



# Exposing the True Costs of War and Militarism Since 1985

# VETERANS FOR PEACE

Organized locally. Recognized internationally.

2013 VFP Convention, August 7—11  
Madison, Wisconsin

SUMMER 2013

## POWER TO THE PEACEFUL

**Doug Rawlings**

The 28th annual convention is shaping up to be an exciting power-packed few days of local, regional, and national speakers willing to engage you in a dialogue about how we in Veterans For Peace can affect our communities in our quest to abolish war.

We chose Madison because of its deserving reputation as a city of activists who know how to take a stand for justice. We chose the unionized Concourse Hotel in downtown Madison because it served as a major gathering point for Wisconsin's working people as they battled against Governor Walker's anti-labor power grab. We chose the theme of *Power to the Peaceful* because it reflects VFP's commitment to nonviolent direct activism. We chose the array of speakers and entertainers because they have proven their commitment to the peaceful transformation of our world. And now we ask you to join us in early August as "Mad-town" opens its doors to Veterans For Peace.

Here is a working blueprint for your convention. Although all of the speakers and entertainers listed below have committed to coming to Madison, we are still tying up loose ends and juggling timeframes. All activities listed below will take place in the Concourse Hotel unless indicated otherwise. Once you have made your decision to join us, you should keep an eye on our national website and

forthcoming e-mail blasts for further developments.

### TENTATIVE PROGRAM

#### Tuesday, August 6th

Even before the convention officially begins, VFP's Madison chapter has invited our Executive Director, Mike Reid, and our Board President, Patrick McCann, to address the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Lanterns for Peace event in nearby Tenney Park. You won't want to miss this if you're in the area.

#### Wednesday, August 7th

- All day: VFP's national board of directors meet. Open to all members.
- Registration opens mid-afternoon.
- Evening: informal reception at the hotel hosted by Mike Reid and Patrick McCann. Light refreshments available.
- Night: the vibrant local bookstore *A Room of One's Own* will host VFP's annual convention poetry reading. VFP poets and local peace

poets share their work. Light refreshments will be served.

- Late Wednesday: we begin our convention documentary film series. Whenever possible, major players in the making of the films will be present. Keep your eye on the website for further details.

#### Thursday, August 8th

- 9am—4 pm: Registration. Please register and pick up your registration packet as soon as you can. Convention T-shirts will be available at the table.
- 9:30am: Opening Plenary. The Madison VFP chapter hosts will be in full force to welcome you to the convention. Speakers will include Mike Wiggins from the Bad River tribe, accompanied by tribal drummers to kick off the convention; Madison Mayor Paul Soglin who will present the key to the city to VFP; David Newby, founder of U.S. Labor Against the War, will speak about the connection of the labor movement and the anti-war movement; and Mike Reid and Patrick McCann will provide us with VFP's vi-

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sion for the future. More speakers to be announced later.

- Noon: brown bag documentary film series begins. Film TBA.
- 1:00pm: Five workshop options.
- 3:00pm: Five workshop options.
- Evening: *Activists Speaking Out* event, beginning with Nick Turse's discussion of his recent book *Kill Everything That Moves* about atrocities in Vietnam that demonstrates how in-depth research can contribute to our work against militarism and war. Warning: this will be a graphic and hard-hitting presentation. Also, John Peck and John Kinsman, leaders of the *Family Farm Defenders* movement who are actively involved in organizing farmers and other citizens against the "corporatization" of our food sources. Interspersed throughout the evening will be the songs of Ryan Harvey, a young activist musician from the Baltimore who carries a strong anti-war message with him. Local peace activists will be presenting their work at various tables around the ballroom.
- Late Thursday: Film TBA.

#### Friday, August 9th:

- 9:00am Five workshop options.
- 10:30am : 5 workshop options.
- Noon: brown bag documentary film series continues.
- 1:00pm: VFP Board hosts a discussion of VFP's newly minted Strategic Plan. This plan has been in the works for over a year, as board members have crafted a working document to guide VFP actions throughout each year. The Board welcomes you to this forum that will include a rationale for the plan, a discussion of specific visions within the plan, and

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**NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:  
SEPTEMBER 22, 2013**

## So You Say You Want a Resolution

**Bob Krzewinski**

### *Creating VFP Policy Through Resolutions*

One part of democracy in Veterans For Peace is the ability of a member to submit resolutions on VFP policy and have them enacted into the official positions of the organization. The process is pretty simple where every spring/summer a period is open to submit resolutions with a deadline of 30 days prior to the annual national convention. At the convention resolutions are discussed with possible recommendations, then sent out to the membership for a binding vote.

It should be noted, however, that a fair amount of work is required by those submitting a petition, namely following a set of resolution protocols established over the years by the VFP Resolutions Committee. These

protocols make sure, among other things, that resolutions don't repeat already-approved resolutions, address funding of projects, and clarify who does any work required of a resolution.

For 2013, proposed resolutions should be submitted to the Chair of the Resolutions Committee, Bob Krzewinski by email at [wolver-bob@gmail.com](mailto:wolver-bob@gmail.com) or mail your proposal to Bob Krzewinski, 706 Dwight Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48198. The deadline is July 7, 2013.

For more information, including resolution protocols and a listing of resolutions currently in effect, visit [vfpnationalconvention.org](http://vfpnationalconvention.org) and click on the "Resolutions & By-Laws" link.

an opportunity for you to provide feedback. Copies of the plan will be available at the registration table.

- 3:00pm: plenary. Environmental activist Diane Wilson recounts her strategies and successes; peace activist Kathy Kelly on her many, many journeys into war zones to bring a message of peace and reconciliation; and Vietnam veteran, lifetime peace activist and author, Brian Willson's words of wisdom about organizing against the planet-destroying forces of American imperialism.
- Friday evening: VFP Banquet. One of the keynote speakers this evening will be the indefatigable Kathy Kelly. She will be joined at the podium by Matt Rothschild, editor of *The Progressive* magazine, radio show host and author of *You Have No Rights: Stories of America in an Age of Repression*. Some good music will round out the evening.
- Late Friday: film TBA.

#### Saturday, August 10th:

- 9:00am: Annual business meeting, beginning with a recognition of our fallen, led by Minnesota VFP Chapter 27's 11-piece chime ringers. The meeting includes the

treasurer's report, the Executive Director's report, discussion of proposed resolutions and by-law amendments.

- Later afternoon: Peace Parade through the streets of Madison - inviting Madison's Raging Gran-nies, the Forward Marching Band, and the Solidarity Sing along troupe to lead us down State Street.
- Night: Buses to take us to the University of Wisconsin – Union South to hear more inspiring speeches, music and poetry. Presenters include Brian Willson, perhaps Ron Kovics, spoken word artist Misty Rowan from Minneapolis, folksingers Jim Walkten-donk and Jason Moon. Jason is a Wisconsin VFP member who has worked extensively with homeless veterans, and
- Jim is a nationally known Vietnam veteran singer-songwriter. To bring the evening to a close, we'll move back the tables and hit the dance floor. Madison folks guarantee us that the band will appeal to all ages.
- Late Saturday: last of documentary film series. Film TBA.

#### Sunday, August 11th:

We conclude the convention with a morning tribute to Lincoln Grahlf, one of VFP's most well-loved members,

# President's Report

Patrick McCann

There's a lot of work going in VFP as we enter spring 2013! VFP members are organizing against drones, building the June 1st Bradley Manning rally at Fort Meade (MD), protesting the Bush Library in Dallas, attending numerous "Bring the War \$\$ Home" rallies, and trying to find a way to show our deep love and respect for Tomas Young and others like him.

We are also internally focused - developing a strategic (programmatic) plan and a campaign to strengthen chapters and other internal organization, and increasing revenue. The VFP Development Committee is developing other 'funding streams' -

('Planned Giving" and a Major Donor Drive) - to add to current options of being a regular sustainer and/or life-time member.

The VFP convention takes place August 7-11 in Madison (WI). We hope you can attend! VFP chapters greatly aided last year's Miami convention by buying ads for the convention handbook. We are encouraging chapters again this year to buy a full-page ad (\$200), and we are way ahead of last year's pace, with chapters having committed to almost \$10K.

VFP Executive Director Mike Reid and I began in February to meet with chapters and regions.

We've travelled to New York City and Ukiah (Northern California) together, and to Boston, Philly, and Raleigh separately. We expect to be in New York City, Kansas City, Atlanta, Indianapolis, Madison, and Southern California by summer's end. We wish to attend chapter meetings to hear your activities and ideas, share what's occurring in VFP nationally, and encourage you to express your chapter's (or region's) wants or needs.

Letting it go here so as not to go on too long, but just remember that we are in this for the long haul. It is, in fact, a lifelong task. There is no finish line!



# Executive Director's Report

Mike Reid

Many times, I am asked, "Why should I join VFP?" I'm sure many of you get the same questions. Here are some reasons I give for joining:

Veterans For Peace was founded in 1985 by 10 U.S. military veterans and has grown to include approximately 5,000 members in 150 chapters located in every U.S. state and several other countries.

Veterans For Peace (VFP) is working to further enlarge its membership as it heads into what it already expects to be a very well-attended 28<sup>th</sup> national convention this August 7-11 in Madison, Wisconsin.

