



Exposing the True Costs of War
and Militarism Since 1985

VETERANS FOR PEACE

Organized locally. Recognized internationally.

FALL 2014

Peace at Home, Peace Abroad

Margaret Stevens



Margaret Stevens speaking at Climate March

Speech given at the Climate March in New York, September 21, 2014

Greetings everyone. And a special shout out to all of the veterans out here who have joined the peace and justice movement and are marching with us today. We're proud to say that just a few weeks ago members of Veterans For Peace joined thousands of others across the U.S. in Ferguson, Missouri, in the aftermath of the wholesale police execution of Michael Brown. Protestors cheered their support when veterans showed up.

Right now, Veterans For Peace is making one of our biggest leaps as an organization by developing a

new means of expressing our struggle for peace; we're uncovering a new lens, a new vision, a "second sight" as Du Bois would call it, for understanding how we cannot isolate or even worse limit our efforts to Peace Abroad and separate our movement from the cause of Peace at Home. Rather, we see now more clearly

than ever that we must be in the forefront of using this new lens, this new understanding of what we're calling "Peace at Home, Peace Abroad."

But it's not enough to stop there. Because what do we mean when we say "at home" vs. "abroad"? Where do the borders of our home begin and end, and when does a region in the world become abroad? If you're not a Native American, you most definitely have roots abroad, and yet I'm sure you consider the U.S. your home. Most Native people understood hundreds of years ago on a much more profound level than we do today that earth itself is our home and that modern notions of property and wealth are indeed absurd and counterproductive to human growth as a species. Wherever humans reside, it is our home—as human beings.

So we in VFP are hardly the first people to discover or understand

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Patrick McCann



Our 29th annual convention in July in Asheville, NC may have been our best ever. Why? 50 of the almost 350 attendees at the convention were post-9/11 veterans, signaling a potentially transforming phenomena for VFP. We put our money where our mouth is, investing thousands of dollars to bring young veterans, women veterans, and veterans of color to the convention. We must now ensure that this infusion becomes part of VFP's permanent landscape.

Another important advance was the unveiling of VFP's new orientation to build "Peace at Home, Peace Abroad." Members of our Board of Directors have eloquently argued that VFP should focus energy toward

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Chuck Rossi, Editor
Contributing Editors:
Will Shapira
W.D. Ehrhart

achieving peace at home to help achieve peace abroad. Directing nonviolent actions, projects, and campaigns toward ending injustice and violence in our communities will build credibility for VFP, attracting new members and financial support. Communities appreciate and support organizations who help to make their community safer and more peaceful. VFP's organizing work around Ferguson, Missouri, demanding justice for Michael Brown reflects our commitment to that effort.

The VFP Development Committee unveiled our planned giving campaign at the Saturday night banquet. This campaign encourages members to remember VFP in their will. As if to highlight the potential of this initiative, we received a bequest for \$80,000 the week after the convention (perhaps our largest donation ever). Another part of institutionalizing VFP finances to build a "lean, green, peace machine" is the recurring credit card contributions to VFP that many of us make (monthly tax-deductible donations deducted quarterly). We expect these campaigns (along with membership dues and solicitation of major donors) to "move the goalposts" for VFP, placing us on a higher plane than VFP has ever seen.

We are excited about VFP's future prospects, and are moving now to consolidate the ad-



Convention registration area.

vances of this year's convention. We anticipate an enormously successful 30th annual convention in San Diego next August 6 – 10, and are already working on making that happen. Onward and upward!



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Michael McPhearson



For those who did not make it to the National Convention in Asheville NC, I want to tell you it was a great success. Members enjoyed each other's company and shared stories, ideas, information, and strategies to work for peace. We made new friends and re-united with people we have not seen since last convention or in some cases many years. We also had a large contingent of veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars attend. It was a wonderful weekend.

In the weeks leading up to the convention, there was a listserv conversation questioning the relevance of Veterans For Peace. While it is important for any organization to evaluate its relevance, I think the better questions for us to ask are how can we be more effective and efficient at how we do our work? How can our organization have greater impact?

The answer to our relevance is seen in the issues we confront and what we do and say. Let us look at the wide range of important issues on which we have a relevant voice. Today, the U.S. is engaged in a new and expanding war in Iraq and Syria. We, with our partner organizations Iraq Veterans Against the War and Military Families Speak Out are the only veterans and active duty-centered associations calling for the U.S. to use its diplomatic and eco-

nomie power instead of its military power to confront the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Former U.S. Army Colonel and retired U.S. State Department official Ann Wright was barred from a Senate hearing on ISIL because she was wearing a VFP t-shirt. Former U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Lorna VanderZanden was arrested outside the White House while protesting this latest round of U.S. war making. Both are VFP life members. These acts of protest are important, because we publically show our opposition and call our leaders to task. We must always exercise these constitutional rights to keep them, but more so in a militarized warring state.

However, we do more than protest, we also educate. We speak about facets of war on which traditional veteran organizations are mum and most others want to ignore. When the latest Veterans Administration scandal hit the news, VFP explained that the main reason for the current crisis is the overwhelming number of veterans from decades of endless war; WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, the Gulf Wars, and now expansion of current era of wars. These wars and all operations in between are also a clear example of a pattern of abuse to which services members are subjected. Service members encounter rampant sexual assault and rape and the suicide crisis has worsened; yet war is always chosen as the answer to conflict.

We uncover hidden connections between struggles at home and war abroad. Peace at Home and Peace Abroad, while not a new campaign or initiative, is a way to organize our work, talk about our

common interests, and look for opportunities to make alliances for positive change. VFP was very visible in the recent Climate March attended by over 400,000 marchers. We floated a carbon bomb blimp highlighting the fact that the U.S. military has the largest single carbon footprint in the world.

Communities across the nation face lack of investment in education, infrastructure, and human services; starved of resources that are used instead for war. Like communities around the globe facing U.S. militarism and war as the answer to global conflict, the answer to social challenges here at home are more jails and police. Veterans For Peace has been very active in the wake of the uprising in Ferguson, MO. We call for the demilitarization of the police and stand in solidarity with the people of Ferguson as they struggle for racial, economic, and social justice. If there is one place where *No Justice No Peace* has meaning today, it is in Ferguson. We must help build a path of peace here at home so that people can believe in the possibility and work for peace abroad.

There is no reason to wonder about the relevance of Veterans For Peace. That should not be in doubt. Everywhere we go people appreciate our solidarity, because, deserved or not, at times our voice and our experiences hold special weight. We must honor our veterans' privilege by being more effective and efficient at challenging war. We must tell our stories as veterans who are now working for peace. And we must continue to tell the truth about war and militarism, and how they affect all aspects of society. To put it simply, our nation is addicted to war. We are here as veterans to make our country face this addiction and work to end it.



MILITARIZATION OF POLICE IS A VFP ISSUE

Casey Stinemetz

The New York Times

December 2, 2011

1968

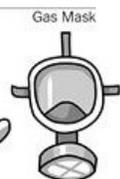
Democratic National Convention Riot
Chicago Police Department (depicted). Also present: National Guard and United States Army.



Characteristics of "Escalated Force":

Inflexibility
Intolerance of disorder and poor communication.

Retributive Force
Violence frequently used against socially and legally transgressive groups.



Tear Gas Grenades
Weaponized chemical agent, reacts with moisture on the skin and in the eyes.

1995

Million Man March
Washington D.C. police (depicted). Also present: U.S. Park Police.



Standard "Soft Hat" Uniforms

Characteristics of "Negotiated Management":



Communication
Coordinated efforts with event organizers to minimize risk of injury on both sides.



Flexibility
Superior officers in the field ready to adapt to changing conditions.

