



Exposing the True Costs of War and Militarism Since 1985

VETERANS FOR PEACE

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VFP Newsletter

veteransforpeace.org

Fall 2021

ARMISTICE IS FOR EVERYONE

by Garrett Reppenhagen

As the U.S. withdrew troops from Afghanistan, it was hailed as the end of the longest war in U.S. history. Any peace celebration, however, was undermined by the tragic failure to evacuate allies and their family members who had invested in the mismanaged occupation of their country. The exposure of the *Afghanistan Papers* revealed to the world what many of us already knew: the operations had massive strategic and tactical dereliction, the financial fraud and waste was tremendous, and the corruption and dependency that U.S. manipulation and dollars caused was destructive. VFP members prophesied the collapse of our foreign occupation and predicted the eventual withdrawal would be brutal. In fact we can say that the violence of the transition is directly proportional to the length of the occupation, as armed

aggression and drone strikes legitimized Afghans' resistance to U.S. imperialism and justified extremism against Western powers and their allies.

So why can't the U.S. ever quit war? Beyond capitalist and political motivations, some of the pervasive factors that add to the weak political will for elected leaders to make bold decisions around ending war is uninterrupted nationalism, glorification of war, and hero worship of military members. These cultural factors impact elections, and recruitment ads, media, entertainment and military messaging reinforces the nationalist agenda. The military uses our tax dollars to sell the desire for war back to Americans, creating a cycle that exponentially grows our U.S. war culture. U.S. Independence Day and



Thanksgiving help reinforce U.S. creation myths and have their place in supporting "American exceptionalism," while Veterans Day helps promote the exceptionalism of our military. Veterans Day has mutated from a day for honoring the sacrifices and valor of military members to a day for full-on glorification of war. It has created a national environment in which critical analysis about the appropriate use of military force is stifled in the name of paying respects and honoring those who have joined the armed forces. For a country that claims to be founded on revolution from a tyrannical monarchy, it seems hypocritical we can't question the use of our soldiers without being cursed that we don't "support the troops."

VFP Statement on Afghanistan

Veterans For Peace has previously condemned the U.S. "forever wars" against "terror" and called for withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, Iraq, and other places in the world. We unequivocally believe that war is not the answer to any problem and that there is no military solution in Afghanistan.

The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan was shameful and poorly executed. We have left too many behind. It was only after veteran and media outcry over leaving dedicated translators and their families, people who risked their lives for us, that the U.S. decided, too late, to include them in our withdrawal. Many Afghans have been blocked by callous immigration policy and "Muslim Bans" from seeking safety in the United States, from the destabilization in Afghanistan that the U.S. created. Caring for refugees and civilians fleeing from conflict is basic decency, and the United States fails to act with the urgency required to protect people. Casual disregard for Afghan lives continues on all levels.

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Chapter reports = 200 words

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

High-res photos print best!

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Please include photo credit and a
caption, and identify everyone in
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Armistice Is for Everyone

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The worst aspect of Veterans Day is that it co-opted Armistice Day, a day that originated with the end of a horrible war in recognition of the potential for lasting peace. Ever since 1954, the idea of celebrating Armistice has been expunged; deemed out of step with a growing nationalized war culture.

So it is not surprising that we continue to find our armed forces drawn out in military occupations and widespread tactical operations. Indeed, it has become impossible to disentangle from conflict in regions like Afghanistan, even after uniformed military members have retreated.

The “chicken and egg” argument about motivations for U.S. militarism can be endless. We should continue to work on changing policy, electoral and economic factors underlying U.S. imperialism. But in pursuing lasting change, we cannot ignore our nation’s cultural infatuation with war.

That is why Veterans For Peace is building a strong Reclaim Armistice Day movement with the goal to have as many municipalities in the U.S. declare Veterans Day, Armistice Day.

With your help in contacting your local mayor and city council members and asking them to proclaim Armistice Day, our goal is to take back Armistice Day in 11 additional towns each year, by the 11th day of the 11th month. Please visit our Reclaim Armistice Day web page (look for the tab under “Take Action” on the VFP website) to join our monthly meetings and get resources to help RECLAIM ARMISTICE.

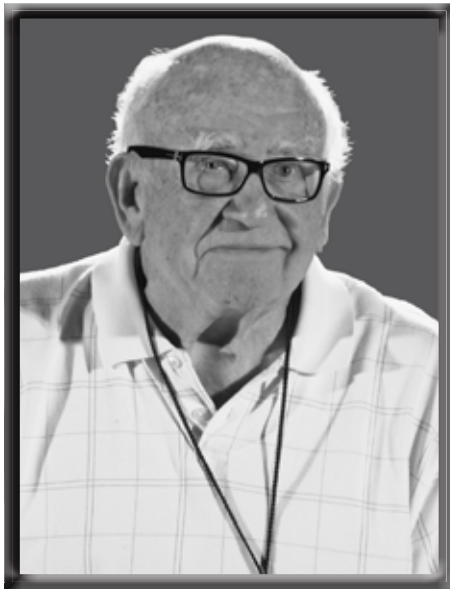
READ ON:

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gail@veteransforpeace.org



ED ASNER (1929–2021)

by Jerry Genesio (VFP founder)

On Sunday, August 29, 2021, this tired and suffering world lost another Prince of Peace. Ed Asner was many things: a steel mill worker; a taxi driver; a GM assembly line worker; a U.S. Army Signal Corps veteran (1951–53); a stage, screen, and television actor; and a former president of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) (1981–85); but the role he poured his heart and soul into was that of a peace and social justice activist.

In the 1980s, Ed drew a continuous and furious salvo of criticism from hoards of Hollywood's high society for publicly

opposing the Reagan administration's policies in Central America. Reagan, also an actor and a past-president of SAG (1959–61), took it personally. While Reagan was flying arms and financial support to the Contra counter revolutionaries in Nicaragua, Ed Asner was flying medical and humanitarian aid to Nicaragua's revolutionary Sandinista government that had, in 1979, overthrown the autocratic Somoza dynasty installed by the U.S. in 1936.

It was Reagan's brutal bullying of the Nicaraguan people, and hardliners in his administration like Assistant Secretary of State Elliot Abrams, CIA Director Bill Casey, U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, National Security Advisor John Poindexter, and NSC aide Oliver North (LtCol, USMC), that drew me, and one short year later an organization newly christened Veterans For Peace, to the defense of the Nicaraguan people and the thousands of children victimized by Reagan's war. I had read about Ed Asner's relief efforts and work with the Alliance for Survival, and I was fortunate enough to meet him during this period. He later joined VFP, and was a VFP Advisory Board member until his death.

Ed was active in many great causes including universal, single-payer healthcare; the unionization of Hollywood actors; and he worked on the

documentary film *Behind the Fear*, which addressed HIV/AIDS denialism. He was a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, and the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund (First Amendment). He was on the boards of The Survivor Mitzvah Project (Holocaust), and the Defenders of Wildlife. And he was on the advisory boards of the Rosenberg Fund For Children (children of targeted activists), Exceptional Minds, Aspiretech (both autism), and of course, VFP.

Ed (Yitzhak) Asner was born in Kansas City, Missouri, on November 15, 1929, and when he died of natural causes at his home in Tarzana, a neighborhood of Los Angeles, California, at age 91, he had racked up over 400 acting credits. He was a Hollywood and television legend, and a giant among men of good will. Ed Asner is one of comparatively few human beings of whom others will honestly say the world is a better place because he once dwelt among us.

Photo by Gage Skidmore, 2012.

[Editor's note: When a delegation of high-ranking Vietnamese veterans came to Santa Cruz, Calif., in May 1994 for an international meeting of the Viet Nam Friendship Village Project (co-founded by members of Veterans For Peace), Ed Asner was there to help celebrate the "Day of Reconciliation." —B.L.]

Peace Bells for Armistice

by Stephen McKeown

Veterans For Peace Chapter 27 in Minneapolis–St. Paul, Minnesota has set a goal of getting 50 churches to ring their bells on Armistice Day, and we encourage other chapters to set a goal for Armistice Day outreach. We request churches not only to ring bells, but to announce to their parishioners/congregation members via their bulletins or from the pulpit the origins of Armistice Day, and to ask their members to work and pray for world peace.

Normally we contact churches by phone, and sometimes they ask for further information. Here is a sample response:

On November 11, 1918—at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month—an armistice agreement ending "the war to end all war" was signed. It wasn't called World War I then, as World War II hadn't occurred yet. Bells were rung throughout

the world—in joy, because this horrible war had ended, but also in sorrow for the millions of lives lost and maimed in the "Great War."

In 1938, Congress set aside November 11 as a day dedicated to world peace, to be thereafter celebrated and known as Armistice Day. In 1954 the name was changed to Veterans Day, and the emphasis on world peace was never the same.

Veterans For Peace, at the local, national, and international level, recognize the challenge of working for peace, yet the desire to end war is still with us. To commemorate Veterans/Armistice Day, along with recognizing the sacrifice of veterans, we ask that you ring bells 11 times on November 11 (or the preceding or following Sunday), and ask your members to work and pray for peace.... Thank you.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



VFP Board President Adrienne Kinne on screen at the 2021 VFP Convention.

Dear Veterans For Peace and Comrades,

I want you to know how much I appreciate the work and activism that each of you bring to the effort to make the world a more peaceful and socially just place. That effort requires us to be open to learning from and actively listening to one another. There are many opportunities for members to connect and work with each other in a mutually supportive community. If you need help finding the right group to connect with, please reach out to us!

I have spent a lot of time over the past month reflecting on the shamefully executed U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and the push for the U.S. to allow more Afghan refugees to resettle in this country with less red tape. We encourage everyone to research and connect with their local community refugee support groups and organizations—an action many of our members and

chapters are already taking. You can also help by letting your representatives know that the U.S. should increase the number of refugees we will take.

This outcome is, in many ways, exactly what many of us expected twenty years ago, as it has long been evident that war is not the solution to the problems we face today, and in fact only creates more problems for people, the planet, and our shared environment. Twenty years ago, I had just finished my undergraduate degree after having served four years on active duty as an Arabic linguist in the U.S. Army. I was soon recalled by my reserve unit, and spent two more years on active duty as a linguist—most of it under the Stop Loss program.

I was not in favor of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, and I was even more opposed to the invasion of Iraq, but at that time I was unaware of the rich history of G.I. resistance in this country.

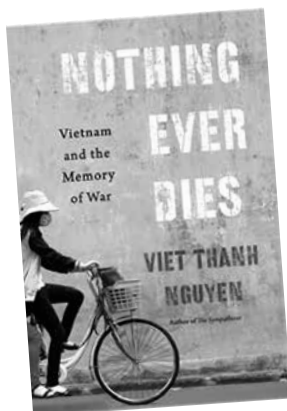
Instead of resisting, I finished my two years and then went back to school so that I could eventually be a counselor to returning service members.

