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VFP NEWSLETTER

veteransforpeace.org

WINTER 2019

STAYING HUMAN: Deported Veterans provide aid to asylum seekers at the Tijuana border

By Mike Tork

MEET YOUR DEPORTED VETERANS

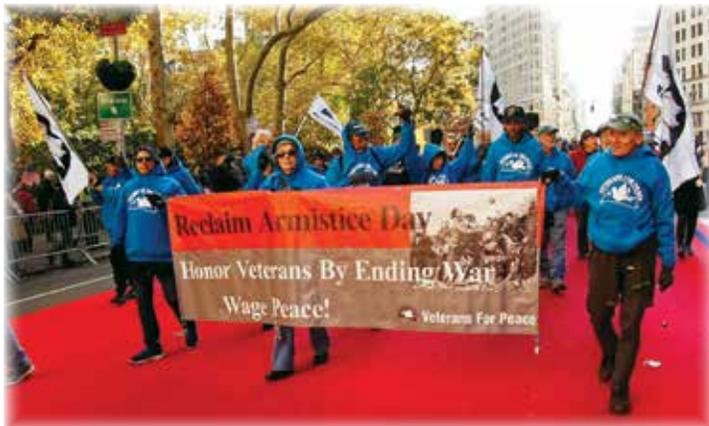
What started out as a trip to learn firsthand what was happening on the border and help provide a little aid to asylum seekers ended up being much more.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Hector Lopez, Lupita Cibrian, Robert Vivar, Blanca Viramontes, and Jan Ruhman for not only welcoming me, but also helping me understand, and see, what was happening along the Tijuana border.

What I saw was a very strong community of Deported Veterans (Unified Deported Veterans/VFP Sgt. Barrios Memorial Chapter 182) and supporters who unselfishly set aside their own struggles to help asylum seekers. I also saw a community of veterans supporting each other through difficult times, sharing what they can. It inspired me to remain human—no matter

#NeverAgain

Veterans and allies turn out in force to Reclaim Armistice Day



Read all about it on pages 6–7, and in the Chapter Reports.

how bad things get. *Seguiré siendo humano.*

Before I share what I saw regarding the asylum seekers, I want to remind everyone that the veterans I met with in Tijuana are just that. They served their country honorably, many in combat, many highly decorated, but were deported for mistakes they made after being discharged—mistakes like those made by so many fellow veterans after returning home. Although others of us have been forgiven for our mistakes, they have not. They remain deported, separated from family and friends, without the opportunity to make amends or move forward. They continue to pay a very high price for something they did a long time ago. I am not talking about serious mistakes, but relatively minor ones.

These men grew up in the U.S., went to school in the U.S., played high school sports in the U.S., worked in the U.S., and paid taxes in the U.S. They did not necessarily join the military just to become citizens, as many of them felt like they were already citizens. They joined the military because they felt like it was their duty, and the fact that they were deported after serving their country is incomprehensible. These are the exact people I want as neighbors and fellow citizens.

DELIVERING AID

Deported Veterans and VFP members from San Diego (Chapter 91) delivered food, water, toilet paper, blankets, gloves, socks, backpacks, and wool caps to asylum seekers at the Barretal Shelter. Things went well because it was intentional, organized, and thought out. We didn't want to create

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Lupita, Robert, and Blanca prepare sandwiches for asylum seekers.

We Can End the “Forever Wars” in 2019

I am writing this letter on January 1, the first day of 2019, feeling glad for a New Year—2018 was rough!

Multiple “forever wars” dragged on, unopposed by any really large antiwar mobilizations. There was lots of confusion about how we ended up with a right-wing racist running amok in the White House. Boris and Natasha were accused of posting a lot on Facebook, and even “hacking” the election. And he was so distrusted, when Trump made tentative moves toward peace, few applauded.

Peace activists were confused about how to respond to the regime change war in Syria. Some thought the CIA-backed “rebels” were the good guys. As for Latin America, some progressives were disoriented by the propaganda war against the governments of Venezuela and Nicaragua, who, with Cuba, make up John Bolton’s “troika of tyranny,” and are in the sunsights of U.S. imperialism.

In this difficult political environment, Veterans For Peace persevered in 2018. We were not distracted by “Russiagate”; we kept our eye on the ball. Ours was one of the first peace groups to issue a public statement applauding Trump’s announced withdrawal of U.S. troops from Syria (which apparently has been reversed by the “adults in the room”). We continue to call for an end to U.S. wars and occupations in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Libya, Somalia, Niger, and Chad (the nine countries bombed by the U.S. in 2018).

Veterans For Peace participated in scores of antiwar actions in 2018. We helped found the Coalition Against U.S. Foreign Military Bases and participated in the First International Conference Against U.S./NATO Bases in Dublin [see p. 23]. We followed the lead of our Okinawan friends to demand an end to the environmentally disastrous construction of a U.S. Marine base at Henoko.

VFP was also busy on the “War at Home” front. Most notably, our Unified U.S. Deported Veterans chapter in Tijuana, Mexico, worked hard to provide material support for the wave of Central American asylum seekers [see story on page 1]. San Diego members helped deliver humanitarian aid across the border, even as they continued with their “Compassion Campaign,” providing sleeping bags to hundreds of people sleeping on the streets of San Diego. VFP also provided leadership in the campaign to Save Our VA from privateers.

A bunch of us traveled to Viet Nam for another very moving visit, coinciding with an exhibit in Hanoi of U.S. war resisters. We continued to advocate on behalf of Agent Orange victims in Viet Nam, as well as U.S. veterans and their offspring.

We enjoyed a fantastic 2018 convention in St. Paul, Minnesota! Aida Touma, a leading Palestinian writer, activist and member of the Israeli Knesset, was a featured presenter. Indigenous presenters included Dr. Chris Mato Nunpa, a Wahpeton Dakota from the Upper Sioux Community in southwestern Minnesota, who enlightened us about the Doctrine of Discovery and the Papal Bulls that sanctioned the slaughter of Indigenous peoples and the theft of their land by European “discoverers” as early as 1493. And there was so much more.

Partly due to ongoing concerns about sexism within the ranks, the VFP Board presented a Code of Conduct for members to discuss at the convention, which was well received and has now been incorporated into our Policy Manual. We will continue to encourage respectful dialogue in 2019, to engender a safe environment for all within our organization.

We made real progress in rebranding Veterans Day as Armistice Day in 2018, with actions in many cities [see pages 6–7]. Chapters began to step up their efforts to distribute our great quarterly newspaper, *Peace In Our Times*, more widely, and our weekly VFP eNews did a wonderful job of celebrating achievements of VFP members throughout the past year, locally, nationally, and internationally.



While in Washington, D.C., on Armistice Day, VFP President Gerry Condon joined three of VFP’s women veterans in laying a wreath at the Viet Nam Women’s Memorial. L to R: Sabrina Waller, Gerry, Ellen Barfield, and Madeleine Mysko. The memorial is dedicated to U.S. women who served in Viet Nam, most of whom were nurses. Madeleine served as a burn unit nurse during that era.

In short, Veterans For Peace had an outstanding year of action! All this good work will continue in 2019, but we will do even more to strengthen our presence in the antiwar movement.

Veterans For Peace is in a good position to lead. We should continue to join the initiatives of other peace groups and coalitions. We should also be planting our own flag to rally more people to the cause of peace. Veterans For Peace is highly respected in many quarters—and we are everywhere! There are active VFP chapters in over 100 U.S. cities.