2011

Occupy Oakland Eviction
Oakland Police Department (depicted). Also present: Other agencies.



Riot Helmet with Face Shield

Gas Mask

Kevlar Tactical Body Armor

12-Gauge Shotgun (With "Less Lethal" Rounds)

"Less Lethal" Projectiles:



Bean Bag Round



Tear Gas Canister (used with 40-Millimeter Launcher)

Characteristics of "Miami Model":

Pre-emption
Protests managed through permit process and preemptive arrests.

Conspicuous Force
Regular use of intimidation, less lethal weapons and physical force.



Flash Bangs (use disputed)
Non-lethal pyrotechnic grenade, produces a flash of light and sound designed to stun and temporarily incapacitate.

The VFP national office staff began to examine the militarization of the police early this year. Executive Director Michael McPhearson addressed the issue on a local panel hosted by Drone Free Saint Louis, as part of organizing efforts to stop police from acquiring drones.

In August, after unarmed teenager Michael Brown was killed by a Ferguson, Missouri, police officer, people across the country turned to newscasts, social media, and live feeds to attempt to make sense of what was happening. Haunting images of local police officers using military equipment on protesters in Ferguson emerged, making it impossible to deny that militarization of police is a real issue in our own streets. In St. Louis, many of us witnessed firsthand the escalation of violence over the following weeks, at the hands of local police.

At our 2014 National Convention, we discussed the concepts and theories of building peace at home and peace abroad. Now is the time to put those ideas into action. People across the country are now ready for change: to reform the policies and the system that has allowed oppression and police brutality to haunt our streets. This system is one that is supported by the U.S. war machine. As Veterans For Peace, we can lead the discussion about the militarization of our communities, and about the Pentagon's program to equip local and state police departments with military surplus weaponry.

How Did We Get Here?

When comparing today's police officer with those of the past, it is easy to see the differences from the equipment to the mentality. Over the past several decades

while many of us weren't paying attention, the U.S. government has been quietly arming our local police with military weaponry.

This shift was initiated by the Nixon administration's declaration of the war on drugs in the early 1970s. Then, in the 1980s, as result of President Reagan's escalation, millions of federal dollars were poured into the drug war, pivoting the focus of local law enforcement away from violent and property crimes to mostly small-time drug offenders.

In recent years, the U.S government has initiated a program that funnels to local police equipment that was designed and intended for use in a war zone. Congress in 1990 enacted the National Defense Authorization Act. Section 1208 of the NDAA allowed the Secretary of Defense to "transfer to Federal and

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100 YEARS AGO SOLDIERS SAID NO TO WAR!

Susan Schnall

Just before Christmas, 1914, British and German soldiers along the western front of World War I made temporary peace. The truce broke out along the static line of trenches and barbed wire entanglements that stretched from the coast of the North Sea southward to the Swiss border. Armies employed huge artillery bombardments followed by attacks of tens of thousands of soldiers. However, in December 2014, ordinary soldiers made temporary peace and the western front fell silent. The truce broke out spontaneously in many places, with troops singing Christmas carols, shouting out a truce, coming out of the trenches, and exchanging cigarettes and souvenirs. This extraordinary event was a call to peace among enemy soldiers.

But by the end of December 1914, almost 1 million soldiers and civilians had died as a result of the war. The slaughter of the Great War claimed over 37 million civilian and military casualties.



As veterans of war, we at the Veterans Peace Council reclaim that history of the Christmas Truce in their name. As witnesses to and instruments of the brutality and dehumanization of armed conflict, we are no longer willing to be used to bring death, destruction, and suffering to others. We commemorate the Christmas Truce of 1914 with a determination to reconcile with enemies, to reconstruct and rebuild after war's devastation, and to lay down arms.

We call on warring factions, sects, and nations to find the road to peace. Please join us by signing The Call To End All War: veteranspeacecouncil.org.

Formed in the late 1990s under the leadership of the late David Cline, the **Veterans Peace Council** consists of representatives of various organizations, primarily the local chapters of Veterans For Peace and the metro area chapter of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, including Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, and Military Families Speak Out. The Council has staged forums and speak-outs on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, initiated the Veterans Support Vieques campaign, and participated in Operation Dire Distress.

The Council stopped meeting when Dave died. It was revived during the February 2013 commemoration of Dave's life and legacy. The Council meets regularly to discuss issues of common interest and to stage events, such as the May 2014 conference on the veterans' peace movement, last September's Veterans Peace Walk at the United Nations, and the "Reclaim Armistice Day" Campaign.



VFP REMEMBERS 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN WAR IN VIETNAM



The Full Disclosure Campaign is a Veterans For Peace effort to speak truth to power and keep alive the antiwar perspective on the Vietnam War as we approach a series of 50th anniversary events. It represents a clear alternative to the Department of Defense's current efforts to sanitize and mythologize the American war in Vietnam and to thereby legitimize further unnecessary and destructive wars.

Review tremendous resources and keep up with the campaign vietnamfulldisclosure.org





MORE WAR IS NOT THE SOLUTION

Veterans For Peace is disappointed but not surprised by the so called strategy President Obama presented on September 10 for responding to the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). We are disappointed because it is more of the same. The U.S. will continue to be “the greatest purveyor of violence” on the earth. It will continue to follow a failed policy of war-making in the Middle East. It will continue to waste precious financial resources which should be directed toward human needs and to support the U.S. economy. It will continue to put U.S. service members in harm’s way when other solutions are possible, and it will continue to take the lives of innocent people, most of whom will undoubtedly be women and children who are always disproportionately impacted by war.

We are not surprised because it has been made clear to us that our leaders are not interested in finding solutions other than war to solve international conflicts. After thirteen years of war what has been accomplished? Iraq and Afghanistan are in shambles, the Taliban has not been defeated, al Qaeda has further decentralized to at least thirty countries, ISIL has emerged as a power of sorts in Iraq and Syria, and a State Department report outlines that terrorism increased by 43% in 2013. By any objective measure, U.S. foreign policy in the Iraq and Afghanistan from Bush to Obama has been a failure. Yet more war is put forth as the answer, even though President Obama himself in the recent past said there is not a military solution to the violence in Iraq and explained that ISIL does not pose an immediate threat to the U.S. Why then do we continue down this path?

There are solutions to confronting ISIL which do not include U.S. military action.

Stop the airstrikes because the Sunni leaders and militia, who President Obama acknowledges must be persuaded to break with ISIL, see the U.S. as acting as the air force for the Kurds and Shia against Sunnis. The driving force for the Sunni-ISIL alliance is the alienation of Sunnis from Baghdad by the previous Iraqi administration. Bombing Sunnis will not help mend this relationship.

Stop the slippery slope of sending troops to Iraq and stop sending more weapons that fuel the conflict, killing more civilians and ignoring human rights violations committed by “allies.” This includes pressuring countries to stop supporting and selling arms to ISIL and stopping all black market weapons sales.

Make diplomacy the number one priority. Since it is clear there is no military solution, seriously engage with everyone in the region, including Iran which is needed to force the Iraqi government to be more inclusive of Sunni leaders. Without an inclusive government in Iraq there is no way to effectively confront ISIL.

Initiate a new effort at building a broad diplomatic solution in the United Nations to use diplomatic and financial pressure to stop countries from financing and arming ISIL and other fighters in Syria. An arms embargo on all sides should be on the long-term agenda.

Make a real effort to restart UN negotiations to end the civil war in Syria. Set aside pre-conceived demands and work to end the violence. Once that is achieved the people of Syria can begin to chart their destiny.

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VFP GEARS UP LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

Virginia Druhe



It is often said that to achieve social change we need to Educate, Agitate, and Legislate -- that is, create an informed public that will act to demand a change in policy. Whether we like it or not, members of Congress are making decisions that affect issues and people we care

about deeply. They are one of the most direct routes to change.

