

Sufficient office space in a building with other peace and justice organizations has been found in St. Louis, offering a great atmosphere at the remarkable rent of but \$60 per month (in contrast to our current rent of around \$800 per month.) While Woody’s compensation requirements are somewhat greater than the maximum advertised for the office coordinator position, the cost of compensation plus rent would decrease slightly should VFP accept Woody’s offer and move to St. Louis. Furthermore, the volunteer situation, as described to the Board by Woody, appears considerably better in St. Louis than in DC.

Woody Powell has demonstrated a variety of skills relevant to the efficient functioning of an office. As Secretary he has carried out his duties in a well-organized and timely manner; he expresses himself in both writing and speaking with clarity and style; he has a professional background with proven organizational abilities. Finally, his involvement in Chiapas, Colombia, Korea and the upcoming Korea Truth Commission are evidence of his commitment and enthusiasm for VFP’s principles and work.

A number of issues would need to be resolved before such a move could take place, most notably negotiating out of the lease in DC. Further, some on the Board feel it important for VFP to remain in DC, since that is the “power center” of the nation. Most on the Board feel this aspect is either minimally important, irrelevant or even a hindrance to VFP. Nonetheless, the Board has decided to give the whole issue an airing at the convention. Members’ views can also be expressed to the VFP Internet forum

**[vfp-all@yahoogroups.com](mailto:vfp-all@yahoogroups.com)**

or in writing addressed to the current VFP office, Veterans For Peace, Suite 928, 733 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Washington DC 20005. Applicants have been told of the potential move and the attendant postponement of any immediate decision on hiring. The final decision will rest with the Board.

## Nominations for Board of Directors

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 Friday, July 25.

## Communicating with the Editor

Please send chapter news (or “individual” news in the case of an at-large member) directly to the Newsletter Editor by either email (**[pbs@psu.edu](mailto:pbs@psu.edu)**) or surface mail

Peter B. Shaw  
RD 1 Box 126A  
Port Matilda PA 16870.

**PLEASE** keep these reports **BRIEF** and to the point. In particular, do not send newsletters that have to be culled for news. **You** decide what is most important. Actions and projects are of the greatest interest to people—they want to know what you are doing.

Articles intended for publication should be emailed to **[vfp-newsletter@yahoogroups.com](mailto:vfp-newsletter@yahoogroups.com)**

or in the absence of email send a **typed** copy to the above address. Please keep the articles reasonably short (under 500 words), although longer articles will be accepted if space and interest permit.

### VFP STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

We, having dutifully served our nation, do hereby affirm our greater responsibility to serve the cause of world peace.

To this end we will work, with others:

- Toward increasing public awareness of the costs of war;
- To restrain our government from intervening, overtly and covertly, in the internal affairs of other nations;
- To end the arms race and to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons; and
- To abolish war as an instrument of international policy.

To achieve these goals, members of Veterans for Peace pledge to use non-violent means and to maintain an organization that is both democratic and open with the understanding that all members are trusted to act in the best interests of the group for the larger purpose of world peace.

We urge all veterans who share this vision to join us.

## Chapter News

**Chapter 1 ME:** Maine VFP worked hard in trying to keep NJROTC out of Gardiner High School. Numerous members and other activists spoke to the school board from various viewpoints against JROTC—including a student who spoke about the teaching of distortions of history. The passion fell on deaf ears. The board voted in favor of “military virtues.” JROTC, and more generally the militarization of youth, remains an area in which VFP should be more active as a national organization. The Albuquerque convention, in part, will address this issue. See also New England VFP

**Chapter 7 CA:** Ed Ellis reports the main chapter activity is the Veterans Speaker Bureau, which sends two-veteran teams into LA high schools to talk about their various military experiences. Frank Dorel has become a full time activist and attends peace and protests around the area.

**Chapter 22 CA:** As usual, Fredy Champagne is project-bound out of Garberville—this time to Vietnam with the My Lai Project, joining with other VFP members. Fredy is stepping down as co-chair of Iraq Water Project.

**Chapter 31 PA:** The Chapter held its VFP Annual Banquet on May 16 under the theme Honoring the Spirit of Dissent. A highlight of the evening was the presentation of Eugene Bloomfield Award to a recent high school graduate, Allison Styan. Eugene, a chapter member who died a few years ago, was a longtime passionate dissenter. Allison, who exuded courage, poise and maturity in her remarks accepting the award, has worked on the Campaign for Debt Relief, has been on a Witness For Peace teen delegation to Nicaragua, has traveled to Chiapas, and is a founding member of both Teens For Tolerance and Diversity and the Youth Coalition For Human Rights. This successful annual event is a model for other chapters to follow.

