



Exposing the True Costs of War and Militarism Since 1985

VETERANS FOR PEACE

Organized locally. Recognized internationally.

VFP Newsletter

veteransforpeace.org

Summer 2021



We are tired of parades, memorials and pageantry.

Take back your "thank you for your service" and 50% off sales.

We want people to live without threats of U.S. bullets and bombs.

We remember the enormous loss of civilian life that is forgotten in today's memorials and hidden from view in the U.S. consciousness. America has no space on its calendar to memorialize these victims.

We grieve the loss of friends and the death of veterans unable to forget the tragedies and forgive themselves.

We are ANGRY that there is a holiday that glorifies nationalism and patriotism and ignores the trauma that U.S. militarism enacts all over the globe.

We are filled with rage as we continue to watch the empty political platitudes from the two largest political parties praising soldiers and veterans as they continue to send them off to wars that line the pockets of the rich.

We are frustrated that mainstream media and popular culture glorifies U.S. militarism.

We are exhausted from nightmares of our participation and the images of ongoing trauma from a system of violence we once propped up. We live with the wounds of our moral injuries, scabs that we can't let heal for fear we'd recreate the injury.

On Memorial Day we don't want to remember and we are afraid we will forget.

MEMORIAL DAY 2021 [Also see page 10.] TOP: Smedley Butler Brigade members march to the Soldiers and Sailors Monument on Boston Common. BOTTOM: Combat-wounded Per Odman demonstrates in front of the Times Square Recruiting Station in New York City where he signed up for the Marines in late May 1967. RIGHT: The bold statement issued by National Veterans For Peace on this year's Memorial Day.



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Chapter reports = 200 words

Include chapter number,
name/location, and your
chapter reporter's name.

High-res photos print best!

1200+ pixels wide works well.
Please include photo credit and a
caption, and identify everyone in
group shots if possible. Thanks!

Submit chapter reports to:
editor@veteransforpeace.org

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Veterans For Peace welcomes new staff!

Veterans For Peace National Office has hired two new staff members. Jules Vaquera is our new Membership Coordinator and Chris Velazquez is our new Digital Organizer!



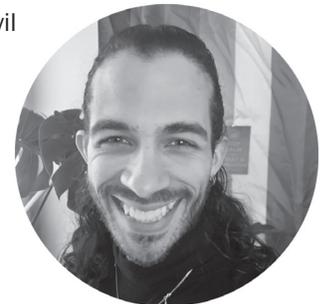
JULES VAQUERA is coming to Veterans For Peace after working as a teacher at SAYSi, an arts school for youth with a focus on social justice, based in San Antonio, TX. She

is a veteran of the USAF and has also been a member of About Face, Veterans Against the War for about a year and a half (formerly IVAW). She has been writing music, poetry and plays about her war experience for about 6 years. In her words, "I am very excited to be here and to work for an organization that has a mission that is so dear to my heart."

CHRIS VELAZQUEZ is a life-long gamer having served in the United States

Marine Corps as a Civil Affairs Operator with combat deployments to Fallujah, Iraq and Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

After receiving an honorable discharge in 2010, Chris



navigated academia, the fitness industry, and corporate finance sector until stepping into an advocacy role with Disabled American Veterans as a National Service Officer. Chris resides in Pennsylvania where he continues working as a veterans advocate and activist in his role with Veterans For Peace.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Interconnected movements

VETERANS FOR PEACE MEMBERS are organizing around a variety of new initiatives this year! The new Climate Crisis and Militarism Project has been putting pressure on Special Envoy John Kerry to acknowledge the environmental destruction inflicted by the U.S. military. Deported Veterans joined a campaign to create Leave No One Behind murals all over the U.S. Racial justice and police abolition work is ongoing in chapters across the nation. VFP's Gamers For Peace initiative has over 20 hours of original Twitch (streaming platform) content weekly, challenging militarism and predatory military online recruitment. The No Nukes working group is growing again. Save Our VA has been taking actions to stop the privatization of the VA. And we have been organizing to pass municipal proclamations to officially change Veterans Day back to Armistice Day. It is hard to capture the full scope of great work being done by our members in one paragraph. But what do all these things have to do with peace?

All these issues are interconnected with warmaking and the consequences of U.S. militarism. In 1967 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. observed: "The bombs in Viet Nam explode at home. The security we profess to seek in foreign ventures we will lose in our decaying cities." U.S. institutions continue to destroy the boundaries between domestic and foreign policies as U.S. war culture grows exponentially by the day. Resources monopolized by the Military Industrial Congressional Complex could go a long way toward addressing our healthcare and housing crises, making education accessible to all, reducing the economic divide, building a green, just transition to a new economy, and much more. Meanwhile, our freedoms to protest and advocate for people's rights are being eroded to the point that they are criminalized.

Dr. King also stated, "True peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice." To be a peace activist means confronting injustice everywhere.

My exposure to war is what motivated my activism. It created in me an uncompromising calling to stand in the way of injustice. To turn away in the face of atrocities in foreign lands or in our own communities would betray my personal values and inflict additional moral injury upon me.

As military veterans, we are in a unique position to highlight how militarism impacts these many issues and show how they are connected. Society has gifted military veterans with exceptionalism and trust because of misguided hero worship. This veteran exceptionalism allows us to speak truth to power, protest with less risk than civilian activists, and to open



Garrett Reppenhagen
VFP Executive Director

doors that may be closed to other organizations. We have the opportunity to raise up voices that have been marginalized—victims and survivors of war, victims and survivors of injustice.

We see many segmented movements trudging along in a fight to be heard. We can do a better job of making the connections between diverse issues and uniting in understanding that they are interconnected. Nationalism, capitalism, racism, and patriarchy all drive war and injustice and oppression, and militarism exacerbates these connected forces.

We build stronger relationships when we show up for others in our community. Solidarity is infectious. Intentionally building relationships with a variety of people's movements helps us realize how interconnected we are and to see the association between justice and peace. If we unite we might have hope of creating critical mass and developing lasting positive change.



Folks representing several different peace organizations attended the virtual visit with Senator Alex Padilla's staff person, Jose Villalvazo.

VFP join in push to repeal AUMF

The House voted on June 17 to repeal the 2002 authorization for war in Iraq; the measure passed by a 268–161 margin. As Kathleen Hernandez observes, "We have a long, long way to go in our efforts to end war and dismantle the war machine, but this is a step in the right direction." She and other VFP members have been part of the successful push to get Congress to repeal the AUMF.

In a recap, Anthony Manousos of Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) wrote:

"We had an excellent lobby visit with Jose Villalvazo, Senator Alex Padilla's staff person on military and foreign affairs. A graduate of the U.S. War College and Redlands University, Jose was principal advisor to Congresswoman Lori Trahan, Member of the House Armed Services Committee, on national security, foreign policy, intelligence, homeland security, immigration, veterans, and trade issues. He told us that he personally supports repeal of the AUMF and feels that there is strong interest in Congress in repealing it at this time. He gave us 35

...continued on page 9

Ready for a deeper commitment? Run for the board!



VFP Board President Adrienne Kinne with her husband Danny, a UK veteran

Greetings all,

It's been a busy year and this summer is no exception! We are gearing up for another great convention and another board election!

One of the strongest components of our organization is that we continue to be a bottom-up organization that elects our leadership from our membership by our membership. The primary mission of the Board of Directors is to provide oversight and guidance of the Executive Director, ensure the financial viability of the organization, and lead national strategic planning in accordance with our Statement of Purpose and the will of the membership.

Board members serve for three years unless filling a vacancy, in which case they serve the remainder of the term for that vacancy. This year we have five board seats to fill. Seats are open to individuals who are Veteran (Full) Members of Veterans For Peace at the time of nomination. Anyone who wants to submit their name for board candidacy must do so prior to the start of the business meeting, which is **Saturday, August 14, at 11:00 am Central Daylight Time**. Submission may be done online via the board candidate Google form, at: <https://bit.ly/2021VFPBoard>. Candidates are also required to supply a copy of their DD-214.

Following the conclusion of the annual convention, we will reach out to each nominee with a request to send in their bio along with a short statement describing why they seek a position on the Veterans For Peace Board of Directors, as well as what they hope to gain and learn from the position. We will also coordinate at least one "Meet the Candidates" Zoom meeting that will be open to all members of Veterans For Peace—likely in September and October. (Ballots are mailed at the end of October.) This will give all candidates an equal opportunity to share their views with members.

We are striving to make participation on VFP's Board of Directors accessible to all Veterans—including those who may be working, attending school, have family obligations, or other draws on their time. As such, the time commitment might range from 4–6 hours a month on average, to many more. (VFP Directors and National Office Staff have done a lot of hard work to support the development of our committees, and as a result we have more member participation. This increase in shared responsibility makes it possible for all members to step back if/when they need to for personal reasons, and re-engage when ready.)

We are also striving to maximize our use of technology to support regular board communications and meetings, as well as to retain information and be better equipped to share it with future board members. A few basic applications that are important for directors to know or to be willing to learn are Zoom (online meeting platform), Slack (internal communications app); and Google Documents.

Before applying, please review the Veterans For Peace Bylaws and Policies, available at: <https://www.veteransforpeace.org/who-we-are/governance>. Pay close attention to the code of conduct and board responsibilities. Above all, VFP board

service is about ensuring the organization is run well, so it may effectively support the success of our members in co-creating a more peaceful and socially just world.

We continue to seek opportunities for members to get involved and participate in our decision-making. Many of our committees also include members who are not on the Board of Directors, which allows us to help share the work, bring in more voices and, most importantly, create continuity. If you are interested in joining a committee, please feel free to reach out to me or any of the other board members.

Looking forward to see you all virtually at the convention,

Adrienne Kinne, VFP President

ONGOING VFP EVENTS

- **#StandDownLive** is an amazing talk show that airs live every Wednesday on VFP's Facebook & YouTube: 5 pm (E), 4 pm (C), 2 pm (P).
- **VFP Open Mic Nights** every Friday evening. Submission Guidelines: <https://www.veteransforpeace.org/our-work/vfp-open-mic>
- **VFP Book Group "Be the Change"** meets every second or third Sunday at 5 pm (E), 4 pm (C), 2 pm (P). So far, participants have taken up *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo, *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad, and *All About Love* by bell hooks. Next up: *Unconventional Combat* by Mike Messner (see Ken Mayer's review on page 23). You can sign up for the book group at <https://veteransforpeace.salsalabs.org/vfpbookclub>. For more information, contact Kathleen Hernandez at hernandezkathleen@hotmail.com.

Find more events on p. 25.



THURSDAY–SUNDAY
AUGUST 12–15, 2021



Dear fellow members and supporters of Veterans For Peace,

Once again we are gearing up for the annual National (*actually, International!*) Veterans For Peace Convention. For the second time it will take place online, meaning you won't have to fork out your hard-to-come-by cash for transportation, lodging, and meals. You'll be able to kick back in comfort to watch, whenever, wherever and with whomever you choose. (Not to mention, the registration fee is lower than for traditional in-person conventions, and if you really can't afford the low fee, "tuition assistance" is available on request.)

VFP Board Member Dave Logsdon was characteristically enthusiastic in his praise of last year's groundbreaking effort: "Successful beyond my wildest dreams!" he said. "so accessible . . . an artistic and financial success." This year we are building on that success.

Another comrade, the venerable Al Glatkowski summed it up nicely in his comment: "I have attended many media calls online, and I do believe this was the best that I have ever been involved in . . . a wonderful experience. As a working-class individual, this format enabled me to listen during working hours . . . and I did not have to pay for a room, hotel, restaurant meals, or additional travel costs, nor lose vacation time I don't have!"

Cara Bissell much appreciated a special advantage of the on-line format: "Like every VFP convention, for me there did not seem to be enough time to take everything in . . . [so] I was glad workshops were able to be viewed after the convention was over."