VFP is reaching out to other peace organizations and everyone who cares about ending war, requesting their assistance in encouraging veteran friends and neighbors to join their local VFP chapters or start a new one.

VFP has been a powerful part of the peace movement in the United States and abroad for a generation, and a leading advocate for the abolition of war as an instrument of national policy. VFP has helped those



McCann & Reid at Northern CA regional gathering.

who've seen war up-close push back against those who would continue to invest in war preparations and sanction the launching and continuation of wars.

VFP has collaborated with dozens of organizations and sponsored 1000s of activities promoting peace, including educational events, mass demonstrations, artistic displays and memorials, lobbying, counter-

recruitment, and creative nonviolent action. VFP has led or participated in over 50 peace delegations to Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa, and sponsored numerous projects to heal the wounds of war and repair its damaged, including projects to restore clean water to Iraq and to provide medical assistance in Bosnia.

VFP holds a permanent Non-Governmental Organization seat at the United Nations. It is also the first military veterans' organization invited to be a member of the International Peace Bureau based in Geneva, Switzerland.

VFP's members have a particular ability to inform the public of the true causes of war and its enormous costs. On this webpage some VFP members explain why they joined: [veteransforpeace.org/take-action/tell-your-story-why-i-became-a-veteran-for-peace](http://veteransforpeace.org/take-action/tell-your-story-why-i-became-a-veteran-for-peace)

And Finally, because of our Statement of Purpose. Check it out on the back cover!



# National Calendar Update

As we've mentioned through e-blasts, the website, and previous newsletters, Veterans For Peace is keeping a national calendar in 2013. This calendar is meant to bring together our voices and to mobilize our members into unified actions each month.

In April, we focused on **Actions Against Drones** and educated on drone warfare and surveillance. On tax day, we discussed military spending, educating on the financial costs of endless wars. By the time this newsletter reaches membership, we will have completed our **Memorials in May** to remember those impacted by war and violence and to educate on the humans costs of war.

In June, when you receive this, Bradley Manning's trial will have started. We want to show him support this month, advocating for him and bringing attention to his trial when major media will not. **Please join us by holding an action, signing a petition, or simply discussing the trial with other in your community.** Many people are still unaware of Bradley's situation. The injustice Bradley has faced for exposing war crimes is an example of how war takes a toll on democracy.

Each month, a document is e-mailed to chapter contacts and displayed on the website with suggestions for members to take action. Please consider participating in the national monthly actions. By unifying our actions, we can not only make a larger impact but learn from each other's experiences along the way.

Keep up with the activities of other chapters each month on the VFP website in the Take Action area on the Monthly Mobilizations page.

**If you have any questions or suggestions regarding the calendar, please contact Casey, Chapter Coordinator, [casey@veteransforpeace.org](mailto:casey@veteransforpeace.org)**



## 2013 VFP National Calendar

### June 2013

Bradley Manning Trial Starts in Fort Meade, MD

### July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Independence Day: Peace is Patriotic

### August 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>, 2013

VFP 28th Convention: Power to the Peaceful

### September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013

UN International Day of Peace: Sustainable Peace for a Sustainable Future

### October 2013

Story Telling Month: Why I joined Veterans For Peace

### November 11, 2013

Armistice Day: Eleven Bells For Peace

### November 22-24, 2013

School of Americas Watch in Fort Benning, GA

### December 2013

Town Hall Meeting: A Year End Review

## New Services From National VFP

Check out the new Members Only section of the VFP website! In that area you can

- Request VFP's endorsement of national campaigns or events
- Order reduced cost printing services from VFP
- Announce upcoming chapter events
- Communicate with other VFP members
- Request the VFP brochure is now available in Spanish



# Introducing VFP's New 'Members Only' Website!

Shelly Rockett

If you have not seen it yet, be sure to visit the new Members Only section of the VFP website. This section allows current members to participate in online voting, view your member information in the VFP database, create and participate in forum type discussions and view documents that are available only for members.

## Online Voting

This section allows VFP National to poll the membership for their opinions on issues and statements and provide feedback of the results. Future plans include allowing online voting for Resolutions, By Law changes and election of Board of Directors.

## Member Information

This section allows members to verify your contact and membership information as stored in the VFP database. When you have updates, you can submit the Change in Information.

## Discussions

Members will be able to create topics for discussion, allow or disallow comments, add text, hyperlinks, photos, tags, etc. A VFP National Staff member will monitor discussions to ensure that all discussions adhere to VFP policy. If discussion does not fit the VFP Statement of Purpose, it will be removed and an email will be

sent with an explanation. An author who persists in violations will be banned from the site.

## Member Only Documents

This section includes documents relating to VFP governance and services to members: Board Minutes, Resolutions, forms to request endorsement(s), printing services, to join a Working Group and Chapter Toolkits and Resources/



# Saint Patrick's Peace Parade

Pat Scanlon

## *The Alternative People's Parade for Peace, Equality, Jobs, Environmental Stewardship, Social and Economic Justice*

Three years ago (2011) VFP Chapter 9 the Smedley D. Butler Brigade submitted an application to walk in the traditional Saint Patrick's Day Parade in South Boston. This is a huge parade with 700,000 watching. The Smedleys only wanted to walk, carrying our banners and flags. As they have been off and on since 2003 the Smedleys were denied participation in the traditional parade. The stated reason was, "They did not want to have the word *peace* associated with the word *veteran*". But 2011 was a little different. "With their Irish hackles up," the Smedleys decided to pull their own parade permit from the city and create the Saint Patrick's Peace Parade, proudly and enthusiastically walking one mile behind the traditional parade.



A small group called the Allied War Veterans Council runs the traditional parade. This is a right wing, pro-war, anti-gay group that controls the traditional parade, turning the celebration of Saint Patrick in South Boston into a military parade. Twenty years ago the Irish Gay and Lesbian Association of South Boston wanted to walk in the parade and were denied. A law suit was filed that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court resulting in the "Hurley

Decision" which simply stated says that whoever is running a parade has the exclusive right to say who can and who cannot be in, no questions asked. When any group is denied participation to walk in any parade, Veterans Day, Memorial Day, etc., this is the legal decision that is quoted.

- Well, the Smedleys true to form, reached out to our Gay and Lesbian brothers and sisters and said, "You were denied the opportunity to walk in their parade eighteen years

### Peace Parade continued

ago. We are having a parade; how would you like to walk in our parade?" Join the Impact, a group of young LGBT folks immediately said yes and a strong alliance was born.

- In **2011**, with only three to four weeks to organize the first parade, we had one duck boat, one band (The Leftist Marching Band) and 500 people. In **2012**, we had seven divisions, two bands, one duck boat, two trollies, one labor float, some bag pipers, a drumming group and 2,000 people. In **2013** we had eight divisions (Veterans For Peace, Peace, Religious, LGBT, Climate Justice, Political, Labor, Social and Economic Justice), one duck boat, two trollies, five great bands, a small three piece ensemble, a large drumming group, an Irish float, a labor float, Bread and Puppet Theatre (with wonderful puppets and their bus), plus 2,500 enthusiastic participants.

- Leah Bolger, VFP Past President, and Mike Reid, VFP Executive Director, were positioned in one of the lead cars, proudly waving the VFP and Irish flags. Make no mistake about it, we are in a struggle here in Boston. For the past three years we have been winning hearts and minds. We have won over the residents of South Boston, forty non-profit groups, the police, and the press but we still walk behind the street sweepers, one mile behind the traditional parade. Next year may be different. We are being represented by the ACLU of Massachusetts and the law firm of LeClair Ryan. We intend to shake up the status quo in 2014 and you are all welcome to join us, *Céad Míle Fáilte* (You are welcome a thousand times over).

- A final note on the 2013 Peace Parade. One of Boston's finest, after viewing both parades stated, ***"I don't know why the second parade is not part of the first parade. Besides, the music in the second parade was so much better than the first parade"***. Please join the Smedleys in 2014 on the streets of South Boston. We have a lot of fun, with great music and have created the only large "Peace Parade" anywhere. Hope to see all of VFP next year. *Erin Go Bragh.* 🍀

## 2013 Peace Tour of Vietnam



The members of the Spring, 2013 VFP delegation to Viet Nam, with members of the Hoa Binh (Peace) Chapter 160 based in Viet Nam

This year's VFP Peace Tour of Vietnam included 10 Vietnam veterans – five who are living and working in Vietnam, members of Vietnam's *Hoa Binh* Chapter 160 of VFP – one veteran of the Korean war, a recently retired Air Force nurse, spouses, peace activists, and writers. The group of 17 traveled from Hanoi to Hue and Danang, Nha Trang, and Ho Chi Minh City over 14 days.

We focused on the legacies of the war that ended nearly four decades ago. In our meetings with Vietnamese war veterans and government officials, the U.S. Ambassador and Embassy staff, Vietnamese victims of unexploded ordnance and Agent Orange, and NGOs, our group represented the cares and concerns of veterans and other Americans who feel a responsibility to work together to deal with these painful issues.

We found a unity of purpose and commitment among VFP members and Vietnamese friends. U.S. Am-

bassador David Shear stated that he is working to bring closure to these painful legacies. He wants the help and support of VFP members and other concerned Americans to convince Congress to provide greater U.S. funding, technical resources, and expertise.