What I didn't realize was that my experience counseling Veterans in the VA would highlight for me that the worst experiences for veterans was being attacked or raped by their fellow soldiers, or witnessing events that conflicted with their own moral values. The conversations we have had as a country about MST and Moral Injury need to continue. But we also need to assure all service members that if they refuse to obey illegal or immoral orders, we will be there to support them. The long-standing traditions of insisting on truth-in-recruiting and supporting GI resistance are shaping up to be the backbone of VFPs strategic plan going forward—together with reaching out to the war-affected diaspora.

In closing, I want to express my thanks to Prof. Viet Thanh Nguyen for sharing his experiences as a refugee and professor, author, and activist. If you haven't had the chance to listen to the conversation we had at the convention, it is available at <https://youtu.be/OkQloKpy0Zw>. To learn more about Viet, his books and work, please visit <https://vietnguyen.info>. Also check out the Diasporic Vietnamese Artists Network (DVAN), an organization that helps promote the arts and culture of Vietnamese in the diaspora [see <https://dvan.org/>].

Peace,

Adrienne Kinne, President
Veterans For Peace Board of Directors



A TRUE WAR STORY should tell not only of the soldier but also what happened to her or him after war's end. A true war story should also tell of the civilian, the refugee, the enemy, and, most importantly, the war machine that encompasses them all. But when war stories deal with the mundane aspects of war, some may see them as "boring" or simply not even about "war." These conventional perceptions of war stories blind us to war's extensive nature, for these perceptions divide the heroic soldiers who seem to be the primary agents of war from the citizens who actually make war happen and who suffer its consequences.

Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2016), excerpt from Ch. 8, "On True War Stories" (p. 224).

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Post-9-11 Organizing

THE NATION CRIED OUT “NEVER FORGET!” President George W. Bush stood on the rubble of the Twin Towers vowing vengeance. The eyes of the world were stunned by the events of 9-11-2001 and showed great empathy for the American people, then watched in disbelief as the U.S. administration and Pentagon leveraged the tragedy to set into motion endless war.

The antiwar movement started mustering, but was unable to forestall the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan later that year. But when the “War on Terror” shifted its gaze toward Iraq and the rest of the world, peace mobilizations grew and strengthened. In historic global protests, an estimated 36 million people took to the streets to avert the shock and awe that was to follow.

It seems that ever since 9-11, the antiwar movement has been reacting to the evolution of modern war-fighting and ever-expanding unilateral military aggression without a long-term strategy on how to organize, build power and win.

As a young veteran, I emerged from military service in 2005 angry at being betrayed by my country. Knowing I was used and that I caused incredible harm in the name of corporate profits and U.S. colonialism, I couldn't be bothered about long-term strategy. I was more than ready to hit the streets and podiums to rage against the powers that be. It felt great to be in the crowds chanting, holding massive banners with my comrades, getting arrested on the Capitol steps time and time again. Other than impacting public opinion and possibly shifting electoral results, I am not sure those actions changed anything other than D.C. metro traffic patterns. We didn't hamper military operations, but spoiled some tourists' plans to visit the Smithsonians and the monuments.

Still, the friendships and community we built had, and still have, immense value. Though we didn't stop war, there were other fantastic consequences to those mass mobilizations and one-off civil disobedience actions we engaged in. But the lack of efficiency and the urgent tempo of our actions eventually left movement activists feeling burned out and jaded. By the time Obama was elected, many of our allies had tossed their protest signs, and although the forever wars continued, money and support for peace organizations dried up when he took office.

I felt we missed a massive opportunity when we failed to make a sustainable movement, and in many ways I believe our power-building capacity was limited by our lack of investment in leadership development. We never figured out how to construct inclusive paths for mass participation in operational-level tasks, and we stopped skill-building and adopting new tactics. We were content in our reactionary activist mindset and didn't understand the importance of developing a strong, sustainable organizing culture.

It has now been twenty years since 9-11. What will the world look like in 2041, twenty years from now? I know it will be a lot better with VFP truly organizing and finding a long-term strategy to impact militarism. We have an amazing community and



VFP Executive Director Garrett Reppenhagen

incredible skills. We absolutely still have the passion to keep organizing. And judging from Jules Vaquera's script (below), many of us will “Never Forget!” [<https://youtu.be/fYu2uv24oSU>]

I'LL NEVER FORGET.

I'll never forget, even though I wish I could.

I'll never forget the fear I felt after it happened, the fear that those in power capitalized on.

I'll never forget that they told us we were fighting terrorism, even though we were the ones raining fire from the sky.

I'll never forget that we sidestepped the word war.

Every yes vote on The Authorization of Military Force Act might as well have been written in blood. Gashed into the flesh of every single HUMAN BEING who has been killed at the hands of the U.S. military since that day.

I will never forget the DECADES of war, on multiple fronts, that they used this terrible event to justify.

THEY FORGOT.

They forgot the oath we took. And that what they were ordering us to do had NOTHING to do with that oath.

Actually, on second thought, they didn't forget.

They knew. They just didn't (fucking) care.

They USED me. And I will NEVER FORGET that.

Jules Vaquera

9-11 Reflections on the World Wide Web

Never Forget: 9/11 and the 20 Year War on Terror — webinar produced by CodePink and livestreamed on September 11, 2021, at <https://youtu.be/pZDrBSVZihM>

20 Years of post-9/11 Amnesia — op-ed by Margaret Kimberley, Black Agenda Report Editor and Columnist, at <https://blackagendareport.com/20-years-post-911-amnesia>

A Moment of Silence — poem by Emmanuel Ortiz is a third-generation Chicano/Puerto Rican/Irish-American community organizer and spoken word poet, at *Peace&Planet News* (now online) at <https://peaceandplanetnews.org/a-moment-of-silence/>

STATEMENT ON AFGHANISTAN



A U.S. Marine with the Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Central Command escorts a child to his family during an evacuation at Hamid Karzai Intl. Airport, Kabul, Afghanistan, Aug. 24, 2021. Photo: U.S. Marine Corps/Staff Sgt. Victor Mancilla

THERE ARE OTHER
INSTRUMENTS OF NATIONAL
POWER THAT CAN BE USED
TO ACHIEVE REASONABLE
NATIONAL OBJECTIVES THAN
THE U.S. MILITARY. WILL
OUR NATIONAL LEADERS EVER
LEARN THIS LESSON?

VFP Statement on Afghanistan

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The release of the *Afghanistan Papers* last year [see <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/documents-database/>] clearly laid out the failed policy and the catastrophic level of malfeasance that reach the highest levels of the U.S. government. Virtually all U.S. government agencies bear responsibility for misleading the American public and for creating the conditions in which an unchecked military operates without accountability.

In the *Afghanistan Papers*, over 400 people detailed the systematic failure of the U.S. military to take responsibility for its ineptness and instead blamed “corruption” of the Afghanistan government, all the while revealing the massive corruption and lies that the U.S. is perpetuating. While U.S. military commanders bemoaned Afghan leaders enriching themselves off American tax dollars, those same commanders climbed government ranks and earned promotions for promoting endless war.

U.S. soldiers, contractors, and veterans were routinely marginalized or persecuted to maintain the status quo in Afghanistan. Their integrity was questioned while government lies were glorified as truth by a complicit media and government agencies.

Afghanistan is yet another example of U.S. military ineptness. Name it and it was wrong....Korea, Viet Nam, Afghanistan, Iraq and a host of other military deployments in Latin and South America. There are other instruments of national power that can be used to achieve reasonable national objectives than the U.S. military. Will our national leaders ever learn this lesson?

As veterans who have served in these wars and past wars, we are enraged by leaders that lie to us and lack the

moral courage to act even when there is proof. We demand accountability in real and tangible ways. The pandering and posturing of so many politicians today is infuriating. Both parties are to blame for this and a militaristic culture that places profit above all else.

We must see a shift towards a future that holds the military and our government officials accountable. We must reduce the military budget and reallocate those funds towards social programs that prioritize meeting people’s needs and to support the masses of refugees that seek safety for their families.

We continue to stand by these demands:

- Accept all Afghan refugees and provide humanitarian aid & resettlement aid.
- The military IMMEDIATELY release all three hundred names of those quoted in the *Afghanistan Papers*
- Congressional hearings that include perjury trials for all those officials who knowingly lied in official Congressional testimony, including closed door sessions of the House and Senate Armed Forces Committees
- A special Congressional committee to investigate fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement for the war in Afghanistan
- A Congressional tribunal allowing Afghanistan veterans to testify about their experience.
- Repeal of the AUMF (Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Terrorists) – which includes any subsequent AUMF to have a sunset clause.
- Recognition of Moral Injury as a legitimate diagnosis
- Reparations to Afghanistan and to all Afghans

VFP CAMPAIGNS & PROJECTS

Gamers For Peace

GAMERS FOR PEACE met for the first time in-person during the VFP Organizer Retreat in Albuquerque, NM. Laughs were had, tears were shed, and socially distanced hugs were shared throughout the weekend. Members of GFP planned and coordinated efforts around four main focuses for the next quarter.

The Twitch Military Ad Opt-Out Campaign has begun with VFP member, Katie C (Discord handle - @Plantifa) taking the lead by creating the petition to have twitch remove military ads from being shown on streaming channels. This is the first step of many to impact the reach of military recruiters to underage youths in gaming and online spaces. Go to <https://bit.ly/TWITCHMILITARYADOPTOUT> to sign the petition.

Gamers For Peace has started the #SayNoToRecruiters Mentorship Program! We are a group of VFP members and allies dedicated to providing 1-on-1 guidance for young professionals looking to start a peaceful career outside of the military. We offer resume and transcript reviews, college application and essay reviews, interview preparation, and networking assistance. Looking to speak with one of our mentors? Interested in volunteering as a mentor? Join the GFP discord server for more info by using your phone's camera to scan the GFP QR code.

Season 2 of Gamers For Peace streaming content is coming soon. Be ready for an updated stream schedule and some new content, beginning on October 2nd. GFP is moving to a "show season" format, allowing for new shows, streamers, and volunteers to appear on our twitch platform. Look forward to more show announcements coming soon.



Gamers For Peace is going to PAX Unplugged! PAX Unplugged is a yearly tabletop gaming convention held in Philadelphia, PA. This year GFP will make an appearance, getting in on all the good dice rolling and card playing action. If you are interested in attending and being part of the first ever GFP gaming convention direct action, contact VFP's Digital Organizer, Chris Velazquez, by messaging @SinSeerly_V in the GFP Discord.

TO STAY UP TO DATE on all the Gamers For Peace news and get involved in Veterans For Peace efforts by joining the discord at www.discord.gg/gamersforpeace and make sure to catch our streams at www.twitch.tv/veteransforpeace

Join SOVA in D.C. to Lobby Congress February 2022!

Contact Jeff Roy at royjeff48@gmail.com



The Save Our VA National Campaign continues to advocate for high quality, veteran-centered health care for all veterans. As a part of this campaign, we are planning our second SOVA National Lobbying Conference in Washington, D.C., for February 13-17, 2022. Like the first Conference in 2020, we will gather with SOVA activists from across the nation, get trained in lobbying techniques, and then spend two days lobbying our members of Congress in small groups.