This year's virtual gathering features three plenary events, nine workshops, and three training sessions to help chapters, working groups, and individuals become even more effective in pursuit of world peace and justice. We'll have the perennially popular poetry night (sign up with Jules, VFP's Membership Coordinator!), early morning yoga sessions, after hours movies, and—for the first time—a music video contest with cash prizes. Details coming soon.

To learn more and, most importantly, to register, go to <https://www.vfpconvention.org/>.

I'm going to be there, and I want to see *you* there, too!

Ken Mayers, VFP Board Member; VFP member since 1986

THE NONVIOLENT ARMY



Rev. Lennox Yearwood Jr.
[Photo source: hiphopcaucus.org]

Welcome new VFP Advisor Rev. Lennox Yearwood Jr. of the Hip Hop Caucus!

We are proud and honored to welcome Rev. Lennox Yearwood to the Veterans For Peace Advisory Board. Rev. Yearwood is the President & Founder of Hip Hop Caucus, a minister, community activist, U.S. Air Force veteran, and one of the most influential people in Hip Hop political life. The esteemed reverend has spoken at several VFP events over the years, and this year he kicked off “Beyond the Dream: A Call to Conscience,” a special episode of #StandDownLive that aired on January 22, 2021, in remembrance of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In his remarks, Rev. Yearwood quoted Dr. Martin Luther King’s description of “the nonviolent army”: “In the nonviolent army, there is room for everyone who wants to join. There is no color distinction. There is no examination, and there are no pledges. Nonviolent soldiers are called upon to examine their greatest weapons: their **hearts**, their **conscience**, their **courage**, and their **sense of justice**.”

Yearwood also stressed the need to reach out beyond our ranks. “We must connect the dots. We cannot be a siloed progressive movement. We must break down the silos within our own movement and make sure that we’re speaking out about those things as well. We cannot just be about peace and not justice.”

In closing, he gave thanks to Veterans For Peace, and urged us on, saying “Continue to be just an amazing organization. Continue to just deal with the fact that you were trained for the military, but now you’re using that training for peace.” Amen.

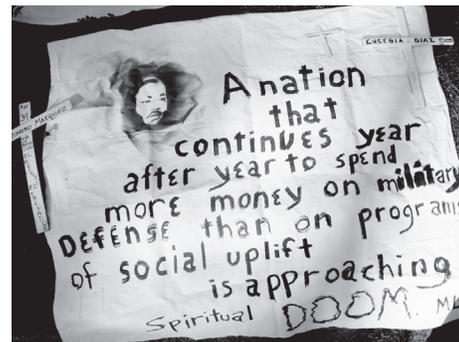
Breaking the Silence is the name of a campaign to spread Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Beyond Vietnam” message—his prophetic sermon delivered at Riverside Church on April 4, 1967—by urging people to host local readings in their communities every year on April 4. Many VFP members and chapters have been involved with such events, especially in 2017 on the 10th anniversary of that address.

On April 4, 2021, the webinar **Breaking the Silence: An Intergenerational Call for Unity and Action** was livestreamed with an intersectional panel of activists:

- Barbara Ransby (Moderator)—Author, Historian, Professor, and Activist (*Making All Black Lives Matter, Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*)
- Ash-Lee Woodard Henderson (Panelist)—Highlander Research & Education Center
- Bill McKibben (Panelist)—350.org
- Dr. Corrine Sanchez (Panelist)—Tewa Women United
- Medea Benjamin—Code Pink

The excitement generated by this program affirms the relevance of Dr. King’s speech for our time. A complete high-def video of the international readings and of the panel discussion is available in English and Spanish to review and share at <https://www.kingandbreakingsilence.org>.

April 4th was conceived as the first step in a multi-year project. The organizers of Breaking the Silence (a project sponsored by ten different organizations) welcome your suggestions for moving forward. People are invited to use the videos they have produced as well as other resources available on the project website to organize viewings and local readings by school, faith and community groups. For more information or to get involved, email info@kingandbreakingsilence.org.



LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

To mark the end of President Biden’s first 100 days in office, **Veterans For Peace**, the **Deported Veterans Advocacy Project (DVAP)**, and other coalition members of the **Leave No One Behind Mural Project*** ended a week of online advocacy with on-the-ground actions in Washington, D.C.

The coalition is calling for Congress and the Biden-Harris administration to take a series of policy steps to protect immigrants by:

- passing an Executive Action or a series of actions as outlined by Senator Tammy Duckworth to begin the process of repatriating deported veterans;
- implementing the New Way Forward Act into law as reintroduced by Representative Jesus “Chuy” Garcia; and
- taking concrete steps to end family separation and support family reunification.

The D.C. visit included meetings with Congressional leaders, a vigil in front of the Peace Monument, and a press conference in front of local artist Flor Rivas’ painted mural tribute to local Maryland deported veteran Laura Meza. In addition to emphasizing the calls for policy changes, the press conference included deported veterans Cesar Nunez and Manuel Valenzuela, a statement from Rep. Chuy Garcia (read by a member of his staff), a letter in Laura Meza’s own words recounting her experiences, and the testimony of the spouse of a military veteran in the deportation process.

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*www.veteransforpeace.org/pressroom/news/2021/02/25/leave-no-one-behind-mural-project

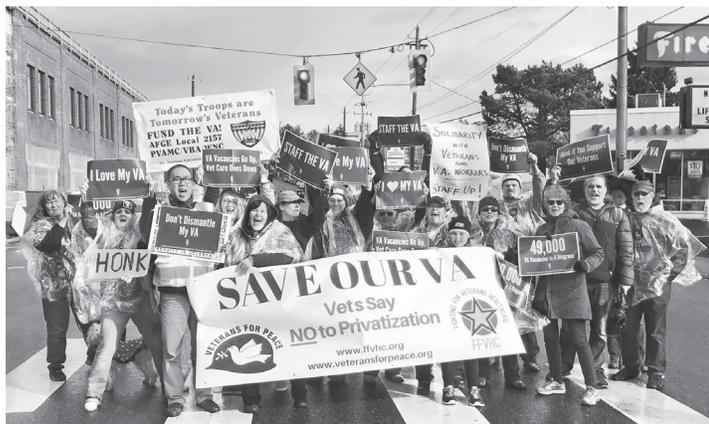
VFP CAMPAIGNS & PROJECTS

VA healthcare system is the best—but many veterans still don't know it!

Contact: Jeff Roy (royjeff48@gmail.com)

One of the biggest problems that the SAVE OUR VA National Campaign (SOVA) has uncovered is the sad fact that many veterans—including some members of Veterans For Peace—have been so influenced by a decade's worth of relentless VA bashing from Congress and the media, that they believe the Veterans Health Administration is not a good healthcare system. And in response, many veterans are requesting to go to private-sector facilities through the MISSION Act's Veterans Community Care Program.

For anyone interested in the counter arguments and real facts, please check out our SOVA pages on the VFP website



May 1918—American Federation of Government Employees, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Veterans For Peace, and others at a “Save the VA from Privatization” event in Portland, Oregon.

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND ...continued from page 6

Maurice Martin, a member of VFP's Deported Veteran Advocacy Project writes:

The Deported Veterans Advocacy Project team developed new allies, including the local business owner who lent us her wall, that brought national to our deported veteran issue with conventional press conferences, radio and TV, and Facebook interviews, using various social media platforms in getting our message out while building Grassroots community support.

Most important, DVAP was able to build a new, high-powered political alliance of champions who have a lot of legislative experience and are attorneys who might be able to work on some individual cases and get us across the finish line in bringing all Deported Veterans home.

DVAP [is grateful to] Shelly Rockett for all her logistics work getting us there and back home safely... Sam and Chris from VFP National were [also] very helpful in preparing and implementing our work on the ground, the mural project, and social media.

“Bring Them All Home!”

(search “Veterans For Peace SOVA”) as well as the Veterans Healthcare Policy Institute (VHPI) website, <https://www.veteranspolicy.org/>.

Yes, the VA has problems. And yes, we need to fix them. But the VHA is still the best healthcare system in the country and the only one that is equipped to deal with veterans' specific and complex healthcare problems. The private sector is not!

Private-sector providers have refused to accept veterans as patients if they are required to spend even a measly two hours learning about military culture or how to identify Agent Orange-related diabetes, burn pit-related diseases, PTSD and Military Sexual Trauma (MST), just to name a few. Moreover, as a recent study documented, a veteran who goes to a private-sector Emergency Room (ER) is twice as likely to die within 28 days as a veteran who goes to a VA ER!

If you currently get your healthcare at the VA, we urge you to talk to other veterans about the benefits of VA healthcare—even in spite of some of its problems (problems that we know are actually the same or much worse in the private sector). We urge you to tell folks the facts, encourage them to ignore the Koch Brothers-funded/health industry-generated propaganda. Share your positive healthcare experiences with them and tell them to go to the VA. This is one of the most important things you can do to save the system.

Please understand that if the VA hemorrhages enough patients to the private sector, which is the privatizers' outsourcing plan, then VA facilities and programs will be shuttered and the system as a whole will be fatally crippled and ultimately closed—turned into just another “insurer” rather than a provider of care.

Please help us. Just as you advocate so forcefully for peace, please help us advocate forcefully for an improved, strengthened, and even expanded Veterans Health Administration.

—SAVE OUR VA National Project & Campaign



DVAP's Maurice Martin in front of the Leave No One Behind mural tribute to Maryland vet Laura Meza painted by Flor Rivas in Washington, D.C. [Photo by Chris Velazquez.]

Climate Crisis and Militarism Project (CCMP)

Contact: climate@veteransforpeace.org

Climate Crisis and Militarism Project, or CCMP (formerly Climate Crisis and Militarism Working Group), has become a VFP National Project. We have two general meetings a month as well as regular steering committee meetings. VFP Executive Director Garrett Reppenhagen, President Adrienne Kinne, and three CCMP members, Vince Dijanich, Steve Morse, and Jim Rine, met with two senior staffers of U.S. Climate Envoy John Kerry's office on April 14, 2021, and respectfully presented VFP's concerns about the military's role in the climate crisis.

When Viet Nam veterans massed a powerful anti-war movement in D.C. 50 years ago (which some current VFP members were part of), Kerry spoke to Congress a devastating critique of the Viet Nam war; his testimony gained him much prominence. Yet Kerry has not shown any willingness to address militarism's role in exacerbating the climate crisis, and we have not heard back from Kerry's office since our meeting despite repeated inquiries. We plan to track Kerry's pronouncements and actions on the climate crisis at least through the November COP26 (26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties).

Throughout March and April, we actively distributed the "Open Letter to John Kerry" that was submitted to his office on April 2, and again on April 27 with many additional endorsers. We collected endorsements from prominent individuals including Naomi Klein, Noam Chomsky, and Rev. Lennox Yearwood, and from nationally known organizations such as 350.org, Our Revolution, the United Electrical Workers (UE), CODEPINK, and the Native American Veterans Association—plus 55 VFP chapters (thank you!). The letter is endorsed by hundreds of people who understand the connection between peace, environmental, and social justice issues and are doing something about it on the state and local level. Outside the

U.S., endorsers came in significant numbers from Japan, Canada, Afghanistan, Cameroon, Ireland, Senegal, the UK, and Russia. Cindy Piester deserves special credit for her extraordinary work at gathering many, many endorsements.

CCMP's work includes Legislation, Communication, Slideshow Presentations, Social Media, Outreach, Education and Merchandise. We post to VFP National's social media accounts on climate crisis and militarism issues. We connect to the larger movement by taking the time to attend other organizations' webinars. And we have developed both 20- and 40-minute versions of a slideshow on climate and militarism available for presentation to groups (350.org chapters have expressed interest). Right now, CCMP members are involved in a music video contest with a "Climate Crisis and Militarism" theme. In addition to cash prizes, winners get to perform at the VFP Convention. Bumper stickers and T-shirts are coming.