The delegation visited the Veterans Agent Orange Friendship Village on the outskirts of Hanoi, a facility that treats disabled children and teaches them vocational skills. Vietnamese veterans from the city of Hai Duong were there for a brief period of treatment, rest, and rehabilitation. Veterans from different sides in the war warmly shook hands, exchanged stories, and posed for photos.

The tour overlapped Vietnam's "Hung Kings National Holiday," which is followed by National Liberation Day April 30 celebrating the end of the war in 1975. VFP met with the Veterans Association of Viet Nam, the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations (VUFO), Vietnam Association of Victims of Agent Orange. We were



## Chuck Searcy

briefed on efforts to assist the estimated three million victims of Agent Orange and unexploded ordnance, and we confirmed VFP's commitment to support these efforts.

We then visited Hanoi's museums, historical sites, crowded shops and cafes, and street eateries and strolled around Hoan Kiem Lake in the heart of the city, photographing the elderly doing their exercises and the young with dyed yellow hair on skateboards.

From Hanoi we flew to Danang and drove to Hue across the spectacular Hai Van Pass, the *Sea-Cloud Pass*, with a mountain view over the bay of Danang. In Hue, scene of fierce fighting during the 1968 Tet Offensive, we visited the Citadel, the royal emperors' tombs, and other historic sites.

Quang Tri Province was one of the most heavily bombed areas in history. The staff of Project RENEW received our delegation and briefed us about the effect of unexploded ordnance—cluster bombs, grenades, mines, and other weapons—that has resulted in more than 100,000 casualties since the end of the war. In the past 2 years, RENEW teams have removed and destroyed some 17,000 items of ordnance. Over the past decade, all NGOs together have removed and destroyed more than 200,000 items of ordnance in the Province.

A visit to the Ben Hai River, the dividing line between the former North Vietnam and South Vietnam, was followed by exploration of the Vinh Moc Tunnels, where an entire village went underground to avoid the devastation of U.S. bombing. During those years 17 babies were born in the tunnels.

After the Truong Son national cemetery in Quang Tri, resting place for some 20,000 fallen combatants from the war, we ascended the mountains near the border of Laos to the Khe Sanh Marine combat base, site of the historic siege of 1968. A few relics of the war, including an old C-123 and a couple of U.S. Army helicopters, are part of the Khe Sanh Museum, which was closed for repairs when the group

was there. The area is now mostly covered in coffee plants, today one of Vietnam's largest export commodities.

A bus ride south along the Ho Chi Minh Highway brought the delegation to A Luoi, in the A Shau Valley, where we visited some of the families benefiting from VFP funds that support the Orange Cow program. This micro-credit program provides loans to families of Agent Orange victims to buy cows that they raise and breed or sell for profit.

After another twisting bus ride along magnificent mountain passes, the group arrived back in Danang.

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### **our group represented the cares and concerns of veterans and other Americans**

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We were permitted to visit the dioxin remediation site at the Danang International Airport escorted by retired Sr. Col. Ngoc Tam, Ph.D, a chemical and environmental specialist who works with VAVA. The \$43 million U.S.-funded project removes toxins from the soil where they had accumulated after years of storage and deployment from the U.S. military base. The American team is managing the U.S. partnership with the Vietnamese Ministry of National Defense. The work continues and the soil is expected to be free of dioxin by 2016.

The group also visited the Danang Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange (VAVA) center for disabled children, another facility that received a contribution last year

from the VFP delegation. The local Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations (VUFO) chairman and the leadership of the Veterans Association welcomed the delegation later in the afternoon, and both sides pledged continued cooperation.

On a free day, many of us strolled the wide white sands of China Beach, or went to the river port town of Hoi An. Nha Trang, a lovely beach town in south central Vietnam, was next stop. We took a quiet bus ride from the airport at Cam Ranh Bay into Nha Trang, and met with the VAVA chapter and several Agent Orange victim families. A few in the delegation went to Nha Trang's noted therapeutic hot mud baths, which are fed by steaming natural springs that flow through a creamy chocolate mud mixture.

The final stop was Saigon, District 1 and the heart of a huge metropolitan area created after the war named in honor of Vietnam's revered first president, Ho Chi Minh. Ho Chi Minh City includes the port of Saigon, Cu Chi, Tu Du, Gia Dinh, and various other communities and extends 50 km in every direction.

The group visited Tu Du Hospital's Agent Orange center for children, a treatment and rehabilitation facility for severely disabled children whose problems are thought to be caused by Agent Orange. The children receive excellent care, and some have hopes of improvement.

In Saigon, we visited Reunification Hall, which was the former presidential palace of the Saigon regime, a uniquely modern Vietnamese design that has remained untouched since April 30th, 1975, the day the war ended. The family quarters of the President and the radio room with the hotline telephone remain intact; it is history frozen in time.

Before leaving, the delegation met and agreed on disbursement of some \$16,000 in donations from members of the group, several VFP chapters, and individual members in the U.S.

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**Chapter 1 members at the demonstration for Bradley Manning.**

## **CHAPTER 1 PORTLAND, ME**

**RICHARD CLEMENT**

Chapter 1 members declared opposition to any "missile defense" base to be located in Maine. In January we hosted Crystal Zevon and helped her kick off her *Searching for Occupy* journey. She has connected with many other VFP chapters across the country.

-In February, we held our annual retreat. Filmmaker and member Regis Tremblay showed his documentary titled: *Jeju Island of Peace: In the Crosshairs of War*. We also held a demonstration on the bridge in support of Bradley Manning.

In March, several members traveled to Boston to join the Smedley Butler Brigade in the 3rd annual "Peace Parade" that marched behind the traditional Saint Patrick's Day Parade.

## **CHAPTER 16 WASHINGTON, DC**

**MIKE MARCEAU**

VFPDC Vice President Mike Marceau represented the chapter at these events in the Washington, DC, area:

Dec 31st - Meeting with Rep. Chris Van Hollen's staff about the budget. Van Hollen is the ranking Democrat on the House Budget Committee.

January 8-11 & 16 -18, 2013 - Hearings at Ft Meade for Bradley Manning.

January 11 - Nat'l Day of Action Against Guantanamo.

Jan 21st - Arc of Justice Rally & Parade Washington, DC.

Jan 31 - Gave a brief presentation on the 1st Annual VFP Vietnam

Peace tour to Vietnam.

Feb 9th - Make Peace Not War Valentines Party at Busboys & Poets.

Feb 13th - Helped take Jobs Not War petition to Representatives on Capitol Hill.

Feb 17th - Forward on Climate Rally

Feb 24th - Helped plan and attended fund raiser for Bradley Manning.

Feb 26th - 28th - Hearings at Ft Meade for Bradley Manning.

Feb 27th - Went with Fund Our Communities to meet with president of Montgomery County Council.

Feb 28th - Went with members of Fund Our Communities to Representatives on Capitol Hill urging them to cut Pentagon spending.

March 18th - Part of a group who met with 3 Syrians about problems on the ground there.

March 18th - Panel in Washington, DC on Iraq: 10 Years Later.

March 23rd - Day-long bus tour with Peace Action Montgomery visiting places affected by the sequester.

March 26th - "Reset Defense" conference in Washington, DC.

April 10th - Hearings at Ft Meade, for Bradley Manning.

April 13th - Anti-drone rally at White House.

April 18th - Defending Dissent panel in Montgomery County MD.

## **CHAPTER 21 NO. NEW JERSEY**

**WALT AND NANCY NYGARD**

Throughout the cold weeks of 2013 chapter members have participated in peace vigils in central and northern New Jersey. Chapter members have represented VFP in Newark with People's Organization for Progress fighting for Jobs Not War and have hiked with the Buddhist Peace Walkers in the southwest US.

In February, chapter members joined the many friends of Dave Cline to celebrate his life at Connolly's in New York City.

Two members of our chapter met with representatives of Senators Lautenberg and Menendez to discuss war, corruption, and fair treatment of veterans.

Our twice cancelled (by Hurricane Sandy & Blizzard Nemo) Puffin Po-

etry reading commemorating the 40th anniversary of *Winning Hearts and Minds* is now scheduled for July 13<sup>th</sup>, barring any natural disaster. An excellent lineup of readers has been assembled including original WHAM poets and veteran poets of the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan. Anyone associated with the original publication of WHAM is urged to contact Jan Barry or Walt Nygard. This will be a fund raiser for Warrior Writers.

Members of Chapter 21 have participated with Combat Paper NJ. Cutting up our uniforms, we have made paper & prints & seen our art displayed for the public.

And if you are feeling safe and protected it's because our son Joe, an honorary member of VFP 21, and the Fightin' 508th MPs are on duty at Camp Phoenix, Afghanistan. Less than 2 months to go, can't wait.

## **CHAPTER 27 MINNEAPOLIS, MN**

**LARRY JOHNSON**

Chapter 27 works closely with other Peace and Justice efforts to educate decision makers on policies we believe are needed to abolish war and establish peace with justice.

Congressman Keith Ellison, co-chair of the Progressive, represents part of our area. We have established monthly meetings with him or his foreign policy person to discuss our concerns. When Leah Bolger spoke on drones at the WAMM annual meeting in March, we organized a "No Drones" demonstration in a neighborhood populated heavily by recent Somali immigrants. We also arranged a meeting for Leah with Rep. Ellison, resulting in a standing invitation for members of the national VFP board to meet with the Progressive Caucus in D.C.