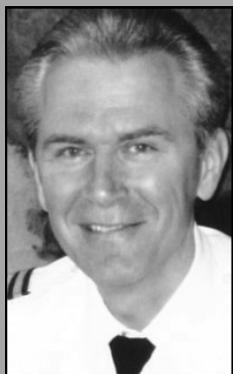
To help sustain a focus on legislative issues, VFP has begun sending a monthly Legislative Update via email. We encourage a few members in each chapter to build an active relationship with their Senators and Representative. Consistent efforts like these develop credibility and strengthen the veteran voice for peace in Washington. The Legislative Action page of the web site has a variety of tools and suggestions on how to work with Congress.

Often, important legislative activity is focused to a few specific days

or a few specific legislators. VFP's Legislative Listserve will send more timely updates when there is an opportunity to act on legislative issues important to VFP's priorities. To join, send an email to vfp-legislation-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. This list is NOT a discussion list; you will only receive action alerts.

Based on our Mission Statement, Veterans For Peace has three main legislative priorities:

- End current & prevent future wars
- Reduce and redistribute military spending
- Healing the wounds of war in U.S. veterans and overseas



Thank You, Ed Mucha!

Veterans For Peace recently received a very generous bequest as beneficiary of a life insurance policy of Edward Mucha. We are grateful for Ed's active commitment to peace and to Veterans For Peace. We extend our sympathy to Ed's wife, Patricia, his children and all who miss him.



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Massively increase humanitarian efforts through the UN and any other means. Real and effective efforts to relieve suffering will go a long way in convincing people to break with ISIL. More U.S. bombings and killings will only confirm that the U.S. is the enemy of Islam.

President Obama outlined a strategy no different from what the U.S. has done for the past thirteen years. It is not a plan for success, it is a gamble that war will work this time when it has spectacularly failed thus far. We at Veterans For Peace challenge the American people to ask whose interests does endless war serve? Who is paying for these wars, whose children are dying in these wars and who is getting paid to finance and provide weapons for these wars? We the people are being driven by manipulated fear to support policies that are not in our interest. Peace is harder than war, but it is cheaper in blood and treasure. After thirteen years it is time to take another path, the path of peace.

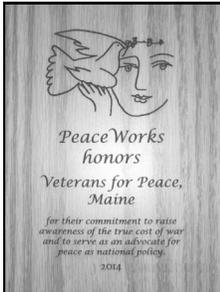
- September, 2014



VFP CHAPTER REPORTS

CHAPTER 1 - PORTLAND, ME

Richard Clement



Tom Sturtevant Chapter Member Regis Tremblay has had continued remarkable reception for his documentary *Ghosts of Jeju*. It has been screened around the world and has been translated into many languages. Great job, Regis!

Founding member Doug Rawlings and current chapter President, Richard Clement and wife Rita, attended the 2014 Convention in Asheville, N.C. Super convention hosted by VFP Chapter 99. Thoroughly enjoyable experience.

At the 10th annual Brunswick Maine Peace Fair, Maine Veterans For Peace was honored with the 2014 PeaceMaker Award. The plaque reads: "for their commitment to raise awareness of the true cost of war and to serve as an advocate for peace as national policy." Thank you PeaceWorks for this honor and recognition.

CHAPTER 23 - ROCHESTER, NY

Lew Montenaggi

The Chapter has now been revived after a period of dormancy. We had our first meeting in four years in April. With the help of a core of long-time VFP members, we have hit the ground running.

With the goal of getting our presence and message known in the greater Rochester community, we

have participated as an organization, with our Chapter banner and flag flying, in the following actions.

- An anti-drone rally at Hancock Air Base in Syracuse
- The "official" Rochester Memorial Day Parade, which we have been doing for the past several years (even during our dormancy)
- A table at an information program for student veterans at Genesee Community College
- The local Close Guantanamo protest on May 23, part of a national action
- Four members attended the National Convention
- Participated in the Rochester Labor Council's annual Labor Day Parade, emphasizing the costs of maintaining the US war machine.

We are holding monthly meetings. We have reached out to the local IVAW chapter. Two post-9/11 veterans attended our August meeting. We are now working on Chapter by-laws and filling leadership positions.

CHAPTER 27 - MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Larry Johnson

Since the late 80s, the Chapter has celebrated November 11 as the original Armistice, with bells of peace ringing 11 times at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. This year a State Arts Board grant allowed 11 of us to make our own bells with sculptor, Gita Ghei. That led to an invitation to be at the Festival of Nations, an enormous annual event at the St. Paul Civic Centre, drawing thousands from the 5 state region. We talked with many about why we ring bells for peace, and how the Kellogg-

Briand Pact, outlawing war, emerged from the massive peace movement following World War I. As darkness fell in front of the Science Museum on Kellogg, we rang bells 11 times and planted flags to claim the boulevard for the work of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which Kellogg himself said should be hanging in every public institution. Our next major work to "enforce" the Pact is the annual bus, full of activists and college students, to the "Close the School of Americas" event in Columbus, GA.



Chapter 27 members ring bells on Armistice Day

CHAPTER 31 - PHILADELPHIA, PA

Chuck Rossi

The Chapter once again cosponsored with Physicians for Social Responsibility and others Legs Against Arms, a walk/run and educational exhibition to bring attention to the problem of gun violence in the city. Mike Felker was our representative runner and a top fund raiser for the cause. Our annual banquet was special this year: we honored three members of the Citizens Commission to Investigate the FBI who carried out a history-changing burglary of an FBI office in suburban Philadelphia in 1971 and exposed the FBI's surveillance of peace activists through the infamous and largely illegal CoIntelpro project. Despite a massive FBI investigation, the iden-

tity of the burglars remained unknown until recently with the publication of the book *The Burglary The Discovery of J. Edgar Hoover's Secret FBI* and the premier of the film titled simply *1971*; the book and the film are more thriller than documentary. We were very pleased to recognize the brave actions of John Raines, Bonnie Raines, and Keith Forsyth who, along with Daniel Ellsberg and Edward Snowden, have made clearer the more opaque and often lawless workings of the government. Thank you John, Bonnie, and Keith for your service.



The burglars, John & Bonnie Raines & Keith Forsyth respond to questions.

CHAPTER 34 - NEW YORK, NY

Bob Keilbach

The Kaufman/Pahios Chapter members participate in numerous anti-war and human rights actions, education, and counter-recruitment activities. Meetings are held on 3rd Wednesday of each month; recent speaker was Dr. Tom Fasy reporting on his recent trip to Jordan and Iraq, where he noted significant health issues among Iraqi civilians, correlated with U.S. use of uranium weapons.

Recent events: Conference regarding Full Disclosure: Honest Commemoration of the American War in Vietnam, attended by Vietnamese Ambassador to UN, and testimony from Veterans; Memorial Day Observance to honor fallen comrades and all victims of war, a very moving ceremony with 52 attendees; Heritage of Pride Parade where we had a large VFP Chelsea Manning Support Contingent near front of the Parade.

Members attended the People's Climate March on Sept. 21, in con-

junction with UN Summit on Climate Change. We are participating with other peace and social justice groups, collaborating with artists designing inflatable pieces for the march; NYC Armistice/Veterans Day Parade; Holiday Party; and Veterans Peace Council commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Christmas Peace Truce of 1914, the extraordinary cessation of hostilities during the holiday season in the first year of WWI. A commemoration action is being planned for December 20 at Cooper Union.