Let’s begin to flex our collective muscle by organizing regular days or weeks of coordinated actions. This would make VFP more visible, attracting new members while strengthening the peace movement, locally and nationally. Internationally, Veterans For Peace now has chapters in seven other nations—the



latest being Russia!—with more to come. In order to maximize these international connections, VFP is planning an International Veterans Peace Conference, and hope to host an initial meeting later this year. We have been invited to attend the Russian VFP conference in May.

Veterans For Peace will be in Washington, D.C., for an anti-NATO march and rally on Saturday, March 30, and connected actions Wednesday and Thursday, April 3–4, when NATO leaders will be in town celebrating the organization’s 75 years. NATO has become an international interventionist force for the Western powers who wish to continue their colonial legacy around the world. This must end.

We are looking forward to another great VFP Convention, August 15–18, 2019, in the heart of beautiful downtown Spokane, Washington. We have negotiated decent prices at the Doubletree Hotel (\$150 per room, including taxes—up to 4 people per room). To make it less expensive for all, we decided to shorten the convention by one day. It will go from Thursday evening through Sunday morning. That means only one day for workshops. We are considering doing some other things differently too, like orienting the convention more toward strategic planning for VFP’s ever-evolving work. We intend to attract top-of-the-line speakers and cultural performers to Spokane, and I hope you will be there.

Twenty-nineteen should be a year of growth for Veterans For Peace and the peace movement. Imperialism’s “forever wars” may not be so “forever” after all, as revealed by Trump’s tentative draw-downs in Syria and Afghanistan, and congressional opposition to the U.S.-supported Saudi war in Yemen. These are all “failed wars,” not to mention illegal, mass-murdering wars. The powers that be are divided over what to do. Veterans For Peace can make a real difference this year if we take a lead in pressing for the end of *each* and *every* war.

Wage Peace in the New Year!

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**NEXT CHAPTER REPORTS DUE
JUNE 15, 2019**

Submission Guidelines

Keep it concise—under 200 words. Submit your report via email (pasted in message or as attachment in doc or text form) to editor@veteransforpeace.org.

Title report with your chapter number and location name, e.g. 001 - Portland, ME. Don’t forget to include your name at bottom.

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

TOO MUCH PAPER?

You may opt to receive your newsletter electronically by sending a request to gail@veteransforpeace.org along with your name and email address.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Michael McPhearson, Executive Director, Veterans For Peace [Photo: Ellen Davidson]

A Four-Corner Foundation for Waging Peace and Justice

This will probably be my last message to you as your executive director. Thank you for allowing me the great honor of serving you in this role. And thank you for all the work and support you provide to this wonderful organization. I want to give special thanks to all our associate members. Your support of Veterans For Peace is priceless. You definitely made my job easier. Without you, many of our chapters would not be viable or exist at all. We need you and we are fortunate to have you.

I had some trouble writing this, because I was not sure what to say in my last address as ED. In the midst of this transition from what has been an important period of my life, words seem to fall short. But then I received an email from a Gold Star mother whose son was killed in Iraq. She expressed gratitude for the work of Veterans For Peace. This is possibly the most poignant example of the relevance of our work.

War is killing. If war were a game with no deaths, then it would be perhaps no more dangerous than NASCAR, football, or some other semi-dangerous activity. But we know that war means indiscriminate death and destruction. There is perhaps nothing more tragic than a parent losing a child, no matter the circumstances. But to lose a child to the senselessness of war is an added burden. I am inspired by the courage of

the Gold Star parents who work through their pain to pursue peace and justice. I am motivated by all those who have died in war to stop this madness for the living. And we as an organization of former death-dealers and cogs in the U.S. death machine and imperial project have a responsibility to do all we can for the larger purpose of world peace.

I feel compelled to briefly mention a few current challenges we face. The news of a U.S. withdrawal from Syria may go up in smoke, as Administration warmongers work to change Trump's policy direction. The Administration continues to pull out of all previously negotiated restraints on the U.S. nuclear arsenal and ability to wage nuclear war. Meanwhile, Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson recently warned that the same tactics used to justify war on Iraq are being used to justify war on Iran. And of course, there are the domestic challenges such as the ongoing attacks on all people of color, most recently illustrated by the lies about and demonization of immigrants. There are so many challenges before us. How do we face them all?

This leads me to briefly review the four corners of what I see as a foundation to the work that I believe we must continue if we are to be successful at waging peace and ending war: Resistance, Education, Unity, and Building the World We Want to Live In.

First, of course, we must always continue to resist. We must resist for our own individual sanity and to show each other that we are not alone. We must resist to show the government that there are people who will not let war be waged in our name. Most important, we must resist to show that resistance is possible, and to provide a space and place for others to resist with us.

Second, we must educate ourselves and others that peace is possible. This is done by meeting people where they are on issues, not insulting them and chastising them for not understanding the folly and immorality of war. We should be humble and remember that there once

was a time, for most of us, when we did not see it ourselves. We must be clear that a small and isolated peace movement cannot end war alone. We must understand for ourselves and help others see how ending war and building peace at home and abroad is relevant to all our lives. We must spread the message and understanding that peace is not an idealistic dream or a naïve pursuit to be morally just. Instead, it is a pragmatic imperative to build safe communities, to ensure human existence, and to maintain the earth as a viable place for life as we know it.

Third, we must understand that, to be successful, our efforts, our movement must be part of a larger, full-spectrum movement for peace and justice. We must understand that our challenge is not to out-think, out-maneuver, or defeat the warmongers, death-dealers, and those who would impoverish us and the planet to satisfy their greed. Our challenge is to uncover and see the connections of our struggles and then to unite, for in that unity they are defeated. I say "uncover and see the connections," because we do not need to make them. The connections are there. Those who work to keep us apart know this; they fear this and constantly work to keep us divided. Trump is a prime example of those who seek to control and oppress us by division. Martin Luther King Jr. and Fred Hampton are prime examples of leaders who chose to confront injustice through inclusion and healing. They were both assassinated. And as soon as Malcolm spoke less about division and more about understanding and action, he was assassinated too. The fact that all three were killed speaks to the power of unity.

The fourth corner of our foundation is to build the world we want to live in. To do that, we must understand that building that world begins with each of us. This is the most important aspect of our work. We are asking people to believe that a new world is possible. The best
continued on page 22...

Viet Nam: A country, not a war

After serving a year in Viet Nam (March 1968–March 1969), I returned to this war-torn country in March 1989. From the 30 years I have been photographing the country and people of this once devastated but resilient culture, I have come to understand: Viet Nam is a country, not a war. Here's how I know.

On page 29 of his book of essays, *Viet Nam: Tradition and Change* (Ohio University Press, 2016), Huu Ngoc (1918–), explains the meaning of Viet Nam. Unlike English, the Vietnamese language is monosyllabic. Each word has meaning. *Viet* means “people,” and *Nam* means “south.” The name Viet Nam (or Nam Viet) differentiated the Vietnamese from their age-old enemy, the people of the north, the Chinese.

Even the United Nations recognizes the name Viet Nam.

In 2005, the late Philip Jones Griffiths, photojournalist and author [*Vietnam Inc.* (1971); *Agent Orange: Collateral Damage in Viet Nam* (2003); and *Viet Nam at Peace* (2005)], described to me how the *New York Times* changed the spelling of Viet Nam in the late 1960s. When reporters filed stories from “Indochina” by cable, each word cost money. The correct spelling of Ha Noi, Viet Nam, cost twice as much as “Hanoi, Vietnam.”

When transmission was “free,” Philip suggested the *Times*' editors were culturally ignorant, or arrogant, or a little of both. They wouldn't correct their misspelling. Style manuals accepted the misspelled word, and the name of a mythological country became associated with pain and anguish in the hearts and minds of just about every American.

