



## Exposing the True Costs of War and Militarism Since 1985

# VETERANS FOR PEACE

Organized locally. Recognized Internationally.

VFP Newsletter

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

Summer 2019

## “Thank you, all!” and a warm welcome to our new executive director, Garrett Reppenhagen!

As I prepare to step down as Executive Director I am filled with gratitude. Thank you all so much for your support over the years. Veterans For Peace is a remarkable organization and one of the most important in the country. It has been a great privilege to serve the organization.

I am proud and excited to pass the torch to Garrett Reppenhagen. I have known Garrett for more than a decade. He worked with David Cline, who recruited me into Veterans For Peace, and former VFP ED Woody Powell, who in 2005 welcomed and mentored me with open arms when I arrived in Saint Louis.

Garrett served in Iraq in the 1st Infantry Division as a Cavalry/Scout Sniper. He left active duty with an honorable discharge in May of 2005. He has intimate knowledge of the antiwar veterans' movement. He has not only worked closely with Veterans For Peace, but he is also a member of About Face and served a term as chair of its board when its name was still Iraq Veterans Against the War.

I feel fortunate to be able to leave the position of executive director in the capable hands of a person who is not only highly qualified, but who I know for sure is one of us.

Unfortunately, there continues to be more than enough work for Garrett and all of us to do. I could go into a list of the challenges we face, but there is no need. You already know them. But we also know that we have what it takes to meet



*VFP Executive Directors  
Michael T. McPhearson (outgoing)  
and Garrett Reppenhagen (incoming) have  
a history with Veterans For Peace—and with each other.*

the challenges. As military veterans who have both trained for and fought in war, we know the immorality and futility of war. We know that the rich send the poor to fight in wars. We know that communities are starved for resources used to conduct wars abroad and plagued by violence as war returns home. United with associate members who also know the truth of war, together we resist and work to build a world of Peace at Home and Abroad. Our most powerful tools are our pens, voices, stories, and bodies. We are willing to lay it on the line for peace because we are Veterans For Peace.

I am honored and proud to be one of you!

*Michael T. McPhearson*

Former Executive Director, Veterans For Peace



### See you in Spokane!

*Reduced registration and travel assistance available for post-Cold War veterans while funds last. . . .*

*Find info and register at [veteransforpeace.org](http://veteransforpeace.org).*

*Find program highlights inside, on page 17.*



## VFP NATIONAL STAFF

Garett Reppenhagen  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Shelly Rockett  
BUSINESS MANAGER

Colleen Kelly  
COMMUNICATIONS COORD.

Gail Aquino  
VFP OFFICE STAFF

Samantha Ferguson  
PROGRAM AND EVENT COORD.

Helen Jaccard  
GOLDEN RULE PROJECT MANAGER  
vfp@veteransforpeace.org  
314-725-6005

## NEWSLETTER

editor@veteransforpeace.org

Becky Luening  
NEWSLETTER EDITOR / LAYOUT

W. D. Ehrhart  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Doug Rawlings  
ADVISOR AND CONTRIBUTOR

## Next Deadline for Chapter Reports:

**September 10, 2019**

Send your 200 words to:

editor@veteransforpeace.org

Don't forget to include reporter's name along with chapter name, number, and location.

Photos must be high resolution to look good in print. A good size is 1200 pixels wide or more. Please include a caption and when feasible identify everyone in group shots. Thank you!

## TOO MUCH PAPER?

If you'd like to receive your newsletter electronically, send a request to gail@veteransforpeace.org along with your name and email address.

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## MARK THESE DATES!

**AUG 15-18 • 34th Annual Veterans For Peace Convention, Spokane, Washington.**

**SEPT 21 • U.N. International Day of Peace.** This year's theme, "Climate Action for Peace," is about combatting climate change as a way to protect and promote peace throughout the world.

**SEPT 20-23 • People's Mobilization to Stop the U.S. War Machine, New York, New York.**

**SEPT 29-OCT 5 • SHUT DOWN CREECH** Fall Action at Creech "Killer Drone" AFB, Nevada.



Michael Kerr, Chris Knudson, Ken Kohler, and Ray Cage at the Spring 2019 SHUT DOWN CREECH action.

**OCT 5-6 • NoWar2019 Pathways to Peace, World BEYOND War's 4th global conference on the abolition of war, Limerick, Ireland.**

**OCT 5-12 • Keep Space for Peace Week,** an international week of protest to stop the militarization of space.

**NOV 11 • Armistice Day**

**NOV 15-17 • SOA Watch Commemorative Gathering: Bridging the Past and Present, Ft. Benning, Georgia.** SOA trained the military personnel that led the massacre of the 6 Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter, in El Salvador almost 30 years ago. They continue training foreign military and police personnel. They train Border Patrol. "Shut Down SOA!" is just as relevant now as it was 30 years ago. This will be a focused, powerful weekend. Let's add to that power by having a large turnout of VFP veterans and supporters.

**DEC 3-5 • No to NATO Summit, London, England.**



## In appreciation of life, friendship, and solidarity

Nobody ever said the struggle for peace and justice would be easy. And it is not. Nobody ever said that keeping an organization like Veterans For Peace up and running, growing, and evolving would be easy, either. Members of the VFP Board of Directors are unpaid volunteers who put in a lot of time and energy managing many aspects of the organization. Sometimes we are tasked with making difficult decisions.

Board members don't always see things in the same light (no surprise there). We struggle with one another—usually in a very civil manner. But we all try to do our best to remain united and to serve Veterans For Peace as best we can. I appreciate the trust and confidence VFP members put in us who serve on the board. I know that many of you are making great contributions to many important, interrelated struggles for Peace at Home and Peace Abroad. Thank you for your dedication, and for doing the hard work of peacemaking!

It's so great to see the torch of VFP directorship being passed to Garrett Reppenhausen, a next-generation veteran. When I first joined Veterans For Peace, many World War II and Korea-era vets still held leadership positions, and a few Lincoln Brigaders and World War I veterans were

still around. In the 2000s, Viet Nam-era veterans really came to the fore under the leadership of David Cline. Garrett will be the first Iraq veteran to serve as executive director for VFP, and I am seeing other post-Cold War veterans jumping on board at the same time, giving me faith our important work will continue, and continue to adapt to an unpredictable, changing landscape.

Friends have been dying at an alarming rate lately, including several friends in Veterans For Peace. My longtime friend Harry Meserve died last December. Harry was the president of Chapter 11 in Santa Cruz, California. I first met him in the mid-eighties when we were working with S. Brian Willson and the Veterans Peace Action Teams, rebuilding clinics and schools that had been destroyed by U.S.-backed “Contras” in the Nicaraguan countryside. Always affable and thoughtful, Harry had grown into an elder statesman of the Santa Cruz peace and justice movement. He was a huge fan of VFP's *Golden Rule* anti-nuclear sailboat, which was warmly welcomed in Santa Cruz on three different occasions.

Two other Santa Cruz peace activists—Sherry Conable and Catherine “Cat” Steele—died within a few months of Harry. Sherry, an associate member of VFP, was the go-to person in Santa Cruz peace circles, the one who always showed up to organize whatever was needed at the time. Cat was always there too. Harry, Sherry, and Cat were close friends, and it was not long ago that Helen Jaccard and I were sitting down to a wonderful meal with all three of them. Now they are gone. I can only imagine the impact on Santa Cruz of losing these three wonderful human beings and key peace activists in such a short time.

Then, in late May, we got the news that Barry Binks had died. The leukemia he had lived with for several years had finally caught up with him. Barry was a Vietnam veteran and longtime VFP activist based in Sacramento. He was one of those humble types who always

wore his VFP shirt and always showed up. He was a reliable regular in the monthly anti-drone demonstrations (and direct actions) at Beale AFB Airbase in Northern California. Barry was also a big supporter of the *Golden Rule* peace boat. He crewed on it, he served as shore support, and he contributed financially.

I felt moved to say something about these wonderful human beings, to mark their passing, and obviously other great folks have passed who I did not get to know. It has become typical for 30–40 names of the recently deceased to be read aloud at our convention, as we invoke their spirits with our *iPresente!* ritual.

Reflecting on these recent losses and pondering the inevitable for all of us makes the passing of that VFP torch all the more poignant. I want to propose that it's time for us Viet Nam-era VFP members to think about “planned giving” as a way to ensure sufficient support for the work of our younger generations of veterans to continue. I would love to see us create a legacy fund that flows from one generation of Veterans For Peace to the next. We could make a campaign of it, create a special fund and give it a name. If, for example, just 20 members a year were to leave \$10,000 to Veterans For Peace, that would be \$200,000 that could be put to work for peace.

The incredible bonds that we form in working together for peace despite our differences—the solidarity that keeps us all striving in the trenches, so to speak—does not have to end when we die. It might give you joy to know that your passion and energy can be channeled, for a time, through a growing group of younger VFP activists who will continue working for peace on this earth even after we have moved on to another plane. If you too like this idea, and would like to help make it happen, let's talk!

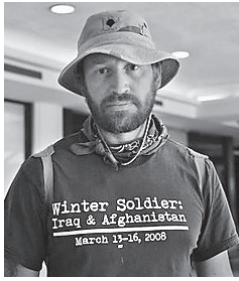
*Wage peace!*

*Gerry Condon*

Board President, Veterans For Peace  
[gerrycondon@veteransforpeace.org](mailto:gerrycondon@veteransforpeace.org)



## Hello, Veterans For Peace!



First, I want to thank Michael for his years of dedication and sacrifice advancing VFP's mission of peace. It is difficult to express adequate appreciation for the commitment he made.

As Michael stated, I am no stranger to the veteran community and our work. Both my grandfathers served during WWII. My father served in Viet Nam and retired an E-8. After more than 20 years of service he died the year he retired—of cancer connected to Agent Orange. I went on to join one month before September 11, 2001. In Iraq I began publishing an antiwar blog called *Fight To Survive* that got the attention of the peace movement. When Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) formed under VFP, I was the first active-duty member to join while on sniper missions in Operation Iraqi Freedom. It wasn't long before my Stop-Loss was lifted and I was home, in 2005, helping to confront the Secret Service the first day at Camp Casey with Veterans For Peace members in Texas.

It has always been a natural fit to fall in with my sisters and brothers in the veteran resistance. So I am excited to help lead VFP into another era. As one member has told me, "It feels like you're coming home." After all, I found my salvation organizing for a meaningful cause. I joined a new community that understands my military experience and shares my values and urgency to save lives.

My first job coming back was working for Robert "Bobby" Muller, a Viet Nam veteran who was a peace activist and veterans advocate. My first desk sat underneath a Nobel Peace Prize that Bobby was co-awarded for his Campaign for a Landmine Free World. My experience as chair of IVAW and working in several veteran non-profits taught me the ropes of organizational management, but the real lessons I gained were under the

mentorship of the veterans who came to the movement before me. VFP is full of incredible experience and amazing leadership that has helped me every step of my journey. It is humbling to be the director for Veterans For Peace, but it shouldn't be surprising that I ended up in this position since I can directly credit my education in the antiwar movement and veteran organizing to so many of you.

As I enter this role, we do face unique challenges. Veterans For Peace has a solid foundation of passionate and dedicated members. We need to find ways to honor the tradition and history of the organization while building for the future, which means reaching a new generation of veterans. It's important that our ranks be strengthened and continuity established. I hope to create a space for new members that allows for the same mentoring I have found within VFP.

I know that together we can work toward VFP reflecting the inclusive power of today's social movements. I know that with a culture of openness and willingness to learn, we can become a place where underrepresented veterans, including people of color and veterans with diverse gender identities, can feel safe. We will proudly stand next to anyone who wants to abolish war and end the institutional brutality in our own communities.

A time of transition in leadership is also a good time to evaluate our strategy. I hope to help focus and uplift the work you all are doing to address immediate threats of foreign war, but also to build on long-term goals so the change we create is sustainable. Folding our varied efforts into a single strong message will drive our mission forward.

The accomplishments you all have made are legendary, the ongoing work you are engaged in is inspiring, and I am humbled to take the next step with you toward justice and peace.

Yours for the cause,

**Garett Reppenhagen**

Executive Director, Veterans For Peace

## The Wall

**We were wrong, terribly wrong.**

—ROBERT McNAMARA

Visitors stand in silence—sharing grief and pain. War casualties etched in polished granite.

1959	2
1960	5
1961	16

Each year the numbers grow, row after row. Young lives cut short.

1966	6,144
1967	11,614
1968	16,589

A girl stops, gently touches the name of the father she never met. Tears flow freely.

Leaders in Washington are not moved by sentimentality. Vietnam casualties are acceptable losses.