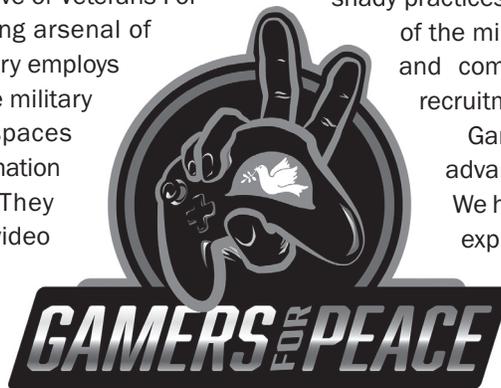
Navigate to <https://www.veteransforpeace.org/take-action/climatecrisis/> to read our "6 Asks of Kerry," the letter to Kerry (in five languages) with all its endorsers, and the petition to Kerry. (Please sign if you haven't yet.) Under "Resources" you will find numerous articles, interviews and published articles by some CCMP members, and a PDF of our brochure that you are welcome to print at home or use to order quantities from a union print shop. (All VFP members were mailed a copy.)

As the climate crisis continues on its path, leaving disaster in its wake, humans must work together to stop or slow it, or at least to mitigate its effects. We as veterans are in a good position to understand and call attention to the U.S. military's role in creating greenhouse emissions, in commandeering so much wealth and resources, in causing environmental destruction, and in acting as hit man for corporations that do all of the above. We invite you to join us in this important work. If you or your chapter are already active in climate work, please make contact so we may strengthen our connections. We thank you for all you do, and we thank the VFP National staff for their great support. Contact us: We welcome your feedback!

NEW VFP INITIATIVE

Gamers For Peace

Gamers For Peace is the newest initiative of Veterans For Peace aimed at stopping the ever growing arsenal of predatory recruitment tools the U.S. Military employs online. In recent years every branch of the military has started using competitive gaming spaces online in order to gather recruitment information for children as young as 13 years old. They have recruiters online every day playing video games on livestream in order to spread propaganda, and collect recruiting leads through raffles and sweepstakes, never telling the viewership that entering their



information places them into a recruitment database where they can be tracked and targeted for future recruitment efforts. The shady practices continue in person as well, as every branch of the military now has an E-Sports team that travels and competes full-time in uniform, as a trained recruitment force.

Gamers For Peace is working to stop these advances into our hobby spaces on multiple fronts. We have created our own E-Sports teams with the express purpose of engaging in the same spaces as the military teams, but with an anti-war message. We have begun partnering with other initiatives online to help fight
continued on next page...

#ShutDownCreech!



A lizard's-eye view of the Nevada Desert Experience (@NVDesertExp) tweeted by the Catholic anarchist group Saint Francis (@SaintFrancisCAL).

SHUT DOWN CREECH! **September 26–October 2, 2021**

<https://shutdowncreech.blogspot.com/>

One might ponder why people camp in the desert for 5 days twice a year protesting drones, and my answer has three parts:

First, the drone issue cannot be ignored with the U.S. Air Force killing people globally with apparent impunity from operator chairs at Creech and other bases.

Second, it's personal. I carry profound regret that I voluntarily helped the United States destroy so many people's lives 50 years ago in Southeast Asia, and I don't want the current batch of Air Force drone operators to carry the same burdens in life.

Last, I wouldn't do this stuff if it wasn't fun—storming the bastille so to speak—and at Shut Down Creech! the people are fun and the food is wonderful. Each day is choreographed with

different themes, and we are free to join in or to try and deliver our own messages. I have one I use every morning as the drone personnel arrive at Creech AFB from Las Vegas. My poster reads "Go Back, Wrong Way." I know what taking the wrong path means, and I hope they can see it in my face.

Organized by Code Pink, Shutdown Creech happens twice every year, and usually at least once or twice during the week the entrance roads are temporarily blocked by protestors, causing some disruption and time for reflection on the part of the Air Force personnel that perhaps blowing up people we are not legally at war with isn't right after all. Maybe they will decide to stop and walk away? We hope, and keep protesting.

Shut Down Creech! is a great way for we VFPers to get the message across that we do not agree with what these people are doing. We invite you to come along this fall and join our action in solidarity with drone victims across the globe!

—Dave Patterson, VFP Member at Large
Ramona, California

the spread of military propaganda in video games, such as our push to #DeplatformSixDays in support of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).

Perhaps most importantly, we are building an online community of inclusive, anti-war gamers who are willing to stand up to these injustices. In the first three months since this initiative was started, our Twitch following has grown to 250 people, and our Discord community hosts 176 active members, all gaming, building community, and organizing to push back against the war machine. We're growing rapidly every day, and we can use all the help we can get! If you're a gamer who wants to get more involved, come find us by going to: <https://www.veteransforpeace.org/take-action/gamers-peace> and join our Discord server and Twitch channel.

AUMF ...continued from page 3

minutes of his time and 16 people took part in our Zoom call, including reps from Veterans For Peace, Military Families Speak Out, and Deported U.S. Veterans Resource Center, as well as Interfaith Communities, United for Justice and Peace, and Friends Committee on National Legislation."

After the visit, Sen. Padilla did become a co-sponsor. The group also met the following week with Sen. Feinstein. As we go to press, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is set to consider S.J.Res. 10 on Tuesday, June 22, a bipartisan bill led by Sens. Tim Kaine (VA) and Todd Young (IN) that would repeal both the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) against Iraq and the 1991 Gulf War AUMF.

Remembering ALL Victims of War

Every year, Veterans For Peace chapters and members across the country commemorate Memorial Day to remember the true costs of war. [Read the full 2021 Memorial Day statement issued by VFP on page 1.]

Things still looked a little different this year, with many chapters keeping their events online, while others were able to resume their long-running annual Memorial Day events.

This year, Chapter 9 (Boston) and Chapter 27 (Minneapolis) were able to carry out their traditional in-person Memorial Day commemorations featuring marches, music, speakers, and remembrances of *all* victims of war.

In Duluth (Minn.), Chapter 80 and Grannies for Peace resumed their “Costs of War Walk” drawing attention to both human & financial costs.

Following weeks of public actions staged in support of Palestine, Chapter 23 (Rochester, NY) joined with Rochester Witness for Palestine for a “Nobody is a number and everybody has a name” memorial service for the Israeli and Gazan children killed in May 2021.

Other VFP chapters across the country partnered with the Leave No One Behind Mural Project to unveil three local murals

in Los Angeles, Portland, and Detroit. Through this public art, the Leave No One Behind Project urges the Biden-Harris administration and Congress to enact immigration policy to repatriate deported veterans, protect childhood arrivals, end

family separation, and reunite families (see pp. 6–7).

Community members of the VFP Gamers For Peace initiative (see pp. 8–9) came together for a panel discussion and livestream to discuss the origins of Memorial Day, the shift in its meaning and celebration, and how to highlight the consequence of the unchecked destruction that war causes. VFP chapter actions were highlighted and celebrated by the crew, just before a conversation with a conscientious objector about his journey. The show wrapped with the sharing of anti-war poetry, and a viewing of “Body of War,” a documentary film

about the life and efforts of veteran Tomas Young.

On the heels of Memorial Day, the *Golden Rule* peace boat sailed into the San Francisco Bay after a sometimes rough, month-long ocean passage from Hawai’i (see p. 20).

View our full VFP 2021 Memorial Day recap on the VFP website: <http://bit.ly/VFP2021MemorialDay>



VFP Chapter 178 members gathered at the Memorial Park in Fort Collins, Colorado, to commemorate the day. Those in attendance were Tom Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Modello, Nancy Sinclair, Steve Vallee, and Roy Bath. [Photo by Rosalind Larsen.]

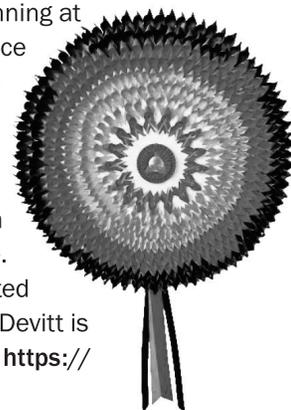


Hollis Higgins rings a set of bells 11 times at the conclusion of the Spokane Veterans For Peace My Lai remembrance vigil held Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at the Viet Nam statue in Riverfront Park. [Photo by Dan Pelle/The Spokesman-Review.]

March 16th My Lai Remembrance

In honor of the My Lai Resolution passed by a vote of 430–8 at the Veterans For Peace 2020 virtual convention, VFP members from Chapter 35 in Spokane, Washington, gathered at Riverfront Park in Spokane to hold a vigil lasting 504 seconds (8 minutes, 24 seconds), beginning at 11:00 a.m. on March 16, in remembrance of the 504 innocent victims of atrocities committed by U.S. military members on March 16, 1968, known as the My Lai Massacre. They also placed a wreath of 504 red ribbons at the local Viet Nam War memorial where the vigil took place.

The My Lai Memorial Exhibition created by Chicago associate member Mac MacDevitt is now retired, but still viewable online at <https://mylaimemorial.org/exhibit/>.



VFP CHAPTER REPORTS

#023 – ROCHESTER, NY

Despite the difficulty of the pandemic, Chapter 23 continues to be active with regularly scheduled meetings and direct actions.

From January through June, Chapter 23 has been fortunate to have several guest speakers for chapter meetings, aligned with different VFP National working groups/projects. Guest speakers included Holly Adams, a representative of the Genesee Valley Citizens for Peace (GVCP), who spoke on the recent nuclear treaty ban; Helen Jaccard, Project Manager of VFP's Golden Rule Peace Project and VFP Nuclear Abolition Working Group; Devora Gonzalez, a field organizer at the School of the Americas Watch; K. J. Noh, a scholar, educator, and journalist focusing on the political economy and geopolitics of Asia-Pacific; Michael Wong, Co-chair of the VFP China Working Group; and most recently Suzanne Gordon from the Veterans Healthcare Policy Institute and author of *Wounds of War*.



#009 – EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

The Smedley Butler Brigade has been holding meetings on Zoom for over a year now, some with guest speakers. We have taken part in the Mass Peace Action Raytheon Campaign in person.

On Memorial Day we gathered, walked to the soldiers and sailors monument on Boston Common, listened to speakers, and then placed carnations on the monument (see photo above). Our message: Remember ALL victims of war.

Nate Goldslag

#021 – NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

As the Covid crisis began to ease in early spring, Chapter 21 was right back in the swing of things. In March, members joined the Teaneck Peace and Justice Vigil several times, once in support of the Amazon workers in Bessemer, Alabama, and once with Bayan and Anakbayan to demand U.S. troops out of the Philippines. Also in March, members joined with Bayan and Anakbayan as well as with members of About Face and VFP Chapter 34 in New York City at the Philippine Embassy to protest the assassination of nine Filipino activists.

Chapter members also joined with The People's Organization for Progress and local unions in Newark this spring for an action in support of the Amazon workers in Bessemer. In May, members joined a solidarity action in support of laundry workers in New York City.

When Israel began launching air-to-ground attacks on Gaza, chapter members took part in numerous rallies and activities throughout Northern New Jersey in solidarity with the Palestinian people. We were in Paterson, Montclair, Teaneck, Jersey City, and Clifton with our Veterans For Peace flags and banners, presenting a popular photo op for attendees and the press. Chapter member James Yee spoke at a very large rally in Paterson.

Wendy Fisher



On June 8, VFP Chapter 23 held a memorial service for the lives lost in 1967 on the USS Liberty when it was attacked by Israeli forces. Out of the 34 KIA, two were from the Rochester area. A memorial site exists near the beach of Lake Ontario in Rochester New York.

[Photo by Jeremiah Knowles.]

On May 12, members of Chapter 23 participated in a demonstration to oppose Israel's attempts to evict Palestinians from Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan Homes. Due to the ensuing tragic events, on May 31 members participated in the creation of a children's memorial for the Israeli and Gazan children who had been killed in the conflict.

Jeremiah Knowles

#025 – MADISON, WI

Chapter 25 weathered the pandemic year better than many. We stayed active by using Zoom for our general membership meetings through May 2021. Our members are looking forward to an in-person June meeting in a beautiful Madison park.

Thanks to generous donations from our many supporters, we have been able to carry on many important outreach activities.

Chapter Reports continued on page 12...