Introducing our war, *National Geographic* published a series of articles “on war-torn Viet Nam,” “South Viet Nam Fights the Red Tide” (October, 1961), “Water War in Viet Nam” (November 1962), “American Special Forces in Action in Viet Nam” (January 1965), and more. On page 22 of *TIME Magazine*, Vol. No. 5 (July 30, 1965), under

“THE WORLD,” a story describes “South Viet Nam,” yet shows “Danang” on their map. A September 1965 letterhead of the U.S. Embassy uses “Viet-Nam.”

Starting from childhood, I think we can all agree, words can make a big difference in the emotions and well-being of others, positive or negative. In war, we use words to dehumanize the enemy. That makes them easier to hate and kill.

A humble suggestion: Spell this country's name Viet Nam (don't worry about diacritical marks). Pay attention to how you feel when using these new, “old” words. We're conditioned to associate “Vietnam” with an emotional trauma. Hopefully, in time, your personal emotions will begin to relax, realizing they have never actually been to *Viet Nam*. The war that remains in our hearts and minds happened in the mythical country of “Vietnam.”

Now that you know, you too, can change ... if you want. Accepting Viet Nam as a country, not a war, is a positive step in the world of being human.

—Ted Engelmann

Ted Engelmann is a charter member of VFP Hoa Binh (Peace) Chapter 160, Ha Noi, Viet Nam. He lives in Denver, CO.



Displaying VFP Japan's message at the 2018 VFP convention (L to R): David Rothauer (Ch. 9), Seijiro Mera (VFPJ), Ed Garza (Ch. 110), and Takao Izutsu (Co-Chair, VFPJ).

Reclaim Armistice: Let us keep Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan

Reclaiming Armistice and celebrating the Kellogg-Briand Pact is very relevant to us in Japan, due to the situation of Article 9 of our Constitution, which is the “fruit” of the international agreement to

renounce war. The Kellogg-Briand Pact is actually the root of Article 9.

Though it seems the pact has been ignored for a long time, the spirit of it is still alive in the article, and still inspires people who hunger for peace. First of all, the text of Clause 1 of Article 9 says:

The Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

Colonel Charles Kades, who drafted Article 9, recalled that he was deeply impressed by the pacifism of this pact when he was at Harvard Law School. He said the reason why he undertook drafting Article 9 was because he had the confidence to instill its essence into the article. Also, he recognized that the refusal of maintaining military power was intended to restore the spirit of the pact, which has been ignored.

Prime Minister Kijuro Shidehara, who proposed the renunciation of war to General Douglas MacArthur, was the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time the pact was negotiated. So he knew the spirit of the pact very well.

Recently, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has expressed his intention to amend Article 9. We strongly believe that if we want to “reclaim” real “armistice” (i.e., win back renunciation of war) in Japan, our Article 9 should be kept as it is.

Some people say that renunciation of war is unrealistic idealism. However, knowing so much about the reality of wars as veterans, we are confident that *renunciation of war IS a realistic choice.*

VFP Japan wishes to continue pursuing world peace in cooperation with all people who long for peace. By sharing these historical values, we hope to revitalize movements for international solidarity to “end all wars.”

Thank you for sharing with us many points of view for peace.

—Yukiko Takei, Esq.

Yukiko Takei is
Secretary of Veterans
For Peace Japan



ARMISTICE DAY 2018 • #NeverAgain

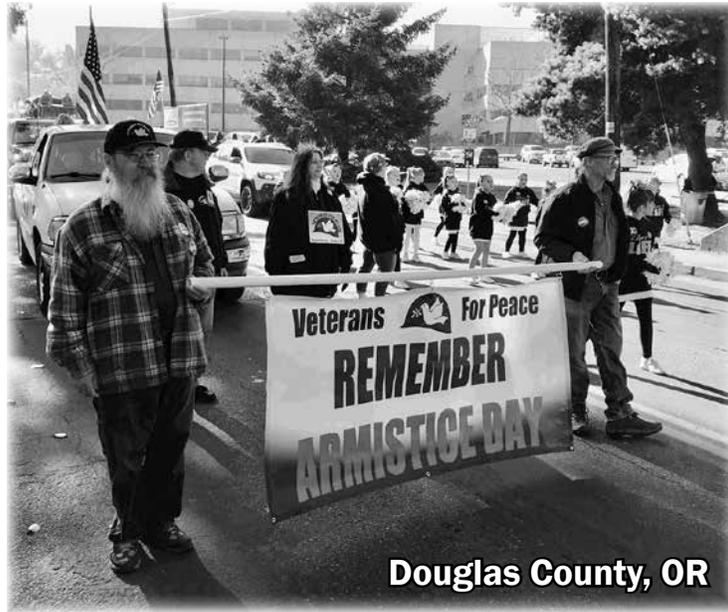
ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, on November 11, 1918, the world celebrated peace as a universal principle.

The first world war had just ended, and nations mourning their dead collectively called for an end to all wars. Armistice Day was born and was designated as “a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated.”

After World War II, the U.S. Congress rebranded Nov. 11 as Veterans Day. Honoring the warrior quickly morphed into honoring the military and glorifying war.

Veterans For Peace has taken the lead in lifting up the original intention of November 11, celebrating Armistice Day, almost since the organization’s inception with a few chapters doing yearly events. In 2008, observing Armistice Day became a national effort with the passage of an official Veterans For Peace resolution. Since then, U.S. chapters have stepped up their efforts to publicly celebrate the end of war that Armistice represents. These actions help open up space in the national Veterans Day conversation for the consideration of peace.

On November 11, 2018, Veterans For Peace chapters across the world worked to reclaim Armistice Day by staging local actions and vigils, organizing peace concerts, and marching in Veterans Day parades with messages of peace. They spread awareness and shared the message of Armistice Day by writing letters to the editor, reaching out to faith communities, hosting radio shows, and reaching out to local schools. Within Veterans For Peace, a special edition of *Peace in Our Times* was created for chapters to hand out in their communities, and the “Reclaim Armistice Day” flyer developed by staff was also put to good use by many.



Douglas County, OR

Veterans For Peace, Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW/OSS), and Military Families Speak Out organized a solemn veteran-led march among the veterans’ memorials. Participants gathered to hear moving speeches from various peace activists, including Veterans For Peace leaders Maurice Martin, Ellen Barfield, and Board President Gerry Condon. Many involved also participated in *Veterans Occupy Washington*, holding space at McPherson Square and at the Veteran’s Administration from Friday to Sunday night.

ARMISTICE DAY IN D.C.

After the announcement of Trump’s Military Parade early last year, a coalition of 200 peace and justice groups and activists united in opposition and planned a mobilization in response. The eventual cancellation of the parade was considered a victory, and the coalition planned a weekend of events in Washington, D.C., to celebrate that and to commemorate Armistice Day.

A Peace Congress brought peace and justice groups and activists together to discuss how to build and strengthen the movement to end the wars at home and abroad. On Sunday, November 11,

ARMISTICE DAY IN COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

The centennial anniversary of the World War I Armistice falling on a Sunday presented some challenges, but it also created opportunities for chapters, and we engaged more faith communities than ever before. Veterans For Peace chapters and members across the country encouraged local churches and other houses of worship to ring bells 11 times at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month—just as they did in 1918, when the Armistice was signed.



Long Beach, CA [photo: MFSO]

Members of Chapter 90 (Binghamton, New York) who visited area churches with a request to ring bells on 11/11/18 gave each pastor a copy of the *Reclaiming Armistice Day* edition of *Peace in Our Times*. Chapter 92 (Greater Seattle) put together a whole list of suggestions of Armistice Day activities for churches. New Hampshire Veterans For Peace joined together with the New Hampshire Council of Churches to ask congregations to ring their church bells on Sunday, and to read the statement below:

The Armistice of 1918 ended the horrendous slaughter of World War I, called THE WAR TO END ALL WARS. When the Armistice was signed, exuberant JOY broke out around the world. For many years, bells rang 11 times at that 11th hour of the 11th day on the 11th month. Then it slowly faded away, especially in the U.S.