Earlier in the year, Roxanne Abbas, director of MPP, told us they had made a board resolution to not use "derogatory language" in their dealings with each other, and especially in talking with elected officials, no matter how much they differ from us. In the wake of so much election-driven strong feelings, we wrote and adopted our own similar resolution.



Ch. 27 No Drones Action

rights advocates, 5/18 Regional Conference on the Veterans Peace Movement, 5/23 demo against Henry Kissinger receiving the Intrepid Freedom Award, 5/26 Memorial Day Observance, and 6/30 Pride Parade honoring Brad Manning.

### **CHAPTER 41 CAPE COD, MA**

**DUKE ELLIS**

On April 14, we cosponsored, with Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), a public showing of the film *The Invisible War*, an expose of the Pentagon's inadequate response to military sexual violence against both female and male service members. Official supporters of the event included a wide range of human services and political groups and individuals. Among them were our state and national representatives who will now be pressed to follow-up with concrete efforts to repair this horrendous situation. The Massachusetts Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs also attended and spoke following the film. Chapter members Billie Stewart, Nina Tepper and Jim Canavan were important contributors to the joint planning group.

On May 4, our Eighteenth Annual Poetry for Peace Contest culminated in the Awards Ceremony and Reading. Once again, under the leadership of Nina Tepper and with Jim Canavan's key editorial help, we set a new record for poems submitted and teachers participating. This year we also had some of our best-ever coverage from our local media. Another aspect of this wonderful contest is that we bring a winning poet with us to read at the largest Memorial Day ceremony on Cape Cod. Our chapter has already begun to brainstorm and plan for our 20th Annual Contest to make it an even larger and most special occasion.

### **CHAPTER 45 IPSWICH, MA**

**DAVE WISE**

A historically significant collection of Veterans For Peace, Samantha Smith Chapter 45 records, along with a 10-year series of Peace Poetry Books were transferred on March 13, 2012 to the Salem State University Library Archives, Salem, MA for future study and research on peace.

### **CHAPTER 31 PHILADELPHIA, PA**

**CHUCK ROSSI**

The Chapter has been working to implement the plans developed at the planning retreat in December 2012; much of this has involved working with other peace and justice groups in the area. In April, we once again participated in the *Legs Against Arms* event organized by the Physicians for Social Responsibility. The event, which is intended to focus on gun violence in the Philadelphia area, consists of a 5K run and a community education and outreach program. Two members of the Chapter participated in the run (Mike Felker placed 4<sup>th</sup> in his age group and Chuck Rossi finished way out of the money, but finished nonetheless), and we had a table with information on gun violence and the global scourge of land mines. On May Day (the real Labor Day), the Chapter Precision Grill Team (John Grant and Chuck Rossi) cooked hundreds of hamburgers and hot dogs for union families and friends celebrating the history and future of organized labor, important in this time of challenge to the union movement and fiscal austerity. The war economy as a stress on public services and worker training was stressed by many of the union speakers. The Chapter has also worked with the Warrior Writers in many of their local presentations, including a teach-in at Temple University. We have begun discussions with other Chapters in Pennsylvania to try to plan a state-wide meeting to discuss some common projects that would benefit from state-wide efforts.

### **CHAPTER 34 NEW YORK, NY**

**BILL KEILBACH**

The Mike Pahios/Murray Kaufman established priority issues for 2013, including Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility, Drone Warfare, Bradley Manning, Uranium Weapons & the Legacy of the Iraq War, and Membership. Members have been involved in actions and events concerning these issues including: legislation to provide overdue relief for all victims of Agent Orange, and fulfillment of promised remediation in Vietnam; anti-drone actions; Brad Manning support actions, with an upcoming bus trip to Ft Meade on June 1; and contacting lapsed members.

We also participated in the 2/16 Celebration of the Life of Dave Cline, 3/3 - St Pat's For All Parade, and 3/14 Counter-Recruitment at NYC Public High Schools,

The Chapter initiated the Haditha Memorial Project in response to the November 2005 massacre of 24 unarmed civilians in Haditha Iraq by US Marines; 12 were charged but no US personnel served any brig time. The project involves installation of a memorial plaque in Haditha from people of the U.S. to the Iraqi people.

We also plan to set-up a Facebook page and develop a series of YouTube videos regarding each of our priority issues, which will be distributed via social media, in order to expand our outreach efforts for greater impact.

Upcoming Events: 5/1 May Day demo with union and immigrants'

Paul Brailsford, age 96, (since deceased) founder in 1990 of the Samantha Smith Chapter 45 presented to Betty Dole, Associate Librarian, and University Archivist, Susan Edwards, his many chapter documents and newspaper articles.

Tom Gale, initiator of the Chapter 45 Peace Poetry Contest, then presented the ten Peace Poetry Books (2000-2009) containing poetry by children, K-12 in public, private, charter and parochial schools throughout Essex County.

Both were guest speakers at the presentation along with Salem State University Professor of World and Peace History, and Chapter 45 member, Hope Benne.

The program was videotaped by VFP members Tom Gale, Martin Ray and Bill Grover.

## **CHAPTER 46 MONTEREY, CA**

**PHIL BUTLER**

Our chapter is sponsoring an anti-drone rally here in Monterey on Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, at a place locally known as *Window on the Bay*. We will have speakers, music, tables, placards, banners, and print media to educate and share information. I've had an op-ed accepted at the *Monterey County Weekly* and chapter member Jack Erickson has one coming in the *Herald of Monterey County*. We are also preceding the rally with local radio interviews & of course public service announcements.

In addition, chapter member Heidi Trinkle is representing our chapter at a rally in Sacramento for the plight of homeless veterans in our area.

## **CHAPTER 50 NORTHERN MICHIGAN**

**TIM KEENAN**

We continue to honor our fallen Michigan Vets from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars with a Memorial Day and Veterans Day display of tombstones. It is similar to Arlington West, but we don't use crosses, out of respect to all religious or non-religious beliefs

We co-sponsored a film festival hosted by Mid-East, Just Peace. This was the first film festival of its kind, and it was well received. Once again, we adopted families for Christmas and Thanksgiving.

We met with our airport manager in November and December requesting to place a sign welcoming home our troops. We are encountering some resistance from a member of the Board that approves the placing of the sign. As of this writing we have yet to contact the media, waiting to hear from the Board.

We are sponsoring a blood drive at a church in May. We are hard at work planning the second annual International Peace Day. Last year's was a rousing success. We planted a peace pole in a park, the Mayor proclaimed Traverse City a city of peace, a panel of 10 each gave their opinions on what peace means to them, and we capped it off with a musical celebration and potluck. Our wish is that the world celebrate this event on September 21 with a cease fire in all wars around the world.

A peace walk sponsored by us takes place the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month. We will be walking in the annual Cherry Festival parade, attended by some 300,000 people, in July. Over the years, scowls have turned to cheers & clapping as more & more people realize the true cost of war.

We are taking applications for our John Lewis Veterans for Peace scholarship to Northwestern Michigan College, given annually to a young student who believes in our mission, is financially needy, and is the child or grandchild of a veteran.



Ch . 54 display at Stearn's Wharf.

## **CHAPTER 54 SANTA BARBARA, CA**

**MARY JOHNSTON**

The CIA and the military are carrying out an illegal "targeted killing" program in which people far from any battlefield are determined to be enemies of the state and killed without charge or trial. The executive branch

has, in effect, claimed the unchecked authority to put the names of citizens and others on "kill lists" on the basis of a secret determination, based on secret evidence, that a person meets a secret definition of the enemy.

In order to bring this alarming practice to the attention of the public, the VFP Santa Barbara chapter has a model of a drone on display at Arlington West. Please stop by to see our display at the foot of Stearn's Wharf on the first and third Sunday of each month."

## **CHAPTER 55 , SANTA FE, NM**

**KEN MAYERS**

The Chapter co-sponsored a February 5 public forum featuring a presentation by Robert Naiman, Policy Director of Just Foreign Policy, Washington DC. His talk was entitled Drone Attacks and Ethical Questions and was followed by a Q&A session. Some 70 Santa Feans attended. The Chapter plans to co-sponsor another forum on April 27, with Code Pink co-founder Medea Benjamin as speaker on the theme Drone Warfare: Killing By Remote Control. (Medea is also speaking in Albuquerque on Friday night, Taos on Sunday night, and Las Vegas, NM on Monday night.) The Chapter also commemorated International Free Bradley Manning Day with a Feb 23 demonstration at the state capital building while the legislature was in session. The Chapter is a member of a New Mexico-based "Alliance for Real Democracy" and is providing financial support to an April 19-21 Democracy School sponsored by the Alliance. We will also have at least one member in Dallas, TX to protest the dedication of the Bush Lie-Bury the week of April 21.

## **CHAPTER 61 ST. LOUIS, MO**

**CASEY STINEMETZ**

In January, the Don Connor's Chapter decided to sponsor an Iraqi student, Ahmed Al-Dulaimi, who is attending a local college through the Iraqi Student project. We plan to raise funds to support Ahmed over the next school year. Alongside members of the national board of directors, members of chapter 61 attended a rally on January 25 against Peabody Coal. There were 12 arrests, and the rally

received attention from local major media.