It was a long war  
A tragic war  
An unwinnable war

—BARRY L. REECE

*Barry L. Reece is a member of VFP Chapter 157. He wrote this poem after visiting The Wall. The epigram at the top is a statement made by Robert McNamara late in life.*



### MEMORIAL DAY IN SANTA FE

Chapter 55's rose-laying team at the National Cemetery in Santa Fe, New Mexico. L to R: Bob Joseph, Monisha Rios, Bob Gaines, Dia Winograd, Dona Rae Peth, Joanna Dewey, and Daniel Craig.

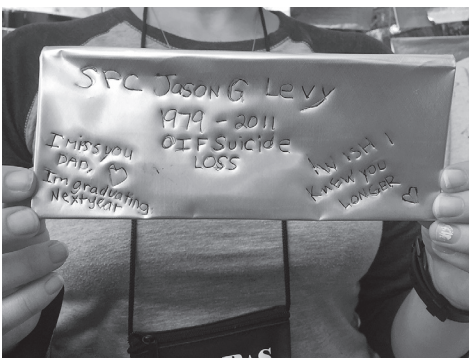


## In D.C., a day for remembering and appreciating war resisters and the sacrifices they made

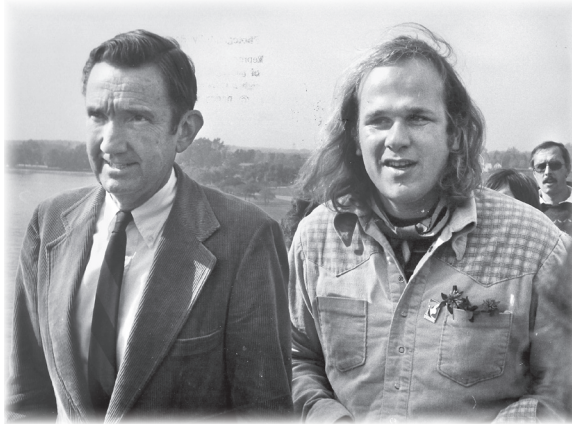
It was a hot day in Washington, D.C. About a dozen people turned out to deliver a total of 63 letters to The Wall. Crowds were sparse in the morning, when they were placing the letters at the memorial, but a lot of people came later in the afternoon—people of all ages.

The Veterans For Peace ceremony was led by Doug Rawlings and Susan Schnall, members of the VFP “Viet Nam Full Disclosure” campaign committee. It started at the Belltower, with a reading of a statement authored by Doug honoring resisters, and especially remembering Bruce Beyer, who many of us had come to know through Viet Nam Full Disclosure listserv conversations that took place during the fall 2017 airing of *The Vietnam War*, the Burns-Novick public television extravaganza.

Fifty years ago, Bruce was one of those who publicly and openly resisted the draft, and he paid dearly for his action, living years in exile, in Canada and Sweden. He was always fighting on behalf of the Vietnamese people and American soldiers to end that particular war and, for that matter, all wars. Mr. Beyer died on April 15, 2019, leaving behind a legacy of antiwar activism that no doubt has saved other would-be soldiers from the devastation of war.



**This memorial message was etched by a mother with several children who came to the Belltower in response to hearing mention of veteran suicides. The woman told us it was her “Angel Day”—the anniversary of her veteran husband’s suicide.**



**¡BRUCE BEYER, PRESENTE!**

*Ramsey Clark (left) crosses the Peace Bridge from Canada with Bruce Beyer on October 20, 1977, ten years from the day Bruce turned in his draft card to Mr. Clark, who was U.S. Attorney General under LBJ, from 1967 to 1969. Bruce’s friend Gerald McCarthy (far right, wearing sunglasses), the author of *War Story: Vietnam War Poems*, was among 50 Viet Nam veterans who brought Bruce home that day.*

Following Doug Rawlings’ general statement recognizing the sacrifice of war resisters (below), he called out the names and brief bios of a dozen resisters, some still living, who have been affiliated with VFP over the years. Plaques were then placed on the Belltower to recognize those 12 individuals, and 12

red roses were placed at The Wall along with the 63 letters.

Talking about Bruce Beyer, Doug said, “In a very real sense this ceremony today is a direct result of Bruce Beyer’s work, and we would like to dedicate this day and our activities on this Memorial Day to his memory.”

### RECOGNIZING THE SACRIFICE OF WAR RESISTERS

STATEMENT BY DOUG RAWLINGS

It is a given that war takes many lives. Any historical exploration of the bloody 20th century can attest to that. And we all know that the toll goes beyond the numbers of people who have lost their lives as combatants or as bystanders caught up in the crossfire. A walk through the psychiatric ward of any VA hospital can attest to that. A cursory reading of a local newspaper’s obituary section will reveal those veterans whose lives were taken by their own hand, those whose nightmares would not let them live in peace. And, of course, we need only walk a few hundred meters from this very spot to find a stark testimony to the death wrought by a war that many of us here today either fought in or were witness to. Do not think for a moment that any of us can escape war’s wrath. We need only heed the words written by the poet John Donne four centuries ago to fully understand the clouds we are living under: “... *never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.*” In a very real sense, everyone who has lived in the United States over these past 50 years is a veteran of war. And the bell will continue to toll for all of us, until we rise up and resist those who enrich themselves by sending our young people off to kill and die for their ill-gotten gains.

Yet there were those (some still living, others now gone) who, five decades ago, chose a path other than war. They resisted. They chose to follow a deeply ingrained moral code and stand up to the warlords who were so wanton with our lives. Contrary to some conventional thinking, they did not “shirk their duties.” Indeed, they bravely and courageously followed a higher calling and took a stand against war. And they paid dearly for it. During the American War in Viet Nam there were thousands who refused to fight in what they so rightly saw as an immoral and unjust war. That courageous tradition, which began with earlier generations of war resisters, has continued through our recent wars as well. Today, we honor them all.

# VFP CHAPTER REPORTS

## #001 – PORTLAND, ME

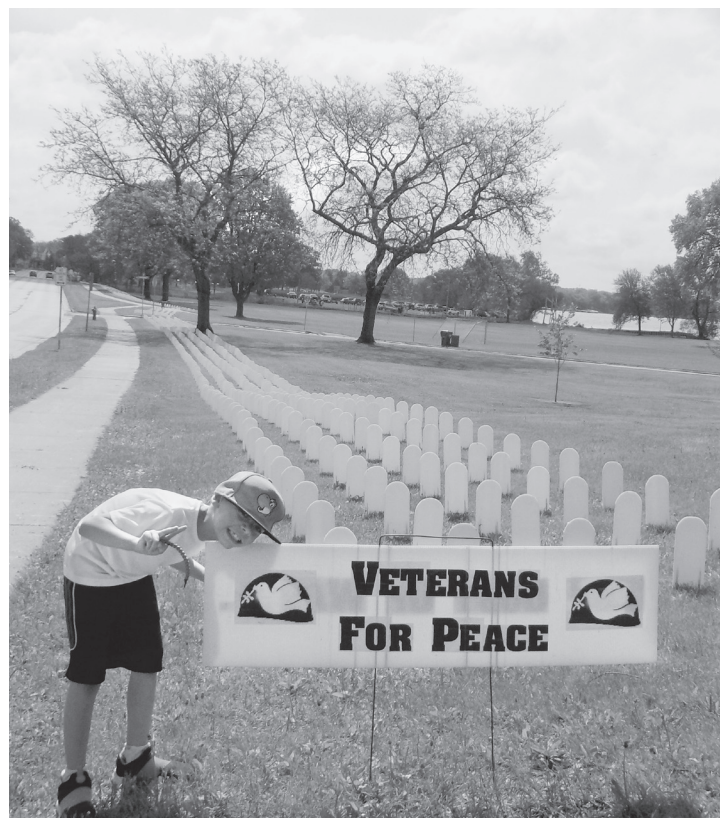
Over the course of the past few months, three actions in particular stand out in my mind.

Chapter members supported MOMS DEMAND ACTION ON GUNS by testifying on LD1312, a “red flag” bill that would allow police officials to temporarily seize the guns of a person who is showing signs of deep distress. Chapter member Peter Morgan is to be credited for our strong working relationship with the MOMS.

Seventy-five activists protested at the christening ceremony of a new naval destroyer at Bath Iron Works in April. The 25 arrested for civil disobedience included four Portland chapter members—Suzanne Hedrick, Dan Ellis, Rob Shetterly and Dud Hendricks. Our main argument is that the shipyard, Maine’s largest employer, should convert to making sustainable and environmentally friendly infrastructure (solar panels, trains, windmills, hospital ships, etc.) rather than \$7 billion Navy destroyers. We have been making this case for years and now it seems to be gaining some traction. The next civil disobedience at the shipyard is June 22.

In March, we hosted an evening with so-called “New Mainers” who have settled here, primarily from the Congo and Somalia. As new asylum seekers arrive in our state, our chapter will be helping provide sustenance and support, working with those who are already helping asylum seekers settle in Maine.

*Doug Rawlings*



VFP Chapter 25 set up over 6,000 tombstones—The Memorial Mile—at Olbrich Park in Madison, Wisconsin, for Memorial Day weekend, to remember U.S. lives lost in our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

## #021 – NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

New Jersey Chapter 21 has had a busy winter and spring. Our annual holiday party was a great success and included a moving talk by member Soobok Kim, a veteran of the ROK, South Korea’s armed forces. In February, we took part in the global campaign of solidarity with Venezuela by tabling and holding a speak-out in Jersey City. A few weeks later we joined with allies in the Latinx community to mark the 54th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic. (It was in 1965 that President Lyndon Johnson sent 22,000 U.S. troops to that nation in order to bolster the right-wing coup that had overthrown Juan Bosch, the Dominicans’ first freely elected president.) We also joined with our friends in the Philippine community to protest the U.S. military presence in their nation. Chapter 21 continues to work with the New York Metro Area Veterans Peace Council, with public events at the St. Patrick’s Day for All parade in Queens and a Memorial Day gathering in Manhattan. In addition, several members of our chapter have agreed to become part of a New Jersey Progressive Speakers Bureau currently in formation.

*Wendy Fisher*

## #023 – ROCHESTER, NY

In December 2018, members Lew Montemaggi and Bob Ames presented to over 75 attendees about their experience at the November SOA Watch Encuentro. Lew and Bob spent two weeks in the Tucson/Nogales area, attending deportation hearings and doing water drops and demonstrations on migrants’ behalf.

William and Marilyn Lambert Fisher hosted a February social gathering that was well attended. Several new members were introduced and shared their stories and interests.

In March, Executive Committee members met with newly elected U.S. Representative Joseph Morelle (D, NY-25) to discuss veterans’ concerns and the Trump Administration’s saber rattling.

Thanks to excellent materials and assistance provided by Samantha Ferguson from VFP National, our table at an April forum on Free Enterprise Solutions to Climate Change (sponsored by Sierra Club in partnership with Chamber of Commerce) helped raise awareness of the environmental cost of war and VFP’s role in the fight against climate change.

Chapter 23 had a presence at three organizational dinners in May—Teen Empowerment, Rochester Metro Justice, and the Rochester Committee on Latin America. These groups are our local partners, and we sponsor ads in their publications.

The VFP contingent in the Rochester Memorial Day parade got to walk behind a noisy contingent of veteran motorcyclists.

*James Swarts*





*A strong VFP contingent from Rochester Chapter 23 turned out in a blistering February snowstorm to join with hundreds of others in a protest of Trump's Emergency Declaration. Photo by John Diehl.*

## #025 – SOUTHERN WISCONSIN

For Chapter 25, spring means preparation for our annual Memorial Day Peace Rally, made possible through the hard work of coordinator David Giffey. The rally blends reflections on peace topics with entertainment by local musicians. We also celebrate our Peace Scholarship Program, awarding high school seniors for essays on subjects related to peace in our times.

Spring also brings our Memorial Mile display. Countless hours of preparation and planning by Phil Fransen and John Fournelle go into this display, which is set up and maintained by many chapter and community volunteers. The long rows of grave markers stretching down a gentle slope through Olbrich Park along heavily trafficked Madison Street are an awesome reminder of the true cost of war.

Don McKeating has been a leader in the Save Our VA campaign, educating the public about the Mission Act and what it really means for veterans' health care.

Thanks to Brad Geyer, Chapter 25 has a thriving, relevant website, [Madisonvfp.org](http://Madisonvfp.org), and an informative Facebook page, Madison Veterans for Peace. We are reprinting member David Giffey's book, *Long Shadows: Veterans' Paths to Peace*, and will be looking for opportunities to advance the book's message. As we move into summer, chapter outreach volunteer Steve Books will be advancing the message of peace at farmers markets and festivals almost every weekend.