CHAPTER 35 - SPOKANE, WA

Hollis Higgins

Our 22 members carry on in Spokane. The "Friends of 035" list, expands our actionable base. Members Ray Thorne, Bobby Kirl, and Tom Charles have recorded interviews that can be podcast on local Thin Air Community Radio Station, KYRS, 88.1 & 92.3 FM.

This summer season our Outreach Booth appeared at Earth Day at Riverfront Park, Out Spokane's Pride Festival & Parade, KYRS Marmotfest, and the Perry Street Fair. Six members attended the VFP Regional Conference in Tacoma (Feb. '14). In March we donated \$400 and staged a "Truth In Recruitment" workshop at the annual Peace & Economic Justice Action Conference. We sent \$200 to Under The Hood. We bought a full-page ad in the National VFP Convention Program.

Work continues on having Opt Out information available for students, monitoring the environmental impacts of Fairchild Air Force Base, police accountability, a Peace Promotion Agency to collect and issue "Peace Credits," and the Peace & Justice Action League coalition to "make militarism irrelevant."

Current projects include protesting Condoleezza Rice's appearance at the Convention Center on Oct. 9th, raising a donation to Wah Bin Chapter 161 in Viet Nam, op-

posing the Viet Nam war commemoration whitewash, Veterans Day activities, and raising awareness of the Christmas Truce of WWI.



Chapter 35 in the Spokane Pride Parade

CHAPTER 41 - CAPE COD, MA

Duke Ellis

On Memorial Day and during the summer we continued to emphasize our "22 Each Day" focus, meant to promote awareness and action about the horrendous military suicide rates (active duty and veteran) over the past several years. We wear armbands with "22" on them and try to link-up with other civilian and veterans groups which are working on this issue. As Veterans day approaches we plan to intensify our outreach to younger vets through IVAW and IAVA (Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America), perhaps with a theme of: "From Veterans Against THIS War to Veterans Against All Wars to Veterans For Peace"

On July 22 our Chapter leadership joined with "The Cape and Islands Veterans Outreach Center" in organizing and participating in a major fundraising event to benefit the Center's new complementary and alternative therapy program.

On August 9 we were part of the third annual Cape Cod Veterans Stand Down as local medical and other professionals offered a day of free services to vets. We explain that a part of OUR service to vets is to give them a place to find support for their anti-war sentiments and to add their voices for peace - to ours.

CHAPTER 50 - N. MICHIGAN

Tim Keenan

Chapter 50 recently hosted out second jazz concert/silent auction fundraiser at our local college. The event helps support our John Lewis VFP annual scholarship, which is given annually to a veteran or descendant who is in financial need and shares our mission of peace. The event raised over \$4,000.

We are now in the process of attempting to enter and have a presence at one of our local high schools. Our duty in this situation is to educate our high school students on the facts of the military, not from the eyes of the military recruiter, but from a veteran who may have dissimilar ideas. We will distribute educational handouts and simply state the facts based on our own service connected experiences.

To this point we have been rejected in our requests by the school superintendent to enter the school, rationale being, "if we let you in, we will have to let all other special interests in".

The reason military personnel are allowed to be on campus? The school receives federal funds. Failure to allow the military on campus may result in the loss of these funds.

CHAPTER 55 - SANTA FE, NM

Bob Stearns

On Memorial Day the Chapter honored our deceased members of record by laying flowers on their markers at the Santa Fe National Cemetery. Special events were held for the theater showing of the film *The Kill Team*, concerning a U.S. soldier who refused to take part in lethal violence against innocent Afghans, and for a presentation by Elaine Coleman of excerpts from her father's WW II letters entitled *From Calcutta With Love*.

Ken Mayers reported on his visit with the Veterans Peace Team to

Ferguson Missouri for observing the major protest by black city residents concerning the shooting death by a local policeman of an 18-year-old youth. The Chapter endorsed the New Profile-Amnesty International petition calling for immediate release of all persons held by Israel for their conscientious objection to military service.

CHAPTER 61 - ST LOUIS, MO

David Sladky

In the past 6 months, Chapter members have: tabled at Earth Day, Garlic Fest, 2-day Pride Fest, 3 Jackson Browne concerts (Peoria, Springfield, MO and St. Louis), various films such as *The Invisible War* and talk by Dr. Johnson, the father of murdered Missouri soldier Lavena Johnson. We distributed over 1500 DVDs including *Invisible War I Unmanned*, collected hundreds of signatures in support of Chelsea Manning and gave out over 1,000 of the ever-popular peacock feathers for peace.

Protests/Rallies: Twice with drone @ Whiteman AFB, three local protests in support of Gaza, one was in front of Sen. McCaskill's office, the monthly Women in Black vigil, endorsed and supported efforts in Ferguson protesting the police killing of unarmed teen, Michael Brown. Distributed food at the Ferguson community garden.

We took the drone to Iowa City and Des Moines for the St. Patrick Day weekend protests. We brought Mother Agnes Mariam de la Croix to St. Louis for two speaking engagements. She is mother superior of the monastery of St. James the Mutilated in Syria, a Melkite Greek Catholic monastery in the town of Qara in the Homs diocese.

CHAPTER 63 - ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Alice Thompson

We have participated in numerous police violence protests and in protests against the Hobby Lobby

decision. We have marched in the Fourth of July parade and plan to march in the upcoming State Fair parade, with the release of a fleet of white doves in front of the viewing stand.

We tabled at the University on the occasion of Military Recruitment Day. We met several prospective members and collected some donations.

Our three members who attended the convention were happy to greet two of our former members, Maria Santilli and Maurice Martin. We wish them well in their new endeavors and their new homes.

We are planning details of my upcoming Granny D walk that will begin October 13 (Indigenous People's Day) with a goal of reducing the political power of war profiteers.

CHAPTER 69 - SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Denny Riley

On the third Saturday in August, Chapter members joined with people from over seventy organizations in BLOCK THE BOAT, a demonstration and march on the Port of Oakland to stop the unloading of an Israeli cargo ship. More young people than usual were in the crowd of over 2,000. The uniformed police standing by were in dark blue jumpsuits with embroidered badges and nametags, not in the full combat garb they wore at Occupy and other demonstrations of free speech and assembly since the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

When the ship arrived at the berth, organizers of the protest got word and within thirty minute were able to mobilize four hundred people who picketed the port's entrance. ILWU workers who were called to unload the ship honored the line and stood on the side of justice as they historically have.

For four days the picket line was honored and not breached. Late in that fourth day the ship left port and picketers felt victorious. But the ship circled outside the Golden Gate and returned to another berth

where late at night it was unloaded. Front in the line of demonstrators were Chapter 69 members Arla Ertz and Jim Dorenkott.

shared his insights regarding the creation of this falsehood and other war crime observations. And lastly, we will be participating

Fair. Peace Park maintenance is ongoing with a major work party and planting scheduled in October.



Ch. 71 at our 4th Annual Northern California VFP Conference



Mike Hastie, President Daniel Ortega, Brian Willson, and Betty Leuning

CHAPTER 71 - SONOMA VALLEY, CA

Bill Simon

We hosted and coordinated the annual VFP Northern California Regional Conference in May at Mountain Home Ranch, located in a secluded mountainous area near Calistoga. Ten VFP chapters were represented from Ukiah to Monterey, and 50+ diverse peace community and VFP members attended. Participants enjoyed inspiring guest speakers: Col Ann Wright (Keynote), Phillip Butler, PhD, (author and POW), & Peter Phillips, PhD, professor and author. The conference theme was Developing a Unified VFP Northern California Vision & Voice. We established three collaborative priorities: Deportation of veterans, Membership recruitment, and Debunking the Vietnam re-visioning project of the White House/DOD in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the American War in Vietnam. In addition, conference attendees thoroughly enjoyed the camaraderie, great food, hiking, poetry, and live music.