In April, we teamed up with 15 other local peace groups to rally downtown against Drones. Our model drone was a centerpiece to the rally. Additionally, Larry Helms and Woody Powell, participated in the History Museum's *Between 2 Worlds* exhibit, discussing their experiences at veterans.

April also brought the *Stand Down for Homeless Veterans*. We worked along St. Louis University law students in the Legal Department, and together, assisted over 60 veterans with legal cases. On Earth Day, we set up a table at the local event to educate about the environmental costs of war. Approximately 8,000 people were in attendance, and many people signed our mailing list.

In May, the chapter partnered with local groups at the *Stand Up for Women Veterans* Event, which is held annually on St. Louis University campus with a focus on the unique challenges and experiences of women veterans. Members of Chapter 61 prepared the entire meal for this event and set up a chapter table each year.

The chapter has also assisted the St. Louis Veterans Drug Court Computer Clinic in its development over the past year. To-date, it has served 60 people, mostly veterans, and certified about 40 of them as competent in the basics of computer literacy. At least ten have gone on to obtain jobs that would otherwise not be available to them.



**Ch 61:** Catie Shinn greets vets at the Stand Up for Women event.

### **CHAPTER 67 LONG BEACH, CA** **HORACE COLEMAN**

At the last Arlington West Chapter 67 held, volunteers from a high school

Peace Club helped rake beach sand smooth and put up crosses. People fishing from or walking on the nearby pier could easily see the memorial. Some came over to get a closer look at the faces and obituaries on the crosses. Among the passersby who chatted with chapter members was an army armorer, a woman veteran of Iraq. She said that while deployed she always took a knife with her when nature called at night. And, how some women never used the facilities after dark—which sometimes caused infections.

She was given some pamphlets to pass on and told about the program for women at the local VA. The pamphlets were about *The Soldiers Project*, a civilian nonprofit counseling project staffed by psychiatrists and other professionals who work with military people and their families for free military sexual trauma, PTSD, family problems.

VFP members attended the *Great American Write-In* held in Anaheim, CA. The write-in is an annual event at a community center there. People came to it to write letters to their U.S. Senators and Representatives. Progressive organizations gather at tables with literature, petitions and talking points about their issues. They talk with the attendees, exchange viewpoints and tell why their cause is important. Women of Orange, a dynamic group, sponsored the event, provided refreshments, paper and envelopes, addresses of Senators and Representatives, postage and mailing. It was one stop shopping for people who wanted to get something off their chest and into the minds of those who represent them.

The struggle continues.

### **CHAPTER 69 SAN FRANCISCO** **NADYA WILLIAMS**

Two handsome young Iraq Veterans Against the War led VFP Chapter 69's contingent in San Francisco's Saint Patrick's Day Parade March 16th, cheered on by thousands of on-lookers. Waving the peace sign, Jason Matherne and Ethan Kreutzer, broadcast IVAW's and VFP's message to far more people than to the relatively sparse crowds on Veteran's Day. The parade's theme was *A United Ireland*,

so to make the obvious link, *One Ireland, One Peace* was emblazoned on the side of our parade truck, reinforcing the peace mission of VFP that has been achieved in the north of Ireland – but not in our country. Jason is now on staff at the San Francisco American Friends Service Committee (the Quakers), who have always filled a prominent role in local progressive movements.

That same week marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, and saw several actions and educational events, organized mainly by IVAW and their associate organization, CivSol – Civilian Soldier Alliance.

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, a delegation of Chapter members presented a beautiful plaque to Lawrence Ferlinghetti, a well-known literary figure in San Francisco and a World War II veteran, who became a life-long veteran for peace after seeing Nagasaki six weeks after the A-bomb struck.

The end of April marked the departure from the Veterans Memorial Building of all who used it, as major renovations get underway. Operating without an office for 2–3 years will, we hope, not significantly impede our work.



**Ch 69:** Mike Wong, Chapter Vice President, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Nadya Williams, Ron Dickenson, and the Italian biographer of Ferlinghetti

### **CHAPTER 71 SONOMA VALLEY, CA** **BILL SIMON**

In 2013 the Sonoma County Chapter plans to continue our Full Picture ([www.thefullpicture.info](http://www.thefullpicture.info)) counter-recruiting efforts in local high schools and the local Junior College. We have partnered with members of the Friends House retirement community and developed a more standardized presentation that includes a veteran sharing his experiences and how they relate to the hidden costs of war, what

recruiters won't tell you, and we end presentations by providing alternatives to joining the military. Unfortunately, even with the assistance of the ACLU we have met with firm resistance when approaching high schools, but we persist in our efforts.

Chapter 71 Officers have participated in two of the VFP National training webinars on recruiting and retaining new VFP members. We highly recommend these trainings.

We also will participate in two Sonoma County parades, and we plan to expand our Armistice Day demonstration/celebration in Santa Rosa this year.

The newest, and by far most daunting, project this year will be to plan for the hosting of the 2014, 3-day, VFP Northern California Regional Conference to be held in Sonoma County. Peace,



Members of Ch. 72 renovating the Peace Memorial Park

## **CHAPTER 72 PORTLAND, OREGON** **MARION WARD**

Members are hard at work renovating the Peace Memorial Park in Portland. A winning design was chosen from the architectural landscape class at a local community college. The peace sign will be outlined with bank-chipped paths with drought-resistant native perennials in the middle sections. Fundraising is well under way with completion of the project anticipated before the end of summer.

A successful program and fundraising event to benefit the Vietnam Friendship Village took place in March. Don Blackburn, Becky Luening, and Chris Knight all took part in the program. Don, a Vietnam veteran,

resides in Vietnam and is on the Friendship Village board. Becky is the President of the U.S. committee. Other activities the Chapter sponsored in March were a program on the Free Gaza Movement featuring Dr. Bill Dienst and a screening of *Authority and Expectations* (Iraq vet, Wray Harris, speaking about the Iraq tragedy).

The Chapter continues its ongoing presence as an integral part of the peace community and is currently planning its annual Memorial Day ceremony at the Korean wall followed by a procession to the Peace Park.



Ch. 75: Charles Osburn, Richard Smith, and Dennis Stout tableting at Crosby, Stills, and Nash Concert

## **CHAPTER 75 PHOENIX, AZ** **RICHARD A. SMITH**

Phoenix Chapter 75 had a busy Fall 2012 and Spring 2013. September found us tableting at the Crosby, Stills, and Nash (CSN) concert in Phoenix. The performance was superb and they performed a rousing version of Graham Nash's *Military Madness*. Our annual appearance in the VA-sponsored Phoenix Veterans Day parade on November 12 was well received but not without controversy. One female spectator shouted as we walked past, "You are the guys who were afraid to get shot at." More troubling was the VA parade committee's decision to censor a portion of our entry description. We immediately petitioned the VA for a meeting to address our concerns. Our meeting, which was held on March 15, is discussed further below.

In December we conducted a presentation and discussion at a Phoenix high school. We provided 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students with a realistic depiction of combat and non-combat military life as well as our commitment to Veterans for Peace.

On February 17 we conducted a successful tableting at the Bonnie Raitt concert during which she gave us a "shout out" for our efforts.

On March 15 we met with the VA's Regional Attorney; presented our evidence that established the VA's discriminatory conduct toward us during the Parade; and requested several remedies. As of the date of this submission, we are awaiting the VA's response to our proposals.

## **CHAPTER 80: DULUTH/SUPERIOR - LAKE SUPERIOR REGION, MI** **VERN SIMULA**

Chapter 80 is providing support and acclaim for one of its VFP members, Greg Boertje-Obed, 57, who, along with two other courageous *Transform Now* Plowshares disarmament activists, Sr. Megan Rice, 82, and Michael Walli, 63, engaged in nonviolent direct action by cutting through four chain link fences and entering the presumably, highly secure, nuclear weapons factory near Oak Ridge, Tennessee, last July 28<sup>th</sup>.

Their action has drawn international attention to the U.S. ongoing, illegal and deceptive production of redesigned H-bombs in violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the president's promise of seeking "a world without nuclear weapons."

The three now face serious felony charges. To provide them not only moral support, but also to help spread their message for an end to nuclear weaponry, VFP Chapter 80 has hosted a SignOn.org petition to get more people educated and involved. VFP members nationally can access the petition at [/signon.org/sign/us-1-stop-nuclear-weapons](http://signon.org/sign/us-1-stop-nuclear-weapons). Chapter 80 asks other chapters across the country to disseminate this petition.

Chapter 80 is also educating the local public by hosting an April 15<sup>th</sup> Tax Day Rally with a *No Taxes for War!* message. Using its billboard-type parade float, Duluth citizens will learn that they have, since 9/11, squandered \$445.1 million of their tax dollars on US military adventurism,

dollars that could have been better spent in the local community!

To host this event, Chapter 80 is partnering with Grandmothers for Peace, Loaves and Fishes, the Northland Anti-War Coalition, and the Twin Ports MoveOn Council.

## **CHAPTER 87, SACRAMENTO, CA**

**JOHN C. REIGER**

Protesting against military drones has been a big part of our actions. Nearby Beale Air Force Base, with its drone squadron, see us quite regularly as part of a Code Pink protest. One of our members earned an arrest for his actions (charges later dropped).