Now we ring bells again, many bells, many places, 11 times, at that sacred moment. With a moment of silence, we remember the soldiers and civilians killed in warfare in every country, and we commit to work and pray for peace until this assault on the Will of the Creator of us all, is finally over.

Twenty-six churches across the state of New Hampshire participated in bell-ringing on November 11, and over 18 churches participated in Massachusetts. Many chapters, including Duluth, Minnesota (#080), Seattle, Washington (#092), Western North Carolina (#099), and Pueblo, Colorado (#129), hosted events or gave presentations at local churches and other houses of worship.

CHAPTER EVENTS

On the centennial celebration of Armistice Day, over 60 Veterans For Peace chapters participated in almost 100 different events across the world.

Santa Cruz Chapter 11 wrapped up their Armistice 100 Year with a full weekend of activities, including a peace-themed concert cosponsored by a local church on November 10 that was standing room only. The bell-ringing ceremony

at the Santa Cruz Clock welcomed a Veterans Suicide Awareness group that had walked 22 miles from Watsonville that morning, and an afternoon program focused on local peacemaking efforts.

Chapter 34 of New York assembled its largest contingent ever for the New York Veterans Day Parade on Fifth Ave. After being told they weren't registered (even though they had proof), the group of around 90 people persisted in walk-



ing in the parade despite attempts to stop them. Turning around in front of the reviewing stand, they shouted, "No More War!" and those who could, took a knee.

Minneapolis/St. Paul Chapter 27, which has been celebrating Armistice Day for almost 25 years, held "A Day of Peace," starting at the Historic Landmark Center in St. Paul (where the closing ceremony for this year's VFP convention was held) with storytelling, music, and art that conveyed the spirit of peace and goodwill globally, nationally, and locally.

Chapter 102, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, brought together 500 local grade school through high school students for an Armistice Day observance. The event began with students reading poetry, and an essay on what it means to be a veteran, and ended with the students planting red poppies at the nearby World War I memorial. VFP members spoke about the real costs of war, and the importance of promoting peace on Armistice Day.

Of course, commemorating Armistice Day was not limited to chapters in the USA. VFP U.K. marked the 100th anniversary of Armistice—known as Remembrance Day in the United Kingdom—with their annual march to the Cenotaph in Whitehall [see photo on back page]. Veterans For Peace Sgt. Barrios Memorial Chapter 182 in Baja, Mexico, hosted a prayer vigil at the Tijuana/San Ysidro border crossing in solidarity with fellow

veterans and military families marching in Washington D.C. to reclaim Armistice Day.

BUILDING MOMENTUM

The many VFP Armistice Day observances and activities detailed here and in this newsletter's Chapter Reports make it clear that the movement to reclaim the original meaning of the holiday continues to gain momentum and reach larger audiences with its message of peace. It is more important than ever that we maintain that momentum and continue to build on each year's work, until Veterans Day is known everywhere as Armistice Day.

As veterans, we know that a day that celebrates peace, not war, is the best way to honor the sacrifices of veterans. We want future generations to never know the destruction war wreaks on people and the earth.

VFP CHAPTER REPORTS

#001 PORTLAND, MAINE



Chapter 1 members with lots of VFP flags and a “Reclaim Armistice Day” banner gather at Monument Square, along Portland’s parade route, to protest the glorification of war.

This fall saw the Tom Sturtevant Chapter (100 members strong) involved in some significant events. On Labor Day weekend we hosted Mac MacDevitt’s traveling *My Lai Massacre Exhibit* at a donated art gallery space smack dab in the middle of Portland. Close to 200 people visited and were blown away by the exhibit. We held readings of poetry and selected *Letters to The Wall* to complement it, and Dud Hendrick’s moving film about disabled veterans bicycling through Viet Nam and the trailer for Eric Herter’s new documentary on the Vietnamese resistance played throughout.

Later in September, our chapter had an educational table at Maine’s Common Ground Fair, an annual event that attracts 60,000 people. Our theme this year was “Ban Assault Weapons,” with a huge banner, lots of handouts, and our very popular button-making machine for kids.

On Armistice Day we stood at Monument Square with VFP flags flowing as the so-called parade passed. Our “Reclaim



Santa Monica Beach, California—One group of the many high school students who volunteered with VFP-Los Angeles Chapter 7 to help set up the Arlington West Memorial on Armistice Day this year. These students also made the wreath in the picture.

Armistice Day” banner called attention to the absurdity of the American Legion’s celebration and glorification of war. What gives us hope is that over the years we have noticed a significant shift in the general public’s response to our presence—from open animosity to indifference to open embrace.

Doug Rawlings

#007 LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Members of VFP L.A. continue to set up the “Arlington West Memorial” every Sunday, beginning at 5 am. Steve Davis, Michael Lindley, and Jerry Van are quite the team. On a recent Sunday, 75 students came from Fairfax and San Pedro High Schools to help with the setup. We’ve been lucky to have more students help us lately.

On the social media front, we have begun live-streaming our memorial on Periscope, and we are experimenting with Instagram. Andrew has converted one of our websites to Wordpress, and Kathleen Hernandez set up our Facebook page, which has been getting a lot of activity. We are hoping to get an intern early next year to help with spreading our words of peace and environmental justice on social media.

Ed Ellis

#009 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



Members of the Smedley D. Butler Brigade Reclaim Armistice Day in the Boston parade.

The Smedley D. Butler Brigade observed the 100th Anniversary of Armistice Day relegated, once again, to the back of the Boston parade, where we led with our new banner, “Armistice Day: A Day for Peace,” provided by Joe Kebartas. We had hoped to follow this segment with our other new great banner, designed by Ellen Davidson and Tarak Kauff, “Honor Veterans: Wage Peace,” provided by Pat Scanlon, but things happen. Both these statements express our mission.

Two accomplished street bands, The Leftist Marching Band and the Boston Area Brigade of Activist Musicians (BABAM), brought energy and widespread viewer approval. After the parade, we gathered at Sam Adams Park for poetry, song, and

speeches that lifted up organizations and works that support our chapter's commitment to wage peace.

The number of area churches ringing bells "to rededicate our country to the cause of world peace" was expanded to nearly 100 this year. Chapter members Pat Scanlon and Al Johnson spoke at church services about the meaning of the day and the church's role in peacemaking.

Any thoughts on how to move bell ringing beyond churches in the future would be appreciated. In Armistice Day, we have the historical roots of peacemaking that can spread widely, if nurtured.

Doug Stuart

#010 ALBANY, NEW YORK

Chapter 10 has been busy. We welcomed Brian Trautman as our new chapter president this fall, and are excited about the enthusiasm and knowledge he brings to this position. Reclaiming Armistice Day found us ambling in the local parade, where we were greeted warmly this year. Please watch our short video at youtu.be/DHSACSIBFZU.

Our members have been hosting radio programs on WOOC 105.3, writing letters to the editor, and calling congressional representatives on various issues, always insisting on peace and nonviolence. Several of us went to the Women's March on the Pentagon where the amazing Sheri Bauer performed her songs, "The Noble Cause" [youtu.be/cnZfGsvWlco] and "Lift Up the Pentagon" [youtu.be/GHyo3vxxQt0].

John Amidon

#013 TUCSON, ARIZONA



The Tucson Chapter sends greetings!