*Fran Wiedenhoef*

## #032 – SOUTH FLORIDA

Chapter 32 has been busy doing solidarity work for the Bolivarian movement in Venezuela, in opposition to U.S. plans to invade there. We've participated in three different rallies in Miami. Chapter president Camilo Mejia and vice president Patrick McCann each spoke as part of a three-stop mini-tour organized by Max Blumenthal of *The Grayzone*. Earlier, Patrick spent a week in front of the Venezuelan embassy in D.C. as part of the Embassy Protection Collective, joining more than a score of VFP members who traveled to Washington from around the country to participate in that historic initiative.

*Patrick McCann*

## #034 – NEW YORK, NY

Chapter 34 continues to be very active with important projects: Save Our VA, Move the Money, Save Yemen, and Agent Orange Campaign.

Ninety attended our Holiday Party, with entertainment provided by the Filthy Rotten System, Raging Grannies, Dave Lippmann, Sarah Mess, and Jan Barry.

After Ken Mayers and Tarak Kauff were arrested at Ireland's Shannon Airport, we supported them with demos and letters to the Irish Ambassador demanding they be permitted to return home, pending trial.

*continued on page 8...*



# VFP CHAPTER REPORTS



Chapter 34 members Gary Davidson and George McAnanama pause at “The Immigrants” sculpture in Battery Park to display solidarity with Muslim immigrants—one stop along the New York and New Jersey Chapters’ Memorial Day procession through the park.

## Chapter 34, New York City, continued...

In March, we hosted Mac MacDevitt’s My Lai Memorial Exhibit, and hundreds attended over three days of events, which included a panel of Viet Nam veterans—Jan Barry, Doug Hostetter, JJ Johnson, Mac Bica, and W.D. Ehrhart—and film screenings of *Sir! No Sir!* and *Winter Soldier*.

A hundred people participated in our Memorial Day Observance for Peace, carrying a flag-draped coffin through Battery Park in a solemn procession accompanied by bagpiper John Maynard and drummer Paula Spiro. Along the way we distributed flyers and stopped at sites honoring veterans and immigrants. At the seawall, we commemorated those who have died in war. Chapter president Susan Schnall spoke; the ceremony ended with remarks by 95-year-old activist/actor Vinie Burrows, and the playing of taps by bugler Frank Castillo. The Raging Grannies, Bud Courtney and the Filthy Rotten System sang, Jan Barry and Sarah Mess read poetry, and Soobok Kim spoke at the Korean Monument.

Bob Keilbach

## #035 – SPOKANE, WA

Greetings from Spokane! Home of the 2019 National VFP Convention!

Despite achieving paradigms of aging, we continue to be engaged. Two members attended a seminar at Eastern Washington University on Yemen, viewing horrific conditions there. We

attended a seminar on water pollution from per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at Fairchild AFB, hosted a Poor People’s Campaign tour bus stop, and cosponsored a talk by David Barsamian with KYRS Community Radio. Chapter president Rusty Nelson and his spouse Nancy were nominated for the Spokane Citizens Hall of Fame, for their Innovation and Leadership as co-directors of the Peace and Justice Action League.

The Appeals Court ruled against George Taylor’s necessity defense for blocking oil trains; trial date in October.

In the annual Pride Parade organized by Spokane Pride on June 8, our contingent carried our “Military Spending Is Killing Us” banner, our VFP chapter parade banner, and three flags. Pride members carried an upside-down U.S. flag indicating distress in the U.S.! Outspoken Pride member Patrick Divine confronted the nine-member Air Force color guard, shouting “No guns in our pride!” This year’s parade was much larger than past parades.

“VFP has the job of pointing out the insanity of giving the wealth and youth of our country to war.” —Rusty Nelson

Hollis Higgins

## #041 – CAPE COD, MA

We began our annual “Voices of Peace” poetry contest in January by soliciting entries from school kids and adults across



Jessica Ross, eighth grade student at Nauset Middle School, reads her poem “All for Peace” during the 2019 Memorial Day Parade Ceremony in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Jessica’s was one of 769 submissions in this year’s Voices of Peace contest (the 24th annual!) sponsored by Corporal Jeffrey M. Lucey VFP Chapter 41. The contest serves to illuminate struggles for world peace, security, and human well-being through the art of poetry.





**Humboldt Bay Chapter 56 members pause for a photo during their 2018 Armistice Day celebration on the Arcata Plaza. From left to right: Rob Hepburn, John Schaefer, Nate Lomba, Rich Gilchrist, Dave Tschoepe, unidentified friend, Bill Thompson (Presente!), unidentified friend, Jane Riggan, Gordon Anderson, and Peter Aronson. Read their report on page 10.**

the Cape Cod and Islands region. The response was impressive: 769 entries representing 24 schools with a total of 68 teachers facilitating student submissions. In the 24 years of the contest, more than 11,720 Cape and Islands poets have participated. Our 75 winners were celebrated by the community at an April Awards Ceremony and Reading, which was well attended. A special contest and recognition event is in the works for next year's 25th anniversary!

In May, chapter members spoke at the Hyannis Rotary Club luncheon and were well received. Veterans and non-veterans in attendance engaged in a discussion of conflicts from Vietnam to the Gulf Wars that highlighted the costs of these wars in civilian and military casualties, and how citizens can help prevent future wars by actively promoting nonviolent solutions.

We've made significant progress toward our long-term goal of establishing a tangible and permanent memorial to the "Hidden Wounds of War"—PTS, TBI, MST, etc.—and to the many veteran suicides that occur as a result of these injuries not being recognized and properly treated. It will be a place of reflection and remembrance for families and friends of those veterans who have succumbed to these wounds.

*Duke Ellis*

## #055 – SANTA FE, NM

Several of our members assembled at the Santa Fe National Cemetery on Memorial Day to remember those Veterans For Peace who are buried there. We left a rose at each of their grave sites, after sharing short stories and remembrances.

One of our members, Ken Mayers, was arrested for an act of civil disobedience at the Shannon, Ireland, airport. He and New York VFP member Tarak Kauff were released on bail, but their passports were confiscated, preventing them from leaving the country until the authorities are finished with them.

Members continue to hold weekly Friday noon vigils, displaying the flag for peace on one of the busiest traffic corners in the city.

We are working with the Albuquerque VFP chapter to identify, assign, and act upon duties and responsibilities in preparation for the 2020 Veterans For Peace international conference, which will be held in Albuquerque.

We are working to establish a film series in order to spur public discussions about ethical issues, and hope to reach a younger audience with this effort. We have found a sympathetic theater manager to provide the venue for these events.

*Ruth Sabiers and French Leger*

# VFP CHAPTER REPORTS

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## #056 – HUMBOLDT BAY, CA

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Since 1994, the Humboldt Bay chapter has sponsored one node of the G.I. Rights Hotline, which provides guidance on military regulations to service members, recruits, veterans, and their families. Information is free, confidential, and accurate, supplementing the guidance that callers' command should provide but sometimes does not. The hotline consortium includes about 20 nodes staffed by NGOs and non-profits, located in 11 states and Germany. Counselors include veterans, lawyers, and medical specialists. The hotline does not attempt to dissuade callers from military service, but offers information both to callers who face difficulties getting out and to callers who face difficulties staying in.

Our chapter maintains the Arcata Peace Memorial Garden. Over the years we have: founded the Redwood Coast Peace Poetry and Art Project; established an annual VFP Kit Crosby-Williams Peace Scholarship; co-sponsored the Viet Nam Friendship Village Project; co-founded and sponsored the Iraq Water Project; created and published a newsprint *Resource Guide: Advice from Veterans on Military Service and Recruiting Practices*; and published a newsletter, *The Foghorn: Cutting through the Fog of War*.

Humboldt Bay is the home port of the *Golden Rule*, which our chapter proudly supports. We have donated thousands of dollars and hours to the project, and we are very proud of chapter member Chuck Dewitt for coordinating the restoration effort.

Peter Aronson

## #057 – GREEN MOUNTAIN, VT

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Chapter 57's theme for marching in parades this year is "Stop the U.S. Wars—Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, Iraq, Niger, Libya, Syria." Our members marched with this message in two Memorial Day parades on the same day, one in Middlebury, Vermont, and one in Vergennes, Vermont. We will be marching in the Montpelier Fourth of July Parade and the Labor Day Parade in Northfield, Vermont.

Chapter 57 has been very involved in a campaign to stop the F35 nuclear-capable aircraft from coming to the Vermont Air National Guard base at the Burlington International Airport. Basing F35s in the middle of Vermont's "Metropolitan Area" will subject thousands to harmful noise levels, render many units of affordable housing unlivable, and make Burlington a target in any nuclear exchange. We have been lobbying the Vermont congressional delegation to reverse their support of the decision made 10 years ago. Chapter 57 has been supporting a newly formed citizen organization, Citizens Against Nuclear Bombers in Vermont ([canbvt.org/about](http://canbvt.org/about)). Efforts so far have resulted in a Vermont Senate Resolution being passed in May of this year that says in part:

"Resolved by the Senate of the State of Vermont: That the Senate of the State of Vermont expresses its strong opposition to the basing of any nuclear delivery system in the State of

Vermont, and be it further Resolved: That the Secretary of the Senate be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Governor, to Acting U.S. Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan, and to the Vermont Congressional Delegation."

Also, one of our members, Andy Schoerke, is keeping track of the U.S. Carrier Strike Forces to determine if they are converging on the Middle East, which would indicate some U.S. action or war with Iran. A commentary Andy wrote on the Iran situation appeared in Vermont's online news site, *Vermont Digger*, and can be read at [vtdigger.org/2019/05/19/andrew-schoerke-no-attack-iran/](http://vtdigger.org/2019/05/19/andrew-schoerke-no-attack-iran/).

On the media front, one of our members is organizing the distribution of VFP's *Peace In Our Times* to libraries around the state, another produces a monthly public access television program, and we are starting to pay more attention to social media as a way to spread our message.

Foster Peace.

Richard Czaplinski

## #061 – ST. LOUIS, MO

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At 10:00 a.m. on June 5, five veterans and two associates from Chapter 61 joined two members of AFGV at the entrance of John Cochran Veterans Hospital, where we handed out leaflets explaining the Mission Act and its intent to privatize veterans' medical care. We tried to keep a low profile, since we were on VA property, so we did not fly the VFP flag or chant. Our primary purpose was to inform veterans of the new legislation and its intended consequences, and to gauge responses. We reached a lot of vets, and in general were well received, but it was apparent that many of the veterans were either ignorant of the legislation or were misinformed. No one I talked to understood that the money paid to outsourcing was coming out of the VA budget. The VA staff was well aware we were there, but we had no problems with them and were not asked to move or leave. It is my impression that we were effective in raising awareness of what is coming down the pike and we hope to do more events like this at Jefferson Barracks and John Cochran facilities.

Bob Suberi

## #063 – ALBUQUERQUE, NM

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Chapter 63 participated in a protest at the annual Air and Space Fiesta Air Show at Kirtland AFB on May 18, along with members of the Party for Socialism and Liberation and Military Families Speak Out. Traffic was heavy and we had good conversations with passersby.

On May 31, we met with U.S. House Representative Deb Haaland to discuss VA privatization, the situation of Ken Mayers and Tarak Kauff (which she promised to look into), and the plight of deported veterans. Rep. Haaland is supportive of the VA and against privatization. She offered to put a "Save Our VA" bumper sticker on her car, and to look at the bill that would





*From left to right, VFP Chapter 61 members Barbara, Mary, Michael, Bob, Tom, Reese, and Charley stand with Harry from AFGE outside the John Cochran VA Medical Center in St. Louis. On June 5, 2019, the group greeted veterans coming into the facility and handed out flyers explaining the Mission Act and its objective to privatize veterans' healthcare and ultimately to starve the VHA as we know it out of existence.*

place quality controls on private providers. Rep. Haaland has co-sponsored the Repatriate our Patriots Act (HR 1078), and her staffer promised to ask her to co-sponsor the Veterans Visa and Protection Act (HR 2098), and to consider sending a letter to New Mexico's governor in support of a pardon for deported veteran Cesar Lopez.

Member Herb Hoffman spoke on a panel at a screening of *Occupation of the American Mind*, a film about Israel's propaganda efforts to influence U.S. policy.

Founding member Sally-Alice Thompson has been nominated for the U.S. Peace Memorial Foundation's 2019 Peace Prize.

Kris Hardy's video and short article about our June 6th Save Our VA action at the Albuquerque VA Hospital is available for viewing at [vfp-abq.com/2019/06/07/save-our-va/](http://vfp-abq.com/2019/06/07/save-our-va/).