Ch. 80: Michael Walli, Sr. Megan Rice, and Greg Boertje-Obed (left to right)

He followed that up by spending a week at Creech Air Force Base in Nevada protesting the armed drones that are piloted from that base. He also participated in the *Peace March* from Las Vegas to the nuclear test site in Nevada. Some of our members traveled to San Francisco for the anti-drone rally and march on April 13, and we co-sponsored an anti-drone rally in Sacramento later that day as part of a National Day of Protest. Tax day, April 15 found a bunch of us (and Code Pink friends) in front of the local federal building protesting the military use of our tax dollars, and (once again) the military use of killer drones. We had a drone *fly over* that day.

Some of our members attended the Northern California VFP Conference where we were very pleased to meet our new National President, Patrick McCann, and our new Executive Director Mike Reid who made the long trip from the East and Midwest to hobnob with us left-coasters. Opportunities to talk to small groups, like high school classes and other peace groups, have cropped up recently. And we continue our weekly and

monthly Peace Vigils, our support of the Boycott Divestment and Sanction (BDS) movement (anti-Soda Stream picketing), our monthly serving lunch to homeless folks, and other anti-war and/or pro-peace events that come along - like Cindy Sheehan's cross-country bike tour, *Tour de Peace*.

## **CHAPTER 91 SAN DIEGO, CA**

**GIL FIELD**

This past quarter, as usual, has been a very active one for the Hugh Thompson Memorial Chapter. The year started with our participation in the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Parade here in San Diego. Unex-

pectedly, this parade honoring a man of peace, has become a display piece for the military, ROTC, and law enforcement groups here in San Diego, including the FBI which of course spied illegally on Dr. King in the 1950's and 1960's.

San Diego is the home to two of the largest drone manufacturers (General Atomics and Northrup Grumman), and we hosted a national week of drone awareness and demonstrations over the April 4th-7th weekend. Nearly 100 people attended the walk and rally and both local, national and international press covered the event.

"Earth Fair" San Diego, touted as the 3rd largest Earth Day event in the country, was attended by 80,000 people, many of whom came by our booth and talked to Dave Patterson, our "drone man", who brought our scale model drone along for people to look at. Our booth was well attended by chapter members, and we raised over \$900 in donations for our general fund, drone activities, and our Compassion Campaign.

Our Compassion Campaign, raises funds and buys sleeping bag sets

which are delivered late at night to the homeless in downtown San Diego by chapter members, continues to provide this life-saving support to the poorest of the poor downtown, many of whom are veterans. This quarter we have given our Sleeping Bag Sets #1500-1650 with more on order. \$33 buys a sleeping bag set. [sdvfp.org/campaign-of-compassion/](http://sdvfp.org/campaign-of-compassion/)

Chapter members are involved in a monthly book review and discussion on *Home To War* by Gerald Nicosia, which is an excellent history of the Vietnam Veterans Movement.

Members volunteer for dinner preparation for 400-500 homeless folks once a month at the oldest African American church here in San Diego.

Lastly, we are strategizing and making plans to visit the five congressmen/women who represent San Diego. We have learned that even those congressmen on the other side will always listen to veterans, but sometimes getting in the door is the trick. With our past persistence, all doors of the local five are now open to us and our messages.

## **CHAPTER 102, MILWAUKEE, WI**

**BILL CHRISTOFFERSON**

Our chapter joined other veterans and citizens groups in speaking out against Governor. Scott Walker's decision to reject money from the federal Affordable Care Act, which will deny affordable health care options to 1,700 veterans and their spouses.

Three chapter members spoke at a news conference across the street from Zablocki VA Hospital: Roger Quindel, a former county supervisor; Mark Foreman, a member of the national VFP board; and Tracey Sperko, a registered nurse at the VA Hospital, on behalf of Wisconsin Federation of Nurses.

Veterans Book Project.

Earlier in April, VFP members participated in the opening of the Veterans Book Project at the Milwaukee Art Museum. The exhibition, *Objects for Deployment*, includes a library of 50 books that artist Monica Haller created in collaboration with veterans and others—in Milwaukee and elsewhere—telling of their experiences of the American wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Roger Quindel, a Vietnam veteran and VFP member, also has a book in

the exhibit. The books are available to read online or can be downloaded at [veteransbookproject.com/](http://veteransbookproject.com/) In conjunction with a local bookstore, the chapter sponsored a reading and book signing by authors of two new works of fiction that look at the lives of those who go to war and what happens to them when they return.

## **CHAPTER 104, EVANSVILLE, IN**

**LYNN KINKADE**

In January, we voted to make Chuck Hagel, Vietnam vet and then Secretary of Defense nominee, an honorary member of Veterans for Peace because of his experiences as a veteran; for his expressly stated views that "there is no glory in war, only suffering;" and his stated reluctance to commit troops to war. The chapter received a gracious thank-you letter from him in return.

On February 8, Chapter 104 members Gary May, Dave Helfrich, and Lynn Kinkade met with Indianapolis Chapter 49 members Ken Barger, Esteban Ortiz, and Pat Carrithers in Bloomington to discuss common issues. We found that both chapters are facing many of the same issues, including recruitment, how best to organize our chapters and what projects we should focus on so that we are not spread too thin. We discussed contacting student veterans groups to try to increase the participation of Iraq and Afghanistan vets. We also discussed supporting and attending each others' events.

Chapter 104 has become actively involved with the local chapter of Jobs with Justice, understanding our common interests in moving the country away from a war economy to one that strives for full and decent employment for workers and support for their families.

Earth Day in a local woods provided the opportunity for our chapter to present information on the environmental costs of war. Craft activities for kids were provided to help them find ways to resolve conflicts peacefully, and to create *peace catchers* to help build global peace.

## **CHAPTER 105 BALTIMORE, MD**

**JIM BALDRIDGE**

The Phil Berrigan Memorial Chapter participated with 60 other coalition members in the 23 March *Fund Our*

*Communities – Not the Pentagon* Bus Tour from Baltimore to D.C. in the. The tour opened at a Baltimore school with presentations by Fred Mason (President of the Maryland/DC AFL-CIO and an original co-convenor of USLAW) and others. The tour then moved to five additional sites and concluded at the Capitol with a rally decrying the prioritization of war funding at the expense of community needs.

On February 17, we participated with 40,000 others in the *Forward On Climate*, demonstration at the Capitol against the Keystone XL Pipeline, which threatens the environment from Canada to Texas, especially to the Great Plains' Ogallala aquifer. On this blustery day we stood behind a VFP banner held at one end by Mike Marceau from D.C. Chapter 16 and at the other by members from New Jersey, Maine, and Pennsylvania.

On April 5-7, at Towson University, we participated in the *New Faces of War* national conference of Historians Against the War. Chapter members Ellen Barfield and Jim Baldrige participated in panels on *Militarism, Gender and Sexual Violence* and *US Soldiers and the Vietnam Experience*.

Chapter 105 is now planning the annual 17 May Catonsville Nine event at the site of the 1968 draft records burning, and working with the coalition preparing for the Pfc. Bradley Manning trial, which begins in June at Ft. Meade.



**Ch. 105 at *Fund Our Communities – Not the Pentagon* Bus Tour**

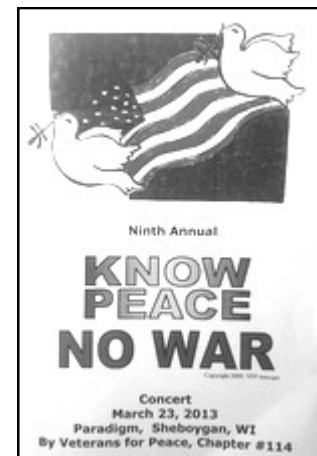
## **CHAPTER 114 SHEBOYGAN, WI**

**TOM CONTRESTAN**

Greetings folks. We've missed a number of issues of the newsletter so here's what we've been up to in the past year. We held our 8th annual Anti-War Concert in March

2012 to a full house. A second theme of economic and social justice was included. Besides our usual anti-war songs and poems, people heard songs slamming our "Governator" Scott Walker. Throughout April and May, some of our members worked phone banks to recall the *Governor of the 1%*. In the end, Koch brothers \$ defeated grass roots and the scoundrel stayed in office. Over the summer we said goodbye to Korean War vet, founding member and longtime chapter president Ed Filemyr and his wife Sara as they moved to New Mexico. We will miss their leadership and service.

We joined with another peace group in town to request that a one acre traffic triangle facing Lake Michigan be declared a *Peace Park* by the city. We are pleased to announce that the motion passed the city council in April. The park already has an eight foot white pole bearing the word peace in six different languages. In September six of us took part in a Peace Parade in West Bend organized by our friend Tom Haibig. On November 11th, thir-



ty people gathered at the Peace Pole to observe Armistice Day once again.

As the year drew to a close, chapter members Craig Wayh and myself traveled to the S.O.A Watch protest at Fort Benning, GA. Each December we donate to a worthy cause. This year we answered a request from Kathy Kelly of Voices for Creative Nonviolence. She told us of 35 children freezing to death in refugee camps in Afghanistan. Her *Duvet Project* allows our dollars to pay local women to sew duvet sleeping bags for the children, thus providing modest employment and warm comfort for the kids.