VFP CHAPTER REPORTS continued

Chapter 25, Madison, Wisconsin, continued...



MEMORIAL DAY 2002

Founding Chapter 25 member Clarence Kailin, a Spanish Civil War veteran, places a red carnation at a memorial to Wisconsin volunteers who served in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade at a ceremony at James Madison Park. [Photo by Craig Schreiner, Wisconsin State Journal.]

Counter-recruiting efforts continued virtually in six rural schools and peace scholarships were awarded again this year.

We continued with the pinnacle of our yearly spring activities. Through the efforts of many, particularly David Giffey, Paul McMahon, John Fournelle, Tom Glassel, and Norm Stockwell, we had an excellent virtual Memorial Day Peace Rally and an abbreviated and Covid-safe version of our Memorial Mile display.

Brad Geyer continues to maintain our website, located at madisonvfp.org, keeping it updated with recent and coming activities. Brad also manages our vibrant Facebook page in unison with Larry Orr.

Fran Wiedenhoft

#034 – NEW YORK CITY

Chapter 34 activities include online meetings and in-person events. **Meeting Topics/Speakers:** U.N. Nuclear Ban Treaty—Brendan Fay, Anthony Donovan, Rachel Clark, and Seishi Morikawa; Political Prisoners—Johanna Fernández; Rudean Leinaeng, author of a historical novel, *Coal, War and Love*; Racism in the Military—Edwin Krales, Claude Copeland, and Jonathan Hutto; Common Humanity—Lubna Mousa, Iraqi refugee artist, and Mel Lehman, who survived four nights of American bombing in Baghdad; TS-21 with IPAN & U.S. Peace Movement Representatives Ann Wright, Annette Brownlie, Robin Taubenfeld, Margaret Beavis, and Dr Vince Scappatura re Australia-U.S. Talisman Sabre military exercises scheduled for June–July.

Chapter Projects: Save Our VA; Move the Money; Stop Sanctions/Save Yemen; Agent Orange; *Peace & Planet News*.

In-person Events:

January 22: Celebrating Nuclear Weapons becoming illegal under International Law (www.nuclearban.com)

March 19: Iraq War Anniversary Demo

May 17: Move the Money Press Conference

May 17: WRL-NYC Tax Day event at Times Square Recruiting Station, with march to GPO.

Memorial Day: Over 150 attendees at our powerful online event, speakers who have fought in war, and nations affected by those wars, from WWII through Vietnam, Korea, Okinawa, Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel/Palestine. The program included both veteran speakers who were part of the U.S. War machine, now working for peace, and speakers from nations affected by wars.

Find us on Facebook @veteransforpeacenyc034

Bob Keilbach

#035 – SPOKANE, WA

Greetings, all! Chapter 35 held our first combined zoom/in-person meeting in June—we're all vaccinated. Good to be with friends!



Spokane Chapter members show off the Peace Pole created at the 2019 National Convention, to be presented to a local high school "so that all students can see Peace every day."

Our chapter joined organizations staging a rally at the Foley Federal Courthouse protesting Israeli murder of Palestinians in Gaza. We combined energies two weeks later rallying at Clark Park with about 70 flag/sign waving friends along Division Street. Many positive responses. Connections were made. We've been members of B/D/S and U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights for several years.

Four Drones Quilt Project quilts hung in the lobby of Gonzaga University Student Union for four days; several discussions took place with students/parents passing by.

We will present a Peace Pole created at the 2019 National Convention to Lewis & Clark High School, and plan to hold a dedication ceremony in the near future.

Our new focus is a legacy project exposing the effects of



HIDDEN WOUNDS MEMORIAL

THIS MEMORIAL SERVES AS A TANGIBLE REMINDER OF THE SACRIFICES MADE BY THE MEN AND WOMEN, AND THEIR FAMILIES, WHO HAVE SERVED THEIR COUNTRY WITH HONOR AND WHO, AS A RESULT, HAVE SUFFERED FROM THE HIDDEN WOUNDS OF WAR.

THESE HIDDEN WOUNDS OR SILENT CASUALTIES, OFTEN RESULTING FROM POST TRAUMATIC STRESS, HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE SHOCKING LEVEL OF VETERAN SUICIDE.

THESE VETERANS, WHO HAVE DEFENDED OUR COUNTRY'S FREEDOM AND DEMOCRATIC IDEALS, HAVE EARNED OUR REMEMBRANCE AND OUR ENDURING GRATITUDE.

DONATED BY THE CORPORAL JEFFREY M. LUCEY CHAPTER
CAPE COD VETERANS FOR PEACE NOVEMBER 2020

The Cape Cod chapter's Hidden Wounds Memorial, dedicated to veteran PTSD and suicide, now placed on the Town Green in Hyannis, Mass.

militarism and U.S. hegemony by Fairchild AFB in nearby Airway Heights. A subcommittee will meet and report.

The annual Armed Forces Torchlight Parade in May was cancelled by the coronavirus.

Look for two ads from Spokane in the upcoming 2021 VFP Convention online slideshow and commemorative booklet!

Hollis Higgins

#041 – CAPE COD, MA

During the long months of the pandemic, Chapter 41 continued our financial support for other important allies in the peace and justice community by contributing to About Face: Veterans Against the War. We also supported a local direct-assistance organization for service members, the Massachusetts Military Support Foundation. Once again we were a recognized participant in the annual Memorial Day event in Centerville.

This past winter and spring we held our 26th Annual “Voices of Peace” Poetry Contest. It was our second, fully virtual edition of the contest, and another great success in spite of pandemic conditions, thanks to the efforts of our dedicated contest leadership team of Nina Tepper and Jim Canavan. This wonderful event now has a life of its own and has become a part of the local educational and cultural scene, with 438 poems submitted and 51 winners, plus 29 schools and 51 teachers facilitating student participation.

In May, the Cape Cod chapter's Hidden Wounds Memorial to veteran PTSD and suicide was placed prominently on the Town Green in Hyannis alongside several other veterans' memorials. We plan to hold the formal dedication on Veterans Day with the family of Cpl. Jeffrey M. Lucey USMCR present. Chapter 41 is named after Jeffrey as a representative of this group of “hidden casualties.” We are very proud of this tangible reminder to count veterans lost to suicide and depression in the tally of the true costs of war. We will use the memorial as a focus of education and action about the often-unrecognized possibilities of peace.

Duke Ellis

#050 – NORTHERN MICHIGAN

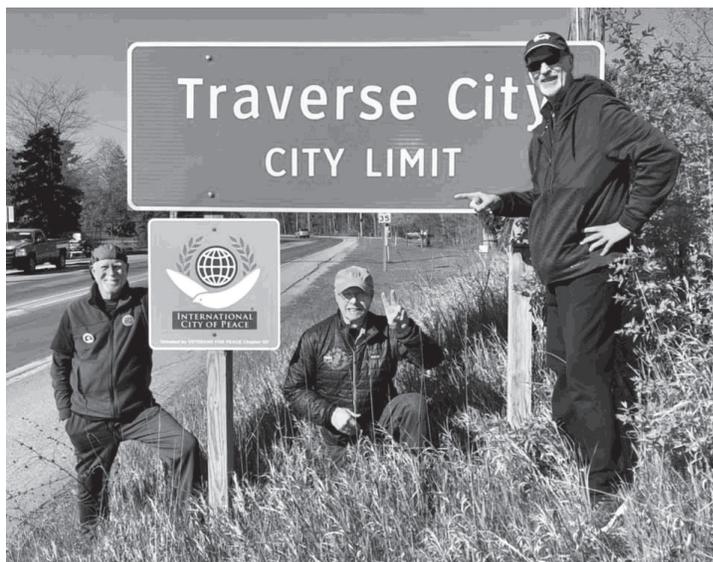
We are proud to say we were successful in obtaining membership for our city (Traverse City, MI) as the 175th member of the International Cities of Peace. As you may know, getting something like this done requires jumping through lots of hoops.

After fundraising, we had signs erected on our city limit signs, that show our city as members. Our chapter is recognized on each sign as the donor.

We feel that in today's unrest, it is important to show our community, and all who reside here, the importance of being peaceful and living peacefully.

Chapter 50 awarded our annual scholarship to Northwestern Michigan college to the daughter of a veteran—the twelfth recipient since its inception in 2010.

Though Covid has kept us from holding in-person meetings, we found more people can attend via zoom. During the pandemic, Chapter 50 donated significant dollars from our



Thanks to the efforts of VFP Chapter 50, Traverse City, Michigan is now an official member of International Cities of Peace.

Chapter Reports continued on page 14...

VFP CHAPTER REPORTS continued

Chapter 50, Northern Michigan, continued...

pass-the-hat collection to a homeless program in our city.

Two members of our chapter organized a zoom meeting with two separate classes of 7th graders in our community. We explained Veterans For Peace and our mission and why we are members. We explained that this is our service to our country. As a result, one of the students is starting a “peace club.” Our goal is getting into more schools in our area, and to address seniors and juniors, those that are more military vulnerable.

We welcomed a member of one of our Rotary Clubs to a recent meeting, with the goal of partnering with them on peacemaking endeavors, be it peace poles, education, etc.

Getting young members to join VFP is a priority. If anyone out there has any suggestions, please contact us. Our group is active, but we are getting old fast.

Tim Keenan

#057 – GREEN MOUNTAIN, VT

Will Miller Green Mountain Veterans For Peace Chapter 57 has met monthly via Zoom during the pandemic. We have been discussing the book, *In the Shadows of the American Century: The Rise and Decline of U.S. Global Power* by Alfred W. McCoy.

From a review: “For over 40 years, Alfred W. McCoy has been trying to make Americans aware of what their government was doing around the world. ... CIA dealing in opium (McCoy, 1972); ... developing torture tactics and deploying them around the world (McCoy, 2012); ... developing surveillance methods ... for use against American citizens (McCoy, 2009); McCoy has been detailing the conscious development of components of what he now recognizes as the U.S. Empire. ... This is the stunning latest development of thinking by a truly experienced global researcher/analyst/writer, ... his book deserves serious consideration.”

Chapter 57 recommends that all VFP chapter members



Memorial Day, Portland, Oregon—VFP Chapter 72 staged an event in collaboration with Repatriate Our Patriots focused on the plight of deported veterans, MC'd by Dan Shea.

read and discuss McCoy's book to learn about what our country is doing around the world, in order to inform and raise public awareness about the folly and tragedy of war.

Richard Czaplinski

#069 – SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Arla S. Ertz, Chapters 69 (San Francisco) and 63 (Albuquerque) associate member, whose Palestine solidarity stems from a 1992 delegation to the West Bank and Gaza, walked this year's UNRWA Gaza 5K on June 12 as part of the Jewish Voice for Peace—Bay Area team. Arla, a WWII veteran's daughter and activist since age five, thanks to her father's mentoring, did draft counseling during the Vietnam war, worked in Nicaragua on reforestation for the Sandinista revolution, in South Africa on Nelson Mandela's election, with a citizen diplomacy delegation to Iran, as an Election Protection volunteer in Phoenix, a drone protester at Beale and Creech Airbases, and a human rights delegate to the Arizona-Mexico border.



Arla Ertz

Arrested near the White House seeking a nuclear test ban, she was later tried for protesting at Senator Pete Wilson's office over the same issue. She arranged legal representation for VFP 69 members arrested for an Afghanistan war protest. Her conviction for direct action seeking homeless family housing in the San Francisco Presidio was overturned, although Arla spent a day in the Presidio brig! Arla and her partner, a veteran and lifetime VFP member (they found true love at the 2016 convention!), work on anti-nuclear issues, focusing on Los Alamos Lab's mission change from research to plutonium pit production.

Denny Riley

#072 – PORTLAND, OR

Over the last few months, VFP Chapter 72 has taken up many actions and statements. Most notably, we issued a letter against rampant police brutality that exists in the City of Portland, Oregon, and beyond. We advocate for a peaceful summer of accountability and a de-escalation of violence at the hands of both police and agitators. A copy of the letter is available on our updated website, vfpchapter72.org.