Register for the conference at <https://veteransforpeace.salsalabs.org/sovalobbyingconference/index.html>. We hope you will join us there, but even if you can't attend you can support our efforts with a donation. Visit our website at veteransforpeace.org/sova to donate, to learn more about the issues, and to sign up to get letters to send to your representatives in Congress in support of a fully funded, fully staffed VA health care system.

VFP CAMPAIGNS & PROJECTS

Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign

Ask your representative to co-sponsor HR 3518: Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act

On May 25, 2021 Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) introduced H.R. 3518, the Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2021, in the House of Representatives with the following statement:

"THE UNITED STATES HAS A MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO COMPENSATE THE VICTIMS OF THE AGENT ORANGE CAMPAIGN. IN THE SAME WAY WE ARE FOCUSED ON BEGINNING TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE OF SYSTEMIC RACISM IN THE FORM OF REPARATIONS, AND THE WAR ON DRUGS WITH RESTORATIVE JUSTICE, IT IS ALSO OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO TRY AND ATONE FOR THIS DISGRACEFUL CAMPAIGN DURING THE VIETNAM WAR."

Sixty years ago, the United States sprayed approximately 19 million gallons of 15 different herbicides, collectively known as Agent Orange, over Viet Nam, Camb Viet Nam odia, and Laos. Between 2.1 and 4.8 million Vietnamese were exposed during the spraying and many more continue to be exposed through the environment. Agent Orange/dioxin exposure continues to negatively affect the lives of men and women in Viet Nam and in the United States. Agent Orange exposure is associated with cancers, immune deficiencies, reproductive illnesses, and severe birth defects in Vietnamese, Americans, and Vietnamese Americans directly exposed and their affected children and grandchildren.

Descendants of the approximately 2 to 4 million Vietnamese people, hundreds of thousands of U.S. Viet Nam veterans, and Vietnamese Americans who were exposed to the toxin continue to record disproportionate rates of congenital disabilities and higher rates of many diseases.

U.S. veterans receive some compensation from the U.S. government, but very little assistance has been given to the Vietnamese people, the intended victims of the toxic defoliant.



Representative Barbara Lee with Tran Thi Hoan, who was born in Binh Tuan Province, Viet Nam, without lower extremities and missing a hand. Her mother, a farmworker, was exposed to Agent Orange/dioxin. Hoan is a graduate of the Ho Chi Minh City University of Foreign Languages and Information Technology where she earned a degree in computer science. [Photo by Ngo Thanh Nhan, 2016.]

HR 3518 calls on the U.S. government to:

- Fund significant assistance to Vietnamese A.O. victims.
- Clean up of the lands and eco-systems contaminated by Agent Orange/dioxin in Viet Nam.
- Provide additional assistance for U.S. veterans and health care for their offspring affected by Agent Orange.
- Address the health needs of affected Vietnamese Americans.
- Conduct research on the health effects of Agent Orange/dioxin with U.S. and Vietnamese scientists.

Please write an email to your representative in the House of Representatives asking them to co-sponsor this important bill providing justice for those harmed. For additional information on Agent Orange, check out the website for the Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign (VAORRC):

<https://vn-agentorange.org/>

Viet Nam Full Disclosure Campaign

In 2012, under Obama, the Pentagon launched a 13-year, \$65 million-dollar 50th anniversary commemoration of the U.S. war in Viet Nam. In response, VFP members launched "Viet Nam: Full Disclosure" to speak truth to power and keep alive the antiwar perspective on the American war in Viet Nam, which would surely be airbrushed out of the official history in order to legitimize future unnecessary and destructive wars.

Just as the war was winding down after 1971, the 50th anniversary commemoration campaign is now winding down.

But we have ensured the VNFD website will stay vital for the foreseeable future. It is a great resource, connecting to many thoughtful and thought-provoking articles and op-eds, book reviews, photos, videos, podcasts and poems about the war and its aftermath—a rich resource for educators and anyone interested in studying, understanding, or reflecting on that era. Please share with others, and consider becoming a donor to support future maintenance and promotion of this valuable site: <https://www.vietnamfulldisclosure.org/>

Climate Crisis & Militarism Project Hard at Work

VFP's National Climate Crisis & Militarism Project (CCMP) has made strides since our last report. Here are some updates:

The VFP convention workshop

Our workshop, "Militarism Fuels the Climate Crisis," was a success, drawing in nearly 100 attendees; thanks to all who showed up on Zoom. Skillfully moderated by Marcy Winograd of CODEPINK (also a member of CCMP) and Gary Butterfield, the panel included Afghanistan War veteran Erik Edstrom, researcher Nick Rabb of the Sunrise Movement, and our own Adrienne Kinne. You can watch the entire recording on YouTube: <https://bit.ly/CCMPWorkshop2021>

Slideshow presentations

Thus far we have presented our 20-minute slideshow on the connections between the climate crisis and U.S. militarism to 11 groups, including VFP local chapters, Peace Action Maine, civic groups, environmental/climate groups, and others. Several more are scheduled for this fall, including at Peacestock in Minnesota where VFP Board President Adrienne Kinne will be a featured speaker. The presentations always generate lively discussions. VFP chapters that have hosted the presentation have enjoyed it, and members have committed to reach out to tell allied groups about the slideshow. Currently there are two scheduled for Armistice (Veterans) Day. We hope to have many more VFP chapters engage with us, so please consider signing up here to schedule your local presentation: <https://veteransforpeace.salsalabs.org/ccmppresentation/index.html>

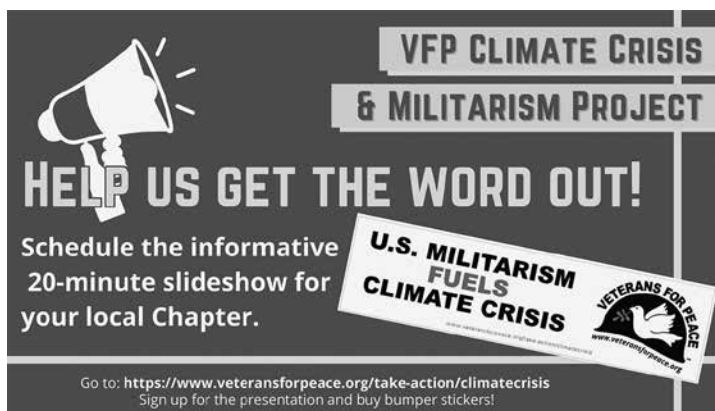


Climate Disruption and US Militarism

By
Cindy Piester
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Ventura County VFP Chapter 112 member Cindy Piester (pictured), developed a Climate Disruption and U.S. Militarism slideshow for the VFP Climate Crisis and Militarism Project.



House Resolution on reporting military emissions

Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA), famous for her courageous lone vote against the 2001 AUMF, has agreed to be the lead sponsor of a House Resolution drafted by members of the CCMP on reporting, and eventually reducing, military greenhouse gas emissions which contribute the worsening climate crisis. The resolution is titled "**Recognizing the Duty of the Department of Defense to Annually Report Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Progress on Reduction Targets.**" We anticipate that Rep. Lee will be putting forward the resolution later in September. Please sign up to support the resolution by contacting your member of Congress: <https://veteransforpeace.salsalabs.org/ccmpcongressionaloutreach/index.html>

Climate negotiations

Known as COP26, UN climate negotiations are coming up soon—November 1–11. Climate Envoy John Kerry will lead the U.S. delegation in Glasgow, where more greenwashing and empty talk of "net zero by 2050"—a completely inadequate goal—is anticipated, as is furious, sustained protest by climate activists, especially on Global Day of Action for Climate Justice. Kerry has been ratcheting up his own carbon footprint by traveling the globe, meeting with world leaders and talking mostly "bright-side" talk about opportunities for the "Fourth Industrial Revolution" even as the UN IPCC Sixth Assessment Report laid out very grim predictions, and the International Energy Agency called for no new investments in coal, gas or oil—worldwide. For more info, please check out this webpage: <https://www.veteransforpeace.org/take-action/climatecrisis/kerry>. Will COP26 be a climate win, or a bust? Please keep an eye on VFP social media platforms, with great CCMP content from Louis Raprager, for info and how you can take action during COP26.

Learn more about Climate Crisis & Militarism

Please visit our Resources page, with many links to articles, videos, interviews, books (including one by VFP Advisory Board member Jane Fonda). Have a suggestion for Resources? Send that or other feedback to climate@veteransforpeace.org.

Nuclear Abolition Working Group is on the move!

The Nuclear Abolition Working Group, originally launched in 2011, is on the move again! Approximately thirty VFP members from all over the U.S. have participated in bi-weekly meetings for the last six months.

The Working Group began with a lot of self-education, hosting regular guest speakers at its meetings: Ralph Hutchison, Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance (OREPA); Denise Duffield, Los Angeles Physicians For Social Responsibility, Back from the Brink (BftB); Alan Ware, Parliamentarians for Nonproliferation and Nuclear Disarmament; Tristan Guillelte and Yasmeen Silva, Beyond the Bomb; Bruce Gagnon, Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space; Desmond Doulatram, Radiation Exposure Crusaders for Humanity, Marshall Islands; and Akino Miyagi, Environmental Investigator, Okinawa.

After many positive discussions, the group agreed upon and wrote a statement of purpose. Our ultimate goal is total elimination of nuclear weapons. We support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. In the near term, we are concerned about the dangerous nuclear posture of the United States and other nuclear powers.

We are calling on the U.S. government and military to declare and implement a policy of No First Use of nuclear weapons. We want to take nuclear missiles off of “hair-trigger alert” (Launch On Warning). Stepping “back from the brink” will greatly reduce the chances of a nuclear war, by accident or miscalculation and give us breathing room to build a mass movement for nuclear disarmament and peace.

The Nuclear Abolition Working Group meets twice a month, on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays, at 6 pm Eastern, 3 pm Pacific. We maintain a “VFP-No Nukes” list serve where we share anti-nuclear news and views, and we have a page on the VFP website under “Working Groups.”

For more information, email vfp.nonukes@gmail.com.



Activists mark the International Day for the Total Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (Sept. 26) at the Nevada Test Site. Photo by Brian Terrell.

Veterans For Peace to Biden: Just Say No to Nuclear War

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE TOTAL ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, SEPTEMBER 26

On the occasion of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, Veterans For Peace published an *Open Letter to President Biden*, urging him to give Veterans For Peace and other peace and disarmament groups a “seat at the table” of the administration’s Nuclear Posture Review, which is currently underway.

Below is the short version of the letter, which was distributed to VFP chapters for further publication as letters to local editors. Here’s a short link to the full-length letter on the Veterans For Peace website: <https://bit.ly/3ofZXCv>

Open Letter to President Biden:

We are writing you on the occasion of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, which has been declared by the United Nations General Assembly to be celebrated annually on September 26.