Since the 2017 VFP International Convention in Chicago, Chapter 13 has taken "Peace at Home, Peace Abroad" to heart. From "Say NO to VA Privatization" to the SOAW Border Encuentro in Nogales, Sonora/Arizona, to the ongoing support for refugees along the border, we continue to expose the true costs of war and war's futility. We participate in vigils against war at Speedway's recruitment center, against manufactured

armaments at Raytheon, and now against immoral/illegal mistreatment of asylum seekers at Davis Monthan Air Force Base, where Army personnel are being temporarily housed as they shuttle to and from the border. We also pick up trash on a mile of highway, a service project arranged through the Arizona Department of Transportation. Chapter 13 is growing in numbers as we appeal to all veterans and veteran supporters who support nonviolent means to solve problems, locally to globally.

Cara Bissell



Chapter 23 members and friends at the Armistice Day rally in Rochester, New York, Sunday, November 11. After an 11 am bell-ringing ceremony, the group distributed VFP's "Reclaim Armistice Day" flyers to passersby.

#023 ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

In July, Chapter 23 held a picnic in a historic Rochester park to strengthen bonds in the peace community and attract new members.

In October, a contingent of VFP members participated in a screening of *Veterans For Peace in Palestine* during the local "Witness Palestine" Film Festival. A panel discussion followed, with guests Tarak Kauff and Ellen Davidson, editors of *Peace in Our Times* and organizers of several VFP delegations to Palestine, moderated by chapter president Rev. James Swarts.

For the 2018 election, we sent questionnaires to candidates in New York's 23rd, 24th, 25th, and 27th Congressional Districts, asking about veterans' issues. Chapter members also raised issues at local candidate forums.

On Sunday, November 11, VFP Chapter 23 members and friends held an Armistice Day rally on a busy corner in Rochester, New York. After an 11 am bell ringing, they distributed VFP's "Reclaim Armistice Day" flyers to passersby.

Marybeth Knowles, chapter treasurer, is organizing locally and statewide for the national Poor People's Campaign. We continue to support School of the Americas Watch and others seeking peace and justice in the Americas. Members Lew Montemaggi and Bob Ames represented us at the SOAW Border Encuentro in Nogales, Arizona/Sonora, in mid November.

James Swarts | Jack Spula

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#025 MADISON, WISCONSIN



Chapter 25 founding member David Giffey's setup for a presentation to students about his painting, "The Mourning Dove Effigy Mound," at The Highground Veterans Memorial Park in Neillsville, Wisconsin.

In August, Chapter 25 hosted an educational event, "My Music, My War." An audience of roughly 40 gathered to enjoy a multimedia presentation by author Lisa Gilman based on her book, *My Music, My War: The Listening Habits of U.S. Troops in Iraq and Afghanistan*, and to share their own experiences.

We shifted gears in September through November to focus our efforts on reclaiming Armistice Day and helping the public understand the militaristic overtones embodied in Veterans Day. We sponsored and participated in *The Greatest War*, a live rock-n-roll history show focused on WWI and Armistice Day, and made a citywide call for Madison churches and congregations to ring their bells on Armistice Day and share peace education with their members.

Most members of Chapter 25 do important work for peace individually throughout the year. Recent highlights include the ongoing work of Phil Fransen with the Madison social justice group United Against Hate, and the tireless efforts of member Lincoln Grahlf to oppose privatization of VA Healthcare. Chapter 25 founding member David Giffey gave presentations to 300 central Wisconsin students on the history and meaning of his creation, *The Mourning Dove Effigy Mound*, at The Highground Veterans Memorial Park in Neillsville.

Fran Wiedenhoft

#026 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

In line with the VFP "Peace at Home, Peace Abroad" motto, and the Chicago chapter's "Education Not Militarization" initiative, we are directing our efforts at joining and building coalitions with the over 150 groups in this city who are working on justice and peace issues. We are using our "status" as veterans to provide these groups with additional credibility, and they appreciate our presence and input.

We have sponsored or supported a variety of actions and events this fall, including peace actions, anti-gun and anti-violence actions, speaking and music events, and a very successful Armistice Day event. We're looking at forming an

academic advisory board to guide and bolster our efforts at making the connections between militarism and violence.

For early 2019, we're planning a Martin Luther King Jr. event focused on his Riverside Church talk, with its emphasis on the causes of moral and financial poverty in the U.S.—the trifecta of militarism, materialism, and racism. Also in 2019, Chapter 26 will participate in the American Psychological Association's panel on torture. And we're working to be involved with the American Historical Association annual meeting in Chicago in early January.

Arny Stieber

#027 MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA



Minneapolis City Council members Cam Gordon and Lisa Bender present their Armistice Day Resolution to VFP members Mike Madden, Tom Bauch, Craig Wood, Dave Logsdon, Bruce Barry, Mike McDonald, and Steve McKeown.

Things did not slow down for Chapter 27 after hosting the national convention this summer. Here are some recent activity highlights.

Steve McKeown and Tom LeBlanc helped lead a discussion on "Viet Nam Remembered" at Macalaster College.

We took a road trip to Mankato in our Peace Bus and held a silent vigil for the 38 Dakota men hung in 1862. We continued the trip to the sacred native land near Pipestone, Minnesota, collecting anti-nuclear petition signatures along the way.

Several members participated in SOA Watch protests in Arizona and in Sonora, Mexico.

Our chapter held discussions with audience members after viewing *Not About Heroes*, a play about WWI. Many local churches rang bells on Armistice Day and joined with VFP and others in a Sacred Day of Peace event held at the Landmark Center in St. Paul, where the City of Minneapolis presented an official resolution, reading, in part: "*The City of Minneapolis and City Council do hereby commemorate Armistice Day, support peace in all forms for all people, and hold out hope that the spirit of Armistice Day will motivate all leaders throughout the world to work for peace and prevent war.*"

Mike McDonald

#034 NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK



Members of New York City Chapter 34 take a knee at the NYC Armistice Day Parade reviewing stand. Photo by Bud Korotzer.

Chapter 34, honored for its activism with the *Chapter of the Year* award at the 2018 VFP National Convention, continues to be very active, keeping up VFP presence at rallies, demonstrations, and educational events regarding continuing U.S. military involvement in Yemen, Iran, North Korea, and Afghanistan, and coordinating with other peace groups, including CODEPINK,

ON RETURNING

1.
thank you for your service
seems as empty as
thoughts and prayers,
mine or ours,
are with you,
are being sent to you
or them.
another phrase
turned cliché,
over used
the words have lost their
weight.

2.
no more thoughts and prayers
I want to yell
or post or tweet
but I don't because
I believe in the power
of thoughts
and prayers.
words
strung together
hoping for
dreaming of
believing in
a better place,
an easier time.

3.
a peace filled existence
that you've earned
that you deserve
yet have to work at now.
what words should I
whisper or shout
to console
to encourage
to coax
you back to life
despite all you've seen
still carry,
hear,
smell
and feel.

4.
you are welcome here
home
you are loved here
home
we are glad you made it
back here
home

—Kim Berner (read in memory
of Cape Cod's Max Money)

Granny Peace Brigade, PANYS, and War Resisters League. We helped organize NYC's Pride March, and commemorations of the 73rd anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as the 17th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan.

Chapter President Susan Schnall spoke at the 50th anniversary commemoration of the Presidio 27 "Mutiny" in San Francisco and the 100th Anniversary of the WWI Armistice at the Puffin Cultural Forum. A hundred marchers participated in a veterans' peace contingent in NYC's parade with a banner commemorating Armistice Day, many wearing blue VFP sweatshirts.

A crowd of 90 attended a *Save Our VA* Town Hall meeting with keynote Suzanne Gordon organized by our *Stopping VA Privatization* project, led by Skip Delano. Other active projects are *Move the Money* (Tom Gogan) and *Agent Orange* (Susan Schnall).