*Kris Hardy*

## #069 – SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Four members of Chapter 69 took a road trip to Bishop, California, for the Mule Days Festival. Bishop is in high desert country; picturesque ranches and sagebrush surrounded by snow-covered peaks. Mule Days boasts the longest non-motorized parade in the world. We saw a 20-mule team pulling two borax wagons, and local dignitaries riding fancy mules. Patriotism and Christianity were on everything as thick as syrup

on a pancake. The stars and stripes motif was everywhere, used on horse blankets and bandanas and you name it. We thought of sending the organizers a letter mentioning desecration, but really we didn't care.

*Denny Riley*

## #072 – PORTLAND, OR

Chapter president Dan Shea made much hay of his spring delegation trip to Venezuela with Gerry Condon, Eva Bartlett, et al., relating his experience at multiple report-back events. Dan has also been busy coordinating VFP72 actions with AFGE folks (VA employees) in the "Save Our VA" campaign to fight creeping privatization of VA healthcare. We have a great hospital here in Portland, and a handful of our members have testified that the VA actually saved their lives.

The Peace Memorial Park, which some of you may remember visiting during the 2011 convention, is getting a long overdue rejuvenation thanks to a nonprofit named Lloyd EcoDistrict, which has embraced the park as a key node in the neighborhood pollinator corridor they are creating. We are hopeful this cross pollination will help spread a culture of peace in our city and beyond.

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# VFP CHAPTER REPORTS



*On Memorial Day in Portland, Oregon, artist Nancy Hiss chinks the word "peace" (in all different languages) around the Peace Memorial Park, a peace-sign garden "dedicated to the memory of all those people, including combatants, who have ever perished in war."*

## Chapter 72, Portland, Oregon, continued...

Portland VFP celebrated May 27 as Decoration Day, with an address on the history of the holiday presented by World War II veteran Will Pool at Pioneer Square, downtown. Will also celebrated his 93rd birthday on Decoration Day, and someone brought cupcakes. Passersby could tell there was something special going on, and some paused to hear his speech alongside the small crowd of VFP members, family, and friends who turned out for the event.

*Becky Luening*

## #087 – SACRAMENTO, CA

Chapter 87 continues our long-standing, weekly Peace Vigil near the California State Capitol, reminding evening commuters that the wars are not over and that the military budget is killing us. One of our members is very active with the National Lawyers Guild (NLG), whose "green hat" legal observers attend rallies and protests to monitor police actions and let attendees know their rights.

Handing out VFP *Peace In Our Times* newspapers at the Veterans (Armistice) Day parade and other events has been wonderfully successful. We also continue to support Palestinian rights rallies, the Poor People's Campaign, and Black Lives Matter events, flying VFP banners whenever we can.

We note the passing of one of our most active members, Barry Binks. Many VFPers may remember Barry for his anti-drone activities at Creech AFB, his involvement with the *Golden Rule* peace boat, and frequent attendance at VFP national and regional conventions. Barry always wore VFP garb and waved our flag whenever possible. His departure leaves a big hole in our chapter.

*John C. Reiger*

## #089 – NASHVILLE, TN

Chapter 89 participated in the 40th annual Memorial Tribute to honor the 1,900 Civil War U.S. Colored Troops who are interred at the National Cemetery in Nashville. The tribute is held every year on the 15th of December, the anniversary of the 1865 Battle of Nashville that turned the tide of the Civil War. The focal point of the ceremony is a bronze statue of an African-American Union soldier commissioned by the African-American Cultural Alliance and unveiled in 1979. During the ceremony we met a Kurdish film crew from *Voice of America*, which led to our being interviewed to explain Veterans For Peace. The resulting video was aired globally in Kurdish.

Our experience motivated us to redouble our efforts to remove the bust of Confederate General and KKK founder Nathan Bedford Forrest from the Tennessee State Capitol. The campaign thus far has included confronting Tennessee legislators and new Republican Governor Lee, as well as holding rallies in remembrance of the hundreds of surrendered African-American and white Union troops who were killed in the Fort Pillow massacre (under Forrest's command).

We are partnering with the AFGE office at the Nashville VA Hospital to oppose privatization and protect VA workers.

Mike Hearington joined the Venezuela Embassy Protection Collective and provided real-time reportage on the standoff for our VFP Radio Hour show.

*Harvey Bennett*

## #092 – SEATTLE, WA

Our chapter has been very busy with activities and outreach, welcoming new members along with our new president, Phoenix Johnson, of the Tlingit & Haida Nation.

Mason Rhoads has been leading the NO VA PRIVATIZATION banner at the VA Hospital. Ray Nacanaynay was cited again—Great!—for a Mothers Day civil disobedience action at the Bangor Trident nuclear submarine/weapons base.

At "The Future of the VA: Privatization or the Model for a U.S. Single Payer System," an event organized by Mike Dedrick at the University of Washington on March 21, Rev. Kelly Wadsworth brought up critical points from her personal veteran's



perspective, viewable at [youtube.com/watch?v=JtL\\_iXBKI8I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtL_iXBKI8I).

Charles Davis and James Williams have been organizing screenings of the *Golden Rule Project's* film, *Making Waves*.

Our Tax Day event at the Federal Building drew a good crowd as we welcomed affiliates Ground Zero, newly formed Seattle Anti-War Coalition (SAWC), and Pax Christi Penny Poll.

Phoenix Johnson organized the Oceania Rising Speaking Tour, a very successful event that enjoyed a good turnout. A video by Ed Mays of Pirate TV [[youtu.be/fWOYLpg7cXg](https://youtu.be/fWOYLpg7cXg)] covers the Seattle event, featuring Kyle Kajihiro (O'ahu), Tina Grandinetti (Okinawa), Kisha Borja-Quichocho-Calvo (Guåhan/Guam), and Ruth Aloua (Hawai'i).

*Kim Loftness*

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## #93 – SOUTH CENTRAL MICHIGAN

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A recipient of Chapter 93's Peace Scholarship, Kelly Organ, has completed a master's degree in international education policy at Harvard. She has been hired by Character Lab, whose mission, she writes, "is to help figure out...what contributes to children becoming more empathetic, more compassionate, more self-confident, more committed to peace?" Chapter scholarships are supported by an annual concert in Ann Arbor in observance of John Lennon's birthday.

Regular visits are made to Wayne State University's Center for Peace and Conflict Studies classes to introduce students to VFP as well to promote the chapter's Peace Studies Scholarship.

Chapter 93 members have started to attend meetings of the Washtenaw County Council of Veterans, and have been welcomed there.

In April, chapter members tabled at Earth Day, which attracts a lot of younger kids and their parents, and at Ann Arbor's College Night, at which military recruiters usually appear. In May, our members joined with Detroit VFP Chapter 74 to set up and staff an Arlington Michigan display in Detroit.

*Lynn Gilbert*

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## #099 – ASHEVILLE, NC

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Chapter 99 gathered on Memorial Day in Asheville to celebrate the cause of peacemaking and honor the memory of persons, including military personnel, lost due to the abundance of wars and armed conflict. A wreath was dedicated, several poems were read, and Lyle Petersen sang "The Band Played Waltzing Matilda." Intervals of hammer dulcimer music lent a spirit of solemn reflection.

Members also participated in a stand-out with members of AFGE union, to urge support for the VA Medical Center system and to protest contract changes they are facing at our local VA Medical Center and the planned closure of area Job Corps centers.

*Chris Berg*

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## #100 – JUNEAU, AK

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We've worked with the Juneau City Assembly to renew a large peace sign carved into a local hillside. The peace sign, originally a piece of guerrilla artwork by a local surveyor, has now been designated by the city as a permanent piece of art. The activity was the subject of several newspaper and radio stories. To listen, go to [www.ktoo.org/2019/03/21/volunteers-get-thumbs-up-on-spruced-up-peace-sign-redesign/](http://www.ktoo.org/2019/03/21/volunteers-get-thumbs-up-on-spruced-up-peace-sign-redesign/).

We continue to work on next year's Youth Congress to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons, to be held in Sitka, Alaska, in April 2020. The week-long congress will bring together high school students from Alaska and around the world to focus on skills and policies to promote nuclear disarmament. The website is up, [www.akhopecongress.org/](http://www.akhopecongress.org/), the venue has been selected, and we're in the midst of fundraising.

As part of the lead-up to the Youth Congress we are sponsoring a brown bag lunch event on the 14th of June about the U.N. Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference that was held in New York City earlier this year.

*Craig Wilson*



*VFP 102's Mark Foreman speaks at a community meeting called by Milwaukee Area Labor Council.*

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## #102 – MILWAUKEE, WI

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Our members chose three top priorities to focus on in 2019: (1) fighting privatization of Veterans Administration health care, (2) building solidarity with and supporting the work of other organizations, and (3) opposing U.S. military intervention in other countries.

We've been working closely with the Milwaukee Area Labor Council and American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), which represents workers at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center, to speak out about the move toward privatization

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# VFP CHAPTER REPORTS

## Chapter 102, Milwaukee, WI, continued...

and recent pressure and intimidation of union leaders and members here.

Chapter members participated in a town hall meeting at the VA on the Mission Act and a community meeting the labor council hosted to discuss the issues and raise concerns, and also appeared on a radio program along with the labor council president. We have circulated and sent letters and petitions to members of Wisconsin's Congressional delegation.

We also participated in events to protest against war with Iran and U.S. intervention in Venezuela, with the Milwaukee Coalition to End the Wars, of which our chapter is a member.

Keith Brumley, seven-year Air Force veteran, was elected as new chapter president. Other officers: Paul Moriarity, vice-president; Mark Foreman, treasurer; and Larry Meisgeier, secretary.

Bill Christofferson

## #106 – DALLAS, TX

Since last reporting, Chapter 106 has hosted a toy drive for indigenous children, an exhibition of the Drones Quilt Project, and a two-week “Art and Human Rights Exhibit” at the Univer-



VFP Chapter 106 President Ron Unger shines a light on the need for a New Green Deal at Dallas City Hall.



The Ventura, California, chapter rallied with Brady United, Indivisible Ventura, Indivisible Conejo, the Ventura chapters of National Association of Students Against Gun Violence, and March for Our Lives to end gun shows at our state-owned county fairgrounds.

sity of Dallas's art gallery. Medea Benjamin's "Drones, Bombs, and Innocents" talk at the opening reception sparked lively discussion!

We cosponsored "Inside Iran," a dinner and book-signing with Medea, and made a surprise visit to Lockheed. We also cosponsored the "Beating Guns Tour" (where a gun was forged into a garden tool), an intensive campaign to save Yemen, involving several demonstrations and many congressional visits, and a three-day visit by LTG Russel Honore of the Green Army. We worked with 350.org on the 2019 ExxonMobil Shareholder Meeting protest in Dallas.

We participated in World Refugee Day "Families Belong Together" rallies and light displays, ETP's shareholder meeting protest, Pakistan/Iran Peace Rally, and the North Texas Climate Symposium, and tabled at two awards banquets and Eastfield College's Human Rights Festival.

Chapter president Ron Unger attended Armistice Day events in D.C., and Leslie and John Harris joined the VFP contingent to Global Network's study tour to Russia.

We've joined an environmental justice coalition and are working on the Campaign to STOP Texas Anti-Protest Bills and the Green New Deal. At a June 13 Inspiration Award Celebration honoring Dale Hansen, "unlikely progressive hero," iconic sportscaster, and Viet Nam veteran, we presented him with a letter of appreciation and Veterans For Peace t-shirt. For inspiration, google him!

Leslie Harris

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## #112 – VENTURA COUNTY, CA

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We started the year by having a presence at the now immensely popular annual Women's Day march and rally in January, and then the MLK, Jr. event in February. Member Michael Cervantes tabled in March at an annual high school district career fair where the military had heavy representation.

Chapter 112 has joined with other organizations in opposing the gun shows at our state-owned county fairgrounds. With other organizations we culminated this springtime period with a rally in front of the fairground's marquee. Earlier in the year we tabled at Westlake High School, where student activists and lawmakers called for gun reform at the Westlake High forum. Nearby Thousand Oaks was the site of a mass shooting in November of 2018.

We coordinated an action with the newly established California Progressive Alliance (CPA) meeting in San Luis Obispo County. Michael Cervantes and chapter president J. Acebedo attended CPA's founding convention. On the convention floor our chapter was asked to introduce the CPA founding document on Corporate Power, Militarism, and Perpetual War, written up by Norman Solomon. Along with Mr. Solomon, VFP 112 and VFP 162 (East Bay) are signatories.