As veterans who have fought in multiple U.S. wars, we are concerned about the very real danger of a nuclear war that would kill millions of people and could possibly even destroy human civilization. Therefore we are asking to have input into the Nuclear Policy Review that your administration has recently initiated.

Veterans For Peace urges you to do the following:

1. Adopt and announce a policy of “No First Use” of nuclear weapons and make that policy credible by publicly decommissioning U.S. ICBMs that can only be used in a first strike;
2. Take U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert (Launch On Warning), thus reducing the probability of an accidental, unauthorized, or unintentional nuclear exchange;
3. Cancel plans to replace the entire U.S. arsenal with enhanced weapons at a cost of more than \$1 trillion over the next 30 years;
4. Redirect the money thus saved into environmentally sound programs, including the cleanup of toxic and radioactive waste left during eight decades of the nuclear cycle;
5. Sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and provide global leadership for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Sincerely,
VETERANS FOR PEACE



The Golden Rule reaches the Golden Gate Bridge
Photo © Noah Berger, San Francisco Chronicle.

Anti-nuclear sailboat *Golden Rule* arrives back in California

The world-renowned *Golden Rule* anti-nuclear sailboat is back in California after returning from a two-year voyage that included stops at all the Hawai'iian Islands. Since returning to the California coast, Project Manager Helen Jaccard has been taking groups of supporters sailing on San Francisco Bay.

"We are sailing for a nuclear-free world and a peaceful, sustainable future," says Helen Jaccard, who gave nearly 150 educational presentations while in Hawai'i.

Back to the boatyard

In late September, the *Golden Rule* and her three-person crew returned safely to her homeport in Humboldt Bay, where the 34-foot ketch was rediscovered in 2010, and rebuilt by Veterans For Peace members, Quakers, and boat-loving volunteers. During her stay in Eureka, California, the *Golden Rule* will receive routine maintenance and some repairs in the boatyard of Leroy Zerlang, where she was reconstructed over a five-year period and "splashed down" in June 2015.

"Great Loop" delayed

After a few weeks in Humboldt Bay, the *Golden Rule* will return to San Francisco Bay to appear at several public events and to take supporters out sailing, before continuing down the coast to San Diego. Its projected major voyage around the "Great Loop" of the eastern, southern and midwestern United States has been postponed for one year, in order to gather the necessary resources to ensure its success—more funds, more staff, more volunteers.

The *Golden Rule* is a national project of Veterans For Peace, which owns the historic boat. People wanting to know how they can contribute can contact Helen Jaccard at 206-992-6364.

Nuclear catastrophe averted: A history lesson

by Leo R. Sandy

Vasili Alexandrovich Arkhipov was a Soviet Naval officer credited with casting the single vote that prevented a Soviet nuclear strike (and, presumably, all-out nuclear war) during the Cuban Missile Crisis. I was a participant in that blockade as a sailor on the U.S.S. Enterprise CVA(N) 65. Arkhipov was one of the top officers on a submarine that had been ordered to fire torpedoes at the ships in the blockade. Thus, Arkhipov not only saved my life but also the life of the planet. Such an attack likely would have caused a major global thermonuclear response which, as Noam Chomsky described, could have destroyed much of the world.

As flotilla commander and second-in-command of the diesel-powered submarine B-59, only Arkhipov refused to authorize the captain's use of nuclear torpedoes against the United States Navy, a decision requiring the agreement of all three senior officers aboard. Typically, Russian submarines armed with the "Special Weapon" only required the captain to get authorization from the political officer to launch a nuclear torpedo, but due to Arkhipov's position as flotilla commander, B-59's captain also was required to gain Arkhipov's approval.

Immediately upon return to Russia, many crew members were faced with disgrace from their superiors. One admiral told them "It would have been better if you'd gone down with your ship." Olga, Arkhipov's wife, even said "he didn't like talking about it; he felt they hadn't appreciated what they had gone through. In 2002, retired Commander, Vadim Pavlovich Orlov, a participant in the events, held a press conference revealing that the subs were armed with nuclear torpedoes and that Arkhipov was the reason those devices had not been fired. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., an advisor for the John F. Kennedy administration and a historian, continued this thought by stating "This was not only the most dangerous moment of the Cold War. It was the most dangerous moment in human history. Peace campaigner Milan Rai has written that October 27th should be celebrated as "Arkhipov Day."

Arkhipov continued in Soviet Naval service, commanding submarines and later submarine squadrons. He was promoted to rear admiral in 1975, and became head of the Kirov Naval Academy. He was promoted to vice admiral in 1981 and retired in the mid 1980s. He subsequently settled in Kupavna where he died on 19 August 1998.

VFP CHAPTER REPORTS



#021 – NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

After a struggle lasting over three years, a signpost honoring Vietnam veteran Clarence Fitch was finally installed at the always busy student entrance to James J. Ferris High School in Jersey City, New Jersey. Clarence was a graduate of the school. The effort was a joint project of Veterans For Peace Chapter 21 and the Fitch Family, led by Clarence's sister, Reverend Mona Fitch-Elliott. Additionally, the Jersey City Board of Education is now planning to use *Another Brother*, a documentary film about Clarence's life [Tami Gold, AndersonGold Films, 1998], as a teaching tool at the high school level.

Michael Kramer



Chapter 31 at anti-drone demonstration, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September 2021. Photo by John Grant.

#023 – ROCHESTER, NY

As more people have become vaccinated against COVID-19, Chapter 23 has moved to a hybrid meeting format, with some attending in person and some still via Zoom. We will continue offering that option for the foreseeable future.

It is with great sadness that Chapter 23 reports the loss of a chapter associate, David Dornford. Although David had been inactive lately, his loss is still felt by many of our members and he will be missed.

On August 5, Chapter 23 joined the Genesee Valley Citizens for Peace in a candlelight vigil to remember the tragic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 75 years ago. Later in August, we held our annual chapter picnic, at which special guest VFP President Adrienne Kinne was in attendance and presented us with the VFP Chapter of the Year award! We would like to thank everyone for the honor and recognition.

Finally, Chapter 23 has been putting considerable effort into the "Leave No One Behind" mural project to bring awareness to the struggle faced by our deported veterans. Chapter 23 has created a mobile version of the mural, to be showcased



Chapter 23 group shot captured before the Aug. 5th candlelight vigil.

in different places across Rochester. It will first be displayed at the Rochester Public Market on September 18, and then at Nazareth College for approximately one month. We are excited for these opportunities.

Jeremiah Knowles

#031 – PHILADELPHIA AREA, PA

Chapter 31 has lately ramped up its actions around various themes, especially gun control, immigration, and anti-drone actions. Mainly through the tireless work of Mike Felker, we continue our commitment to reduction of gun violence in Philadelphia and environs where we will likely set a record for gun homicides this year. We remain active on behalf the immigrant population of the area, mainly through the commitment of Gene Cleaver as a member of the New Sanctuary Movement. John Grant and Lou Ann Merkel have



Veterans For Peace along with other peace activists at a July 17th press conference organized in support of Drone Whistleblower Daniel Hale.

been active in the local anti-drone campaign and on behalf of drone war whistleblower Daniel Hale. Next month the Chapter will participate in the *Out of the Darkness* Philadelphia Walk sponsored by the American Federation of Suicide Prevention. Cherie Eichholz and Frank Corcoran are leading this effort to work with local organizations "...to acknowledge the ways in which suicide and mental illness have affected our lives and the lives of those we love and care about." Several members of the chapter have started a reading group to discuss current and classic works of collective action and theory. The book *After the Apocalypse: America's Role in a World Transformed* by Andrew Bacevich is our next read.

Chuck Rossi

#034 – NEW YORK, NY

NYC Chapter continues online monthly meetings, as well as in-person events. Meeting Topics/Speakers:

- IPAN & U.S. peace movement representatives Ann Wright, Annette Brownlie, Robin Taubenfeld, Margaret Beavis, and Vince Scappatura re Australia–U.S. Talisman Sabre military exercises confronting China: https://youtu.be/uQe8hefee_Q
- Joint Yamanashi Peace Committee/NYC VFP meeting re Okinawa with three Japanese speakers and USMC Veterans Ken Mayers and Matt Hoh
- VFP Advisory Board Member Marjorie Cohn re new Agent Orange legislation HR 3518, legal issues concerning Julian Assange, and targeted killing using Drone Warfare: <https://youtu.be/FgIHUfgWvY>
- Manhattan Project for a Nuclear-Free World Annual Peace Gathering to Commemorate 76th Anniversary of Hiroshima & Nagasaki on August 5: <https://mp-nuclear-free.com/>
- Jonathan Moore re landmark Stop & Frisk and Agent Orange cases.

Chapter Projects: SOVA; Move the Money; Stop Sanctions/Save Yemen; Agent Orange; *Peace & Planet News* — <https://www.peaceandplanetnews.org>.

In-person events:

- Weekly *Say Their Names* vigil at 96th St. & Broadway
- Weekly vigil for Yemen at Union Square Park
- July 16 – Rallies to end U.S. Participation in the War on Yemen, at Congressperson's offices.
- July 17 – Press Conference to support drone whistleblower Daniel Hale. See photos at <https://photos.app.goo.gl/34u6fUMRWrgf49ex8>; to support Daniel Hale go to <https://standwithdanielhale.org/>
- August 2 – Visited Japanese Consulate, with bouquet of flowers and open letter apologizing for Atomic bombing of Hiroshima & Nagasaki.

Find us on Facebook @veteransforpeacenyc034.

Bob Keilbach

#035 – SPOKANE, WA

First off, much gratitude for the daring protest by Mike Prysner on 9/19 at the Long Beach Convention Center, calling out former President George W. Bush for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Bravo! Drive out the Bush Regime!

Our own protest against oil and coal trains passing through Spokane, carried to the Washington State Supreme Court by chapter V.P. George Taylor, has been set for a jury trial on October 28, in District Court, with the lone defendant granted the right to use the necessity defense at trial. This is a precedent-setting case for all environmental protesters claiming their actions are necessary to prevent a greater harm. Stay tuned.

Practicing public health protocol, we are meeting in person again as well as via Zoom. Our 20 paid-up members continue to work on campaigns. A gathering of remembrance of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, cosponsored with Pax Christi, was held at the Spokane Convention Center with 30 attending. Several speakers shared recollections of the bombing of Japan, after which lavender flowers were floated in the Spokane River.

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Above: A gathering of remembrance of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the Spokane Convention Center in early August, cosponsored by VFP Chapter 35 and Pax Christi. After speakers shared recollections of the bombings of Japan, they floated lavender flowers in the Spokane River.

Chapter 35, Spokane, Washington, continued...

On September 21, we celebrated International Peace Day with an informational rally and vigil at the "V." Peace For All.

Hollis Higgins

#042 – CONNECTICUT

At the August 6th remembrance held at the Quaker Meeting House in West Hartford, Connecticut, Jim Basile promoted the *Golden Rule's* "Great Loop" event and was successful in getting retired Archbishop Peter Rosazza to speak up again for nuclear disarmament as he has done for over 50 years.