Chapter 75 members came together on May 4 to commemorate the May 1970 massacres of students at Kent State and Jackson State.

In April, chapter members voted to sign onto the Climate Crisis and Militarism statement. We were treated to an important presentation thereof by chapter member Janet Weil at our June meeting. Both Janet and Marion Ward are active with VFP's Climate Crisis and Militarism group, and we appreciate their extensive work on this important project.

Chapter 72 is slowly emerging from the pandemic, and although we are still hosting meetings online, we were honored to host an in-person Memorial Day event to install a "Leave No One Behind" mural in Portland. Chapter member Dan Shea spearheaded the event in collaboration with Jennifer Martinez-Medina and others from Repatriate Our Patriots, which featured speeches and statements about our departed comrades. We appreciate Dan's dedication to this and other justice causes.

We look forward to more events and opportunities to gather in the Rose City this summer.

Eileen Cowen

them to commit to ending the filibuster to ensure passage of the John Lewis Civil Rights Act; and addressing and supporting all efforts on behalf of police reform legislation as espoused by Black Lives Matter and progressive Democrats.

Our activities in November will include requesting that the City of Phoenix distance itself from Honoring Arizona Veterans (HAV), which operates the Veterans Day parade in conjunction with the City, and selected the infamous Peter Hegseth as its 2016 Grand Marshal and banned us permanently from the Parade in 2017.

Richard A. Smith

#089 – NASHVILLE, TN

Members of the Hector Black VFP Chapter have held vigils in front of Representative Jim Cooper's office every Friday since the first Friday in January, with only two exceptions. Other progressive groups like Our Revolution, Nashville Peace and Justice, Indivisible, the Green Party, Sunrise and others have periodically joined VFP calling for Mr. Cooper to take and support bold action to address the series of challenges faced by the post-Trump, Biden Administration. We have called on Mr. Cooper to support ending endless wars, ending our nuclear nightmare, opening up to Cuba, rejoining the JCPOA, repealing the AUMF, reducing the pentagon budget while supporting the VA, and so much more. Other groups have advocated for Medicare for All, Green New Deal, Criminal/Racial Justice Reform, responsible gun control, immigration reform and so much more. Members finally were invited to meet Mr. Cooper on May 14, 2021.

Chapter 89 Members also participated in caravans to support reopening relations with Cuba and we held space while young activists confronted Tennessee Legislators to not pass legislation allowing motorists to hit protesters. Members

Chapter Reports continued on page 16...

#075 – PHOENIX, AZ

Phoenix Veterans For Peace, Mark Von Hagen Chapter, emerged from the pandemic on May 4, 2021, to commemorate the fifty-first anniversary of the Kent State shootings. Several members assembled in central Phoenix and displayed VFP flags and signs containing several iconic photos of the events that day.

We are currently drafting our yearly agenda. It will include pressuring Arizona's Democratic Senators and members of the House of Representatives to address their colleagues who support the "Big Lie" and the continuing attempt to overthrow the federal government by force; pressing



VFP Chapter 89 members have staged a weekly peace vigil in front of their representative's office in Nashville, Tennessee, practically every Friday since the first week of January.

VFP CHAPTER REPORTS *continued*

Chapter 89, Nashville, TN, continued...

also submitted comments and spoke about the removal of the bust of Nathan Bedford Forrest from its place of honor in the Tennessee State Capitol.

On the radio show we celebrated Black History Month by talking about the recent white supremacist actions against the capital and the state of race relations and activism with Amber Sherman and young activists in Charleston, South Carolina. We also took up the case for reparations. We then had a series of shows about Biden's foreign policies, in which we demonstrated our skepticism of not only Biden, but also Blinken and Austin. We aired interviews with Mark Reese, Danny Sjursen, Jane Hussain, Ann Wright, S. Brian Willson, Helen Jaccard and Gerry Condon. We remembered Winter Soldier as it turned 50 and we profiled the Kingsbay Plowshares 7 as their verdicts came in. To hear any of these shows, search Sound Cloud at <https://soundcloud.com/user-55976759>, or go to Spotify and search Veterans For Peace.

Jim Wohlgemuth

#091 – SAN DIEGO, CA

Chapter 91 was busy this winter with many Zoom and in-person activities. We conducted a complete bylaws update, attended many meetings with other peace and environmental groups via Zoom, and restarted our Compassion Campaign in March, giving out sleeping bags again carefully to the many homeless folks downtown. Chapter members attended many in-person rallies for peace and justice, and our president went to DC as part of the VFP National Deported Veterans Advocacy Project, where he and others held press conferences, developed new allies, created a huge mural on a community market, and engaged in TV and radio interviews and livestreamed events on behalf of our deported veterans. We very much look forward to getting back to in-person activities



Jim Brown and Ed Fox stand for Black Lives Matter! in San Diego and everywhere.

as COVID diminishes, including the annual Pride Parade in July, which is the biggest event in San Diego each year, and look forward to regular recurring fall events which we have missed since COVID was upon us.

Gilbert Field

#092 – SEATTLE, WA

We have advertised our radio program before; however, here is an update from Mike Dedrick (slightly edited):

On a recent radio program co-hosted by Michael McPhearson, Chris Velasquez, a Civil Affairs marine and veteran of both Iraq and Afghanistan—now a new staff member of VFP—spoke about his experiences during the 20-year war in Afghanistan and the proposed withdrawal of U.S. forces in September 11, 2021. Chris gives an interesting and informative perspective of his time in the Middle East as an anti-war veteran. Check out the archived show (4/28/21 podcast) on both KODX 96.9 FM and VFP92.org.

Our chapter has also become a coalition member of Not In Our Parks (NIOP), which is working to stop the Navy's further encroachment in our public spaces. Learn more at <https://www.whidbeyenvironment.org>.

Seattle has just become the first major U.S. city to be 70% vaccinated, ages 12 and up (*The Seattle Times*, 6/10/21), so we're hoping to get out more!

Kim Loftness

#099 – ASHEVILLE, NC

On May 22, Chapter 99 members took part in a day-long march and rally with the local Reject Raytheon AVL coalition. The event started with about 25 people walking 9 miles from downtown Asheville to the site of bridge construction for a new Pratt & Whitney (Raytheon) plant. People joined along the way and by the time of the rally there were some 60 people attending. The call was to end investment in the military-industrial-congressional complex and to work instead for a peaceful, just, and green transition. Led by Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist monks, the walk lasted 5 hours, winding its way from urban streets through residential and commercial areas to a river park next to the site of the construction. There the walkers were welcomed by coalition members who had been tabling at the park for hours with flyers, information sheets, and petitions. Speakers at the rally included members of the Sunrise Movement, Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) and Veterans For Peace. The event culminated with a ceremony for healing of people and planet on the Pratt & Whitney property. There were no arrests.

Ken Jones

#102 – MILWAUKEE, WI

During the pandemic year, Chapter 102 worked to broaden its focus and support other organizations working for social justice. In recent months, we have:



May 22, 2021—Veterans For Peace Chapter 99 members participated in a day-long march and rally with the local “Reject Raytheon AVL” coalition in Asheville, North Carolina.

- Signed and circulated a letter and petition to John Kerry, U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, urging the U.S. to address militarism in ongoing climate change talks, since it is a leading cause of global pollution.

- Regularly joined, supported and promoted activities of Peace Action–Wisconsin, with which we enjoy a close working relationship.

- Joined the Racine Peace Coalition in Racine’s Fourth of July parade.

- Supported the work of the Wisconsin Coalition To Normalize Relations With Cuba, now holding monthly car caravans to urge the Biden administration to end the 60-year U.S. financial and trade embargo against Cuba.

- Joined Milwaukee’s African American Roundtable in pressing for a shift in priorities in city and county budgets, to move resources from the police and sheriff’s departments to community needs.

- Worked with the Milwaukee Area Labor Council and unions representing employees at the VA hospital to oppose privatization of veterans’ health care, and protest harassment and anti-union activity, which at last report still continues.

Priorities for the coming year are to continue coalition building, opposing privatization of VA care, and increasing and diversifying chapter membership.

Bill Christofferson

#104 – EVANSVILLE, IN

Chapter president Gary May spoke at the city’s dedication of an American Holly as a symbol of peace, which was covered by four local news outlets. In his remarks, he encouraged the mayor to join our sister cities and make Evansville a signatory on MayorsforPeace.org, decrying the city’s priority to fund a “war” museum while denying resources for uplifting peace.

Along with other socially conscious groups, we took part in the virtual Mandela Day Activism Fair hosted by the University of Southern Indiana, presenting VFP’s purpose and highlighting our local efforts in support of Peace at Home, Peace Abroad. This includes bringing people power in support of CAJE (Congregations Acting for Justice and Empowerment), which has convinced the city to engage the National Network for Safe Communities to uncover and address the roots of gun violence in our community.

We are also supporting CAJE in their pursuit of increased funding

for affordable housing, an issue that affects many veterans in our community. We have provided financial assistance to Food Not Jails, a local group that serves the homeless and the hungry, many of whom are veterans. By funding tutoring assistance for a local Black community, we aim to strengthen opportunities for students of color.

As the pandemic eases, we look forward to once again holding in-person meetings and redoubling our efforts to uphold peace and work for an end to war.

Lynn Kinkade

#105 – BALTIMORE, MD

At a low ebb even before Covid due to deaths of core members and attrition, Baltimore Phil Berrigan Memorial VFP



Chapter 105 members celebrate the 53rd anniversary of the historic Catonsville 9 draft file-burning action. [Photo by John Sheehan.]

VFP CHAPTER REPORTS continued

Chapter 105, Baltimore, Maryland, continued...

went into hibernation for a while, except for a lot of petition-signing, but has had monthly Zoom meetings recently. The 53rd anniversary of the Catonsville 9 Viet Nam draft file-burning action of our namesake and his 8 friends saw an amazing crowd of 15 people gather on Saturday May 15 at the action site to tell “Where were you when...?” stories and read poems. Tabling and outreach at a local farmer’s market will resume in July. Members are being strongly encouraged to register for the online National VFP convention.

Ellen Barfield

#112 – VENTURA COUNTY, CA

At our March regular chapter meeting, guest speaker, Kate Connell, the Director of Truth in Recruitment (TIR), Santa Barbara, spoke about the non-profit created as an advocacy for students and counter military recruitment in the high schools in SB and Santa Maria, CA. She discussed Selective Service System registration and women, included a power point on the TIR mission, and explained the regulation of recruitment by utilizing high school board policy.

Our April 17th storefront Mural Project action in Santa Paula was our feature event. The event was video recorded in our chapter Facebook and included in the national VFP website. George Sandoval’s overall presentation was exceptionally educational: bringing awareness to the community plus skillfully explaining the process of how a vet becomes deported beginning from new recruit to the seasoned veteran. The Mayor spoke. A city council member minister gave the invocation. A Latino Town Hall representative, whose husband was once a non-citizen veteran, joined the discussion as did two former chapter 112 presidents, Joe Asebedo and Michael Cervantes. Veteran Sandoval has had direct contact with the Unified U.S. Deported Veteran’s Resource Center in Tijuana. Solutions: executive orders are expected by Biden, and Congress



Hawai’i Chapter 113 members call for cancellation of the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) war practice.



Pictured for the Mural Project unveiling in Santa Paula, California, are Chapter 112 members (left to right), Carl Smith, George Sandoval, Sheila Smith, Joe Asebedo, Sharon Kufeldt, Marlene Houlihan, Shane Meserve (VP), and Michael Cervantes (kneeling).

members have plans to reform the current deported veterans’ portions of immigration law.

Meticulously installed inside the store was a veteran art exhibit.

Michael Cervantes

#113 – HAWAII

On March 1, we co-hosted with the *Golden Rule* and Hawai’i Peace and Justice a Remembrance Day ceremony for Marshall Islanders from Bikini Island that was partially destroyed and damaged by radiation by “Castle Bravo,” the largest U.S. nuclear test. After reading a statement on the devastation of the nuclear tests and singing their anthem, several Marshall Islanders went on a short sail on the *Golden Rule*.