We ended our springtime by tabling at a junior college Diversity in Culture Fest, an Earth Day event, and a City of Oxnard Native American Pow-Wow arranged by president J. Acebedo.

*Michael Cervantes*

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## #115 – RED WING, MN

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Our chapter, in coordination with Minneapolis VFP Chapter 27 is preparing for the 17th annual Peacestock event to be held in Red Wing, Minnesota, on July 20. Our theme this year is "Military Service: Homeland Security or Empire Building." We are

excited to welcome guest speakers Col. Ann Wright and Major Danny Sjursen. For more information, visit our website, [peacestockvfp.org](http://peacestockvfp.org).

Our chapter members have been participating in a lecture series given by Nate Hagans, an expert on the psychology and economics of global climate change. His series, *Reality 101*, can be found on *YouTube*. Nate spoke at Peacestock 2015 along with James Hansen.

We recently sponsored a public viewing of the documentary film, *Scarred Land and Wounded Lives*. A lively discussion followed, but as usual, we wish more people had attended. It seems it is very hard to get the general public out for such presentations, but we keep trying no matter what.

*Bill Habedank*

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## #134 – TACOMA, WA

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At our April chapter meeting, members discussed the war talk about Venezuela and decided that freeway bannering might be effective. We came up with a two-line message, writ large:

**U.S. HANDS OFF  
VENEZUELA**

After a week or two, we decided to add Veterans for Peace and our website on a third line.

A couple of weeks ago, with the talk about Iran, we changed the message to:

**NO WAR – IRAN**

We compared schedules and decided Wednesday evening rush hour would be ideal. We've been out there about every week since.

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*In response to all the war-mongering, VFP Chapter 134 members have taken up freeway bannering in Tacoma, Washington.*



# VFP CHAPTER REPORTS

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## *Chapter 134, Tacoma, WA, continued...*

We have tabled at two functions so far this year—a Martin Luther King Jr. celebration in January and a Veterans' Resource Fair in April. We look forward to representing VFP to the community about 10 times this year. We are discussing with our friends in Spokane the idea of bringing the Arlington Northwest memorial markers to this year's convention, and several of our members may be volunteering. Hope to see you there!!

*Dave Dittmore*

## #157 – NORTH CAROLINA TRIANGLE

In February, Eisenhower Chapter 157 was well represented in Raleigh at the annual HKonJ People's Assembly and March. Tens of thousands of North Carolinians from more than 200 peace, justice, labor, and environmental organizations join annually in this demonstration of fusion solidarity. Speaking at the rally for the 13 affiliated peace groups was Chapter member Vicki Ryder.

In March, we hosted the My Lai Memorial Exhibit, memorializing the two million Vietnamese who died in their American War. We are grateful to chapter member Howie Machtinger, and to Mac MacDevitt (VFP Chicago), for bringing this powerful interactive experience to North Carolina.

Chapter members Doug Ryder, John Ketwig, Roger Ehrlich, and Walter Weathers represented VFP in a panel presentation titled "Q&A on Viet Nam" hosted in April by the North Carolina Museum of History.

In collaboration with the local gaggle of Raging Grannies, we co-sponsored a Mother's Day vigil at UNC Chapel Hill, where graduates and their families were greeted by peace songs and readings of Julia Ward Howe's Mothers Day Peace Proclamation.

Also in May, we co-hosted Orange County's annual Alternative Memorial Day Commemoration, which this year paid homage to war resisters. Among those honored were VFPers Ann Wright, S. Brian Willson, Camilo Mejia, and Chapter 157's past president, John Heuer, who died in 2016.

*Douglas H. Ryder*

## #162 – EAST BAY, CA

Chapter 162 member Daniel Borgstrom became a board member of radio station Berkeley, KPFA. He advocates for truth about our government. Daniel organized a visit to our local Congresswoman Barbara Lee's office, where we became acquainted with her aide.

Gene Bernardi continues to represent us on the local level regarding police and NCRIC (Northern California Regional Intelligence Center), and urban warfare.

Fred Norman read one of his poems at the Crosses of Lafayette on Memorial Day. The event was attended by local representative Mark DeSaulnier, a frequent visitor at our Memorial Day and Armistice Day vigils.

Eugene Rule continues his weekly tabling at the UC Berkeley Campus.

Robert McCockran prepared a presentation on nuclear weapons, all of which are designed in California.

We participated in Northern California's regional conference, where Maurice Martin gave a presentation on Homeless and Deported Veterans and Marti GuyDowning gave a presentation on "Bridge Veterans" as a concept for representing those veterans who serve in less-known conflicts.

Maurice Martin was one of the Venezuelan Embassy protectors in Washington, D.C.

VFP license plate frames are still available for \$10: Make check out to VFP Chapter 162 and mail to Cathe Norman, 113 Rantoul Circle, San Leandro, CA 94577.

*Cathe Norman*

## #180 – FRESNO, CA

It's been a busy year so far for VFP Chapter 180. The Fresno Women's March drew thousands on January 19, including an impactful presence by VFP members Rick and Jeanette Ruzzamenti, Joshua Shurley, Eduardo Castro, and Matt Prine. During February, Castro, Shurley, and Jackson Shepherd held vigil with Joaquin Sotelo, an area Navy veteran facing deportation by ICE's Fresno branch. The dozens of supporters we joined may have been a factor in the decision to allow him to remain free in the United States pending further court hearings.

On March 9, we were honored to host Alfredo Figueroa's workshop, "Leave No One Behind: Keeping Our Promise to Deported Vets," which proved to be both educational and moving for its participants, and sparked some fruitful discussions in our progressive and immigrant community as a result.

On March 30, members Jackson Shepherd, Chris Edstrom, Josh Shurley, Barry Chamber, Lee Liddle, and Eduardo Castro joined with several sister peace groups to hold a highly visible "No to NATO/No War on Venezuela" rally in north Fresno.

The following week, the Poor People's Campaign came to Fresno, and on April 8, Castro and Shurley spoke at their community event about the mission of VFP and the impact of the deported veterans crisis in our community. On April 11, Rick Ruzzamenti, Carli White-Morgan, and Josh Shurley represented VFP at an inspiring talk by Angela Davis titled "Education or Incarceration? Activism and the Prison Industrial Complex."

For two weeks in May, Eduardo Castro was in Cuba engaging in solidarity work and bearing witness to the realities of life under the illegal U.S. blockade of Cuba. The sun continues to rise on our work here in the Central Valley.

*Joshua Shurley*



# VFP CONVENTION 2019

## Strategize and socialize in Spokane this summer!

We hope you can join us for the 34th annual Veterans For Peace Convention happening August 15-18 in Spokane, Washington. The first part of this year's theme, "**Sacred Lands, Sacred Lives,**" is both a reference to the Native Americans who inhabited the lands we call home many centuries before Europeans arrived with their deadly "doctrine of discovery," and a call to recognize the sacredness of *all* life, and all lands that sustain life, on this finite planet we call Earth.

The second part, "**Peace Knows No Borders,**" references not just the crisis in U.S.-Mexico borderlands, but so many immigration crises fueled by ceaseless war and climate catastrophe around the globe. It calls us to reach across nationalist borders in the recognition that *all* the world's people deserve human dignity, peace, freedom and security, and that we are all connected.

You can find some program details on the VFP website. Here are a few highlights.

For early arrivals, two pre-conference events are planned: "**A Tangible Peace On Every School Campus**" peace pole workshop from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m., and the screening of a new film from Japan, **Boy Soldiers: The Secret War in Okinawa**, with director Hanayo Oya, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

All other workshops take place Friday in two sessions of seven workshops each, plus a mini-plenary session with three topics to choose from. As 2019 is the Year of the Resister, the Friday evening community event, **Resistance, Resilience and Reggae**, will feature **Diedre Cobb** and **Camilo Mejia** as MCs, raising up voices of a new generation of GI resisters, **Brittney Chantel**, **Brittany DeBarros**, and **Danny Sjursen**. The program ends with a music set by the local Reggae band, Planetary Refugees.

After the Saturday business meeting, the evening banquet will be jampacked as usual with awards and recognitions, including a poem read by VFP's new poet laureate, who will be announced at that time. The keynote speaker is the inspiring **Ruth Aloua**, a Kanaka Maoli from the Kona District, Hawai'i, who toured with the "Oceania Rising: Peace Pivot to the Pacific" group last February, as part of growing movements against U.S. military bases, and for a demilitarized, nuclear-free, and independent Pacific.



Spokane's Spectrum Singers will grace Sunday morning's closing plenary. Attendees are invited to stick around afterward to participate in the 2019 Call to Action. **Connect the Dots!** is a string of press conferences aimed at exposing high crimes against humanity and the environment being committed by our military in Washington State. Transportation to and from the "dots" will be provided from the convention hotel. You will have the option of being dropped off at Spokane International Airport after 5:00 p.m., or returning to the hotel.

## Stay over Sunday to help us **Connect the Dots!**

Join us August 18 for an afternoon of connected civil actions with press conferences planned to highlight urgent concerns in the Spokane region. Videos from the day's activities and a Friday workshop will be used to educate the public on how military activities are connected over time, perpetuating the consequences of conflict upon generations of human beings, causing devastation to culture, understanding, and cooperation.

The three planned tour stops are as follows (times subject to change):

**Mann-Grandstaff VA Hospital**, Spokane, Washington. Call for full funding of VA hospital treatment programs that address veterans' health issues. Veterans For Peace rejects privatization of the VA and demands full staffing of VA hospitals and quality care for all veterans. 1:30-2:30 p.m.

**Midnite Mine**, Wellpinet, Washington. Meet with Spokane Tribe members calling for the cleanup of contamination from uranium mining, purification of community water supplies, and compensation for tribal members who have been poisoned by mine pollution. The radioactive open pit mine, now closed, continues to pose a danger to wildlife. 12:00-3:30 p.m.

**Fairchild Air Force Base**, Airway Heights, Washington. Call for indictment of Fairchild AFB: for groundwater pollution recently discovered in Airway Heights; for use of Boeing KC-135 Stratotankers to refuel planes bombing targets in Yemen and Africa, against international treaties; for misleading youth as to attributes of a peaceful society; for inviting Operation Mobility Guardian to Washington, landing Colombian troops on U.S. territory; and for undermining the economic well-being of our communities. 3:30-4:30 p.m.

## VFP members among embassy protectors

by Gerry Condon and Kevin Zeese

For 37 days, members of what became known as the Embassy Protection Collective heroically refused to hand over the control of the Venezuelan Embassy to a representative of the U.S.-appointed, self-proclaimed “interim president” of Venezuela, Juan Guaidó.

They did so with the permission of the legitimate government of Venezuela. Members of CODEPINK, Popular Resistance, ANSWER, and Veterans For Peace maintained a presence at the embassy in order to keep it from being taken over in the attempted coup, which eventually failed. Ultimately, the embassy came under siege by violent right-wing thugs, backed by various police agencies, including the Secret Service. When peace activists attempting to deliver food to the embassy’s occupants were routinely attacked, the police looked on passively, but they were quick to arrest those resisting the coup nonviolently, inside and outside the embassy.

In fact, the police actually joined in the attacks, as Gerry learned firsthand. “I attempted to throw a cucumber to the waiting hands of the Embassy Protectors in the second floor window, and was tackled by five or six Secret Service police, thrown face first into the pavement, causing injuries to my face and legs. I was then arrested and put through further abuse amounting to torture” (hands cuffed very tightly behind my back while left in a stress position in the back of three different Secret Service police cars for extended periods of time, followed by a very uncomfortable night and day in jail).

Ken Ashe, a member of the Asheville, North Carolina, VFP chapter, was one of the Embassy Protectors on the inside. A dozen or so VFP members traveled from around the United States to participate in the support vigil outside the embassy, and some of them helped organize a successful 3:00 a.m. delivery of groceries that made it through despite violent opposition. Those unable to go to Washington contributed nearly \$5,000 toward travel assistance for those who could.

Eventually, authorities cut off electricity and water to the embassy. Then Jesse Jackson arrived and managed to deliver four bags of groceries with the assistance of Ajamu Baraka and members of Black Alliance for Peace. Jackson promised to return with more supporters. On May 16, U.S. authorities apparently decided it was time to evict and arrest the remaining Embassy Protectors—Kevin Zeese, Margaret Flowers, David Paul and Adrienne Pine. As many as 100 police, including paramilitary and K-9 units, took two hours to arrest the four.

As unusual and bizarre as this whole struggle has been, it was not unique. Turns out—and there is video evidence—there

was a spate of attacks on Venezuelan embassies in several countries simultaneously. This puts our Embassy Protection struggle in perspective.