Monthly meeting speakers included Ann Wright; Ann and Ahmed Shirazi on Iran; Sarah Manasrah of CODEPINK; Rachel Clark on VFP speaking tours in Japan and Okinawa; and Tarak Kauff and Ellen Davidson on Veterans Peace Team delegations.

Bob Keilbach

#035 SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

It was a pleasure to have VFP President Gerry Condon visit our city to explore with our chapter the possibility of hosting the 2019 VFP convention here. Although some of us were nervous about hosting the convention on such short notice, we decided to go ahead, and now we are all psyched and looking forward to having folks here on the 45th anniversary of Expo '74, when Spokane became the smallest city to host a World's Fair.

Meanwhile, we're helping the city council pass an ordinance to make Spokane a Nuclear-Free Zone, even as Chapter 35 member George Taylor faces delays in his activist case against oil and coal rail traffic. Our VFP flags have become a familiar part of demonstrations for peace, poor people, and social responsibility, and on November 11, we headlined Armistice Day events at 11:00 am and 7:00 pm.

By all means, plan to join us in August 2019!

Rusty Nelson

#041 CAPE COD, MASSACHUSETTS

In August, we saw the passing of Max Money at the age of 88. The heart and soul of our chapter to some of us, Max was one of Cape Cod's original members when Chapter 41 was started in the early 1990s. Max was truly a man of peace and of faith; a teacher, an author, a poet, a humanitarian, and a quintessential veteran for peace.

Max served as a Marine Corps infantry platoon leader during the Korean War, retiring



Max Money

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VFP CHAPTER REPORTS *CONTINUED*

Chapter 41, Cape Cod, continued...

as a lieutenant colonel. His numerous Veterans and Memorial Day essays, published in Cape Cod newspapers, were a regular feature of those holidays. In his heartfelt writings, often focused on the intimate details of experiences of individual veterans and their families, including his own, the true costs of war were always clear.

Max founded and directed our chapter's annual *Voices of Peace* poetry contest and co-led a writing group for veterans at our local Vets Center. At the 2018 Veterans Day ceremony in Barnstable, Cape Cod writer Kim Berner read her poem, "On Returning," in his memory [see box on p. 11]. Our 2019 contest will be dedicated to Max, and will feature some of his writing.

We will miss Max's quiet, clear judgment, and we will try to ensure that his spirit is present as we go on working for peace.

Duke Ellis

#042 CONNECTICUT



Connecticut Chapter 42 members at the New Haven Coalition Peace Conference at Middlesex Community College, Middletown, Connecticut. Left to right: Jim Brasile, Jim Pandaru, Dortha Willet, Bill Potvin, Fred Lewis, and Michael Gilimette

Chapter 42 opened the New Haven Coalition Peace Conference at Middlesex Community College in Middletown, Connecticut, this past November, with the theme, Reclaim Armistice Day. The group presented poems, a letter to The Wall, and other heartfelt thoughts about the real price of war and a need for the USA to focus on more peaceful means, not military, when actions are needed internationally (#connecticutpeace). Dortha Willet will be writing up an article for the Middletown paper.

Dave Ionno, who had planned to be there but was unable to attend, has continued producing his Veterans For Peace TV program, which can be found on youtube.com by typing in the search phrase "VoicesofVeterans."

Jim Brasile

#046 MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

At 11 am, November 11, 2018, the 100th anniversary of the Armistice, members of Monterey VFP Chapter 46 read names of the fallen from Monterey in the Great War, World War II, Korea, Viet Nam, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The ceremony was held on the steps of Monterey's City Hall, with members reading the names as chimes rang.

Following the ceremony, veterans, citizens, and city officials were escorted to the Monterey Museum of Art for a multimedia event, *The Art of the Great War*, which began with a quote from Sir Edward Grey, the British foreign secretary who said on August 3, 1914, when the first artillery exploded in Belgium and France, "The lamps are going out all over Europe ... we shall not see them again in our lifetime." On exhibit were photos from the Great War, paintings including John Singer Sargent's *Gassed* and Christopher R. W. Nevinson's *Paths of Glory*, and recruitment posters from England, France, Germany, Australia, and the USA.

The event featured brief readings from Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *August 1914*, Barbara Tuchman's *The Guns of August*, Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and Erik Larson's *Dead Wake: The Sinking of the Luisitania*. It concluded with readings of poetry written by Great War fallen including Rupert Brooke and Dr. John McCrea, the Canadian poet and physician who penned "In Flanders Fields."

Jack Erickson

#057 GREEN MOUNTAIN, VERMONT

The major work of Chapter 57 in 2018 was raising awareness of the outrageously large and imbalanced 2019 U.S. military budget—\$676 billion for defense and war compared to only \$26 billion for peace and diplomacy, and zero dollars for restoration of destroyed communities and the environment. We marched in five parades—two on Memorial Day, two on the Fourth of July, and one on Labor Day (a dozen of us marching behind two battalions of cadets)—with our 50-foot-long colored banner proportionally representing that huge imbalance.

Several VFP members from around the state contacted churches and asked them to ring bells at the 11th hour on November 11. Chapter 57 members again raised the issue of the imbalanced U.S. military budget in an Armistice Day march in Burlington that netted several minutes of local TV coverage [see bit.ly/2EPvncv].

As an alert to other VFP chapters, know that state police in all 50 states have been traveling to Israel and participating in counter-terrorism trainings. After a petition was presented to the Vermont State Police by a number of groups fostering peace, the Vermont trip was called off [see bit.ly/2AjqLZh].

Richard Czaplinski

#063 ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

In July, we held *Save Our VA* actions at Albuquerque Civic Plaza and at the VA, and demonstrated with New Mexico's Poor People's Campaign at the National Governors Conference in Santa Fe, urging governors to cover people's needs abandoned by the federal government.

In August, chapter President Charles Powell attended the VFP Convention in St. Paul, Minnesota. Chapter volunteers staffed the New Mexico Veterans Memorial Visitors Center on fifth Fridays in August and November.

In September, tabling at the Patriot Picnic and the Labor Picnic afforded us the opportunity to approach office holders and candidates about saving the VA and stopping deportation of veterans. We also tabled on Military/Veterans Day at the New Mexico State Fair. Several members took part in forming a huge human peace sign at University of New Mexico campus for the International Day of Peace. Chapter 63 prompted the United Veterans Council of New Mexico to pass a resolution opposing privatization of the VA.

In November, a meeting with editors of the *Albuquerque Journal* to discuss our chapter's work resulted in Communications Coordinator Kris Hardy getting an Armistice Day op-ed published. We rang the bell, got churches to ring bells, and got city, county, and state officials to issue proclamations on the 100th anniversary of Armistice.

Key member Sally-Alice Thompson conducted an Armistice Day program at the Albuquerque Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. She and new member Ray Cage both attended the SOAW Border Encuentro.

Charles Powell

#066 AUSTIN, TEXAS



Alan Pogue lays a wreath at the annual Veterans Day observance at the Texas Capitol in Austin, Texas. Being the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day, ambassadors from England, France, and Germany were there, along with many local and state officials. When it was announced that Veterans For Peace would lay a wreath on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier a particular stillness came over all present as if to say in unison, "Peace, that is why we are here."

A high point of 2018 for Chapter 66 is that our chapter was approached to help parents at an elementary school not have their children sent to the local national guard camp and be dressed up as little combat soldiers. Our combined efforts did stop that.

I was asked to address senior theology students at a private high school and explain why my experience in Viet Nam led me to join VFP. I showed how closely President Eisenhower's Farewell Address agreed with MLK's "Beyond Viet Nam..." sermon.

