



# VETERANS FOR PEACE

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President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

October 27, 2009

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Dear President Obama,

As veterans of our nation's wars, we insist you hear our call.

British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin spoke an unassailable truth when he said, "War would end if the dead could return." If you believe that is true, Mr. President and Members of the House, you must heed our counsel well: we are the closest anyone can come to that truth the dead would speak. Stop the killing!

Because we personally understand what war truly means, we have written, called and demonstrated repeatedly for an end to the killing in Afghanistan and Iraq. We have protested at and have been arrested in House Office Buildings, the House Gallery, the White House and Congressional offices across the nation. We have pleaded, then demanded, that you stop the suffering in these countries. Although promised prior to the election, no combat brigades have returned from Iraq. And now we can smell the mire of escalation in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Nevertheless, we cannot cease to appeal to that spark of humanity in your hearts. We know wealthy, powerful interests such as weapons contractors, lobbyists and right-wing broadcasters daily make a deafening noise, trying to drown out the voice that insists, "Stop the killing." We also know that no matter how quiet the voice of humanity might become, it can never be silenced.

So we lift up to you voices much more eloquent than our own, voices of soldiers who survived the worst fighting human beings have ever experienced, World War One. For nearly 100 years, the wisdom and compassion of their poetry has endured. Their words now stand as one of the world's most powerful witnesses to the madness of war.

(over)

Working Together For Peace and Justice since 1985

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

You must hear them.

*...And you yourself would mutter when  
You took the things that once were men,  
And sped them through that zone of hate  
To where the dripping surgeons wait;  
And wonder too if in God's sight  
War ever, ever can be right.*

– From “[Foreword](#)” by British ambulance driver, Robert Service

And

*...If in some smothering dreams you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,  
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old Lie; Dulce et Decorum est  
Pro patria mori.*

– From “[Dulce et Decorum est](#)” (It is Sweet and Right to Die for Your Country) by British Army Lt. Wilfred Owen, killed a week before the 1918 Armistice.

More than that we cannot say to you, so we will address our former brothers and sisters in arms who are now our brothers and sisters in peace.

Most Sincerely,



Mike Ferner  
National President  
Veterans For Peace

cc: Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House  
Steny H. Hoyer, Majority Leader of the House  
John Boehner, Republican Leader of the House  
James E. Clyburn, House Majority Whip  
Eric Cantor, Republican Whip