The Venezuelan coup has failed in Venezuela, where the opposition cannot win elections or execute a coup. People are not joining their attempted takeover, and even those who supported the fictional president Juan Guaidó (inside and outside Venezuela) are losing confidence in him. The takeover of embassies was essential in their attempt to resuscitate the failed coup. We continue to push for a solution under international law that has been used since the time of Genghis Khan and is now included in the Vienna Convention, mutual Protecting Power Agreements.

The four Embassy Protectors who were arrested in the May 16th raid are now facing trials on the trumped-up charge of “interfering with certain protective functions” of the Federal Government, a misdemeanor charge that carries a maximum



PHOTO: ELLEN DAVIDSON

of one-year imprisonment and \$100,000 fine. They are facing exorbitant legal fees and difficult court battles, and an Embassy Protectors Defense Committee has been organized to support them.

The defense committee is organizing a nationwide campaign with fundraising, public information, and political components. Active participation will be sought from peace and justice organizations across the United States, including many VFP chapters. Gerry Condon and Patrick McCann represent VFP on the committee. The Embassy Protectors Defense Committee invites all defenders of peace and justice in the United States and around the world to join in this crucial campaign, the result of which will inevitably have serious impact on the future course of our government and country.

The Embassy Protectors Defense Committee is looking for organizational endorsements and solidarity actions with resulting photos to be used for publicity. To get involved or make a donation to the defense fund, visit:

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



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# A life dedicated to peace and justice for all



***“Sally-Alice Thompson has led a life so full of incredible accomplishments and adventures that it’s hard to know where to start.”***

Thus begins an article penned by Joline Gutierrez Krueger, published in the *Albuquerque Journal* on Monday, March 4, 2019, in advance of the Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice’s 35th anniversary gala on March 10, where Sally-Alice Thompson was honored for her work.

The writer goes on to list many significant events in the life of this truly amazing activist, including her participation in two major walks for peace and nuclear disarmament—the 9-month Great Peace March of 1986 from L.A. to D.C., and a 450-mile walk in 1987 from what was then Leningrad to Moscow.

Sally-Alice Thompson, a veteran of the Navy, is a longtime member of VFP. She and her husband Donald Thompson (also a Navy veteran, who died in 2011) founded the Albuquerque chapter of VFP “after both came to believe the cost of war was far too high and the justice shown veterans far too low.”

As relayed by Gutierrez Krueger:

“Thompson was a child of the Great Depression, the oldest of five children born to parents who moved the family from farm town to farm town throughout the Midwest in search of a better life they never found.

“Everyone was poor, and we were the poorest,” she said.

“She recalls that her parents were both antiwar, that her father was a conscientious objector during World War I. Despite her parents’ opposition, she joined the Navy.

“I was a rebel from Day One,” she said.

“The military, she said, was a way out of poverty and a way into higher education. For her, it seemed the only way. That, she said, already seemed wrong.

“‘We should not have to go to war just to go to college,’ she said. ‘Education should be accessible for all, no matter how rich or poor.’

“It was that sense of fairness for all, that desire to make something from nothing, that became the catalyst for why she has marched, protested, toiled and sung her truth.

“‘I’ve always been concerned with justice,’ she said. ‘I don’t think being born in America makes you special. We don’t choose where we are born. People, wherever they are born, deserve to have rights, deserve to have justice and peace.’”

Read the entire article online at [www.abqjournal.com/1287797/a-life-dedicated-to-peace-and-justice-for-all.html](http://www.abqjournal.com/1287797/a-life-dedicated-to-peace-and-justice-for-all.html).

## Sally-Alice commences hunger strike to protest U.S. sanctions

Sally-Alice made the news again on June 20, 2019, when she commenced a hunger strike on behalf of children who are victims of the U.S. government’s sanctions and war-mongering on the countries where they live—Yemen, Syria, Iran, North Korea, Cuba, and Venezuela. Sally-Alice explains:

***I am fasting because I empathize with the many hungry children of the world, so I am joining them in their suffering. I am outraged that our country is engaging in sanctions and sieges that result in starvation of babies and children. I am profoundly saddened that my government interferes in the affairs of other countries, refusing to acknowledge their sovereignty and to respect their dignity.***

***I especially grieve for the children. I grieve for the children of Venezuela, Cuba, North Korea, and Iran, who are suffering because of the illegal sanctions imposed on those sovereign nations. I grieve for the hungry children of Gaza and Yemen, children who are hungry because of my country’s support for immoral sieges that deliberately prevent food from entering the places where they live.***

***I am almost 96 years old. The short remainder of my life is inconsequential. The remainder of the lives of those children may be very important. If allowed to develop normally, who knows what they may become? Are we depriving the world of a future great composer? Or maybe a talented playwright? One can only speculate, because they’re dying of starvation.***

***Those children have a right to live! Permitting our country to continue down this road of genocide is completely unacceptable. So I have decided that instead of asking, “Why doesn’t somebody do something about it?” I looked in the mirror and said, “You’re somebody, do something.”***

***I invite anyone who shares these feelings to join me in my fast, by skipping a meal or fasting for a day or longer. I would like to know and thank anyone who joins me. Please email me at [sally-aliceanddon@juno.com](mailto:sally-aliceanddon@juno.com).***

***For the Children, End the Sanctions!!!***

## The *Golden Rule* sets sail for Hawai'i—again!

The following chronology is culled from “Golden Rule daily news”—not-quite-daily updates sent out by VFP’s Golden Rule Project Manager Helen Jaccard. It’s really fun to follow the boat’s progress and activities. You can subscribe to the email list at [groups.google.com/d/forum/grdaily](https://groups.google.com/d/forum/grdaily). Or send an email request to Helen at [vfpgoldenruleproject@gmail.com](mailto:vfpgoldenruleproject@gmail.com).

**MAY 1** – VFP’s anti-nuclear sailboat, *Golden Rule*, set sail from San Diego, California, headed for Hawai’i. Crew members “C Be,” Tom Rogers, Captain Dan Lappala, and Jamie Skinner are ready! There was a good wind for the start of the voyage. The new sails are so perfect they don’t even look real! We got great coverage on the local CBS affiliate.

**MAY 4** – There is water in the engine oil and the *Golden Rule* is sailing to Ensenada. We hope for a short, inexpensive delay. The crew has engaged the solar panel and is conserving energy.

**MAY 5** – We’re in frequent communication with the crew. The latest update is that the engine is running normally, the exhaust looks normal, and they are making good progress towards San Diego. Leroy Zerlang (*Golden Rule* Committee Vice President and boatyard owner where the *Golden Rule* was rebuilt) has arranged for a diesel mechanic to come to the dock Tuesday.

**MAY 6** – The *Golden Rule* will dock at the Shelter Island Harbor Police Dock at around noon today.

**MAY 7** – We’re very thankful the return voyage went well and the boat and crew are home and well. The crew members are really glad they went on this voyage. Tom Rogers was on night watch and said that he’s seen a lot of beautiful starry nights, but the moonless night after they turned around had stars so magnificent that it made the whole trip worth it. After they turned around, something happened that has never happened before on *Golden Rule*—a dove circled about a dozen times over the boat and landed on the mast, where it stayed until they were in sight of land! We’ve had birds hitch a ride before, but never a dove and never for several hours. The crew also saw dolphins a couple of times. Jamie Skinner very much regrets that due to the delay he won’t be able to resume as

crew. He’ll return home in time for his next chemotherapy treatment. While we must delay, there are a few more improvements we are making on the boat in addition to investigating the engine problem. **JUNE 19** – Thanks to several generous donors, the *Golden Rule* now has a new engine along with a newly designed exhaust system. The crew is now aboard and preparing for a week-long sea trial.

• **Captain Milosz Kaczorowski, 30, from Poland**, is very competent and professional, with the highest captain’s license issued by Poland and extensive ocean experience on the U.S. West Coast, the Mediterranean, across the Atlantic and the North Sea.

• **Tom Rogers, 72, from Keyport, Washington**, was on the previous voyage and prior trips in 2016. Tom was a career Navy captain and nuclear-armed submarine commander. Now he protests against nuclear weapons.



Back: Chris Mayer, Tom Rogers, and Tate Furr. Front: Captain Milosz Kaczorowski

... Tom has spent many years sailing in Puget Sound and on the West Coast.

• **Chris Mayer, 58, from Belmont, California**, worked on electronics and as a crew member before the previous voyage. Chris enjoys building robots that teach themselves to walk. He frequently sails in San Francisco Bay and the West Coast and teaches celestial navigation.

• **Tate Furr, 19, from Greensboro, North Carolina**, has a captain’s license for the Neuse River, where he teaches youth to sail. He’s been on two ocean voyages and will enter his sophomore year at Appalachian State University this fall.

The crew is making minor improvements and learning the communication and safety systems. From June 24 to 29 the crew will take *Golden Rule* far out in the Pacific for a sea trial. Then they will re-provision, make any needed adjustments, and check the weather. If everything checks out, they will be on their way to Hawai’i in early July.

**JUNE 26** – The *Golden Rule* and her crew just left the dock, headed out for their sea trial!

**JUNE 29** – The crew re-provisioned and had a very successful sea trial. They sailed hard in strong winds similar to what they will experience on the way to Hawaii, using all possible sail



# “Shores of Normandy” tops U.K. singles chart

A song about the Allied forces landing at Normandy, written and sung by 90-year-old D-Day veteran Jim Radford, a member of VFP U.K., has beaten songs by artists like Taylor Swift, Justin Bieber, and Ed Sheeran on Amazon’s singles chart in the United Kingdom.

Jim Radford, who was a 15-year-old galley boy in the British Merchant Navy at the time, said he has been “overwhelmed by the response” to the song he wrote 50 years ago.

The Normandy Memorial Trust rereleased the song he penned after returning to the French beaches on the 25th anniversary of the landings to raise funds to build a memorial at the invasion site.

“I didn’t know when I went that my first trip was going to be the invasion of Europe,” Radford said. “The song is to remember the brave lads that didn’t come back.”

The youngest of three brothers who served in the British Merchant Navy, Radford was aboard a tugboat during the D-Day invasion.

He still clearly recalls the brotherhood that existed among those fighting that day.

“Your main concern is not to let your comrades down,” he said. “You’re not thinking about king or country, you’re not thinking about democracy. You’re thinking about, ‘My mates

depend on me, as I depend on them.’ That stayed with me. Anyone who was in Normandy, we all feel that bond to each other. And especially to all the lads who didn’t come back.”

Radford hopes the song will alert a new generation to the horrors of war.

“The significance and seriousness has been forgotten,” Radford said. “I don’t think youngsters nowadays realize just how serious it was...one in every four merchant navy seamen was killed during the war.

“The message I want to get across is that we must not let this happen again,” he said.

Help build the memorial by downloading Jim Radford’s chart topper from the Normandy Memorial Trust’s website:

<https://www.normandymemorialtrust.org/shores-of-normandy-single/>



Jim Radford

## Golden Rule daily news, cont'd

configurations. We’ll have special visitors tomorrow, Jessica Reynolds Renshaw and her husband Jerry Renshaw. Jessica and her family sailed the *Phoenix of Hiroshima* into Honolulu onto the same dock as the *Golden Rule* in 1958. The Reynolds family took the baton and finished the voyage to the Marshall Islands while the crew of the *Golden Rule* were detained and unable to proceed. They represented both boats in 1958 in the attempt to stop nuclear bomb tests. Both boats sank in 2010, and although Veterans For Peace and Quakers and other old wooden boat lovers managed to restore the *Golden Rule*, the *Phoenix of Hiroshima* remains at the bottom of the Mokolumne River (Sacramento River Delta). The Reynolds family and the *Phoenix’s* Board of Directors spent years trying to get the boat raised so she could be restored, but she is too far gone. With sadness, they had to give up on the dream of the two boats sailing together to the Marshall Islands and Japan next year. The *Phoenix* Board of Directors donated \$11,000 to help the *Golden Rule*, and now Jessica is bringing a nicely mounted piece of the *Phoenix* for the *Golden Rule* to carry. This time, the *Golden Rule* will represent both boats in an effort to bring about global nuclear disarmament and end the possibility of nuclear war.

**JULY 11** – After hauling *Golden Rule* out of the water to better secure a brass plate around the propeller shaft and twice replacing faulty engine control panels, the crew and boat are finally on their way to Hawai’i!