Dave Ionno and Steve Fournier's latest TV show stressed the 20 years of U.S. wars in the Middle East in addition to the violent withdrawal from Afghanistan and where the blame really lies.

Members of Chapter 42 met with a staff member of Connecticut Senator Blumenthal's office, where Herb Hoffman, our newest member and also a member of the New Mexico and Maine Chapters, presented the crisis developing in New Mexico with plans to develop Plutonium Pits which will only expand the threat of nuclear war along with exposure. All this news in more detail on our Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/jim.basile.792>

Jim Basile

RIGHT: Chapter 42 presents their 15-foot NO MORE WARS FOR PROFIT banner in front of the Newington, Connecticut, Veterans Parade Float, to honor the veterans and at the same time make them aware they have a voice to step up and speak out about ending all wars, especially those based on corporate profits.



#063 – ALBUQUERQUE, NM

The U.S. War Department and its contractors have stepped up their game further, using New Mexico as its colony for developing new tools for human and environmental annihilation by locating their "Q Station" in the heart of Albuquerque. Veterans For Peace Chapter 63 and the Albuquerque and New Mexico Peace Community are demanding its closure.

In spite of deceptive marketing practices describing it as merely a "tech hub," the Q Station is actually a project of the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) and U.S. military Space Force designed to find and develop technologies to fight the next war, especially from space. Q Station was strategically built next to the University of New Mexico in order to recruit science and tech students, diverting their talent and creativity away from other useful and needed applications here in New Mexico and elsewhere.

Three picketing actions were held at the Q Station in August and September, including a major press conference demanding its immediate shut down. Members of Veterans For Peace Chapter 63 joined in speaking and picketing with members of the ANSWER Coalition, the Los Alamos Study Group, Stop the War Machine, and the Peaceful Skies Coalition.

Our line has been drawn. We will continue to confront and counter the U.S. War Department and its contractors' attempts to legitimize their dirty work here in New Mexico.

Bill Tiwald

#069 – SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Chapter 69 has been meeting on Zoom since May of '20. Some "current" members not able to get to in-person meetings log in to Zoom. Occasionally a national board member has tuned in. We are still able to host guest speakers. No one can deny it is easier to put your laptop in a presentable corner of your home than to travel to the Veterans Building, but much like the VFP national conventions, our meetings aren't the sole reason for getting together. After twenty-seven years as a VFP member, my life has been simplified to my family, my reading, writing, and gardening, my work in VFP, and my friends through VFP. When meetings were live, as we began to show up, the feeling of a party filled the room. Members brought things to share, everything from homemade brownies to copies of *Peace&Planet News*. When Bill Creighton began the meeting there was a spontaneity to it that is lost when every third person who wants to talk has to be told, "You're mute!" And folks could interrupt and sometimes argue. Afterward it would be suggested we go for a beer and some of us always did.



Denny Riley

#071 – SONOMA COUNTY, CA

VFP Chapter 71 was active this summer publicizing the *Golden Rule* and plans for additional boat travel late in 2021. July 24th found nine members from VFP Chapters 71 (Sonoma County) and 69 (San Francisco), led by Helen Jaccard, sailing from the Berkeley Marina onto the blustery San Francisco Bay on the *Golden Rule*. Former naval officer and VFP Chapter 71 President Fred Ptucha was the obvious helmsman, guiding the 37-foot ketch around Alcatraz Island and making a perfect berth at the end of two sailing segments.

Riding out these many months of pandemic, Chapter 71 has never been idle. In fact, we've been involved in four seminal projects. First was a meeting and banquet for Michigan VFP member Tom Keenan, the author of the splendid book, *The Good Hike*, about his Viet Nam service and his hike on the 2,178-mile Appalachian Trail. Second was the chapter's



Fred Ptucha battles the Golden Rule rudder in high wind July 23, 2021, on San Francisco Bay. Next to Fred (l to r) are Bob Bulwa and Helen Jaccard. Also on board were Dominick Favussi, Terry Hallowes, Judy and Terry McNeill, Larry Harper, Phil Salyer, and three Chapter 69 members including Paul Cox. Photo by Phil Salyer.

participation in Sonoma State University's Peace and Justice week, with Fred Ptucha speaking on his four tours of Viet Nam and how he came to the forefront of local activism on social equity issues.

The chapter's Peace Pole project, with the counsel of Sacramento Army Major (Ret.) Renée Marie, involved Napa and Sonoma Counties, with the bright white, 4-inch-square by 8-foot-tall poles being placed in more than a dozen schools. Poles are inscribed with the words "May Peace Prevail on the Earth" in four to eight different languages. Sonoma County Rotary Clubs provided grants for installation, with Chapter 71's assistance, and the reception at the respective schools was strongly positive.

Throughout the COVID period, member Bob Bulwa has kept up with monthly maintenance of the Ragle Ranch Sonoma Regional Park's Peace Garden. Originally established in 1984, the garden is a central feature in a large park where visitors may experience firsthand affirmations of peace in America and in their lives.

Terry McNeill

#072 – PORTLAND, OR

Chapter 72 had a mostly quiet summer. Our meetings continue to be held online, and members of our chapter also hold a weekly brunch call. We are glad to have chances to chat during these social occasions.

On September 11th, we hosted an informational booth at the Peace and Justice Fair in Vancouver, Washington. Despite the restricted turnout, members of our chapter were able to hold meaningful conversations with veterans, family members, and even some active duty comrades. It was quite clear that the end of the Afghanistan conflict has had poignant impacts on

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VFP CHAPTER REPORTS continued



VFP Chapter 72 President Mal Chaddock chats with an attendee of the 2021 Vancouver, Washington, Peace & Justice Fair. on Sept. 11.

Chapter 72, Portland, Oregon, continued...

those who were affected. Thanks to the generous donation of one of our recently deceased members, Will Pool (USN, WWII) we are honored to be able to financially assist with Afghan relocation efforts in the Portland, Oregon, area. We miss Will dearly, and are continually influenced by his example.

We look forward to continued outreach opportunities, as well as expanding cooperation with peaceful entities in the Greater Portland region.

Eileen Cowen

#089 – NASHVILLE, TN

The Hector Black Chapter celebrated the posthumous recognition of Hector Black's work for peace with the Gandhian Non-violence Award at the VFP convention.

Jim Wohlgenuth



Chapter 89 members in Nashville, Tennessee, participated in Days of Action to remember the anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to emphasize the importance of the UN Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons.

As presenters on a VFP convention panel about using media to promote a culture of peace, Harvey Bennett and Jim Wohlgenuth talked about their activism via the *VFP Radio Hour* on WRFN Radio Free Nashville. Featured topics have included the impact of nuclear weapons (with Dr. Linda Marie Richards); remembrance of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; Shut Down Crech! actions (with members of CodePink); and efforts to support drone whistleblower Daniel Hale. They remembered Juneteenth, examined Independence Day, and highlighted the new Warrior Songs CD produced by Jason Moon. Listen on Soundcloud at <https://soundcloud.com/user-55976759> (or other podcast app).

VFP Chapter 89 President Tina Meli and members Michael August and Jim Wohlgenuth tabled alongside allies from the Peace and Justice Center, Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) and Our Revolution as part of Days of Action to remember the anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to emphasize the importance of the UN Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons. We also participated in the Peace and Justice Center's March and Rally against Violence.

President Tina Meli and member Arnold White met with members of the Democratic party women of Rutherford County to encourage a culture of peace and to put pressure on Democratic candidates in Tennessee to work to that end.

Finally, Chapter 89 members celebrated the removal of the Nathan Bedford Forrest bust from the capitol. This bust of the slave trader, war criminal, and first grand wizard of the kkk was a blight on the good people of Tennessee, and our members collected signatures, met legislators, and joined with other groups to vigil and demand the removal, which the governor reluctantly succumbed to despite the efforts of white supremacists in the state house [lowercase intentional].



Seattle VFP Chapter 92 members at the 2021 "From Hiroshima To Hope" event held August 6, 2021, at Green Lake. Photo by Kim Loftness.

#092 – SEATTLE, WA

Chapter members, spouses and friends participated in the August 6th "From Hiroshima To Hope" event this year. Held at Green Lake, this event has occurred every year since 1984, but it was canceled last year due to the pandemic. It was a treat to gather and picnic and enjoy some camaraderie in person, and be treated to a beautiful evening program—with COVID-19 protocols in place, of course. Our chapter is a co-sponsor of this event.

VFP 92 joined the Seattle Anti-War Coalition at the First Tuesday war protest at the Federal Building in Seattle. Recognizing that endless war and militarism affects all of our groups, there were speakers from Seattle 350, Seattle Indivisible, The Poor People's Campaign, Washington Against Nuclear Weapons, as well

as Veterans For Peace. More efforts like this will be needed to grow and strengthen the antiwar movement.

Recently, we were invited to a fundraiser for Afghan refugees at a Seattle park. Veep Mike Dedrick organized tabling for the chapter. Allen Tlusty delivered a good speech and Albert Penta was interviewed by Deborah Horne of KIRO 7. Fortunately, we were invited back for another event the next month, coinciding with the Women's March. We are stoked!

Kim Loftness

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In July, Binghamton chapter V.P. John Patterson ("the tree guy") and treasurer Cecily O'Neil pose for a photo after planting one of several red oak trees, carrying on a ten-year tradition of bringing new life to Mother Earth in memory of the Chapter 90's deceased VFP members.

Jack Gilroy

#090 – BINGHAMTON, NY

On January 22, VFP Chapter 90 joined with Peace Action of Broome County to celebrate the United Nations ban on nuclear weapons with a New Orleans-style procession around the Binghamton Federal Building while making verbal appeals to Senator Schumer's ground-floor office, where staff undoubtedly were tapping toes to our bugles blowing, saxophones playing and tambourines rattling festively to the tune of "When the Saints Go Marching In."

On Mother's Day weekend, members of VFP and Peace Action came together to dedicate a Children's Peace Garden at Otsiningo Park in Binghamton. A second annual Children's Peace Fair scheduled for August 9 was postponed until 2022. The park and the fair are designed to make peace possible by encouraging children to avoid war and celebrate peace. See photos of our 2019 event at <https://childrenspeacefair.org/>.

Peace and justice groups including VFP Chapters 34 and 90 held a press conference in New York City to expose U.S. assassination crimes committed via Predator and other weaponized drones. We highlighted Daniel Hale, the whistleblower who was about to be sentenced in federal court for telling the truth, in front of a large Predator drone sculpture rising above the the High Line at 30th Street & 10th Avenue. NBC was there and captured footage but used nothing. A condensed video may be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8YmpAArTMK8>

VFP CHAPTER REPORTS continued

#112 VENTURA COUNTY, CA

The Ventura chapter has seen little in-person action since the summer edition of this newsletter. In May, a local high school district produced its first-ever online career expo due to the annoyance of the COVID strain, and Chapter 112's counter-recruitment representative participated along with many other Zoom vendors. VFP's rep spoke with several students, but the online format made it impossible to determine how much interest students showed to the military branches at the expo this year.