We lost another founding member, WWII vet Skip Kuehnel passed away

in December. A good friend and champion for peace and justice for over 60 years.

As 2013 began, we hosted our 9th annual Anti-War concert on March 23 to a full house. We were proud to present Ms. Margaret Rozga, reading a few poems. Peggy is the widow of Father James Groppi, legendary civil rights activist in Milwaukee during the 1960's.

We of Wisconsin's Mid-West Coast look forward to meeting and greeting our VFP brothers and sisters in Madison this summer.

## **CHAPTER 115 RED WING, MN**

**EMMA ONAWA**

Chapter 115 is planning busily for their annual Peacestock retreat, to be held July 13 in Hager City, Wisconsin (peacestockvfp.org). Confirmed presenters include Bill Blum, Kathy Kelly, Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, and poet Misty Rowan. Also under consideration are a regional chapter meeting and smaller group workshops. Dinner is included in the price of a ticket. For more information, please contact Bill Habedank, habedank@yahoo.com or Emma Onawa at emmaonawa@yahoo.com.

The chapter recently donated \$500 to the YMCA for low-income youth scholarships and is also looking to pay for scholarships for low-income youth to attend peace camp.

Chapter members are in the process of asking the Red Wing City Council to adopt the Minnesota Arms Spending Alternatives Project (MNASAP) resolution calling for a shift of military spending to domestic priorities. A rally, petition drive, and presentation to the city council are planned. Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer created the MNASAP. Get more info at mnasap.org/.

## **CHAPTER 125 ATLANTA, GA**

**REID JENKINS**

On March 14, George Sossenکو, the president of our chapter, died at the age of 94. A beautiful memorial service was held for him on April 21 at the Atlanta Unitarian Universalist Congregation.

Sossenکو was born in Russia, but grew up mostly in Paris. When he was 16 he left home to fight in the Spanish Civil War. After being turned down by

the French Communists and Socialists because of his age, he was accepted by the anarchist Durruti Column of the International Brigades and served for a year. During World War II, he served with the Free French forces in North Africa and with the U.S. Fifth Army in Italy and France. George was fond of saying, "I sleep like a baby because I fought for the proletariat." People who knew him are fortunate because there aren't many like him anymore. He knew the importance of what he fought for. When the fascists were defeated he laid down his arms, but he didn't give up the fight. When he saw an injustice in the world, he was there trying to change it. I think he slept like a baby because he kept fighting.

He was an inspiration to our chapter. He never missed a noon Friday protest of the Iraq War at Colony Square. He and his wife Bernice "Birdie" were present at innumerable demonstrations. He was passionate about many causes. He volunteered for twenty years at the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary providing counsel for alcoholics and drug addicts. Someone once called homeless people lazy and he gave them an earful: "How do you know that?" he said, "Maybe they just need a chance."

He was a good man and we will miss him.



George Sossenکو, Ch. 125 in action.

## **CHAPTER 129 PUEBLO, CO**

**CHARLES BUTLER**

The Howard Zinn Chapter has primarily been promoting information in presentations related to the cost of war plus some special events, such as Veterans Poetry Night in honor of member Dorothy Gale and a luncheon honoring Doug Gale who was a combat WWII Veteran and VFP 129 Charter Member. After discharge from the Navy,

Doug & Dorothy were married for 60 years in which they were involved in Peace activism. Doug said: "I served in War, now I'm for Peace"

Our Chapter still has fresh memories of college professor Veteran, Robert Mack's outstanding monthly series about PTSD and his leadership in VFP bi-weekly book discussion group on *Howard Zinn's, Peoples US History*.

This year we have presented well received showings of John Perkins (*Economic Hit Man*) Speech from VFP Seattle Convention; and Howard Zinn's Story (*You Can't Stand Still on a Moving Train*).; William Colby (Super Spy and CIA Head) Story. For Cinco de Mayo Celebration a showing of *Soldados* (5 Chicano cotton field workers serve in the killing fields of Viet Nam) followed by three Chicano Viet Nam Vets comments.

Chapter 129 just completed collaborating with three community groups (social justice, health and non-political) in public programs. A DVD of Health Care shortfalls followed by professional speakers on wars take funding from Health Care. This co-sponsoring is the idea of and promoted & strongly supported by Don Bruestle, a Viet Nam combat Vet. Co-Sponsoring like these have offered more programs for members and the public. We have increased attendance & interest in VFP and gained opportunities to advertise VFP programs, such as the Annual VFP Memorial Service which aims to honor service of all vets without celebration of wars.

## **CHAPTER 134 TACOMA, WA**

**RAY NACANAYNAY**

After helping Coffee Strong, the G.I. coffee house next to Joint Base Lewis-McChord, move into its new expanded site we joined them in celebration on April 13<sup>th</sup>. David Dittmore, our chapter's VP, is a G.I. Rights Counselor there and I was on its Board. That same day I also socialized with the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society at its convention in Tacoma. I was like them once, but I've grown. VFP 92's Pio De Cano was there as well. I purchased a copy of their video, *The Forgotten Soldiers*.

Arlington Northwest is scheduled for display along Tacoma's waterfront on Memorial Day weekend, May 25 - 27,

as usual ( photos @ vftaco-ma.com. It will include once again an interpretation of *The Suicide Wall* based on the book by the same title. *Meeker Days* in Puyallup will enjoy the presence of our booth once again in June. It will feature the painting *Priorities vs. Consumption* by M.K. Johnson and a "bean counter" to present the real and imagined cost of war. The "bean counter" was Dave Zink and Tom Karlin's handiwork. Meanwhile Charley Dils has been getting libraries, universities and colleges to distribute the *War Crimes Times*.

**CHAPTER 157 NC TRIANGLE**

**JOHN HEUER**

On February 9, Eisenhower Chapter members teamed up with members of Chapter 99 and 20,000 friends in the annual HK on J March and Rally for Justice in Raleigh, sponsored by the NC NAACP and 150 statewide partner organizations.

Chapter members addressed the rally with a report of the *Bring Our War Dollars Home* resolution passed in January by the Raleigh City Council.

On April 6, chapter members participated in the launch of Orange County's *Bring Our War Dollars Home* campaign, featuring VFP President Patrick McCann, US Rep. David Price, Orange Co. Commissioner Renee Price, Chapel Hill Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt, Carrboro Alderman Sammy Slade, Board of Education member Mia Burroughs and other local citizens testifying to the deficit of community services. Patrick also participated in our chapter meeting following the public forum, and attended the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary Martin Luther King Banquet for Jobs and Justice sponsored by Black Workers for Justice in Raleigh.

On April 21 the chapter hosted a screening of *Sir! No Sir!* followed by a discussion of the Alternative Vietnam War Commemoration Project, led by associate member Howie Machtinger. Howie's presentation, originally delivered to an audience in Austin, TX, can be found at [ncveteransforpeace.org](http://ncveteransforpeace.org).

**Convention continued**

Lincoln Grahlf, at a ceremony and talk held at the nearby Capitol Lakes Retirement Center. Linc has been with VFP since 1989, serving six of these years on the National Board. He is also the national vice-commander of the National Association of Atomic Veterans. He is an author, a recently retired university professor, and an out-spoken critic of this country's nuclear weapons



**Lincoln Grahlf**

program. I'm sure that the local Madison peace activists won't let this opportunity go without celebrating this much-beloved activist's work, but I'm also sure that Linc won't miss this opportunity to inform us of the perils of nuclear war. A celebration and a teachable moment -- what better way to close off this convention and go back into our communities inspired, informed, and proud to be members of Veterans For Peace.

Throughout the convention. We will be setting up separate rooms for David Giffey's artwork and Luke Wilcox's collection, as well as setting aside Esty Dinur's meditation room for convention goers to use throughout the weekend. All three spaces are designed for VFP members to use as places for reflection about war and the work of peace that is now our lives. David was a combat journalist, who will be displaying some of his work from the *Long Shadow: Memories of Vietnam* collection. Luke is deeply involved with Iraqi American Reconciliation Project (IARP) that has presented more than 50 shows around the country, displaying films, paintings, etc to bring the Iraq and American

cultures together. Esty is an Israeli military veteran who is now using her skills as a meditation teacher to help veterans work through their pain. She will be available to give meditation sessions and to present a workshop on meditation.

By the way, in April the VFP national board agreed to drop the convention registration fee from \$200 to \$100. That and the efforts of the local VFP members to seek out alternative, less expensive housing options, speaks to our desire to make this year's convention as accessible as possible to as many of you as possible.

**Viet Nam Tour continued**

Beneficiaries will be Agent Orange victim families, victims of unexploded ordnance and cleanup programs, and some of the other facilities we visited.

We encouraged members of this year's delegation to share travel notes and observations which we will include on VFP Chapter 160's blog at <http://vfp-vn.ning.com/>. Next year's trip is already taking shape; the dates are Saturday 29 March to Saturday 12 April. Nadya Williams, our indispensable stateside trip coordinator, has already received tentative commitments from a dozen likely participants, so the slots are starting to fill up. Contact Nadya for details at [nadyano-mad@gmail.com](mailto:nadyano-mad@gmail.com).