## GOLDEN RULE HAWAI’I SCHEDULE 2019

Map her journey at [share.garmin.com/goldenrule](http://share.garmin.com/goldenrule)

ISLAND	VISIT START	VISIT END
<b>Hawai’i – Hilo area</b>	Thu 08/1	Wed 08/21
<b>Hawai’i – Kona area</b>	Sat 08/24	Sun 09/8
<b>Maui</b>	Wed 09/11	Sun 09/29
<b>Lanai</b>	Tue 10/1	Tue 10/8
<b>Molokai</b>	Thu 10/10	Thu 10/17
<b>Oahu</b>	Sun 10/20	Sun 12/1
<b>Kauai</b>	Wed 12/4	Sun 12/15

## Stuck in Ireland, and making the most of it

by Mike Ferner

Call it a long, involuntary vacation or a real exile, VFP members Ken Mayers and Tarak Kauff are making the best of their unexpected stay on the Emerald Isle.

On St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2019, the two walked onto the airfield at Shannon Airport with a banner that read, "Respect Irish Neutrality: U.S. War Machine Out of Shannon Airport." For that act of peaceful civil disobedience, they expected to be arrested and probably fined, but not jailed for two weeks and then held without passports by the Irish government for what is now going on four months at press time.

For them and their families back home, the separation has been trying, but the two are making good use of their time, needling the U.S. empire and pressuring the Irish government to abide by its constitutional pledge of neutrality.

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"I EXPECT IRELAND TO STAND UP TO THIS MONSTROUS ENTITY WHICH IS CALLED U.S. IMPERIALISM.... THEY CAN DO IT. IT CAN HAPPEN." —TARAK KAUFF

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Every Friday at rush hour they appear with a banner above the highway from Limerick to Shannon to Galway, where between 2,500 and 3,000 cars pass every hour. Every Tuesday they stand outside the Dáil (Irish Parliament) with at least one banner, tri-fold brochures, and copies of *Peace In Our Times*. They've appeared on numerous radio stations and in Irish newspapers across the country, as well as a few back in the States.

The civilian airport at Shannon has been used as a major hub for the U.S. military since the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Since then, some three million troops and their weapons have stopped at Shannon for refueling en route to wars in the Middle East.

Ken, a former Marine Corps Major whose home is Santa Fe, said he finds it "particularly heart-rending that some of this materiel goes to support the Saudi attacks in Yemen where there are over a million on the verge of starvation. After what Ireland went through in the 19th century in terms of starvation, I find it bitterly ironic that Ireland should be complicit in the starvation of over a million people."

Besides bearing witness to Ireland's role in Middle East wars, the ongoing protest is serving to invigorate the Irish peace movement, which has long urged its government to cease being a doormat for empire.

Ed Horgan, head of Veterans For Peace Ireland, served in the Irish Defense Forces and U.N. peacekeeping missions. He has been arrested for similar protests at Shannon. He points out: "Over two thirds of the Irish people support positive Irish



*Every Friday at rush hour, Tarak Kauff and Ken Mayers drop a banner from an overpass on the road from Limerick to Shannon to Galway. "Maybe with luck, one of these days we'll get our passports back and return home," writes Tarak. "Until then we will keep getting the message out as best we can and in every way that we can. It's pretty much a daily occupation and a good one."*

neutrality. As a small state with limited military capacity, our neutrality allows us to do far more to promote international peace and justice. Eighty-eight Irish soldiers have died on peacekeeping duties with the United Nations since 1960. These justifiable sacrifices are being betrayed by Irish complicity in U.S. war crimes in the Middle East. ... As it happens, the day after they did their action, 10 children from one extended family were killed in a U.S. airstrike in Afghanistan. It's possible that some of the soldiers who went through Shannon were involved directly or indirectly in that attack."

Dáil members Clare Daly and Mick Wallace have both been arrested for protesting at Shannon as well. Citing examples of what has happened in similar cases, Daly said Tarak and Ken could be stuck in Ireland for a year before their case is addressed.

"It's a violation of human rights in a very serious way on our doorstep," Daly said, adding, "We are really grateful to the lads for the stance that they took. The best tribute we can pay to them is to redouble our efforts to get involved in the campaigns to stop the military use of Shannon."

Referencing Ireland's rebellious history, specifically the Easter "Rising" of 1916, Tarak noted the Irish people's great courage, saying, "I expect Ireland to stand up to this monstrous entity which is called U.S. imperialism. And if Ireland stands up, it sets an example for other countries that would like to stand up. They can do it. It can happen. People have to start believing in that. The U.S. has over 800 bases in countries around the world. That's an empire like we've never seen before."

Ken also expressed hope that their efforts would "encourage the Irish government to enforce their neutrality policy and stand up to Uncle Sam, and set an example for the rest of the world that they don't have to play ball with our murderous policies and can resist."



# MEMBERS' STORIES

## AARON DAVIS

AT LARGE IN THE PHILIPPINES  
MEMBER SINCE 2004

I joined VFP in 2003, and in 2004 I cofounded Chapter 118 in Salt Lake City, Utah, with Nikko Schoch, who had served as a medic on Hamburger Hill in Viet Nam. We marched, tabled, and spoke in classrooms, at rallies, and on panels. We protested the American Legion and VFW national conventions, and held vigils outside LDS Church semi-annual general conferences. We began helping veterans with their VA Compensation and benefits issues. Nikko and I also became counselors on the G.I. Rights Hotline. When Nikko passed away in 2006, we named the chapter in his honor. In 2008, we mentored a small IVAW chapter. I have great memories of working with Gene and Donna Barrett, George Muller, Robert Littlehale, Rick Miller, and many others.

After retiring in 2014, I moved to Gold Canyon, Arizona, and for two years I participated in many activities with VFP Winter Soldier Chapter 75 in Phoenix. In 2016, I moved to the Philippines, and worked on the Bring the Balangiga Bells home campaign for two years. The campaign was successful, thanks to the help of Americans and Filipinos on both sides of the ocean. It's really not about me, but about us.

## CHANTE WOLF

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA  
MEMBER SINCE 1998

I was introduced to Veterans For Peace at my ticker-tape "Welcome Home" parade in Phoenix, Arizona, at the end of Desert Storm, 1991. It was a huge deal, with yellow ribbons and flags all over the place, ticker-tape, and a fly-over. The atmosphere was very festive, since we had "won" that one-sided war. I represented my base, Williams AFB, as the only woman deployed to Saudi Arabia.

It was while trying to find the vehicle I was to ride in that I came across the ragtag group of vets, standing in mismatched uniforms, holding up a white banner reading, "Veterans For Peace." They all had smiles on their faces. I was impressed they were allowed to march and their message resonated with how my gut felt that day: War is a Racket.



Chante Wolf at a rally in Minneapolis.

I didn't do anything about joining and never thought much more about activism until I met Kathy Kelly in 1998. She was invited to give a talk about depleted uranium at the Quaker Meeting in St. Petersburg, Florida, which I attended with my partner. I had since left the military and was going to college, trying to unravel the hornet's nest I felt I lived. After her presentation, we all went to the Tampa Bay Stadium before the game, and protested President Clinton's plan to bomb Iraq some more, after years of crippling sanctions.

In 1999 I moved to Minnesota with my partner, and right before September 11, I joined Chapter 27. It was the best thing I could have done, hard work, but it set me on the path I am on today. Thanks to my big brother veterans, a sister or two, and all the supporting associates, in my healing journey toward peace, I have been surrounded by love.

## CONWAY LOUOKIS

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
MEMBER SINCE 2017



Conway Louokis

When I was a child, my mother regularly stated that the wars my country was involved in were not for any sort of noble cause! At that time, I did not fully understand what she meant, and when she passed away, it was up to me to find out. Despite her warnings, circumstances led me to join the Army National Guard for eight years, and then the U.S. Army for four more.

During my first two years in the army, I was stationed in Korea. I made the best of it, studying the Korean language and traveling the country as much as I could, making friends with some of the locals. Things I noticed during my enlistment made me think quite critically of U.S. military operations. When people were asked to volunteer for the first brutal assault on Iraq, I refused, because I was very suspicious of the rationale given for this "war," i.e., freedom for Kuwait, good vs. evil. I saw that Standard Oil, Bank of America, NYSE, Pennzoil, etc., had a hidden hand in this conflict.

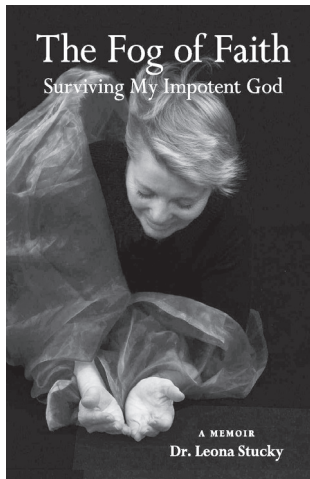
My second two years were spent at Ft. Ord, California, just before it was closed as a regular army base. My senior officers/enlisted knew my views conflicted with the official story, and made it extremely difficult for me, so my honorable discharge in 1993 came a few months early as a result. Oh well!

Since then, I have spent almost 20 years traveling, living in places such as Seattle, St. Louis, Boston, Portland, Athens, Greece, and Minneapolis, where I encountered VFP. I am now back in my hometown in the Los Angeles area, working on my memoirs.

## Pounding the Streets, Hiding in Terror, and VFP

by Leona Stucky

Swarming with young people, the streets took on colors of anger and despair, with sounds and signs clamoring for an end to the Vietnam war, and an end to the draft. Young men and women demanded a change to the law that trapped young



men, armed them, and dropped them into the terror that would haunt many of them for the rest of their lives.

As a baby boomer, these scenes added meaning to my college days. Nonviolence was one of my ideals, and I was appalled that our country would force young men into violent and terrorizing adventures. I pounded the streets with my peace activist friends, never once wondering why no one was pounding the streets for me.

With my child in tow, I tried to escape the violence and terror that trapped me. The kind where you have already been beaten many times, where the killer knows your name, your family, your location, your children, your vulnerabilities, your desires, your habits and schedules.

I was ashamed to be trapped. I didn't talk to college kids about it. I figured I was somehow at fault for being in a horrible marriage. Anyone who had a husband who would kill them was considered a part of the problem. I didn't understand then that my brushes with injury and death would haunt me for the rest of my life. Nor did I have a clue that there were thousands upon thousands of women like me, and that too many would be killed by their abuser. There were no safe houses and few voices decrying the violence against women—the unnoticed and little published war on women—happening right here at home under our own noses. Women were left living in terror, daily, without assistance or national attention.

Almost twice as many U.S. women died from intimate partner violence as U.S. troops died during our last two wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I've written a memoir about my years of terror, titled *The Fog of Faith: Surviving My Impotent God* (Prairie World Press, 2017). My story is riveting, but it will not stop others from facing similar tragedies. So I've taken the next step by joining a small, not-for-profit film company, Healing Voices—Personal Stories, which educates people about domestic violence and has produced a number of award-winning short documentaries on the topic.

Stopping this unnoticed and unheralded killing of women is a job for all of us, and Healing Voices—Personal Stories has a plan of action. We can change the fate of women and children

who are trapped. Your voice and your boots on the ground are necessary.

### Call to action

Teams are being formed all around the country to plan local events for the National Day of Action Against Domestic Violence, October 5, 2019. Organizers are asked to use their own creative ideas to organize events that bring together local talent and community organizations to raise awareness around domestic violence.

Often theater groups, art commissions, local actors' guilds, story tellers, women's studies classes, peace groups, social justice groups, religious groups, local women's shelter programs, journalists, businesses, and many other groups and individuals will join this effort.

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PLAN A LOCAL EVENT  
FOR THE  
NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION  
AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
OCTOBER 5, 2019

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We invite all Veterans For Peace chapters from across the United States to get involved and consider spearheading or joining an event in your locale! When you form a team, you become the decision makers for your event. Go to [dvdaction.org](http://dvdaction.org) to sign up and let us know you want to form a team. We are waiting in the wings, ready to assist you in your organizing efforts.

As part of this coordinated nationwide event, we are asking everyone to stage a die-in as a visual demonstration of the shocking number of women's deaths attributed to domestic violence in the United States, and to film the event, especially the die-in. Filming may be done by film students, professionals, or people with cell phones. These films will be collected by Healing Voices—Personal Stories, which will then seek out wide channels of distribution for a documentary that makes a long-lasting impression that something must be done to stop the unseen war of intimate partner violence.

The films that we have already made for domestic violence education and awareness can be viewed and screened, free of charge. Find them at [hv-ps.org](http://hv-ps.org).