Long-time member Cindy Piester, who is now on the VFP Climate Crisis and Militarism Project's steering committee, presented her full-length (35 min.) slideshow, "Climate Disruption and U.S. Militarism" to our chapter. It was well received and led to the promise of a \$200 donation to the chapter through the actions of an appreciative viewer.

We were invited to participate in a get-out-the-vote rally due to the California Governor recall election. Our flags were flying.

Our final action this fall is reviewing and re-stocking VFP counter-recruitment brochures in the same local high school district mentioned above. Two new smaller schools might be added to the list of career centers where we place brochures.

We very happily received a new OEF veteran chapter member who is running for public office. He proudly participated in an antiwar rally at Los Angeles City Hall in September.

Michael Cervantes

#115 – RED WING, MN

Here in Red Wing, Minnesota, Chapter 115 has been struggling to hold live meetings. Due to a lull in the COVID-19 pandemic we did commence meeting in person, but that is changing again. We all hope things get back to where we can do more live peace events again.

Our big project now is planning our twentieth "Peacestock" event. Earlier we were planning a live event, but have now



A photo from the 2019 "Peacestock" event hosted by Chapter 115. This year's Peacestock will be virtual on Tuesday, October 19 at 6pm Central Daylight Time. See <http://peacestockvfp.org>.

reverted back to a Zoom webinar. Peacestock will be held on Tuesday, October 19, 2021, from 6:00 until 8:30pm CDT. Speakers include VFP President Adrienne Kinne, and San Diego VFP member Gary Butterfield, who will speak on Militarism and Climate. Go to our website www.peacestockvfp.org for more program details and information on how to register. Join us!

Bill Habedank

#161 – EASTERN IOWA

Some virtual, some in person. We continue to lead the every-Friday peace rally at the entrance to Old Capitol in Iowa City. Harold Frakes and David Hempel, working with the Friends, have lobbied their Iowa U.S. senators to rescind the 2002 Authorization to Use Military Force (AUMF). Sen. Grassley has agreed. The Senate has not passed it yet. Now 20 years since the 2001 AUMF was passed by 518–1 in the Congress, we will join in efforts to rescind it.

Bob Mueller has taken over management of our website, <https://www.vfp161.org/>, after 6 years of great work by Franklin Sieberling. We participated in a progressive coalition in the Coralville 4th of July parade, handing out hundreds of quarter-pagers. In late July, four of our members greeted 10,000+ RAGBRAI [Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa] riders with messages of peace.

Kenn Bowen led our co-sponsoring efforts to include previously excluded workers in distribution of American Rescue Plan monies. We had a guest column on Yemen published by two newspapers in March, and two 9-11 letters recently published. We are co-sponsoring an event on Gaza, featuring an Iowa City resident recently returned from a family visit there, with free Ben & Jerry's ice cream being served.

Ed Flaherty

#168 – LOUISVILLE, KY

Chapter 168 is based in Louisville, Kentucky, but has members throughout Kentucky and around the region. We have worked to maintain programming over the summer of 2021 even as COVID and its Delta variant continue to ravage our communities.

First some sad news: Longtime peace and justice activist and Veterans For Peace member Edison Farmer passed away on August 22. He was an inspiration to all of us: may he rest in power.

Our chapter donated to Kentucky Refugee Ministries, recognizing the growing tragedy and need for immediate resettlement of refugees from Afghanistan. VFP member Carol Rawert Trainer has been active in the Be The Change book club and has worked with Jim Wohlgenoth from the Nashville chapter to promote VFP activities. Our *Radio Hour* continues to air monthly and we have added another programmer to our radio collective, VFP member Peter Berres.

Steven Gardiner

U.S. Military Leasing of Lands in Hawai'i



Ultimately, disputes with countries are resolved not by military action, but by dialogue, so why are we spending trillions on weapons?

Over the past two months, members of Hawai'i VFP Chapter 113, with Hawai'i Peace and Justice and other peace groups on all the islands in Hawai'i, have worked to bring attention to the outrageous 65-year leases of 30,000 acres of Hawaii state land for \$1 by the U.S. military. The leases are ending in 2029. We strongly believe that the State of Hawaii should not re-lease these lands, no matter what amount the U.S. military offers.

The leases—of 23,000 acres at Pohakuloa Training Area on the Big Island, 4,370 acres at the Kawaiiloa/Poamoho Training Area, 1,170 acres at the Kahuku Training Area, and 760 acres at the Makua Military Reservation—were given away essentially for free in 1964, with the state charging only \$1 for each parcel for 65 years!

The three areas on Oahu are one-third of the total 18,060 acres of federal and state lands used for military training on the island, while the 23,000 acres at Pohakuloa are 17% of the 133,000 acres that comprise the largest U.S. military training area in the state and in the Pacific region.

Here in Hawai'i, we are subjected to a daily dose of the U.S. military build-up for what the Indo-Pacific command is calling "our enemy China." We know what happens when the U.S. tries to resolve disputes through military action—millions of persons dead and wounded, including tens of thousands of U.S. military, as evidenced by wars in Viet Nam, Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

As residents of Hawai'i, VFP chapter members believe we should want to be known as an area of peace and dialogue—using the Hawaiian technique of *ho'oponopono*, or talking out our problems—rather than as a base for projecting the U.S. propensity for killing. Diplomacy and the willingness to prepare for peace would go a long way toward reducing tensions with other countries.

A first step would be reducing the U.S. military footprint in Hawaii by refusing to re-lease these 30,000 acres.

Comments on the scoping phase of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) were due to the U.S. Army on

September 1, 2021. VFP Chapter 113, Hawai'i Peace and Justice, and many other organizations mobilized to alert the community of the need for their input into the importance scoping phase. Two organizations, Malama Makua and Earth Justice, submitted a 122-page analysis of the continuing negative impact of the U.S. military on the three areas up for re-lease on O'ahu. An estimated 100 other comments from the public were sent to the U.S. Army.

Our collective wrote op-eds and letters to the editor and a remarkable number were printed in the state-wide newspaper, *Star Advertiser*, and articles in other media underscored the need for community involvement. Additionally, Hawai'i Public Radio network provided a venue for VFP member Ann Wright's presentation for no-lease as a part of a brief discussion with military and opposition voices.

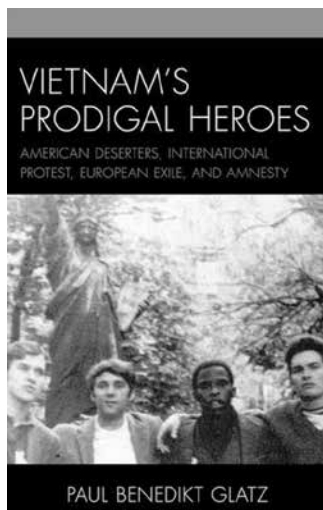
The four members of Hawaii's Congressional delegation are firmly in the pockets of the U.S. military and contractors that contribute to their political campaigns. Unsurprisingly, each Hawai'i member of Congress supports increases in the military budget and a massive military build-up in the Pacific. Our chapter will continue working with other organizations to put pressure on our Congressional delegation to pursue diplomacy rather than military operations in the Western Pacific and on the State of Hawaii's Department of Land Natural Resources, and to NOT re-lease the 30,000 acres to the U.S. military.

#160 – VIET NAM EX-PAT CHAPTER

Recent resurgence of Covid cases in Viet Nam led to strict lockdown orders in Da Nang that caused financial and food stress for many poor and working families. In response, Ms. Ho Sarah Thao at Happy Heart Restaurant organized a fundraising campaign to provide food aid to those in need. Chapter 160 is donating \$500 per month for three months, at which time we will reassess the situation and the need. Thanks for David Clark and his wife Ushi for taking the lead on this charitable effort.

Chuck Searcy





VIETNAM'S PRODIGAL HEROES:

AMERICAN DESERTERS,
INTERNATIONAL PROTEST,
EUROPEAN EXILE, AND
AMNESTY

Paul Benedikt Glatz, 2021

This review by historian Paul Buhle was first published by *The Progressive*, at: <https://progressive.org/latest/praise-who-refused-to-kill-buhle-210907/>

Vietnam's Prodigal Heroes covers a lot of space, from the first appearance of deserters to their long-awaited vindication. It is, like *Dissenting POWs* [reviewed in the Summer issue of the *VFP Newsletter*], a book of memory, both lost and restored.

It is unusual for its close examination of the European press, where the State Department propaganda machine weakened and nearly broke down under the reality of desertion. At least a half-million cases of "unauthorized absences" were recorded, and by 1971, a rate of 73.5 "absences" per thousand soldiers hinted at the mass disillusionment in the ranks.

Compared to the Korean War, which was actually unpopular but in the midst of the Cold War unresisted by draftees, the "deserter phenomenon" arose against the background of the civil rights movement's challenges to racism, the new popular culture of permissiveness

and peaceniks, and above all the sheer unpopularity of the U.S. invasion of Viet Nam.

It is downright exciting to read about the sanctuary that was afforded to soldiers in France and Sweden, likewise the organizing work of French activists and Americans abroad to encourage them and others, with everything from information to housing. Elsewhere, as in Germany, popular opposition to the U.S. effort also became a major strategy of the left, pushing back against the NATO-loyalty of the mainstream political parties. The "Intrepid Four," deserters who showed up in the Soviet Union made headlines, often in the form of attack headlines from *The New York Times* and other U.S. outlets seeking to discredit them.

The role of the deserter naturally grew along with the unpopularity of the war. The State Department and the CIA concocted ways to undermine the security of deserters and draft resisters. Frantic attempts were made to divide them into "confused" and "disloyal" categories. Legal support activists in the United States sought to help, and new groups were formed like the National Black Antiwar Antidraft Union. On the European political front, the Swedish Social Democrats swept to an election victory thanks very much to the young voters drawn to the party's antiwar stance.

"Deserter Activism" rattled U.S. officials who sought to use every means of retribution. On the other hand, the deserters themselves found it hard to adjust to life in exile, especially in those years when English was not so readily spoken by the natives. New helping institutions including the American Exile Project sought to fill the gap, and in the long run helped to lay the basis for a reconciliation of sorts, allowing most Americans to return home without threat of arrest.

In the end, the Amnesty Project found a way forward. Eugene McCarthy and George McGovern had given amnesty their blessings, but Hubert Humphrey faithfully represented the liberal

mainstream in rejecting this solution. Gerald Ford's pardon of President Nixon may have turned the tide of public opinion, or perhaps it was the passage of time that brought Jimmy Carter to issue the blanket pardon.

This pardon unfortunately denied veterans' benefits to offenders, a.k.a. deserters, limiting their opportunities in many ways. By focusing on a distinction between draft offenders (who received the full pardon) and military offenders (who did not), Carter reinforced the class and color lines that had always been at the heart of the Cold War.

This last element makes for an unhappy ending to a story that involves not only great personal courage, but also the dedicated work of thousands of peace activists.