**Chapter 39 OH:** Last August Chuck Overby spent a week in North Korea on a Japanese-youth-organized tour, going ashore through the east coast city of Wonsan—his bomber crew’s first target almost a century before. He was struck by the friendly welcome from North Korean youth in light of what he and his crew may well have dropped on their grandparents. Chuck, founder of the Article Nine Society (advocating the adoption by other nations of Japan’s constitutional renouncement of war), has expressed great concern over current Japanese rumblings about changing Article Nine.

**Chapter 45 MA:** The chapter held its annual peace poetry contest for school children 1 through 12 on April 29 at the Ipswich Congregational Church. There were some 280 entries and numerous prizes. Two VFP members acted as judges at the event attended by more than a hundred people. The event received 4 nights of cable television exposure, and many people were impressed with the event and the quality of the poetry. Perhaps not surprisingly, most of the poems reflected concern for peace in the schools themselves. VFP received a big boost from the event. See also New England VFP.

**Chapter 46 CA:** Phil Butler reports interest has never been better since the Gulf War “surge” in the early 90s. The chapter is looking forward to another successful July 4<sup>th</sup> parade and is getting energized around a new issue of the Navy wanting to establish a new bombing range at Ft. Hunter Liggett (Vieques West??), an hour south of Monterey in the middle of a wildlife and nature preserve.

**Chapter 62 MO:** Bud Duraps took part in Phase II of the Iraq Water Project. He came home more convinced more than ever that the U.S. pursues sanctions because it still believes Saddam can be overthrown if the Iraqi people are made to suffer enough. Bud has been giving talks on his experiences with the IWP. Atomic Vet Lincoln Grahls is a candidate for serving on a panel at the National Cancer Institute. If chosen, Linc will put his knowledge of military carcinogens (radiation, DU, Agent Orange, etc.) to use. He also attended the Huntsville conference and protest. In addition to his travels on behalf of the Korea Truth Commission, Woody Powell has been giving talks at universities and elsewhere on Mexico and Colombia. All three of these members have appeared at protests in St. Louis on Iraq sanctions and on crop destruction in Colombia using Monsanto’s Round-Up. Monsanto has a plant in St. Louis.

Chapter 64 AL: The chapter was a co-sponsor of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space conference in Huntsville. President Dave Waters welcomed the conference attendees on behalf of the chapter. One of the conference topics addressed the post WWII German (and therefore Nazi in some cases) origins of the U.S. space program, particularly in light of the current day U.S. Space Command’s “full spectrum dominance” vision for U.S. control of the planet. Dave and others spoke sensitively to this issue, knowing that many of these space pioneers were revered locally and nationally, and what it might say about “them”—and “us”.

**Chapter 69 CA:** The chapter plans to send resolution to the convention in support of Yesh Guval, the organization of Israeli soldiers that refuse duty in the occupied territories. The Vice-Commander of the American Legion District 8 has asked the chapter to have its members join the AL to reactivate AL Post #315!! The chapter feels there are potential opportunities to affect AL (and VFW) attitudes on a number of issues. The chapter, through the Veterans Speakers Alliance, is active in speaking in high schools against militarism.

**New England VFP:** In an effort to sponsor VFP regional cooperation, ME, NH and MA chapters sponsored an evening panel and lecture event in Ogunquit ME entitled “What in the World is Going On?” Tom Gale, Miles Freeman, Sean Donahue, Art Whitman, Stephanie Niketic and Eric Veltman talked and interacted with the audience of around 35 on a variety of subjects over the course of an evening. Topics were: Iraq and the IWP, Colombia, the Middle East, Yugoslavia and tips on how to get the media interested in progressive causes. John Schuchardt was moderator. While the attendance was a bit disappointing, the presentations went well and the was an encouraging first effort in regional collaboration.

## **Book Review**

### ***Fire In The Hole—a Mortorman In Vietnam***

It's not every day that a friend and member of Veterans For Peace writes an exceptionally well-written and high-quality book, but that has happened for me. VFP member Michael Orange has written about his experiences in Vietnam in *Fire in the Hole—a Mortorman in Vietnam*.

Begun as a personal memoir to aid in his own healing and relief from the almost continuous nightmares of the past thirty years, the quality of the story was such that Michael and his wife thought the work should be published, especially to aid other veterans in their healing. After reading the book, I feel it would be of benefit to all people, not just veterans; they will gain a better understanding of the insanity of war and the kinds of things that are done in times in war, and also what would lead (in this particular case) a young man to change from seminarian to soldier.

The timing of the book seems particularly important in light of the revelations of Robert Kerrey's involvement in the taking of civilian lives during a military operation while serving in Vietnam.

I recommend that all VFP members read the book and promote it within their chapters, not only because it is a good book and was written by one of our brothers, but also because Michael hopes to donate the proceeds from the book to help aid the healing of other veterans.

The \$12.95 book may be ordered over the Internet at **www.iuniverse.com** or by a toll-free phone call to 877-823-9235.