We recently joined with the Peace and Justice Center of Sonoma County to put on an event: The Gulf of Tonkin Myth 50 Years Later. Fred Ptucha, a Navy Intelligence Officer who served 4 Vietnam tours,

(i.e., both tabling and presenting on the Gulf of Tonkin Myth) in the 17th Annual Progressive Festival again this year.

CHAPTER 72 - PORTLAND, OR

Marian Ward

Chapter members Brian Willson, Mike Hastie and Becky Leuning were guests of the Nicaraguan Government in July for the 35th anniversary celebration of the Sandinista Revolution (July 19). It was an emotional return for Willson, a frequent visitor to Nicaragua between 1986 and 1995. The trio presented an engraved wooden plate from Chapter 72 to President Daniel Ortega. A Sept. 7th garden party featured a report back with visuals by Hastie and music by David Rovics.

On Aug. 6th, chapter members marched with VFP flags flying from the Peace Memorial Park to the Hiroshima/Nagasaki commemoration on the waterfront. Col. Ann Wright was a featured speaker at the annual event, as well as at a VFP-sponsored panel on drones the following evening.

VFP continues tabling at many local events including the annual Vancouver Peace and Justice

CHAPTER 75 - PHOENIX, AZ

Richard Smith

The brutal summer heat in Phoenix usually precludes most activity for any progressive organization. Nevertheless, on August 6, the Winter Soldier Chapter members participated in two events of great significance. On the morning of August 6, Dennis Stout (USA), chapter spokesperson Richard A. Smith, Billy Clark, and Charles Osburn met with three members of Senator John McCain's Phoenix staff. During our one-hour meeting we requested that Senator McCain repudiate his role as this country's most preeminent warmonger and that he explain his recent Senate votes in which he voted against funding the VA. The remainder of our discussion focused on a variety of issues including the Pentagon budget, the, "Inversion" corporate tax dodge, the VA "scandal," sensible gun regulation including background checks and a ban on assault rifles & high capacity magazines, income inequality, immigration reform, the Supremacy Clause (Article VI) vis a vis the "Sovereign Citizen" movement / Cliven Bundy, and the disturbing resurrection of the "States Rights" movement.

Finally we have approached Honoring Arizona's Veterans (HAV), the right-wing group in charge of the Phoenix Veterans Day parade. We offered HAV some concessions in

order to appear in "their" parade on November 11. We will keep you posted

CHAPTER 80 - DULUTH, MN

Phil Anderson

Greg Boertje-Obed, a member of our Chapter is serving a 5-year sentence at Leavenworth Federal Prison for his part in the Transform Now Plowshares action in July of 2012. Greg, along with Sister Megan Rice and Michael Walli (a Viet Nam combat veteran) entered the nuclear weapons complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. They received a harsh and unjust sentence, in part we think for embarrassing authorities about the lax security. Andy Anderson, another member of our chapter, gave testimony at their trial. His status as an 87-year-old WWII combat veteran got him a respectful hearing in an otherwise hostile setting.

Letters to Greg, Megan and Michael, letters to the editor, noting their witness at public events, nominating them for annual peacemaker of the year awards, and planning for a welcome home demonstration are some of the ways we hope to remember and celebrate their witness. We welcome other VFP chapters taking this on as well, and look forward to hearing ideas from others.

Their sentence is being appealed, so we hope their welcome home parties will be sooner, rather than as currently projected.

Greg's address is:

Gregory Boertje-Obed, 08052-016
USP LEAVENWORTH
P.O. BOX 1000
LEAVENWORTH, KS 66048

CHAPTER 91 - SAN DIEGO, CA

Gil Field

The Hugh Thompson Chapter has remained very active over the summer and into the fall. In July, we marched and were well received in the San Diego Pride Parade, the largest parade in San Diego, with

300,000 spectators. We were also active in anti-drone and banner activities over the I-5 downtown on many Thursday evenings, with signage against US involvement in the Ukraine, Gaza, and renewed involvement in Iraq and Syria, as well as remembrance of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs. Our "Compassion Campaign" to provide sleeping bags sets to homeless veterans and others on the downtown streets continued, and we have now individually given out 2300 sets to folks sleeping on the streets in this otherwise vibrant city.

Many Chapter members were at the 2014 Asheville Convention and came away with renewed vigor and enthusiasm. We are thrilled to be the host chapter for the 2015 National Veterans For Peace Convention. Perhaps most important, we have been blessed with the addition of many new young post-9/11 veterans, who have attended our meetings and joined our chapter, and we are counting on them to add youth and new ideas to our existing of ten older veteran members.

CHAPTER 92 - SEATTLE, WA

Keith Orchard

The Greater Seattle Chapter remembers 5 members lost this year: Jack Dern-Palmer, Lyle Mercer, Jack Yarrow, Bill Duroe, and Sam Scharff.

Vietnam activist Chuck Searcy of Chap 160 spoke on Saturday, August 30th. He spoke on efforts to mitigate Agent Orange and unexploded ordinance in Vietnam.

We supported the Rally to end military sexual violence on August 29th at Freedom Bridge outside Joint Base Lewis-McCord planned by active members of the National Guard who were victims of sexual assault. A featured speaker was Sarah Blum (who helped with the making of the documentary *The Invisible War*).

On July 30th we demonstrated in support of the Ground Zero Peace

Fleet at Seafair. On July 26th we welcomed the Marines to Seattle for Marine Week. We passed out flyers with quotes from our favorite Marine, Smedley Butler. June 3 we supported a talk sponsored by Washington State Religious Campaign Against Torture and The Constitution Project: "Exposing the truth of U.S. Torture: Restoring Human Dignity and the Rule of Law". The main speaker was General David R. Irvine, USAR (ret). He is a member of The Constitution Project's Task Force on Detainee Treatment.

The chapter marched in the Seattle Gay Pride Parade on June 29th in support of Chelsea Manning.



Ch. 92 at Seattle Gay Pride Parade

CHAPTER 93 - SOUTH CENTRAL, MI

Lynn Gilbert

On Mother's Day, originally a peace observance dating from soon after the Civil War, Chapter members and friends gathered at a grassy area adjacent to the Ann Arbor Farmer's Market to dedicate a new Peace Pole with "Veterans for Peace" and "peace" in various languages inscribed on it. Local singer-songwriter Chris Buhalis performed a new composition in honor of the occasion.

Peace Poles are part of an annual Mother's Day peace event in South Central Michigan, the Chapter's home. During July, the Chapter tabled for two days at the enormous Ann Arbor Art Fair. Public response was positive and the Chapter garnered several new names for its mailing list. Most who stopped by were worried that the U. S. might 'go back into Iraq.'

The Chapter is sponsoring an essay contest for high school students on Martin Luther King, Jr., as a peace activist. Announcements have been sent to Ann Arbor public and private high schools.



Chapter 93 at Ann Arbor Art Fair

CHAPTER 102 - MILWAUKEE, WI

Bill Christofferson

Vietnam veterans were invited to march at the front of Milwaukee's Memorial Day parade, so members of Chapter 102 did just that – and carried the VFP flag – and Veterans for Peace led the parade. We also laid a hand made wreath, created by one of our members, Joel Papham, during Memorial Day ceremonies at Wood National Cemetery here, and participants wore VFP T-shirts.

We manned a table with literature and information about VFP at the annual Locust Street Festival, which draws thousands of people every year.

We are working on two coming events – another in a series of author talks and book signings, this one in October with David Finkle, author of *Thank You for Your Service*, a powerful non-fiction book that follows a group of veterans returning from Iraq, and an Armistice Day event at Milwaukee City Hall on Nov. 11, which we have sponsored annually for several years.