UN - AMERICAN A SOLDIER'S RECKONING OF OUR LONGEST WAR

Erik Edstrom, 2020

Sanford Kelson, former VFP member:

I cannot praise this book enough. I do not have the words to accomplish that task and that saddens me because I think every American should read it and I don't have the ability to express how important it is. The wars are a big part of the book and that is important but the last chapter, "Costs, Opportunity Costs, and Opportunities," synthesizes the war with the major issues facing the nation. It sent chills up my spine.

RECOMMENDED VIEWING

Viet Nam Peace Commemoration Committee Webinar

WOMEN AND THE DRAFT: THE FUTURE OF SELECTIVE SERVICE

Livestreamed Sept. 27, 2021.

Watch the youtube video at

<https://youtu.be/bLs7gdA29Wo>

Resistance to the draft was a major factor in the movement against the U.S. war in Indochina as dramatized in the recent doc film, *The Boys Who Said NO!*

The Senate Armed Services Committee has proposed amending the Selective Service law to require registration of women in addition to men. There will be coverage about this issue in the media this fall and debates in both the House and Senate.

Traditionalists oppose including women in the draft. Peace activists see this as an opportunity to eliminate or suspend an entire dysfunctional system of required registration. Others believe as long as Selective Service exists and is registering men, equal treatment of women in the military and society means they should also register. Feminists who reject war and militarism as linked to patriarchy oppose inclusion of women in the draft.

Critics of an All Volunteer Force decry an economic draft that puts the burden of repeated military postings on a narrow sector of U.S. society and encourages Congressional irresponsibility and public indifference to forever wars. A less discussed approach so far is creation of universal national service offering both civilian and military paths.

This webinar provides insight from different perspectives about how to engage in a vital national debate.

A woman veteran responds to the above webinar announcement:

I am a "feminist" and would support the "all-inclusive" draft that includes women, only when all women are treated equally with equal access to higher education, (the) highest paying jobs, and complete control over their reproductive organs. The draft must include Congress' offspring and their descendants. No exceptions.

I am also a Veterans For Peace activist who wants to eliminate the entire dysfunctional/unfair system of required registration. In addition, the only time anyone would be called up is *if* our United States of America were physically attacked on our soil. NO foreign wars or "entanglements."

S. Jenika, member and former president of VFP Chapter 72, Portland, Oregon; currently active with Project Homeless



Greetings,

I am a carpenter in Ottawa. I am also a musician and when the people recently went into mass actions to oppose the state organized racist violence and oppression I was so deeply moved and inspired I wrote a song that hopefully captures the essence of the struggle. I made a video for this song, "Rome is Burning." [watch on Youtube at <https://youtu.be/9oZA23ahKfs>]

I hope you find it inspiring and useful and if so please feel free to share it. Even though a cop was recently convicted of murder it does not mean there is now justice all of a sudden. The criminalization of political, social and economic problems continue as well as the police brutality. I wish all the success in our common effort and work to build a new society and world that is fit for human beings! Salute!

Yours Truly, Mistahi Corkill



THE BOYS WHO SAID NO!

Directed by Judith Ehrlich • 2021 • RT 1:35

Watch this powerful story of the youth-led resistance that ended the draft and helped end the Vietnam War, then join the Livestream Event on October 17. More information at: <https://watch.showandtell.film/watch/boyswhosaidno>

A \$12 ticket includes a live discussion on Zoom of the film and its relevance featuring: Joan Baez, Daniel Ellsberg, David Harris, Mandy Carter, Judith Ehrlich, and Mac Hamilton.

Veteran Decries Inconsistent Justice

by Ed Flaherty

The story of Zalmay Naizy of Iowa Falls has been well-publicized. He was an interpreter for U.S. forces in Afghanistan for several years, has lived in Iowa Falls for several years, where he has become a valued and respected member of the community. He is now facing deportation back to Afghanistan because his visa has expired. This is all happening as the U.S. is ending its military operations in Afghanistan and is attempting to deal with visa requests from 18,000 Afghans who have served as interpreters for the U.S. and now fear for their lives. On Thursday, July 8, President Biden said “there is a home for you in the U.S., if you so choose, and we will stand with you just as you stood with us.” Only a Pulitzer Prize-winner of the Fiction award could concoct such a ludicrous and obvious inconsistency.

Less obvious and more removed from the public eye is the contrast between the cases of Marine Major Christopher Warnagiris and Air Force veteran Daniel Hale. Warnagiris participated in the January 6th assault on the U.S. Capitol, and reportedly physically attacked Capitol defenders. He has been charged with multiple offenses, but is still on active duty at the Quantico Marine base while awaiting trial. Daniel Hale, involved with weaponized drones while stationed in Afghanistan, has been in jail for several months and may be sentenced for up to ten years. His offense? He made public details about the use of U.S. weaponized drones, including the fact that, contrary to our government’s official statements, the drone program killed many more civilians than targeted “terrorists.”

I hope by the time this article appears that Zalmay Naizy has gotten a green light to stay in the U.S. as long as he wishes. And I hope that the July 8th words of President Biden regarding



A shot of drone whistleblower Daniel Hale from the award-winning documentary National Bird, a film about whistleblowers in the U.S. drone program who suffered from moral injury and PTSD. Photo source: <https://standwithdanielhale.org>

Afghan interpreters bear fruit in reality. I also hope that Major Warnagiris is promptly removed from active duty. If found guilty, part of his punishment must be a dishonorable discharge from the Marines. As for Daniel Hale, a truth-telling, non-violent veteran, I hope that Judge O’Grady imposes a very lenient sentence on July 27 [he was sentenced to 45 months], and that President Biden grants him a pardon.

History will not treat kindly the U.S. involvement since 1980 in Afghanistan. But at least we need not further dishonor our country’s reputation by ignoring the plight of these victims. Naizy and the Afghan interpreters who worked with the U.S. military served veterans nobly. Hale, asserting the rights of U.S. soldiers to speak truth, honors veterans. Warnagiris, if found guilty, should be punished even more than his January 6th peers because of the high responsibility he has, as a senior officer, to defend the Constitution. He has dishonored veterans.

Ed Flaherty is a member of VFP Chapter 161 in Iowa City, Iowa. His essay was published by the Cedar Rapids Gazette on July 21, 2021.

The Mirror: 1975 and 2021

by Larry Slessler

In the summer of 2021, my country pulled out of Afghanistan, bringing the United States’ longest war to an end. No matter how much we deny it, the strongest military power in the world lost this war. I am in mourning for the men and women who face a reality that their sacrifices were not adequate.

I think I understand their feelings. I well remember my grief and loss when the U. S. left Viet Nam in 1973 and later on April 30, 1975 when South Viet Nam fell to our enemy in what was at that time our longest war.

In 1973 and 1975; I did not grieve because I thought we could win; I knew we were losing. I did not grieve for the war as one for a worthy cause; I believed it was not. I grieved for all my fellow Vietnam war participants. In 2021, I relive those same feelings for U.S. Afghanistan vets.

In Afghanistan, we could have learned from our own Revolutionary War and Viet Nam; but we did not. The lessons are clear to all that care to hear them. Too often our hubris overrules and leaders

cont’d on p. 23...

are convinced that overwhelming military force will assure a win. It does not.

First and foremost, the military forces of the base country can, and most often does, win by not losing. Time is always on the side of the home team based revolutionary forces. They can lose most battles but as long as there is not a complete destruction of the revolutionary forces they will win in the end. We taught the British that in our own war of revolution. We failed to remember that lesson in Viet Nam and again in Afghanistan.

In 1965 I was assigned/attached to a search-and-destroy mission in Viet Nam. I paired up with a Vietnamese Captain who was also attached. In a conversation he told me; "You Americans are the best equipped military in the world. You are chasing an enemy that will allow you to catch him when he wants to be caught. His time, his place, his country."

About a month later I had a conversation with a Canadian who had lived in Viet Nam from the mid 1930s. He had witnessed the Japanese occupation of the area in WWII and the French returning after the war until their defeat in the early 1950s. He was clear in his summary of U.S. efforts, telling me, "You will lose like the French, but it will take longer because you have more money."

The foreign forces—In the American Revolution the British, in Viet Nam and Afghanistan the United States—fight far from home, have long supply lines, are seen as an invader, and in time the home population is apathetic or hostile to the effort.

Maybe most important is the revolutionary force has a belief in a cause they will die for. The foreign force counts the days until they can go home and has little motivation to die in a land far from home for a cause they may, or may not, believe in.

Another problem with our role in Viet Nam and Afghanistan was we had no overarching strategy. "Winning hearts and minds" and other ringing slogans are poor substitutes for an actual plan. Our tactic in Viet Nam of "search and

destroy" in reality became "destroy and search." Killing the friend or relative of someone does not win "hearts and minds."

There appears to be a difference between Viet Nam and Afghanistan inside our own country. Viet Nam was a deeply unpopular war. The powers that be thought they cured that problem and by getting rid of the draft there would be little, or no, antiwar movement. The powers were correct. However, apathy toward the Afghanistan war was also damning to the cause. It just took longer.

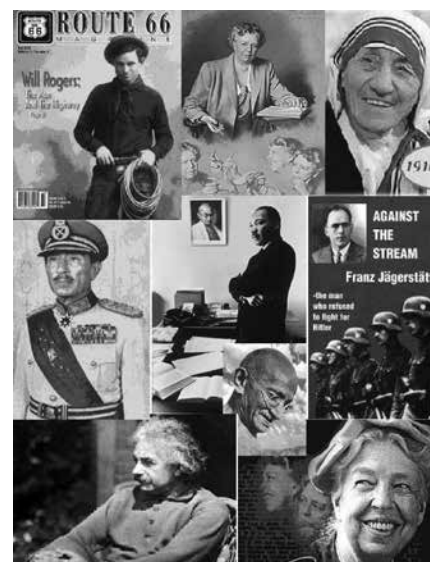
The best Commanding Officer (CO) I had in my 10 years of military service gave me a tee shirt. The shirt had an outline of Viet Nam, an awards ribbon and an inscription that said; "Participant South East Asian War Games 1961–1975, 2nd Place." With a little editing it could be presented to an American Afghanistan vet.

I hope the men and woman that are grieving will turn to older, and hopefully recovering Viet Nam Vets or competent mental health professionals. I was lead worker in the Southern Oregon Vietnam Vet Outreach Center in the 1980s. We dealt with veteran grief and loss over Viet Nam every day. We do not need to re-learn the lesson of the cost of war on our current military men and woman veterans. We know what they are.

There seems to always be a willingness and monetary support to go to war. There are always promises that our vets will be taken care of. After the war vet support; not so much. Ask Viet Nam Agent Orange disabled vets. Ask our current Iraq and Afghanistan "Burn Pit" vets.

I suggest we spend less money on warplane flyovers during NFL games and holidays. Fund a few less parades. Use that money to address the suicide rate, mental health, re-integration issues and other needs among the men and woman who went to war and believed they would be taken care of as promised on their return.