With Hawai’i Peace & Justice, our chapter hosted a farewell ceremony for the *Golden Rule* on May 1, 2021. The peace boat set sail from Honolulu on May 4, and arrived in the San Francisco Bay in early June.

VFP members continue to participate in webinars on militarization of Asia and the Pacific and in community comments on Environmental Impact Statements on issues impacting Hawai’i including closing the massive fuel tanks at Red Hill 100 feet above the water supply of Honolulu, terminating the \$1 lease for 65 years on 23,000 acres of Hawai’i state lands in military Pōhakuloa Training Area on the Big Island of Hawai’i and opposing the massive \$133 million military radar to be built on one of the islands which will make Hawai’i a bigger target for military attack. Citizen activism saved Oahu’s cultural area at Kaena Point from the radar, but another location on Oahu and the Pacific Missile Test Range on Kauai are still under consideration.

We continue to work with the Okinawa VFP chapter to raise awareness about the USS Bowfin, a World War II submarine on display at Pearl Harbor that torpedoed and sunk the civilian cargo/passenger ship Tsushima Maru. [See Winter 2020–21 VFP Newsletter, page 3.]

VFP Hawai'i hosted a webinar "Peace Talks Not War Drills" with Korea Peace Now. Pete Doktor was on a webinar with our Okinawa VFP chapter. Ann Wright has co-authored several articles including "A Brief History of Military Poisoning of Hawai'i," and numerous pieces on the dangers of military confrontation in Korea and with China around Taiwan and South China Sea, as well as commentary on the dangers of Fort Hood for military women.

Ann Wright

#114 – SHEBOYGAN, WI

Greetings from the shores of Lake Michigan.

It is with a heavy heart that I report the passing of the last of our World War II Vets. In February, Marge Behlen died of Covid shortly after celebrating her 99th birthday.

She was an Army nurse in France in 1944–45, just out of nursing school. She tended wounded troops from the fighting in France and Germany, including casualties from the Battle of the Bulge.

A long-time peace activist, I first met Marge while demonstrating against Bush's oil war of 2003. Through the cold months leading up to the March "Shock and Awe" invasion, we became friends. Later that year when we organized a new VFP chapter, she was one of our first members. We plan on installing a memorial paver stone at our city Peace Park.

For the past few months, members of our chapter have been participating in a virtual book club. Our first selection was *Understanding Socialism* by Richard Wolf, a noted expert on political science. Our next book will be *War is a Racket* by Smedley Butler.

Finally, after a long, dismal pandemic shut down, we enjoyed two in-person events. We displayed VFP colors in the Sheboygan Memorial Day parade at the end of May... *We are still here!* In June, a progressive group, MLK Day Manitowoc, hosted the People's Power Summit at the farm of Chapter member Michael Slattery, where our chapter hosted an information table.

It's strange to be getting out and about after staying indoors for so long. I've got my fingers crossed.

Take it easy, but take it.

Tom Contrestan



Marge Behlen, Presente!

#168 – LOUISVILLE, KY

During Covid times, while cutting back on in-person activities, Louisville Chapter 168 has continued to support community radio, Forward Radio, WFMP 106.5 LP FM Louisville. *VFP Radio Hour* programs can be heard at <https://www.forwardradio.org> via livestreaming or archived podcasts. Member Carol Trainer's February show related to Black History Month; Patrick King's April show was a presentation of reports from peace workers around the world; and John Wilborn's May show was a discussion of Daniel Sjrursen's book, *Patriotic Dissent*. Carol also represented VFP in the WFMP fundraiser and talent show in April. We welcome our newest programmer, VFP member Peter Berres, of Lexington, Kentucky.

Steven Gardiner represented us in a WFMP radio show discussion with the Kentucky Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression (KAAPR) regarding the January 6, 2021 attempted coup at the Capitol. In January he participated in the KAAPR meeting, talking about the rally Chapter 168 organized in early 2020 to protest escalating attacks on Iran. We had a great community turnout at that protest rally. He also represented VFP at a recent social justice rally in Louisville.

Carol Trainer participates in the "Be the Change" VFP book club and encourages all VFP members to join the group to explore together the issues that concern us all and make wonderful new friends in the bargain.

On June 3 the *Louisville Courier-Journal* published Harold Trainer's letter to the editor regarding the Republican obstruction of election results and legislation to suppress the vote.

Coming soon we will get involved in the Give for Good non-profit fundraiser. When Covid subsides, we look forward to gradually getting back to in-person meetups and actions. Lastly, we want to thank all our members and supporters for making it possible.

Carol Trainer



The Golden Rule reaches the Golden Gate Bridge (see story on p. 20).
[Photo © Noah Berger, *San Francisco Chronicle*.]

PERSEVERANCE FOR PEACE

Golden Rule arrives in San Francisco Bay!



The Golden Rule and her four crew members, Captain Kiko Johnston-Kitazawa of Hilo, Big Island, Hawai'i, Captain Malinda Anderson of Kona, Big Island, Hawai'i, Michelle Kanoielehua Marsonette of Albany, Oregon, and Nolan Anderson of Seattle, Washington, were greeted at Schoonmaker Point Marina with hugs and leis upon their arrival. Happy and relieved, they wanted nothing more than hot showers, a good meal and sleep. With shifts of four hours on and four hours off, and exposed to the open sea, they were short on sleep, and often cold and wet.

by Gerry Condon and Helen Jaccard

"They're here! They are finally here!" These were the excited shouts of supporters on the morning of June 1, 2021, as the *Golden Rule* came into view, after a rough oceanic voyage from Honolulu. Captain Kiko Johnston-Kitazawa said, "We were weeks out at sea without any sign of land, and then suddenly we are here. This is a good metaphor for the struggle to abolish nuclear weapons."

Golden Rule crew and supporters were greatly relieved to see the historic anti-nuclear sailboat arrive safely into

San Francisco Bay after a grueling 29 days at sea and a difficult night at Drake's Bay just outside the Golden Gate Bridge. The engine, which charges the batteries, quit four days before due to water in the fuel tank. They skillfully sailed until they got into the lee side of Point Reyes, where they ran out of wind. That night the batteries finally died, so they had no navigation lights. When a thick fog rolled in, a tow was required.

Big thanks to **Horseshoe Bay Coast Guard, USBoat, Vessel Traffic Service** and the shore support team that stayed up all night to coordinate the rescue.

The *Golden Rule* will be in the Berkeley Marina through August. Contact Helen Jaccard at vfpgoldenruleproject@gmail.com to arrange a boat tour, sailing, or presentation.

This fall, *Golden Rule* will begin the "Great Loop"—the Mississippi River, Gulf Coast, East Coast, Great Lakes, and inland rivers. The plan is to visit 80 cities over a year's time.

If you know of people along those routes who may be able to crew or help organize events, please contact VFP Golden Rule Project Manager Helen Jaccard at the above email.

A classic verse shared with crew and supporters by VFP member Stan Levin, during the difficult *Golden Rule* passage:

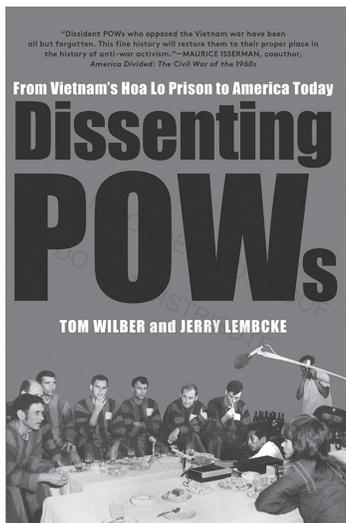
Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!
Sail on, O Union, strong and great!
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!

We know what Master laid thy keel,
What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
In what a forge and what a heat
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
'Tis of the wave and not the rock;
'Tis but the flapping of the sail,
And not a rent made by the gale!

In spite of rock and tempest's roar,
In spite of false lights on the shore,
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee.
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our
tears,
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee, —are all with thee!

—H. W. Longfellow

“We Forced Them to Be Brutal to Us”



DISSENTING POWs

FROM VIETNAM'S HOA LO PRISON TO AMERICA TODAY

Tom Wilber and Jerry Lembcke
Monthly Review Press, 2021

Review by W.D. Ehrhart

Does anyone ever notice those ubiquitous black-and-white POW/MIA flags anymore? You see them everywhere: post offices; federal, state, and municipal buildings; many banks and other privately owned properties; even at all the rest stops on the New Jersey Turnpike.

I'd be willing to bet that almost no one under the age of 40 has any idea what those flags are supposed to represent, or how and why they got where they are. Indeed, even most people over 40 probably don't know or have long since ceased to think about it.

But for over a quarter of a century, the issue of American prisoners of war and missing in action in Vietnam (POW/MIA) was seldom far from the headlines. It became the *raison d'être* for Richard Nixon's continuation of the war, and the argument for refusing to grant diplomatic recognition to Vietnam for another two decades.

Bruce Franklin's *MIA, or Mythmaking in America* convincingly detailed how the myth of the POW/MIA became mythology. And Elliot Gruner's *Prisoners of Culture* explained how the POWs were transformed from survivors into heroes. Both books were published in 1993, and neither was a bestseller, but soon after they were published, the Clinton administration extended diplomatic recognition to Vietnam, and the POW/MIA issue faded into obscurity.

But now comes a new book that illuminates a side of the POW story that has been largely neglected: the story of POWs who willingly and voluntarily opposed and spoke out against the war while they were still in captivity. The accepted understanding of those men is that they were cowards, traitors, brainwashed, or seeking to curry favor with their captors. The authors argue otherwise.

Tom Wilber is the son of one of these “dissenting POWs,” Commander Gene Wilber. Jerry Lembcke is the author of the myth-busting book *The Spitting Image* (1998). They have produced an important book that challenges the argument that dissenting POWs were somehow psychologically damaged, weak, or otherwise compromised, but were instead motivated by conscience, morality, and logic.

Wilber and Lembcke explain how senior ranking officers (SROs), all of them career military men, took control of their subordinates in the camps, and demanded adherence to what these men saw as their “duty” to sacrifice and suffer for the United States of America. As navy commander and future U.S. senator Jeremiah Denton admitted years later, “We forced them to be brutal to us.”

In the wake of the apparent weakness of American POWs during the Korean War—largely mythology itself—for senior career military men like Denton, James Stockdale, and Robinson Risner “torture became a way to confirm their worth as

American warriors When the torture they wanted from the Vietnamese wasn't forthcoming, they provoked it. When that didn't work, they inflicted their own damage.” As Stockdale later wrote, he wanted his wife and his sons to be “proud” of him.

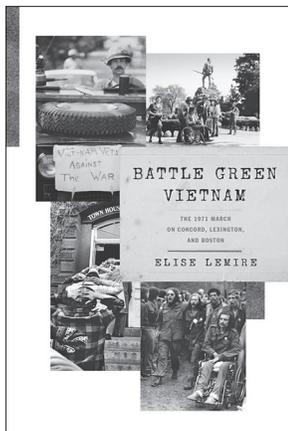
When a few SROs opted out of that masochistic approach, these men ostracized them and threatened them with court-martial in post-captivity, a threat that Stockdale and others tried unsuccessfully to carry out. They did, however, win the cultural war to portray the Vietnamese as sadistic, inhuman monsters who routinely and with relish resorted to torture, and few former POWs dared to challenge their version of captivity.

The public perception of that experience was powerfully fostered by the National League of Families of American Prisoners in Southeast Asia, the ubiquitous metal bracelets sold by the Victory in Vietnam Association (later renamed Voices in Vital America), and the Hollywood film industry through dozens of movies starring the likes of Sylvester Stallone, Chuck Norris, and Gene Hackman, not to mention the incredibly successful campaign to create and display the POW/MIA flag.

Like Franklin's and Gruner's books, *Dissenting POWs* is not going to make the *New York Times* Bestseller List, nor will it alter most people's perceptions of the American POW experience during the Vietnam War. But at least, for the sake of posterity and accurate history, the book exists for those who care to know. It illuminates an entirely neglected aspect of that sorry episode in American history that the Vietnamese call the American War.