*Leona Stucky, a longtime associate member of VFP, has worked as a psychotherapist for more than 35 years. She is a core member of the Committee for Day of Action Against Domestic Violence and can be reached through her website, [LeonaStucky.com](http://LeonaStucky.com).*



# RECOMMENDED READING

## ***The Man Who Fell From The Sky***

**Bill Fletcher Jr.**

**Hard Ball Press, 2018**

Two generations of veterans, WWI and Viet Nam, populate Bill Fletcher Jr.'s murder mystery. It's 1970, and the war on Viet Nam is soon to end. The setting is Cape Cod, and our narrator is a Viet Nam-era veteran and investigative reporter for the *Cape and Islands Gazette*. When WWII veteran TJ Smith is shot in his driveway after kissing his wife goodbye as he was leaving for work, the professional "hit" roils Cape Cod's Cape Verdean population.

Through the lens of fiction, *The Man Who Fell From the Sky* shows us the fascinating true history of Cape Verde, a ten-island archipelago founded as a slave colony by Portugal in 1456 that finally achieved independence in 1975. Being of mixed race, Cape Verdeans were classified ethnically (Portuguese), rather than racially (black), when they immigrated to the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This fact, plus lighter skin, helped them assimilate in Massachusetts. Cape Verdeans who entered all-black military units in WWII were jarred, experiencing blatant racism for the first time. Some denied their blackness and "passed," serving in white units. Debate about principles and consequences of "self-denial" abound in this mystery. The plot rushes to an unexpected ending, uncovering a dark secret from the past.

—Patrick McCann, *Miami*

## ***Every Day Is Extra***

**John Kerry**

**Simon & Schuster, 2018**

I have to confess to having read only half of this recently published memoir by John Kerry, our former secretary of state, but I only closed the copy I had borrowed from the local library convinced I should buy a copy, because it's so well written, personal, and full of recent history. I knew Kerry a bit, having met him when I

was a Midwest coordinator for VVAW back in the day, and I appreciated what he did for our organization in Dewey Canyon III. Some in our group felt that he entered the movement only to further his future political career. This memoir should nix such considerations. I feel John shared the concerns that led thousands of veterans to join VVAW back then, and his book backs this up. He's a complex guy, but mainly a highly organized thinker who presents a ton of information here. It's worth reading, and I would say that John Kerry tried his best to live up to the potential of John F. Kennedy, with whom he shared the initials, JFK.

—Alex T. Primm, *Springfield, MO, Sp4-ret.*

## ***The Backwash of War: An Extraordinary American Nurse in World War I***

**Ellen N. La Motte**

**Edited by Cynthia Wachtell**

**Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019**

In September 1916, as World War I advanced into a third deadly year, an American woman named Ellen N. La Motte published a collection of stories about her experience as a war nurse. Deemed damaging to morale, *The Backwash of War* was immediately banned in both England and France, and later censored in wartime America. At once deeply unsettling and darkly humorous, this compelling book presents a unique view of the destruction wrought by war to the human body and spirit.

This edition includes three other lost essays by La Motte, plus a comprehensive introduction to her wartime writing and an extended biography written by Cynthia Wachtell. Not only did La Motte boldly breach decorum in writing *The Backwash of War*; she forcefully challenged societal norms in other ways, as a debutante turned Johns Hopkins-trained nurse, path-breaking public health advocate and administrator, suffragette, journalist, writer, lesbian, and self-proclaimed anarchist.

—excerpted from publisher's website

## ***Memories in Green***

**Alberto Conde**

**MCM Books, 2019**

*Memories in Green: A mind's 50-year journey from drafted to PTSD (Reflections from Viet Nam)* is a collection of memories, told via short stories, poems, and reflective essays. Essentially, after being involved in combat, surviving, and witnessing others who did not, I came to realize the futility of war. One reviewer says: "This book distills the fear, the anger, grief, exhilaration, and defiance that combatants from across the U.S. experienced in Viet Nam. ...[It] will lodge itself permanently into your psyche by evoking, with piercing simplicity how permanently Viet Nam is etched into the writer's heart, mind, and body."

Special offer: Order *Memories in Green* through MCM Books at [mcmbooks.com](http://mcmbooks.com), and when prompted for a coupon code, enter "Vets 1965" to get a \$3 discount off the regular \$15 price.

—Beto Conde, *Rio Grande Valley, Texas*

## ***Auspicious Journey***

**Bruce Junior West**

**Hawkeye Publishers, 2018**

A novel that serves to illuminate a soldier's story of connection, growth and learning, *Auspicious Journey: The Gift of Peace in a Time of War* is unique among tales told of war in general, and of Viet Nam in specific.

In this elegantly straightforward story, we ride along with Dan, the narrator, on a personal journey of expanding consciousness as he tries to get to the core of why one side is welcomed and another resisted, in the tug and pull over how the local non-combatant should choose to align. This is a story of relationship—with the ordinary members of a country hamlet and its extraordinary and wise leaders—of unanticipated, deeply felt bonds. A key insight is the universal truth that caring on a personal level, not hate and inhumanity, is possible, even amid war.

—Jeff Stein (*abridged; full review on VFP website*)

## Can Climate Change be the issue that brings focus to VFP?

by Wilson “Woody” Powell

[This piece has been greatly altered to save space. Read Woody’s original at: <http://bit.ly/VFVnCC>.]

I recently finished David Wallace-Wells’ *The Uninhabitable Earth* (Tim Duggan Books, 2019), which I found to be the most authoritative and replete array of research exploring all known manifestations of climate change and the range of human responses. If there is one imperative to be derived from his incredible work, it is that climate change is upon us with a vengeance, and there must be a massive, totally-committed response by all human beings if we are to preserve the habitability of the planet.

Nuclear warfare is looming, but will soon appear a minor side issue as the world wakes up to the climate warming already upon us, which threatens annihilation on a scale much greater than the release of nuclear weapons.

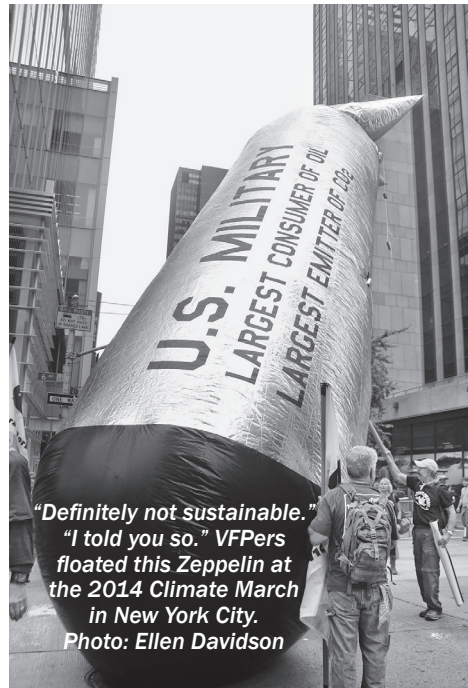
One salient point Wallace-Wells makes is the inevitable increase of military activity, wars, and conflicts as global temperatures increase over the next two to three decades. This alone suggests it is imperative that VFP mount a vigorous response to the climate emergency.

If I have properly evaluated the facts so well presented in Wallace-Wells’ book, mitigating climate change will take effort and personal sacrifice on the scale of what so many nations, on all sides, did in WWII. What we accomplished then was a reordering of political power at tremendous cost. What we need now is a reordering of all national priorities away from self-interested intrigues and conflicts toward a consciously unified effort to keep our planet habitable.

Oil exploitation accounts for much of our military interference in the Middle East, Venezuela, and other places, while reliance on petroleum and coal accounts for a large share of the greenhouse-gas overload driving planet warming. And the Pentagon is the world’s largest consumer of oil! These are just some of the

cause-and-effect connections between war and warming. Further, the immense funds our country now spends on military armaments could be put to good use in addressing the planetary problem now panting on our doorstep.

Divesting in war will make it possible to invest in our communities. I believe peace and justice of all kinds would



“Definitely not sustainable.”  
“I told you so.” VFPers  
floated this Zeppelin at  
the 2014 Climate March  
in New York City.  
Photo: Ellen Davidson

be advanced immeasurably from re-allocation of funds to the employment of known emissions-reducing technologies and the necessary retooling of society away from out-of-control consumption and waste generation. We can start with widespread distribution of technologies already in existence.

Inner-city decay and the oppressions of poverty not only foment frustrations that lead to violence, they also absorb resources that could be used to lift up communities with creative responses to climate change. With sufficient funding, technical training and employment opportunities could be created for community members who would then use their skills to turn vacant lots into vegetable gardens and replace substandard housing with energy-independent structures.

Currently we spend unconscionable amounts on armaments (\$1.3 trillion in 2019, just in the U.S.) and on training

young people in the science of killing. Why not divert those immense sums to the science of saving the planet and the development of creative potential of all lives, including black and brown ones? The increased economic stability this would bring about would help free people from poverty, segregated living, and prejudice.

We in VFP can keep flogging our favorite issues, but we need to begin relating all those issues to the preservation of Earth. I think of the children who are challenging the system by leaving classrooms because, “Why should we go to school when we are all going to die?” We veterans have gone into public schools to wrestle with recruiters, so going into schools to help students organize around their very effective message would not be a stretch for us.

A healthy discussion would reveal many more ways to direct the compassionate energies and resources of Veterans For Peace toward addressing climate change. Let’s have it!



VFP members (not pictured) were among 22 activists arrested on June 22, 2019, for blocking buses delivering people to another destroyer “christening” at Bath Iron Works in Maine. In late April, at another destroyer “christening” at the shipyard, 25 protesters were arrested. A growing coalition of peace and environmental groups in Maine are calling for the conversion of the shipyard to build offshore wind turbines, commuter rail systems, tidal power, and the like in order to help us deal with our real problem—climate catastrophe. Photo: Roger Leisner



## Quan Âm on a Dragon

Mother shows me a lacquered painting on a plaque  
of Quan Âm, bodhisattva of compassion, riding a dragon.

It is misty around the bodhisattva and the dragon.  
The picture looks so real, almost like a photo.

A sacred vase in one hand and a willow branch  
in the other to bless devotees with the divine nectar of life.

Mother says that she and other boat refugees saw Quan Âm as we were  
fleeing Vietnam after the war in a freight boat with 2,450 refugees.

When she looked up towards Heaven, in the clouds, she saw  
the bodhisattva in her white, flowing robe riding a dragon.

Mother says that the goddess was there to guide and save us  
from the strong waves of the South China Sea. I should know

better than to believe her though she swears it's true.  
I ask again and she nods, says really, I saw Quan Âm in the clouds

as we were escaping. I should know better than to believe her.  
But, a part of me wants to believe in a bodhisattva, in compassion

riding on a mythical creature, to believe that somehow something  
more than just our mere human selves wanted us to live.

—TERESA MEI CHUC

Reprinted by permission from the author from *Invisible Light* by Teresa Mei Chuc  
(Many Voices Press, 2018). Image source: [thachcaovietlinh.com](http://thachcaovietlinh.com)

## Iraq 1991

where camels moan  
dogs whine  
caged zoo animals scream

scorpions burrow  
donkeys bray  
birds flee

the deluge of bombs  
melting desert  
into glass

sand yipes  
insects turn amber  
oil smoke hides palms

black gold slides  
into Gulf  
suffocating fish

rain clouds retreat  
sun dims  
moon tips away

air inhales  
Earth winces  
stars shudder

and God weeps

—CHANTE WOLF

Chante Wolf served in the U.S. Air Force, 1980-92, in Operation Desert Shield/Storm.  
Poem previously published in *Meat for Tea*; reprinted with permission of the author.



## Fighting Spirit

In the lull before the ground assault  
the sergeant told us:

Swallow these tablets  
against the alien water  
of fear, with its derisive amoebas

Have confidence: Unseen  
screen-watchers will catch anyone  
who tries to flee you  
before you can destroy them

Call on the ingrained habits  
that make you a worthy arm  
of your equipment

Cling to the saving hatred  
that will keep you from looking down  
while you scale the cliffs  
of doing what you're told

and to the love of your buddies  
who alone know what you suffer

Soon, theirs will be the only love  
you can remember, the only love  
worth remembering

—LYNN GILBERT

Lynn Gilbert belongs to VFP Chapter 93 in  
South Central Michigan.



**Veterans For Peace**  
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**Seattle PrideFest**

## VFP Pride!

Counter-clockwise from left:

Seattle members found the perfect banner to carry in the Trans Pride Parade on Capitol Hill on June 28 (Photo: Kim Loftness).

Fresno members Jackson Shepherd, Eduardo Castro, and Carli White-Morgan applied their marching skills in the Fresno, California, Pride Parade on June 1.

VFP joined tens of thousands of LGBTQIA folks and allies at the Queer Liberation March in New York City on June 30 (Photo: Ellen Davidson).



**Fresno Pride Parade**



**NYC Queer Liberation March**