Larry Slessler belongs to Rogue Valley VFP Chapter 156 in Medford, Oregon.



A Peace Curriculum

Dear Editor,

I read your Summer newsletter with great interest. Thank you. The article by Dr. Leo Sandy and Will Thomas of Chapter 62 in New Hampshire, "Teach peace and social justice in our classrooms," caught my attention....

[Dr. Leo Sandy had endorsed the writer's peace curriculum in a 1995 letter written to VFP on behalf of the Minneapolis Chapter. Below is the story of how the curriculum came to be.]

* * *

I was unhappy with the Minneapolis Public Schools textbooks which seemed to stress war and violence. In 1986, I applied and was granted a sabbatical leave from the Minneapolis School Board to develop a Peace Non-Violence Curriculum.

When I returned in 1987, this course was approved by the administration. I taught this course in several high schools. Other teachers also taught it in their high schools.

It was well received by the students and is now available for free on the internet at www.Cecilram.com, with versions for both high school and grade school levels.

I invite VFP members to use and disseminate this curriculum.

Cecil Ramnaraine, Member VFP Chapter 27, Minneapolis, Minn.



Members' Convention Reflections

"OVER THE YEARS, attending our national conventions has served to inspire me to recommit myself to our life's work within VFP, as my 50 years of seemingly futile efforts at times take their toll on my hope and energy. These past few years I have drifted, struggling to keep myself in the fight. Participating in the panel that Garrett put together ["9-11 and 20 years of veteran anti-militarism activism"] has shaken me out of this funk. The impressive, diverse panel of mostly younger VFP members, with their unwavering commitment to VFP's mission, high energy levels, and wide range of experiences and approaches to our work, reminded me of who we are, and who I am in VFP, and that losing hope is not something to be indulging in. In recent years, it was seeing long-time VFP comrades like Doug Rawlings, Woody Powell, Ken Mayers, Paul Cox, Susan Schnall, and many more, whose commitment never falters, that would keep me in the game. This time, it was a virtual panel of younger vets."

— Frank Corcoran, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

"THE CONVENTION'S EMPHASIS on the benefits of empowering young vets to assume leadership roles made me confident that my lifetime membership won't expire before I do."

—Rick Staggenborg, Albany, Oregon

VFP WORKING GROUPS

• Climate Change Working Group

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

• Reclaim Armistice Day

Meeting every other Thursday in the morning:
Email reppenhagen@veteransforpeace.org

• VFP Nuclear Abolition Working Group

Meeting twice a month on the 2nd & 4th Thursdays
at 6 pm ET | 5 pm CT | 4 pm MT | 3 pm PT:
Email vfp.nonukes@gmail.com

Be the Change book club

In the quest to grapple with systemic racism (and other isms) in our world, our lives, and our organization(s), VFP's *Be the Change* book club (which arose out of conversations at the 2020 virtual VFP convention) has thus far read and discussed: *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo, *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad, *All About Love* by bell hooks, and *Unconventional Combat* by VFP associate member Mike Messner. Next up: *How to Be An Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi. Here are brief reflections from a handful of current participants.

"IT HASN'T BEEN EASY reading, but the books we've taken up have been overwhelmingly thought-provoking and at times illuminating, and the collective approach to doing the hard digging demanded by the authors has its own rewards."

—Becky Luening

"THE VFP *Be the Change* book club has been a meaningful, joyful and challenging experience, as our diverse VFP associates and members read about and discuss how to effectively deal with our abundant racism, sexism, and other prevalent 'isms' basic in our U.S. organizations, education and cultures."

—Judith Sandoval

"AS A MEMBER of the VFP Board of Directors, I find that our discussions in the VFP *Be the Change* book club help me maintain a strong focus on the 'Peace at Home' part of our 'Peace at Home; Peace Abroad' mission."

—Kenneth Mayers

"I FIND THE VFP *Be the Change* book club difficult. It is hard to bring up my dross—my dark side—which is what the reading and discussion does. It has to be done to make factual the changes that I want to see in myself and the world. I do love the connections and friendship that the book club has created."

—Greg Corning

"AS SOMEONE WHO HAS LIVED, for many years, by the slogan 'Change Yourself to Change the World,' the VFP *Be the Change* book club sounded like a good fit for me, and it has been. We have built great connections, trust and respect with each other while taking on some difficult subjects."

—Vince Dijanich

"ONE OF THE THINGS I am most grateful for, besides reading thoughtful and timely books, is the opportunity to meet and friend so many other VFP members that I would not have had the opportunity to do otherwise. I look forward to each session and feel sorry when I have to miss one. I learn so much from others and I really appreciate each and every one of them."

—Carol Rawert Trainer

SIGN UP: <https://veteransforpeace.salsalabs.org/vfpbookclub>

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Contact Kathleen Hernandez at hernandezkathleen@hotmail.com

Fall Calendar

MONDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2021

Indigenous Peoples' Day

The Columbus Day holiday is one barrier to the healing of the deep wounds of this nation's violent founding and colonization and to the recognition and protection of Indigenous rights. Commemorating the arrival of Christopher Columbus to the "New World" is an affront to Indigenous peoples everywhere and particularly to native peoples of the Americas. Veterans For Peace denounces the celebration of a person who carried out mass killings and genocidal acts against Indigenous peoples and paved the way for European colonization of native lands and enslavement of native peoples, and we call on the federal government to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day. See <https://www.veteransforpeace.org/take-action/indigenous-peoples-day>

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2021 • 6PM CDT

Fall 2021 Peacestock: "Is Military Providing the Security We Seek?"

VFP Chapter 115 in Red Wing, Minnesota, is the host of this virtual gathering for peace. Find more info on page 18 and at <https://www.peacestockvfp.org/>

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2021 • 11AM

Armistice Day

Honor veterans by ringing bells 11 times at the 11th hour to celebrate the end of hostilities. Read about VFP's campaign to Reclaim Armistice Day on pages 1-3.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2021

Buy Nothing Day

A great day to stage an event at your local mall, big box store or toy store, asking shoppers to think twice before buying war toys for children.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10

PAX Unplugged

Gamers For Peace will have a presence at this annual event held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. See page 6 for more info.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24-26, 2021

Anniversary of the 1914 Christmas Peace Truce

Celebrate "Peace on Earth" by commemorating the historic cessation of hostilities and full-on fraternization that took place between so-called enemies amidst the horror of what we now know as World War I.

VOTE!

2021 Veterans For Peace Election

<https://www.veteransforpeace.org/2021ballot>

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2021

Last day to cast an electronic ballot.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2021

Paper ballots sent out to all members who did not place an electronic vote.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2021

Paper ballots must be postmarked by this date to be counted.



Members of Veterans For Peace traveled to Nevada to take part in actions at Creech Air Force Base in late September. In this photo, Jules Vaquera holds a sign near the base entrance that links to a letter informing current drone operators and other military members of their rights and the responsibilities according to international law, U.S. law, and the Uniform Code of Military Justice.



I WAS TOWING THE BOAT OF MY YOUTH

I was towing the boat of my youth.
It was slowing me down.
So I cut the hawser and let it drift.
I can see it still, fainter every day,
a speck on the horizon.
But now I'm gaining speed.

Doug Anderson

Anderson served as a Navy Corpsman attached to the Marines in 1967.
Below: Ha Long Bay, Viet Nam, 2019. Photo by Doug Anderson.

AFTER THE WAR

After the war perhaps I'll sit again
Out on the terrace where I sat with you,
And see the changeless sky and hills beat blue
And live an afternoon of summer through.

I shall remember then, and sad at heart
For the lost day of happiness we knew,
Wish only that some other man were you
and spoke my name as once you used to do.

May Wedderburn Cannan

May Wedderburn Cannan (1893–1973) was a British First World War poet and writer.

This poem is reprinted from *In Time of War* (Basil Blackwell, 1917), with permission of Mrs. Clara Abrahams, and can be found online at <https://maywedderburncannan.wordpress.com/after-the-war/>

THESE TWO POEMS
WERE SELECTED BY
W. D. EHRHART
EDITOR-AT-LARGE

WHEN THE WAR ENDS

ON BEING INVISIBLE

So you come home from a war alone and within a week the first place
you want to be is in the bleachers of Fenway Park — one of many where
no one knows who you were last week with your freaked out sense of mortality

Incoming! You caught out in the open last day in country
burying your face in the mud becoming the mud please dear God please
make me disappear not be me and I'll never ever want to be anything more
ever again

I'm looking to be as diaphanous as the deer by the apple tree lost in the
morning mist
Here today gone tomorrow nothing more nothing less just let me
come home and rest in the bosom of Wallace Stevens:

*"For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is"*

Amen, brothers and sisters, amen.

Doug Rawlings

IMMIGRATION

It is October, when the winds of Autumn blow strong in
the Pacific.

There are over two thousand of us, sardines,
barely human and starving. We sleep on the floor and
wash ourselves with seawater. People are sick.
When someone dies from sickness, he or she is wrapped
in a blanket and tossed overboard during a Buddhist
chant.

I was only two years old and cannot recollect the dying
next to me, nor can I recollect my constant coughing, nor
can I recall seeing my mother's worried countenance as she
contemplated our future, how my constant crying made
her want to jump overboard.

Teresa Mei Chuc

These two poems are from an upcoming collaborative book
that will contain paired works of VFP member Doug Rawlings,
a Vietnam veteran, and Teresa Mei Chuc, a refugee of the
American war in Viet Nam.



CONNECT WITH OTHER MEMBERS

SLACK

SLACK is a channel-based messaging platform that allows multiple conversations to take place in the same space, grouped by category. VFP is using SLACK to help build 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

The VFP-ALL listserv is open to all VFP members for sharing announcements and information with other members. VFP-ALL was recently moved from Yahoo! (which stopped supporting listservs) to Google. To join the VFP-ALL group, go to:

<http://bit.ly/VFPALLSignUp>

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

Weekly VFP Social Hour

Held on Zoom 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."

Be the Change Book Club

Held on Zoom every other Sunday at
5 pm ET | 4 pm CT | 3 pm MT | 2 pm PT.
The next round of discussions—on Ibram X. Kendi's book, *How to Be an Anti-Racist*—take place Oct. 24, Nov. 7 & 21, and Dec. 5 & 19. See page 24 for more information and the sign-up link.

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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.



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LEFT: VFP Chapter 1 members made a strong showing Sept. 4, 2021, at a protest outside the Brunswick, Maine, Air Show, which featured the Blue Angels in a "disgusting display of the U.S. military's wastefulness and environmental destruction." Top left: 65 activists rallied, demonstrated, and passed out flyers to show-goers stuck in miles-long traffic lines to get in (at \$45 a pop!). Pictured top right, in mask: Richard Clement. Bottom: Bruce Gagnon and Mark Roman hold up a beautiful banner made by ARRT! (Artists Rapid Response Team). Photos by Ellen Davidson. [Read about other regional actions in VFP chapter reports on pages 12-19.]