Bill Ehrhart is a member of the Thompson Bradley Chapter 31 of Veterans For Peace, editor-at-large of the VFP Newsletter, and author of Thank You for Your Service: Collected Poems.

RECOMMENDED READING



BATTLE GREEN VIETNAM

THE 1971 MARCH ON CONCORD, LEXINGTON, AND BOSTON

Elise Lemire

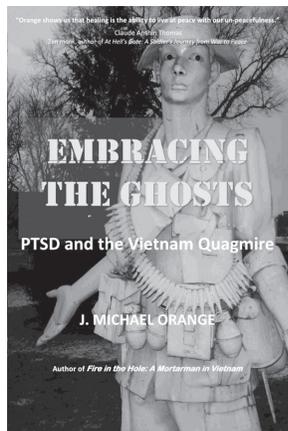
Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2021

“Powerful and beautifully written, this is one of the most important books to come out of the Vietnam War.”

—Ron Kovic, author of *Born on the Fourth of July*

In the spring of 1971, the largest mass arrest in Massachusetts history unfolded at a site nationally celebrated as the birthplace of freedom and democracy [when] the New England chapter of VVAW organized an event to rouse public support for their cause. Over the course of the long Memorial Day weekend, a band of more than two hundred young, fatigue-clad veterans sounded the alarm for peace and patriotism by marching—in reverse—the path Paul Revere had taken two centuries earlier when he called on the American colonists to rise against their British oppressors.

Elise Lemire tells this extraordinary story from the perspective of six men who played central roles in the events of May 1971. Based on more than 100 interviews with participants and [illustrated with] nearly 40 photos and maps, *Battle Green Vietnam* demonstrates the power of mobilizing history, myth, and memorials to effect revolutionary change.



EMBRACING THE GHOSTS

PTSD AND THE VIETNAM QUAGMIRE

J. Michael Orange, 2021

“Fundamentally this is a book about healing the mind and the recognition of the unmitigated stupidity of war. Not to be missed.” —Andy Berman

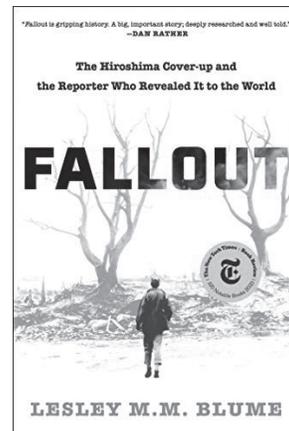
MORE THAN WORDS CAN EVER TELL

Jennifer Lansbury

Eighty-six Sixty-one Pub., 2020

Recommended by Fred Dente, a member of Hawai'i Chapter 113:

“Jennifer is a compassionate writer who tells a unique story of growing up in a military family during very uncertain times, and how her parents dealt with the Great Depression and World War II; through her father's brutal experience of the Korean War; to the island of Okinawa, rocky clime of Argentina, Newfoundland, and Marine bases of the South during the burgeoning 1950s and turbulent 1960s—as Becky and George use sixteen years of love letters to hold together a relationship and family torn apart by war and devotion to military service.”



FALLOUT

THE HIROSHIMA COVER-UP AND THE REPORTER WHO REVEALED IT TO THE WORLD

Lesley M. M. Blume

Simon & Schuster, 2021

“Blume reveals that, at the time of the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Hersey felt a sense of despair—not for the bombing's victims, but for the future of the world.” Read the review by Lawrence Wittner at <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/180389>

THE GAZA KITCHEN

A PALESTINIAN CULINARY JOURNEY, 3RD EDITION

Laila El-Haddad and Maggie Schmitt

Just World Books, 2021

On June 15, Just World Books released the Third Edition of Laila El-Haddad and Maggie Schmitt's now-iconic work. The earlier editions, published in 2012 and 2016, were lauded by the late Anthony Bourdain, by Sami Tamimi, Claudia Roden, Yotam Ottolenghi, Jose Andres, and numerous others. This 3rd Edition contains all the materials that fans of earlier editions enjoyed. It also has new recipes, an all-new Authors' Introduction, and updates from a trip back to Gaza that Laila El-Haddad made with the World Food Program in late 2019.

cont'd on p. 22...

AGENT ORANGE ROUNDUP

LIVING WITH A FOOT IN
TWO WORLDS

Brent MacKinnon and Sandy Scull
Bookstand Publishing, 2020

Every year, August 10 is our little known National Agent Orange Day. While COVID-19 races through the U.S. population, another invisible killer continues to rage among our already endangered population: Viet Nam Veterans. Agent Orange continues to kill veterans and civilians more than 50 years after spraying. Two veterans, Brent MacKinnon, M.A. and Sandy Scull Ph.D, have published a personal account detailing damage done to both body and soul, both American and Vietnamese.

This new book tells of the loss of innocence and final acceptance of Stage 4 cancers. The Department of Veteran Affairs estimates over 300,000 Vietnam Veterans have died from the herbicidal defoliant known. The Vietnamese casualties are in the millions. This collection of powerful art, prose and poetry captures their journey from the home front, into the meat grinder and back again.

TRANSCOMMUNALITY

FROM THE POLITICS OF
CONVERSION TO THE ETHICS
OF RESPECT

John Brown Childs
Temple University Press, 2003

In this original and collaborative project, John Brown Childs offers unique insights into some of the central problems facing communities, social movements, and people who desire social change: How does one build a movement that can account for race, class, and gender, and yet still operate across all of these lines? How can communities sustain themselves in truly social ways? And

perhaps most significantly, how can we elevate communities without diminishing the important distinctions that we all ascribe to ourselves as individuals? In addition to Childs' own exegesis, twelve scholars and thinkers from all walks of life offer their own responses to his concepts, enriching the book as an illustration and example of transcommunalism.



UNCONVENTIONAL COMBAT

INTERSECTIONAL ACTION
IN THE VETERANS' PEACE
MOVEMENT

Michael Messner
Oxford University Press, 2021

Review by Kenneth Mayers

Unconventional Combat is USC Sociology and Gender Studies Professor Michael Messner's second book about the Veterans' Peace Movement. His first book on the topic, *Guys Like Me: Five Wars, Five Veterans for Peace*, centers on the experiences of individuals who served in each "major war stretching from World War II, through the Korean War, the American War in Viet Nam, the Gulf War, and the recent ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan." All five subjects are male veterans, and Messner's major goal in writing *Guys Like Me* was "to understand how these individuals eventually overcame 'manly silence' ... [that] deprives future generations the

opportunity to hear the voices of veterans passionately opposed to future wars and learn about the inglorious realities of war."

Unconventional Combat, while similar both in terms of being centered on a small group of veterans and the author's integration of appropriate sociological findings, is a very different book. Because the issues it addresses are things the veterans' peace movement is grappling with at present, it has the potential to influence the future direction of the movement. In contrast to the all-male cast of the first book, this one "centers on the lives, words and strategies of a half-dozen 'post-9/11' U.S. military veterans, most of them women of color, most queer-identified, who are rising as a new generation of activist leaders in movements working for peace and social justice."

In the opening chapter, Messner identifies an existential challenge confronting Veterans For Peace and About Face: Veterans Against The War. They are both engaged in "an unraveling of gender—and, simultaneously, of race and generation—as they grapple with the de-centering of older, heterosexual White male veterans' stories and leadership." As a member of that cohort of "older, heterosexual White men veterans," I am painfully aware that this book will be hard reading for many of my long-time friends and colleagues. But I am also convinced that it is an extremely important read, and that we should read it carefully, thoughtfully, and reflectively—continually asking ourselves, "Have I been more a part of the problem than I have realized, and what can I do now to make this movement more effective?"

As Mike Messner concludes, "In the immediate future, the continuing story of veterans' peace and justice organizations will be shaped in part by progressive veterans' intergenerational dialogue." I'm hopeful that the upcoming discussion of Mike's book in VFP's "Be the Change" book group [see box on p. 4] will help open us up to such dialogue. For more information about the book, visit: <https://www.unconventionalcombat.com/>.

A Memorial Day Speech, 2021

by David Rothauser

On April 4, 1967 I was at the Riverside Church in Manhattan when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke out against the war in Viet Nam. Many of us at the church that day read aloud the names of American soldiers lost in Viet Nam.

Charles F. Gamble Jr., Army, Juneau, Alaska
Richard Reed Ballantine, Marine Corps, Millard, Nebraska
Ronald Norman Keller, Navy, Exeter, New Hampshire
Marion Dewaine Overbey, Army, Jackson, Mississippi
Gerard Francis Bergin, Marine Corps, Cambridge, Mass.
Jose Gene Abara, Air Force, Long Branch, New Jersey
Jesus Yanez Jr., Marine Corps, Corpus Christi, Texas
Eldon William Tozer, Navy, Natick, Massachusetts
Alfred Lacy Williams, Marine Corps, Roxbury, Massachusetts

Today it's time to speak out against the war on America's children and adults gunned down from Columbine, to Newtown, Charleston, Las Vegas, Parkland and beyond, way beyond...

Cassie Bernall, age 17, dead at Columbine
Isaiah Shoels, age 18, dead at Columbine
Austin Cloyd, age 18, dead at Virginia Tech
Olivia Engel, age 6, dead at Newtown
Megan Hill, age 9, dead at Sutherland Springs Church
Mary Liz Miller, age 7, dead at West Nickel Amish school
Joaquin Oliver, age 17, dead at Parkland
Zoë Galasso, age 14, dead at Marysville Pilchuck High school
Allison Wyatt, age 6, dead at Sandy Hook

So we don't leave those names from Viet Nam and mass shootings in America as just a past memory, let's take a look to a brighter future. The source of all gun violence in America are gun and ammunition makers and dealers.

They are the only businesses in America immunized from liability by the Lawful Commerce in Arms Act when crimes have been committed with their products.

It is in our power to repeal the the Lawful Commerce in Arms Act and, by so doing, honor the names from all wars and mass shootings we remember today.

Sandy Hook, Newtown, CT:

Daniel Barden, 7
Olivia Engel, 6
Josephine Gay, 7
Dylan Hockley, 6
Madeleine Hsu, 6
Catherine Hubbard, 6
Chase Kowalski, 7
Jesse Lewis, 6
Ana Márquez-Greene, 6

James Mattioli, 6
Grace McDonnell, 7
Emilie Parker, 6
Jack Pinto, 6
Noah Pozner, 6
Caroline Previdi, 6
Jessica Rekos, 6
Avielle Richman, 6
Benjamin Wheeler, 6
Allison Wyatt, 6

Frequently the pundits and experts on gun violence in America speak in platitudes and ultimately draw the same conclusions; "Congress needs to act on gun control." And there it rests, un-acted upon.

Finally, President Biden appears to be moving in the direction of repealing the federal law, the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act that immunizes the gun and

ammunition makers and dealers from liability when crimes have been committed with their products. They are the source of gun violence in America, but nobody wants to talk about it.

David Rothauser is a veteran of the Korean War, a member of Veterans For Peace Chapter 9 (Smedley Butler Brigade, Boston, Mass.), and of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

Pure nuttiness

by Frank Erickson

We are just a bunch of nut-jobs in America. It was pure nuttiness to attack Iraq with a fake "war" in 2003, and then continue to be shocked and alarmed when people continue to attack Americans who are still in Iraq. Like the recent attacks upon Americans by "Iran-backed militias."

The first layer of insanity in all of this is that the U.S. government "declared war" upon Iraq and "war" is armed conflict—does everyone understand what this means? That in 2003 the U.S. "declared" it was going to go to Iraq and start a "war" with Iraqis, a killing contest where the U.S. Government needed Iraqis to shoot at Americans for the armed conflict "war" to materialize.

Needed Iraqis to be violent towards Americans to get the "war" that was "declared"—because without armed conflict the world would view the U.S. attacking Iraq as an act of murder. But somehow Iraqis and Iranians are evil for giving America what it needed and wanted—the Iraq "war."