CHAPTER 105 - BALTIMORE, MD

Ellen Barfield

Baltimore Phil Berrigan Chapter has been taking advantage of tabling opportunities at a local farmer's market and a Jackson Browne concert this summer and growing its contact list. Included in the tabling materials are VFP flyers and issue statements along with items from affiliated organizations School of the Americas Watch and the Maryland statewide coalition Fund Our Communities, NOT the Pentagon.

Although sadly only two chapter members could attend the VFP convention this summer, chapter coordinator Ellen Barfield was able to join President Patrick McCann, Helen Jaccard, April Adams, and a World Beyond War intern for a road trip to NC with visits in southern cities and outreach to members and allies along the way, as well as an excellent visit to the Greensboro, NC, International Civil Rights Museum.

We joined the coalition for the Baltimore commemoration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki days. Members Virginia Rodino and Jim Baldrige sang in the Baltimore Labor Chorus for a wonderful concert at the Nagasaki event.

On December 14th we will host a commemoration of the WW1 Christmas Truce with a showing of the film *Joyeux Noel* and discussion about soldiers refusing to fight.



Chapter 105 tabling at Farmers Market

CHAPTER 106 - DALLAS, TX

Leslie Harris

VFP 106 has continued to organize and co-sponsor events in North Texas, including: "People, Planet, Peace Over Profit," a rally in solidarity with the GCC; "Arrest Exxon," at their shareholders' meeting; a week-long series of anti-ALEC events during their national conference, including a banner-drop and lock-down with Gary Egelston and Josh Carmona.

We hosted concerts for Ryan Harvey and Anne Feeney, and a fundraiser dinner for IVAW during their regional conference -- "Healing the Wounds of War," with speakers Dr. Rita Brock of the Soul Repair Center and Col. Ann Wright.

We've partnered with the North Texas Light Brigade for lighting demonstrations, including: Love Mother Earth; No Jobs on a Dead Planet; Right to Heal the Wounds of War; Corporations Are Not People; Supersize the Wage; Free Gaza; Let Gaza Live; Demilitarize; and, at the Bush Library: No New U.S. War in Iraq; and, Iraq Chaos = Bush Legacy.

We displayed "ILLUSION OF DEMOCRACY" in lights with the backdrop of fireworks as thousands of July 4th revelers watched!

Outside the opening of the Bush LIE-bury's "Five Decades of Oscar de la Renta," we staged an alternative fashion show in orange jumpsuits and hoods. Our sign read, "FASHION DURING THE BUSH YEARS."

CHAPTER 114 - SHEBOYGAN, WI

Tom Contrestan

Missed the last edition so we begin in March. We held our 10th annual Anti-War Concert, perhaps our best yet. We offered a mix of music, poetry and info spots focusing on Vet Suicide, Sexual Trauma in the Military and a new study on Moral Injury ...

(Continued on page 14)

the reason some of us threw medals and ribbons into fires of protest. See our website for more info vetsforpeacesheboygan.org

Fourteen of us marched in the Memorial Day parade, led by a very strack looking color guard, Mike Gleue (Coast Guard) and Alyssa Holschbach (Navy), see photo.

We hosted a second Hootenanny at the Peace Garden in June and tried to organize a road trip to Ashville in July.

We began our 2014 Speaker Series in August with Mary Diamond, army vet, educator and human rights advocate discussing her experiences in Latin America and the influx of child refugees to the U.S. Coming in Sept. Rev. Joseph Ellwanger author of *Strength for the Struggle*, a memoir of his years as a civil rights activist in 1960s Birmingham Alabama. His wife Joyce spoke here two years ago about the SOA-Watch, crossing the line and a stretch in Danbury prison as a prisoner of conscience.



Ch. 114 in Memorial Day Parade

CHAPTER 132 - CORVALLIS, OR

Bart Bolger

The Linus Pauling Chapter is working to bring the "World Peace Game" to a local elementary school in fall 2014.

John Hunter, TED Talk All-Star (top 100) and an educator for near-

ly four decades, developed the World Peace Game for his 1978 elementary class in Virginia. Since then this role-played simulation has spread across the U.S. and to several other countries. It is the subject of John's book, *World Peace and Other 4th Grade Achievements*. For more on the game see this link: <http://wp.me/p2gYOB-io>.

Mr. Hunter visited Corvallis in January 2014 and so impressed a local former educator and her high school student daughter that they set out to bring the game to Corvallis. Game facilitator training, travel and game materials would cost \$4,000.

They approached VFP chapter chairperson Bart Bolger for help raising funds and publicizing their efforts. We contacted local organizations, peace and justice groups, held a benefit concert and flooded local listserves with donation requests, achieving our fundraising goal.

The Game board will be dedicated to a charter member of the Linus Pauling Chapter, Del Shirley, in memory of his inspiring work for peace, justice and children's education.

CHAPTER 133 - WESTERN MT

Danny Showalter

Several of the VFP members have been standing with the Women In Black at the Higgins Ave. bridge. We meet on the northwest side of the bridge every Friday between 12:15 and 12:45 PM. A few of the VFP members are volunteering and/or attending the Jeanette Rankin Peace Center (JRPC) Peace Party on Sunday September 21st in Caras Park from 4:40 to 8:00 PM. The party is held each year to celebrate the International Day of Peace. The American Legion held a Patriots Day +2 parade on September 13 in Missoula, MT honoring Veterans and First Responders (September 11 + 2 days). Some of

the Chapter 133 members are planning on marching with the American Legion Post 101.

CHAPTER 156 - ROGUE VALLEY, OR

James Woods

Paul Fattig, a retired reporter with many years of experience interviewing veterans and a former U.S. Marine was our chapter guest speaker in May.

A number of our chapter members are active with a local group, Citizens for Peace and Justice and regularly watch films that characterize the costs of wars. In May the film shown was *War on Whistleblowers*, a Robert Greenwald project that chronicles the arrests and prosecution of several principled whistleblowers by the U.S. Department of Justice. In July *Nuclear Savage* was shown. This is a film about the horrible injustices done to the Marshall Islanders, who were made guinea pigs by the U.S. government to study the effects of nuclear radiation on humans after nuclear weapons testing in the islands in the 1950s. In August, *The Return of Navajo Boy*, was screened which chronicles the return of a long-lost member of the Navajo tribe and the impact on the people of thousands of uranium mines.

We participated in the 29th annual Rogue Valley Hiroshima – Nagasaki Vigil, August 6-12 in Ashland. This was sponsored by Women's International League for Peace and Freedom with assistance from VFP 156. For more information go to: atomicvigil.net.



Chapter 156 at Hiroshima-Nagasaki Vigil

CHAPTER 157 - NC TRIANGLE

John Heuer & Roger Ehrlich

We dedicated a traveling Swords to Plowshares Memorial Bell Tower on Memorial Day Weekend in a moving public ceremony at the site of the WWI-era bell tower at NC State University that inspired it. Since then the tower traveled to Asheville for a week where it was seen by VFP conventioners and thousands of tourists.

The 24 foot tall tower is dedicated to ALL victims and veterans of war. It is framed with recycled orchard stakes, covered with over a thousand mobile 'shimmer bricks' made from old beer and soda cans, and holds a large old bell from the Church of Reconciliation in Chapel Hill

You can add a memorial brick to the tower and help it and an accompanying public history project travel and grow through the 2018 Centennial of the Armistice! Contact Roger Ehrlich at progerehrlich@gmail.com.