### **Crosses of Iron**

*by Mike Ferner, Chapter 39, Ohio*

*This article appeared in the February 24 Toledo Blade.*

Just exactly what were civilians doing at the controls of the nuclear submarine USS Greenville when it sank the Japanese fishing trawler and killed nine vocational high school students? The official Navy inquiry has begun. Rest assured, its findings will completely ignore what civilians were really doing at the controls.

That's because those civilians weren't trimming the rudder a couple degrees, or jettisoning ballast under strict supervision of a trained officer. The civilians on the Greenville performed exactly the same function that civilians perform at the controls of any number of Navy warships - ensuring support for a madly bloated military budget.

Part of the *Blade's* coverage of the Ehime Maru tragedy included a sidebar about two Toledoans who had similarly thrilled at controlling a 360-foot nuclear-powered sub armed with a hundred atomic weapons. The two were among 20 local dignitaries who wined, dined, and sailed

aboard the USS Toledo in 1997.

Asked to comment about having civilians at the controls of a nuclear submarine, one of them, a former city councilman whose teenage son joined him on the Toledo, reassured us that "the chief of the boat was right there with us." Added the other, "they were telling us what to do."

Five years before that little junket, when the USS Toledo was just beginning its billion-dollar construction, a wholesome, young Navy lieutenant commander in dress whites stood before Toledo City Council. He presented a small model of the sub to the mayor and invited us all to join him on the city's namesake when it was commissioned. The mayor joined in the chorus of "oohs" and "aahs", and later placed the model prominently in his office.

A relentless Navy PR barrage followed that City Council presentation. Crewmembers were flown back to visit city schools. Sailors adopted pen pals. News stories on the sub's construction appeared regularly in the media.

One in 1995 was particularly ironic. Just after the local anchorman reported that the newly elected Gingrich House of Representatives planned to reduce a federal budget deficit by cutting the school lunch program, up came footage of six junior high school boys smartly saluting the model of the USS Toledo they had constructed for a physics class.

Not mentioned in the report were two possible math class applications: The sub's construction cost alone would fund the entire school lunch and breakfast program for all of Ohio for five years, and Toledo taxpayers annually sent twice as many dollars to the Pentagon as they kept locally to run their entire city.

When commissioning day finally rolled around, airwaves and newspaper pages were glutted with stories covering every possible angle of the death ship's construction and launch. Elected officials and civic leaders "oohed" and "aahed" via satellite in front of the real thing.

As a Navy hospital corpsman during the Vietnam War, I saw firsthand the real purpose of military hardware. Later, as an elected official I saw firsthand what happens when the Pentagon fattens at the expense of our cities.

Former President and Army Gen. Dwight Eisenhower put it well: "Every gun that is made, every warship launched ... signifies in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children ... This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron."

The sanitized thrill of momentarily controlling a nuclear sub has nothing to do with the realities I've seen or the world Mr. Eisenhower described. It has everything to do with perpetuating a myth that benefits Pentagon planners and military contractors.

## 2001 VFP Annual Meeting

*Holiday Inn Mountain View*  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
August 24-26

**TENTATIVE PROGRAM**  
(details in a separate mailing)

### **Panels**

Western Hemisphere  
Middle East

### **Workshops**

Energy and the Military in New Mexico  
Weapons in Space  
Indigenous Homelands under Siege  
Globalization and its Impact on World Peace  
Airwaves under Siege: Plight of Alternative Broadcasting  
Militarization of our Youth: Youth Perspective

### **Dinner and Luncheon Speakers**

Ward Churchill  
Fr. Roy Bourgeois  
Phyllis Hedges (Attorney, on Wen Ho Lee)

### **Entertainment**

Goatheads

## *Silent Auction at Annual Meeting*

All participants attending the 2000 VFP Annual Meeting last summer in Washington had the opportunity to participate in the silent auction Hari Scordo organized. **The auction will be repeated this year in Albuquerque with the proceeds split equally between the New Mexico VFP Chapter and the national office.** In a silent auction the items being sold are distributed around a room and accompanied by a paper where the bidder can write his/her name and the price offered for the item. Each subsequent bid must be higher than the previous and continues until the auction closes. **Everyone attending the Annual Meeting is encouraged to bring donated items to be auctioned.** Some of the more popular and successful items are local wines and spirits, original art works or professional art reproductions. If you are an author or are the subject of a book, autographed copies have proven to be a meaningful and popular item. Chapters and individuals are encouraged to visit local business in their respective communities and ask for donations that could be auctioned. New tee shirts, jackets, complimentary bed and breakfast nights, tours and jewelry items can bring in a substantial amount. Use your imagination; bring lots of items—and more cash. You will discover this is a fun and painless way to raise funds for Veterans For Peace.



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