The second layer of insanity in this is most Americans have always opposed the fake Iraq "war," but then they believe U.S. troops have the right to defend themselves in Iraq—based on what?—based on simply being Americans. But violence cannot be made right simply because Americans are doing the violence.

The corrupt nuttiness that is going on in Iraq is the foundation for more "wars." Those in Washington know the Iraq "war" was doable from nothing more than U.S. troops defending themselves—from putting them in harm's way. That is all the "war" has ever been.

Frank Erickson is a member of VFP Twin Cities Chapter 27 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. War drives him crazy.

Teach peace and social justice in our classrooms

by Leo Sandy & Will Thomas, VFP Chapter 62, New Hampshire

On June 26, 1945, in San Francisco, 50 nations ratified the charter that created the United Nations. The U.S. Senate later voted 89 to 2 to accept it. On Dec. 10, 1948, representatives from 48 countries voted on the approval of the 30 Articles in

cont'd on p. 25...

UPCOMING EVENTS

SUNDAY–SATURDAY, SEPT. 26–OCT. 2, 2021

Week of Nonviolent Resistance to Drones and U.S. Global Militarism

This twice-a-year SHUT DOWN CREECH action is co-sponsored by CodePink and Veterans For Peace. See article by Dave Patterson on page 9.

INFO: <https://www.codepink.org/04042021>

CONTACT: Toby Blomé – ratherbenyckeling@comcast.net

TUESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2021

Agent Orange Day

August 10th marks the day in 1961 when the U.S. began aerial spraying of toxic herbicides over Vietnam. This year marks the 60th anniversary of that fateful day.

THURSDAY–SUNDAY, AUGUST 12–15, 2021



Veterans For Peace 2021 Virtual Convention

Please read VFP Board Member Ken Mayers' letter on page 5 for more details. Find registration link, information about ad placement, poetry reading signups, and much, much more, at <https://www.vfpconvention.org/>.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 27

Anniversary of Kellogg Briand Pact 1928 signing

SIGN UP FOR ONGOING VFP WORK GROUPS

- **Climate Change Working Group**

Meeting twice a month on Wednesday evenings: email climate@veteransforpeace.org

- **Reclaim Armistice Day**

Meeting every other Thursday beginning July 8 at 11 am Central Time: email reppenhagen@veteransforpeace.org

- **VFP Nuclear Abolition Working Group**

To be added to the No Nukes list serve, email Helen Jaccard at helen.jaccard@gmail.com or call her at 206-992-6364.

PERSPECTIVES: Teach peace

...continued from page 23

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), much of which is based on America's Bill of Rights.

Why a UDHR? After WWII, which led to the slaughter of millions of soldiers and innocent civilians, including six million Jews and others such as Gypsies, homosexuals, the disabled, and political prisoners, the people of the world had seen enough and resolved to establish a new world organization to address issues centering on war, poverty, racism and human rights. Hence, the birth of both the UN and the UDHR, which is not legally binding upon any of the signatory nations.

On March 2, 2021, the New Hampshire House Education Committee held a hearing on HB 441. This bill called for the state to require that, in each public school library and/or classroom where Civics and U.S. History are taught, a copy of the UDHR be posted on the wall. The sponsor of the bill was Rep. Ellen Reed (D-Newmarket) who graciously agreed to introduce it for NH Veterans For Peace (VFP). Leo Sandy, VFP member said: "approval of the public display and discussion of the UDHR is a big step toward international cooperation, respect for human rights, social justice, and world peace. It has an important and unique place in helping to liberate people from oppression, poverty, and ignorance. It also helps to advance human development by bringing attention to the dignity of human beings."

Based on the testimony and opposition to this bill, it appears likely that HB 441 will not be recommended by the House Education Committee and that the entire House probably will not have the opportunity to vote on it. Critics of the UDHR claimed it would take away "school choice," but this is false as Article 26, Section 3, states that "parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

Another opponent mentioned Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person." Perhaps, they forgot the Declaration of Independence? Still another critic said that the UDHR is "being elevated over the Constitution" and some goals are "tyrannical," such as Article 26, which says in part, "Elementary education shall be compulsory." The opponent reminded the committee that the Supreme Court ruled that "parents have authority over their children's education." This same critic said that "our rights are not given to us by a global organization" and that the UDHR is "a direct attack on our liberty."

Finally, yet another critic mentioned Article 22 which listed "social security" as a right. This opponent said isn't this "getting into communism and socialism?"

As peace and social justice advocates, we believe that citizens and their children deserve to be informed about this powerful document. We often hear from politicians that America stands for Human Rights. Let them prove it.

CRISS CROSS

War is a criss cross
War is you
War is I
War is everyone
War is everyone else
War is a criss cross
War is in the sky
War is everywhere
War is a king
War is all the king's servants
and all the king's men
War is servitude
War is in chains
War is a plow that has been left
behind
War is a carpenter of another kind
who has built a cross
War is destructive
War is one *helluv* an engineer
War is disorderly
War is a police drunk
who broke his club
War is an anarchical event
War is disturbing the peace
War is a criss cross
War is the Jersey meadows
War is malaria
War is a disease
War is a disgrace
To be specific war is in the Pacific
War is a camping out party
War is an onlooker
War is a passerby
War is an encampment
War is a lean-to
War is a mosquito
War is a tent
War is little
War is you and I
War is bag and baggage
War is whipped
War is willy nilly
War is an irresponsible command
Leastways war is a little colonel
who has lost his mind
War is big
War is your Christian church
War is a brigade
War is a gesture
War is a criss cross
War is a *hellion*
War is hell

— Alfred Starr Hamilton
PFC U.S. Army, WWII
(1914–2005)

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MARCH 1965

That Sunday
it feeling like July
they broke out with the stakes and horse shoes
and let fly with a game
By noon
their arms and necks were sunburned
and their smiles and laughter
had drawn a crowd of girls
who stood on the corner across the street
snapping their gum
pretending not to notice
Larry
he went in and got a radio
and after a song by The Dave Clark Five
Jimmy hushed everybody at the newscast
of troops departing California
for someplace they argued the location
and pronunciation of
before quietly leaning back on their lawn chairs
gently fondling their beer bottles
hopelessly staring out across the street at the girls
bowing their heads
and hurrying away one by one
pretending not to have heard.

— Francis “Frank” Dunbar, Jr.
Navy Veteran
(1954–2015)

Poem provided by his friend, Richard Olson.

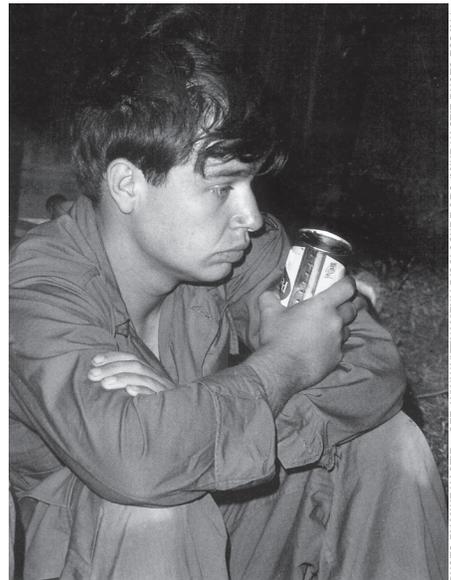


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POEMS SELECTED BY
W. D. EHRHART
EDITOR-AT-LARGE



CONNECT WITH OTHER MEMBERS

SLACK

We are excited to introduce SLACK—a new communications tool for VFP! SLACK is a channel-based messaging platform that allows multiple conversations to take place in the same space, grouped by category. Many other organizations have found SLACK helpful in building community by allowing members to easily keep in touch and share plans, ideas, and resources with each other. The app is easy to download for smart phone or laptop/desktop, so you can access conversations from any device.

To join VFP on SLACK, you have to be a VFP member. To get started, please fill out the form at:

<http://bit.ly/VFPSLACKSignUp>

VFP staff will respond with a SLACK invitation that will be good for 30 days!

VFP-ALL Google Group

Veterans For Peace has for a long time maintained a VFP-ALL listserv open to all members for sharing announcements and information with other members. Up until recently, that listserv was hosted by Yahoo! but when the company decided to phase out its list service, VFP closed the Yahoo! account, then resurrected VFP-ALL list as a google group. To join the VFP-ALL group, go to:

<http://bit.ly/VFPALLSignUp>

This will take you to the google group page. Look for the Join Group link at the top, and click to automatically be added. If you have any problems, email shelly@veteransforpeace.org with a request to be added to the new VFP-ALL google group.

Weekly VFP Social Hour

Zoom is the platform for these open social meetings held every Thursday at 6 pm (Eastern) | 5 pm (Central) | 4 pm (Mountain) | 3 pm (Pacific). To join the gathering, go to our website at that time, <http://veteransforpeace.org>, and look for the meeting link under “Events.”

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Veterans For Peace is a global organization of Military Veterans and allies whose collective efforts are to build a culture of peace by using our experiences and lifting our voices. We inform the public of the true causes of war and the enormous costs of wars, with an obligation to heal the wounds of wars. Our network is comprised of over 140 chapters worldwide whose work includes: educating the public, advocating for a dismantling of the war economy, providing services that assist veterans and victims of war, and most significantly, working to end all wars.

Statement of Purpose

We, as military veterans, do hereby affirm our greater responsibility to serve the cause of world peace. To this end we will work, with others both nationally and internationally...

- To increase public awareness of the causes and costs of war
- To restrain our governments from intervening, overtly and covertly, in the internal affairs of other nations
- To end the arms race and to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons
- To seek justice for veterans and victims of war
- To abolish war as an instrument of national policy.

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

Veterans For Peace Code of Conduct

~ a living document, to be updated as we learn ~

1. We will use our anger at injustice as a positive, nonviolent force for change.
2. We will approach every encounter, with fellow members and the public, with positivity and mindfulness, and with the assumption that concerns raised are coming from a positive place and present a learning opportunity.
3. Our attitude, as conveyed through our words, symbols and actions, will be one of openness, friendliness, and respect toward all people we encounter.
4. All members have an important role to play within Veterans For Peace, regardless of previous military rank, branch, or combat experience. We will respect one another as equal parts of a whole.
5. We will not assault, verbally, in person or online, anyone, to include fellow members and those who oppose or disagree with us, even if they assault us. This does not preclude a member's right to defend him or herself against a physical attack.
6. In keeping with our commitment to achieving our goals through non-violent means, there is an expectation that members will not carry weapons with them to VFP events or while representing VFP, regardless of the laws in their location.
7. We will follow the directions of the designated coordinators during public actions organized on behalf of VFP.
8. We will use democratic principles within our organization to ensure an open, fair, inclusive, and transparent environment.
9. We will speak as members of VFP but not for VFP, unless designated as a spokesperson for VFP. All members are free to speak for themselves or on behalf of their chapter as appropriate.
10. Sexist, racist, homophobic, ageist, transphobic, gender discriminatory, and all other discriminatory language and actions are common within the military; they are not acceptable within VFP.
11. Our words and actions will maintain the political and financial independence of VFP.
12. To achieve the above goals, we will also engage in “active listening”; that is, fully concentrating on what is being said rather than just passively “hearing” the message of the speaker.



Veterans For Peace
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Read about the Leave No One Behind Mural Project on pages 6-7.

CONTENTS

Memorial Day 1, 10
 Welcome New VFP Staff 2
 Executive Director’s Message 3
 Good News: AUMF Repeal 3
 President’s Message 4
 Ongoing Events 4
 Invitation to 2021 Convention 5
 Welcome New VFP Advisor,
 Rev. Lennox Yearwood Jr. 6
 Deported Veterans Advocacy
 Project Update. 6-7
 VFP Campaigns & Projects. 7-9
 VFP Chapter Reports. 11-19
 Golden Rule update 20
 Book Reviews &
 Recommended Reading. 21-23
 Perspectives 24-25
 Upcoming Events. 25
 Poetry Page 26
 VFP Statement of Purpose | Code
 of Conduct | Ways to Connect. 27