Hart Viges visits high schools year round to bring students the truth about war from his own experience and to present alternative ways to fund their educational goals.

Rodney Florence works with too many peace and justice groups for me to list, always wearing his VFP identification.

Clyde Anderson takes part in many VFP national events all over the country.

Doug Zachary is a formidable fundraiser for VFP National.

We are a small group but constantly working to educate.

Alan Pogue

#069 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA



VFP Chapter 69 after the 2018 San Francisco Veterans Day Parade, deciding where in Fisherman's Wharf to have lunch. Waging peace requires really HARD decisions.

Through the hard work of VFP 69 members Paul Cox and Janice Tong, the public areas in the San Francisco Veterans Building have been transformed into a vivid reminder of the Great War and the Armistice of 100 years ago. Because of the Performing Arts Center in the building, people who wouldn't give the war a thought come and go. Eight large banners hang in the lobby, colorfully explaining the war, from before our entry to the troops coming home. The old trophy room has been transformed to the Veterans Gallery, and is open through the spring with artifacts and memorabilia, dark reminders of the WWI slaughter. Soldiers wrote poetry back then, and some of

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VFP CHAPTER REPORTS *CONTINUED*

Chapter 69, San Francisco, continued...

it was published in *Stars & Stripes*, and some of those are on display. Here are two:

NOTHING TO REPORT

One minute we was laughin', me an' Ted,
The next, he lay beside me grinnin'—dead.
"There's nothin' to report," the papers said.

—May Herschel-Clarke

FOR THE FALLEN [excerpt]

They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

—Lawrence Binyon

Denny Riley

#071 SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Unfortunately, we in northern California have been dealing with the local effects of climate change: horrendous, deadly firestorms and the resulting massive air pollution that continued for two weeks.

Chapter 71 held a retreat and focus group to determine how to most effectively mobilize our membership to achieve VFP mission goals.

We attended the annual Sebastopol Living Peace Wall Induction Ceremony in September. Each year, four names are added to the beautiful wall, which is located in downtown Sebastopol [to learn more, search online: "Sebastopol Living Peace Wall"]. We are proud to have one VFP Chapter 71 member, Susan Lamont, honored on the Peace Wall to date.

We tabled, as always, at the annual Petaluma Progressive Festival. We received a wonderful response to our tabling materials and to my presentation regarding VA healthcare privatization and the related national healthcare crisis. Our local Pacifica radio station, KPFA Berkeley, California, also interviewed me about the mission of VFP.

We participate in weekly demonstrations along with other conservative and progressive organizations in downtown Sebastopol each Friday at noon, weather permitting.

Bill Simon

#072 PORTLAND, OREGON

On October 20, Chapter 72 hosted a table at the 11th Annual Northwest Conference on Teaching for Social Justice in Portland, which draws hundreds of teachers from throughout the region. Later in October, Regis Tremblay came to town with his film, *Who Are These Russians?*

Chapter 72 commemorated Armistice Day downtown with a solemn bell-ringing ritual at 11 am, followed by a sharing circle. A couple of members had dashed off quick notes to city



On November 11, Chapter 72 members and friends gather at Director Park in downtown Portland to commemorate the Armistice of 100 years ago. After ringing bell at 11 am, people took turns sharing. Speaking here is Mike Hastie. [Photo: Dan Shea]

officials when someone shared the text of a proclamation the mayor was set to read at the council meeting the week before. Poorly written, it briefly mentioned the Armistice anniversary, then lapsed into typical Veterans Day rhetoric. Small victory: the mayor got the message, and quoted VFP72 President Dan Shea from the podium before reading the proclamation. Dan and Mac McDaniel also joined America Federation of Government Employees to march with our *Save Our VA* banner at the Veterans Day Parade in southeast Portland on November 12.

Mike Hastie went on a whirlwind VFP speaking tour in Japan in October, organized by VFP member Rachel Clark. Associate member Becky Luening engaged in collaborative art-making at the SOAW Encuentro in November.

Becky Luening

#089 MIDDLE TENNESSEE



Chapter 89 members staff the Cookeville High School Peace Table (L to R): Harvey, Hector, Arnold, and Diane (Peace Corps).

In August, several of us from Nashville joined with VFP members from Evansville, Indiana, and Owensboro and Louisville, Kentucky, at Murray State University to rally in support of student survivors of a January school shooting at nearby Marshall County High School that killed two and injured 14 students. The protest confronted Oliver North, new NRA president and keynote speaker at the local GOP annual fundraiser.

We worked with local stakeholders to petition for a ballot referendum to establish a Community Oversight Board in response to Nashville policing practices in poor minority communities. The drive was successful and the referendum won approval on November 6.

We tabled at the Metro Nashville Public Schools College Fair and counseled over 75 students on alternatives to military service. We continue to join Cookeville VFPer Hector Black at the monthly Peace Table at Putnam County High School.

VFP Radio Hour hosted an interview with Sexual Assault Center staff following the Senate testimony by Dr. Christine Blasey-Ford and Brett Kavanaugh. They reported a 500-percent increase in calls in the wake of the hearings, and stressed that sexual assault is the most underreported crime worldwide.

We marched *in the rain* on Armistice Day, and our message of peace was welcomed by the small number of devoted onlookers that turned out, sporting umbrellas and ponchos.

Harvey Bennett

#090 BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

Members of the Stu Naismith Chapter were in New York City on November 7 and 8 to support Kathy Kelly's Voices for Creative Nonviolence Blue Backpack demonstration at the Isaiah Wall across the street from the United Nations. Joining other VFP members led by Jules Orkin, we walked with blue backpacks representing 34 Yemeni school children killed by Lockheed-Martin bombs dropped by U.S. partner, Saudi Arabia. Our VFP banner was displayed as we locked arms and blocked three entrances to the UN Mission of Saudi Arabia. We told people the Saudi Mission was a crime scene and we were closing it. After a two-hour standoff, the police refused the Saudis' request to arrest us.

In Binghamton, our November 11 Armistice Day event was covered by three TV channels as bells rang out over the city at 11 am. A local folksinger led us in a singalong of antiwar songs, from WWI to the present. In the afternoon, disinvented to be part of the Veterans Day parade, we displayed a cemetery on a church lawn along the parade route and amplified our folksinger's words, "Bring 'em Home, Bring 'em Home," to marchers, while two members circulated among parade viewers offering red poppies and the VFP handbill on Reclaiming Armistice Day. Our 71 tombstones (white styrofoam) represented the ratio of 70 Vietnamese, Afghans, and Iraqis to every one American military killed in our wars.

Jack Gilroy

#091 SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA



Chapter 91 published a mobile billboard to publicize its Miramar Air Show boycott campaign, which serves to educate the public about the harmful effects of glorifying war.

The summer and fall of 2018 found San Diego Chapter 91 very active in many ways. We marked our third year educating the public here not to attend the annual Miramar Air Show in September by banner over the I-15 each Thursday during July, August, and September, getting press coverage and purchasing a mobile billboard, after being unable to buy a commercial billboard in this military-friendly town.

Our chapter met with and assisted the new Tijuana VFP chapter of deported vets, and supported the asylum seekers on the other side of our southern fence. We walked in the July Pride Parade, the largest annual parade in San Diego each year, set up our Hometown Arlington West Memorial on Armistice Day, and walked in the Veterans Day Parade as well.

We continued to collect donations and buy and distribute sleeping bags to the nearly 1,000 homeless people downtown, and are very pleased that the TV and radio stations *now call us often for interviews* as events happen in the world. We are thrilled to be the current home port of the *Golden Rule!* Looking forward to 2019.