89 year old Sam Winstead (1st Marine Division, Pacific Theater) is teaming up with FiLMS for World Peace producer/director Ahmed Selim for Sam's 4th annual Ride for Peace from Raleigh, NC to Washington DC in the spring, 2015. We are recruiting multiple, converging bike routes for this ride. Join our mailing list by visiting our indiegogo page at <http://igg.me/at/samsrideforpeace>



Joe McTaggart and Roger Ehrlich, with their Swords to Plowshares Bell Tower

CHAPTER 161 - IOWA CITY, IA

John Jadryev

On the 50th anniversary of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, last August 7th, the chapter put on a program, consistent with the VFP Full Disclosure Project, at the Vietnam memorial in front of the Johnson County Courthouse, Iowa City, Iowa. Featured were 4 Vietnam veterans who shared their perspectives, both then and now, of their personal experiences during their service.

Veteran member John Ivens lead a workshop on Ukraine at the VFP national convention and was later nominated to run for the national board. Veteran members Paul Appel and John Jadryev also attended the convention.

We partnered with other peace minded groups by participating in weekly vigils for peace in the Middle East and we marched with chapter 163 in the Veterans Parade at the Iowa State Fair.

When the March for Climate Action came through Iowa in August our people took part in a welcoming potluck and environmental fair during which we distributed copies or VFPs position paper on the Environmental Costs of War.

CHAPTER 166-- KNOXVILLE, TN

Jerry Bone

President Jerry Bone and several other chapter 166 members were able to be at this year's convention at UNC in nearby Asheville, NC. This was a wonderful venue for the event.

They attended numerous very informative and enlightening workshops, including; "Ukraine: In search of a more truthful narrative", "Postcards From the Axis of Evil: Cuba in 2014" and a presentation by Ali Abunimah called "The Battle for Justice in Palestine."

Jerry's own workshop entitled: "Tyranny That Dare Not Speak Its Name: Deconstructing American

Empire" was well received and solicited some very positive feedback.

Another session entitled "Post 9/11 Veteran's Voices" where six or seven young veterans told of their experiences, their post-service struggles and the healing gained by activism for peace.

Attending member Tupper Morehead too was moved and motivated by his first VFP convention. "I hope to go to San Diego next year and highly recommend it. I was happy to see the diversity of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, and cultural background present. And we are pleased to have a board committed to diversity for the future."

CHAPTER 970 - JANESVILLE, WI

Norm Aulabaugh

Veterans For Peace Members forming a new chapter 970 in Janesville, Wisconsin joined the Rock Valley Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Forward! Marching Band to make a strong statement in the July 4 parade in Milton, Wisconsin. The theme for the parade was "Honoring America's Heroes" and the group chose to honor General Dwight D. Eisenhower with a large float displaying the famous quotation all VFP members know well as it is on the backs of our T shirts! The group is always well received with lots of applause and comments such as, "Look! Here comes my favorite marching unit."



Ch. 970 reads names of the men & women from WI killed in Vietnam, Iraq & Afghanistan





VFP at Justice for Mike Brown March in Ferguson, MO

(Continued from page 4)

State agencies personal property of the Department of Defense, including small arms and ammunition, to be used by the agencies in "counter-drug programs." It was called the 1208 Program. In 1996, Congress replaced Section 1208 with Section 1033.

The 1033 Program authorized the Pentagon to transfer military equipment to local law enforcement free of charge, without established standards. The only requirement is that equipment be used within one year, which gives officers a high incentive to use their new weapons and establishes a "use it or lose it" mentality among local agencies. In addition, there are no training guidelines or requirements enforced by the federal government. Since the program began in 1990, more than \$4.3 billion in equipment and weapons has been transferred to more than 8,000 participating police departments, according to the Pentagon.

The war on drugs, the war on terror, and the incentives from the federal government have pushed local law enforcement to slowly shift their role from community peace officers to armed crime enforcers, looking for an enemy.

Military Mentality In Local Police

What happens when cops armed with the weapons and tactics of war? Everything looks like a war

zone. This creates more tension in local communities and brings animosity from the residents. In a war zone, the mission is to confront and kill a defined enemy. The peace officer has no enemies. His or her mission is to protect the community and every person within it. No matter what crime they may have committed, all U.S citizens are entitled to the protections of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and due process. Many police officers fail to make and keep that distinction in mind, especially as weapons and battle gear have poured into their agencies.

What Happens When Weapons Go Missing?

With all of this military equipment being funneled to our local communities via the 1033 program, many citizens are demanding that this equipment be tracked and made public knowledge. However, finding this equipment has proven to be very challenging for investigators. The decentralized structure of the program makes it difficult for the federal government to keep tabs on the standing of participating police departments, so it becomes increasingly challenging to monitor the actual equipment transfers. 184 state and local police departments have been suspended from the Pentagon's "1033 program" for missing weap-

ons or failure to comply with other guidelines.

Take Action: What Can VFP Do?

Veterans For Peace has a unique voice in this debate, and can lead the discussion about the militarization of police. Many of our members can speak from personal experience, both regarding the dangers of military weaponry being used in our streets and the mentality that accompanies this equipment when deployed in a war zone. Our streets are not war zones, and this equipment is dangerous in the hands of local law enforcement. Please take action, and raise your voice!

- Contact Your Representative
- Spread the word on social media
- Join or organize local actions



PTSD WORKING GROUP

Our Asheville workshop on PTSD and militarism-free analyses of veterans' psychological disorders had some 50 participants. Dave Dittmore, coordinator of the PTSD Working Group, outlined the symptoms of PTSD and presented a video clip featuring two case studies illustrating a frequently used intervention (prolonged exposure therapy). Co-presenter Coleman demonstrated how an anti-military perspective allows far greater understanding of psychological trauma and suicide, and clears paths for innovative programs to heal our veterans.

The working group currently has 36 members, whom we'll soon survey for interests and suggestions. Sam, whose background is medical anthropology and social work, will coordinate the working group. We can be reached individually at sam.coleman@csulb.edu and DDittmore@aol.com



(Continued from page 1)

that human emancipation must be global in scope and effort, "international" by design. In fact, we're behind the learning curve in 2014 compared to one hundred years ago when folk around the country rose up in support of the Lawrence Strike in Massachusetts, or in outcry against the shirtwaist fire here in NYC that killed hundreds of innocent European immigrant girls, or around the world during the Depression when under the leadership of the Communists, the 9 Scottsboro boys of Alabama, falsely accused of raping two white women, were threatened with execution. No—in Port-au-Prince, in Latvia, in Montevideo, in Tampico, in Johannesburg, in Harlem—they stood in solidarity across lines of race and nation to defend the Scottsboro 9. And that was ninety years ago.

History does NOT always move forward.

While we're out here, the newspapers are reporting the recent pandemic Ebola virus ripping across the borders of West Africa and calling it "West Africa's Ebola outbreak." Do you know what Ebola does to your system? You vomit blood. Your temperature skyrockets. It's one of the most painful viruses you can contract and die from in a matter of weeks. Why is it called West Africa's outbreak? It's HUMANITY's Ebola outbreak. You never hear about "West Africa's gold mines" or "West Africa's rubber" because these are resources that capitalist thieves can generate profit and wealth from, so when it comes to their wealth, the capitalists have no borders. But they make us believe in borders.

In Sierra Leone, volunteers are being told to tell residents of Freetown, the capitol city, to report anyone "suspected of illness" to the authorities. Anyone suspected of illness? So now it's a crime punishable by death to be dying. Only a world system that places profit before people would be so backward in treating a virus with vaccines,

which we ALREADY DISCOVERED could cure—but cost "too much" to produce. How much? Curing all of the thousands of infected victims today would not amount to the cost of one week of U.S. military aggression around the world. Not one week!