**Keep up with  
Convention  
Speakers,  
Workshops, Events and  
more!!**

[vfpnationalconvention.org](http://vfpnationalconvention.org)

# Why I Am a Veteran For Peace



**Patrick Eddington**  
Chapter 016, Washington, DC

My war was Desert Storm, though unlike many of my contemporaries I fought it from a light table at a 24 hour watch center, writing intelligence reports on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and then the war itself. The threat of potential chemical weapons use was a constant concern, but during the war the official word was "Nothing happened, all false alarms". As I would subsequently learn later in my tenure at the CIA, that was a lie.

I resigned in protest from the CIA in 1996 and subsequently wrote two books that dealt with what became known as "Gulf War Syndrome": Gassed in the Gulf and Long Strange Journey. Through my work in VFP, I'm keeping faith with vets of all eras.

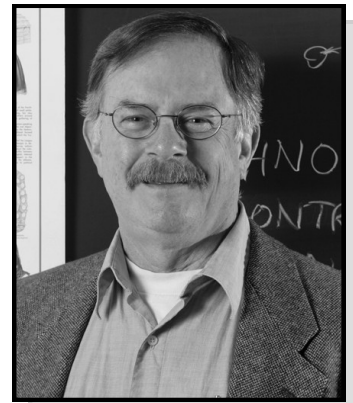


**Steve Yoczik**  
At Large Member, Florida

I am a War Resister. In 2006 I went AWOL to Canada after realizing I was about to participate in business as usual for this country - occupation, re-education, redistribution of resources back to our shores.

After turning myself in in 2009, I moved to the DC Chapter House of IVAW, where I spent the next year. After that, I went back home to Florida in an attempt to try and reconnect with family after being away for so long, and a general desire to "be normal" again. This, of course, failed for several reasons, the main one being the irreversible change within myself, and the inability to "go back to being normal".

When Occupy started, I saw something separate from the corporatized protests I'd witnessed after I became a radical. I saw a chance to finally exercise my oath in an honest way, and so I became a part of Occupy Tampa in November 2011. I'm still here, and was present during the RNC. I chose to represent VFP at this time, and will continue to do so indefinitely.



**Ken Barger**  
Chapter 049, Indianapolis  
Lifetime Member

I went to Vietnam to fight for Freedom and Democracy. In one operation, I looked down from a helicopter and saw two Viet Cong. I looked at where they had disappeared, and as far as I could see there was only death and destruction. I thought, "You know if I was a Vietnamese peasant I'd be out with the Viet Cong fighting the Americans." What the hell had I just thought? I decided that this war had nothing to do with Freedom and Democracy, and that we were killing people and destroying the homeland of people defending themselves from invaders... just like we would do. But it took me years to come to recognize what fighting in a war had done to me. "War is hell" is not about the threat of death... it's about the kind of person I became in war. Having learned the worst I could be as a human being, I decided that now I wanted to work for an America that lives up to our ideals, a people who not only turn away from policies of war but who truly promote peace and justice in the world.



# POETRY

## Turntables

If things were the other way around

20-year-old Iraqi soldiers would write home about the cold New York winter. About watching snow blow from frozen lakes.

A Captain would stand under a tall pine in Appalachia and call home to Baghdad on a satellite phone. They'd try to be cheerful and tell about skunks, hummingbirds and the mountains.

John Stewart would throw his shoes at President Maliki.

Children would scribble the number and type of every enemy vehicle in Crayon.

Graffiti on concrete barriers would tell Iraqis to go home in broken Arabic. A patrol of foreign mercenaries wiped out. The corpses hung from the Brooklyn Bridge. Youngsters in hoodies and *Tims* laughing it up for the camera.

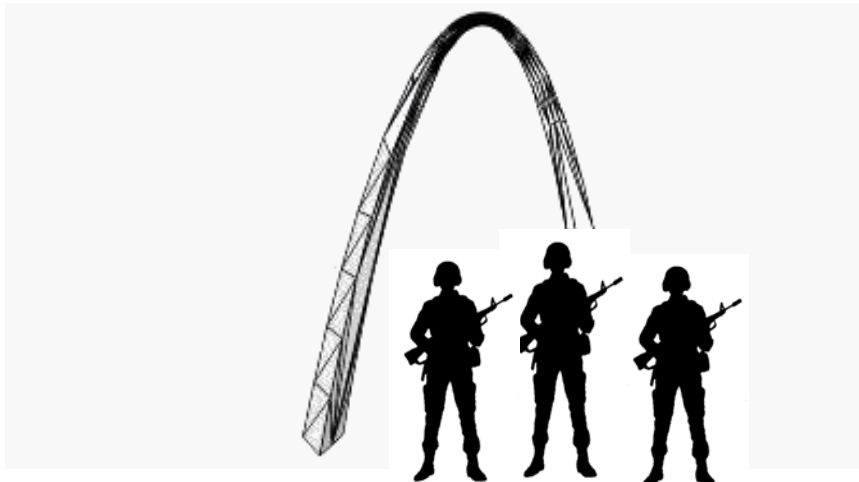
Elderly home owners behind closed doors, clutching shotguns, waiting for the house raids. Thousands of Iraqi soldiers would be shipped home in sleek metal containers draped with a corresponding flag.

There would be withdrawal timetables and multi-national water corporations bidding on Lake Erie. There'd be retired Iraqi generals on Al-Jazeera talking about Canada giving advanced weaponry to insurgents. The politicians would tell you all about the need to occupy Texas in order to keep Mexico out.

Iraqi soldiers would take re-enlistment oaths under the St Louis Arch, in the shadow of the Washington Monument. Two hundred thousand protestors would march down Haifa Street demanding an end to the war. Iraqi veterans would return to mosques, classrooms and Parliament to speak about the murder and destruction. The war crimes.

There would be rebels in the woods called the Yellow Ribbon Brigade. Red Dawn in every town. If things were the other way around, we'd know the unjust sting of occupation.

Nathan Lewis



## Dreams

I'm sorry  
to all the people  
who expected me  
to uphold the norms  
of mainstream  
bourgeois society.

I died that day  
when I looked up  
into the wide Iraqi sky  
and saw  
that the universe  
is hollow,  
a wasteland,  
but I hadn't yet seen  
that the universe  
is hallowed.

I had to live  
for myself,  
and follow my dream.  
I had to be true  
to myself,  
and be myself,  
to be free.  
And a few years  
in jail  
seemed like nothing  
compared  
to a lifetime  
in chains.

So here I am.  
By day I dream  
of the future,  
by night I'm haunted  
by the past.  
At times I look  
up to the sky  
in wonder,  
and wonder if  
my dream  
still dreams of me.

Kyle De Wolf

# CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

VFP National Convention Aug 7-11, 2013



Office use only:

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_ Processed by \_\_\_\_\_

Please type or print the information requested below.  
When filling out the registration form, please enter all

\_\_\_\_\_  
First Name                      Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
VFP Chapter Name & Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City                      State                      Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email



The VFP National Convention is ADA accessible. If you require special accommodations, please check below and complete the information needed. We will call you to discuss any specific needs.

Yes, special accommodations are necessary.

Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

## REGISTER EARLY FOR THE BEST RATES!

### HOW TO REGISTER

**By Mail:**  
Please include this form with your payment to:

VFP National  
216 S. Meramec Ave.  
St. Louis, MO 63105

**By Phone (with Credit Card):**  
Call VFP National Office at 314-725-6005.

**Online (with credit card):**  
[www.vfpnationalconvention.org](http://www.vfpnationalconvention.org)

### PAYMENT

- Check (Payable to VFP)  
 Credit Card

Visa    Mastercard    American Express    Discover.

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVV \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ *3 digit number on far right back of card (front right on AmEx)*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

This year we will include a list of convention attendees (Name, phone, email, location) in each registration packet. If you would like, you can opt out of being on this list.

Please DO NOT share my contact information.

## REGISTRATION OPTIONS

Full Convention Registration includes one meal—the Convention Banquet. Please indicate your dinner choice.

Convention Registration :                      \$200 \_\_\_\_\_  
(T-shirt included)  
“Alternative” Convention Registration :                      \$100 \_\_\_\_\_  
One Day / Two Day Convention Registration:                      \$25 / \$50 \_\_\_\_\_  
Convention Banquet Only (Fri Nite):                      \$40 \_\_\_\_\_

I cannot attend, but would like to donate to Veterans For Peace \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to add a Convention T-Shirt to my registration cost:                      \$15 \_\_\_\_\_  
*T-shirts are being sold at discounted rates prior to the convention.*

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Friday Banquet Entree:

- Atlantic Salmon (Fish)  
 Basil Chicken (Chicken)  
 Seasonal Ravoli (Vegetarian)  
 Grilled Sirloin (Beef)



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## VFP NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2013

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### 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

- To increase 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 & eventually eliminate nuclear weapons
- To seek justice for veterans and victims of war
- To abolish war as an instrument of national 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.



### Don't Forget to Check the VFP Store!

We didn't have room in this issue to include the store order form — so go to [veteransforpeace.org](http://veteransforpeace.org) to see what's available, or give us a call to place your order!

### Updates on Convention Speakers, Workshops, Events and more!!

[vfpnationalconvention.org](http://vfpnationalconvention.org)