So veterans here today, soldiers here today, understand this: the struggle that we are here to wage for peace has no borders. I was just in the U.S. Capitol building Washington DC last week and heard a representative from USAID say that they were proud that the U.S. would be setting up four hundred beds across Liberia in various stadiums to treat infected victims of Ebola. Four hundred beds? Four hundred beds? This from the same USAID that's trying to undermine the Cuban economy with spies and social media sub-

the struggle that we are here to wage for peace has no borders

terfuge—the same USAID that smuggled donated supplies to Haiti's earthquake victims out of the public hospitals and into the country's private clinics that only the rich can afford—the same USAID that claims humanitarian missions the world over and leaves nothing but spies and U.S. agents of warfare and economic imperialism behind, furthering the cause of American aggression.

Veterans today are not just those of us who have worn the fatigues, because we're all veterans of the struggle of surviving every day in this brutal, relentless capitalist system. My grandmother, born into a sharecropper's family in Alabama who died at 58 of lung cancer after spending her life cleaning other folks' homes was a veteran of the struggle. It's the same struggle that steals healthy young Black men from

their families in the name of gun violence, police execution, or drugs. This is a world turned on its head. And it's going to take so much more than this protest today to turn it back upright. Let's give the POLITICS OF SUSTAINABILITY some real legs to stand on.

But if we make our commitment international in every way, and if we learn from the best veterans for peace and justice past and present, we can make bigger leaps. I'm ready!!! My students and colleagues out here with me today are ready. Are you ready?



Sleep escapes me
I see reflections of
white robes, hoods
evolving into police uniforms, caps
KKK symbols becoming badges
crosses forming the shape of
taser guns, assault rifles,
ropes unfolding into hands,
images of "Strange Fruit"
no longer hanging from a tree,
but lying in the street.
I sense Martin stirring in his grave,
the sound of his voice
penetrating my eardrums,
"Mother, Mother, there are far too
many of you crying."
"Brother, Brother, there are far too
many of you dying"
I hear my voice, "Lord, save our
boys-girls,
Save our men-women."
'Save the Children.'
"Save us from ourselves."
I long for an end to this chaos.
I pray for Unity and Peace.

- Ethelyn Holden

support the troops

"we just Need to support the troops"
is what they tell me

well, this is from a troop
so listen carefully

what we Need are teachers who understand the history of this country
what we Need is a decent living wage, so people ain't cold and hungry
what we Need is bicycle infrastructure spanning this beauteous nation
what we Need are more trees and less playstations
what we Need is a justice system that seeks the truth
what we Need are more books and less boots

what
we
Need

is love

for every woman and man
from southern Louisiana
to the mountains of Afghanistan

Now, it's true
The troops need support
-the support to come home

they need treatment and jobs and love for the soul

see,
war ain't no good
for the human condition
I lost a piece of who I was
on every single mission
and I'm tellin you,
don't thank me for what I've done

give me a big hug
and let me know

we're not gonna let this happen again

because we support the troops
and we're gonna bring these wars to an end



IVAW members at Climate March honor Jacob.



Jacob George was a dedicated peace activist with IVAW & VFP. Anyone who met Jacob remembers his joy and fierce tenderness. A three-four veteran of Afghanistan, he committed suicide shortly after President Obama announced renewed bombing in Iraq and Syria.



FILM REVIEW:

WAR'S NEVER ENDING AFTERMATH

Thomas Brinson



We Went To War Director: Michael Grigsby 2012

In 1970, British documentary film maker, Michael Grigsby made one of the first films to examine the impact of war on American soldiers recently returned from brutal jungle combat in Vietnam. Entitled *I Was a Soldier*, the film focuses on Dennis, David and Lamar in their attempts to return to “normal” life in the barren and desolate Texan Hill country near San Angelo. The film poignantly portrays the difficult aftermath of readjustment as described in their own words by the three veterans.

In 2012, Grigsby with creative collaborator Rebekah Tolley produced a sequel, *We Went to War*. Filmed in vivid color, it is often intercut with sepia-toned segments from the 1970 original. Dennis and David are now forty-two years older and Lamar’s life, who died in 2002 from an Agent Orange-related illness, is described by his wife, Barbara, and daughter, Michelle.

In 1970, there was no official diagnosis for PTSD, but the whole panoply of symptoms are discussed for what today is an entrenched medical malady, both within the vast healthcare industry as well as by mainstream culture. The symptoms depicted in the film include nightmares, dissociative states, intrusive recollections,

startle reactions, difficulties with intimacy, anger and rage, self-medication with alcohol and drugs, hyper alertness, avoidance of crowds, survivor guilt, etc., etc., etc.

A recurring theme is how lonely and isolated they have felt, and how they have never been able to forget the war, how it has always haunted them.

The segments with Lamar’s wife and daughter poignantly portray the reality that family members are also burdened by war. Michelle even speculates that her children, Lamar’s grandchildren, have been affected by their grandfather’s experience of that long-ago war.

Both David and Dennis discuss how senseless the Vietnam war was. A sense of angry betrayal and deep bitterness about the government is a pervasive theme throughout the film.

A moving scene is Denis sitting in a Dairy Queen with two younger veterans from the recent wars in the Middle East, Jarod, who’s survived three suicide attempts, and a Tish, a mother, who worries about how her absence during deployment as well as her ongoing PTSD impacts her children. As she softly cries, Dennis reaches over to pat her on the arm, a most affecting gesture of identification and empathy between soldiers from different generations and wars.

The information presented by *We Went to War* is not new. It has been documented in hundreds of novels and non-fiction books, scores of narrative as well as documentary films. What is perhaps unique is the desolate bleakness of the exterior Texan landscape within which the veterans and their families live. Whether in the sepia tone version of 1970 or the vivid color portrayal

of 2012, the landscape becomes a most appropriate visual metaphor for the emptiness and hardened sensibilities of the interior lives of the three veterans.

Politicians, Wall Street Bankers and the elite class, who own and manage the industries that produce the weapons of war, may prosper, but the common people, who fight and suffer the most significant losses of war, gain little from their experience of combat. Instead they live with endless heartache and suffering. With poignant bitterness, David explains, “It always comes down to money, any way you look at it, it’s gonna be money and at the end there’s not going to be no money. There’s no money. You’re gonna have the same thing that you grew up with, no more no less — just a few rich people and the rest of us are gonna stay the same!”

The proverbial “they” say a picture is worth a thousand words — I suppose, then, this moving picture must be worth a thousand-fold more words. That’s certainly how I experienced *We Went to War* — I was deeply moved and saddened by how effective the impact of war upon citizen soldiers and their families is depicted by this most adept and masterful documentary.

If I had my druthers, this remarkable film would be required viewing for every politician who votes to start and fund endless war, as well as the members of the elite class who mostly prosper from it. However, that’s not likely to happen.

Nevertheless, the producers’ goal is that *We Went to War* shall receive prominent play throughout the US during 2015, the 50th Anniversary of the start of American direct combat operations in Vietnam. Hopefully, VFP as part of it’s Full Discloser Campaign can help the producers achieve this goal.



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Dear Members and Friends of Veterans for Peace,

We all know “you can’t take it with you,” but sometimes we either don’t know or forget or fail to take action that can determine where “it” goes when we are gone!

If you believe, as I do, in VFP’s statement of purpose, you know that VFP is going to be needed long after most – if not all – of us have departed the scene. But just because we are not around to pay our annual dues doesn’t mean that we can’t continue to help. There are two really easy ways to keep on giving: (1) include VFP in your will; (2) designate VFP as one of the beneficiaries on a life insurance policy or individual retirement account. If you have already made such provisions but have not notified the national office, please do so.

If you are one of those rare vets with sufficient assets that you are concerned about your estate tax liabilities, there are various alternatives we can suggest to provide you with an ongoing income stream and reduce your tax liability.

For more information on these options, contact the VFP national office at 314-725-6005 or vfp@veteransforpeace.org.