Gilbert Field

#092 SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Armistice Centennial:

Rev. Dr. Kelly Wadsworth presented her eloquent article at Seattle First Baptist Church, "Veteran's Day versus Armistice Day: A Chaplain weighs in on the significance of November 11th" [<https://www.saybrook.edu/unbound/armistice-day-veterans-day/>] and the audience was reportedly very moved by it.

Allen Tlusty spoke at the end of 10 o'clock Mass, introducing himself as a member of both St. Francis Peace and Social Justice Group and Veterans For Peace. He recited the historical time of the 11th hour, 11th day and 11th month, this being the 100th anniversary of the signing of the peace treaty to end all

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VFP CHAPTER REPORTS CONTINUED

Chapter 92, Seattle, WA, continued...



Paused here for a group shot, Seattle Chapter 92 and Tacoma Chapter 134 members marched (and sang!) in the Veterans Day Parade held in Auburn, Washington, on November 10, 2018.

wars. He summarized the history presented on the VFP flyer, and asked for a moment of reflection. It became very quiet, and then, at 1 minute after 11, the bells chimed 11 times. "It was perfect!" exclaimed Allen, thrilled by the warm ovation he received. He gave out white poppies afterwards. His church received many notes of appreciation from parishioners.

At Seattle's Museum of History and Industry, which had a WWI exhibit, Mike Dedrick gave an interesting presentation with a VFP perspective, followed by Q&A.

We sang while marching in Auburn's Veterans Day parade—with the Seattle Peace Chorus "Action Ensemble" joining us—a real crowd pleaser!

Kim Loftness

#093 SOUTH CENTRAL MICHIGAN



Chris Buhalis MCs the John Lennon Concert in Ann Arbor, Michigan, to benefit Chapter 93's Peace Scholarship. He and other local musicians donate their time and talent to this annual event.

Chapter 93 held its annual John Lennon Concert on October 11 to benefit its peace scholarship for veterans and other Michiganders who are enrolled in or admitted to a peace-related program of college study. The net profit was the highest in the 12 years of the concert, over \$3,400; attendance at the Ann Arbor event was about 220.

Chapter 93 hosted the traveling *My Lai Memorial Exhibit* in October, with estimated attendance of 75, including an evening talk by veterans. Members set up *Arlington Michigan* on Veterans Day in the Ann Arbor Veterans Park, which is located at a busy intersection.

In January, two veteran members plan to present their MLK Day talk, on Martin Luther King Jr. as a peace activist, at the University of Michigan and at an Ann Arbor District Library branch. Past response has been appreciative at both locations.

Chapter 93 continues to install or refurbish Peace Poles at half a dozen locations in the area.

Lynn Gilbert

#102 MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN



Presenters at the Armistice Day event hosted by Milwaukee Chapter 102 (L to R): John LaForge, co-director of Nukewatch; Janan Najeeb, president of Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition; and Reggie Jackson, head griot, America's Black Holocaust Museum.

Our Armistice Day program at Milwaukee City Hall drew the largest crowd and most media attention in the 10 years we have sponsored the event. Sixteen other peace and justice organizations co-sponsored this year's event.

Chapter President Paul Moriarty recalled that many Wisconsin citizens and political leaders opposed U.S. entry into World War I, and Milwaukee, with its high percentage of citizens with German heritage, and a socialist city government, was torn apart by the conflict and anti-German hysteria, suspicion, and repression.

Janan Najeeb, president of the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition, spoke of the long history of Islamophobia. Many

Muslims fought for England in World War I. “As Islamophobia runs rampant in Europe and the U.S., it’s important to have an honest historical record, and highlight the important but forgotten role that black and brown people played in protecting Europe. And the fact that Armistice Day is for them, as well,” Najeeb said.

Reggie Jackson, head griot at America’s Black Holocaust Museum, spoke of the war on poor people and the price they pay for the nation’s bloated military budget. John LaForge, co-director of Nukewatch, warned of the growing threat of nuclear war posed by the current U.S. nuclear buildup.

Bill Christofferson

#104 EVANSVILLE, INDIANA



Member Bart Lindenschmidt’s band, The Blind Playboys, perform rockin’ blues at the Peace Jam fundraiser for Evansville Chapter 104’s Peace Scholarship.

Chapter members and friends attended independent league Evansville Otters’ June 28 baseball game, where member John Michael O’Leary sang the anthem.

On August 3, five members participated in the call to action to protest Oliver North’s speech at Murray State University promoting gun rights. A march to campus followed a silent vigil.

Members participated in the local 132nd Labor Day Parade on September 3, and then on September 21 held Peace Jam, a fundraiser for our Peace Scholarship. Member Bart Lindenschmidt’s band performed. Scholarship applicants submitted a short film, with the winner notified November 11.

Chapter President Gary May met fellow Hoosier Tim Bagwell at VFP’s national convention, and subsequently, Gary and other Chapter 104 members assisted with Tim’s *Mickey Mouse in Vietnam* Film Fest in Bloomington, Indiana, on Armistice Day. Six antiwar films were shown. Among the speakers were Gary and CODEPINK co-founder Medea Benjamin.

Member Lynn Kinkade developed a useful “white paper” on making in-person contacts to recruit new members. The chapter is hoping a website upgrade will also enhance recruitment.

Our VA Fall Cookout provided free hot dogs, drinks, and snacks October 17 to Evansville clinic attendees and staff.

Members ended the year volunteering December 8 at our annual Lennon Night fundraiser featuring performances by musical bands and poets. December 13 brought officer elections and our holiday party.

Caroline Nellis

#105 BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Out of the blue, Baltimore Chapter 105 got an invitation to join an elementary school-level Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) event about Civil Engineering and Peace. Member Madeleine Mysko devised a clever participatory project where students could choose magazine photos or do their own drawing and writing about how civil engineers meet human needs and create peaceful neighborhoods.

At the end of the day, one of the organizers came by to thank us for attending, and told us that actually the statewide yearly STEM event’s announced theme was Civil Engineering and the Military, but that the Baltimore County planning team rejected that and went for peace instead! We were honored to be invited, and delighted that the local team had chosen peace.

Armistice Day saw Madeleine Mysko speak at the solemn march to the war memorials in D.C., as part of the events organized to challenge Trump’s planned (then cancelled) parade. Mysko and Ellen Barfield laid a wreath at the Viet Nam Women’s Memorial, along with Sabrina Waller from Chicago.

Ellen Barfield

#112 VENTURA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Rallies and tabling are the means by which VFP continues to be known to our community. We have rallied on immigration and gun violence issues, tabled at city peace and multicultural fests, and tabled at a junior college pre-election Day of Action.

Area VFP members spoke at Selective Service System-related draft/draft registration hearings in Los Angeles. One member continues to assist Santa Barbara’s Truth in Recruitment efforts.

A Chapter 112 member traveled to Santa Monica to meet and greet VFP Executive Director Michael McPhearson on his SoCal tour. Our chapter held a BBQ gathering this summer, for the sake of relaxed, social camaraderie. We picked up two new members since our last report.

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VFP CHAPTER REPORTS *CONTINUED*

Chapter 112, Ventura County, CA, continued...

Past chapter president Michael Cervantes spoke about VFP to millennials at a political science club-sponsored event featuring off-campus community organizations. Dr. Bob Dodge spoke incredibly well on nuclear and radiation issues for his organization.

Chapter 112 decided to participate in efforts to eliminate gun shows at the Ventura County fairgrounds, three members taking to the microphones to speak to fairground board directors.

If you look carefully at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School students' new book, *Glimmer of Hope*, you might see Michael Cervantes silhouetted in the color picture from Huntington Beach, holding up VFP signage!

Michael Cervantes

#113 HAWAII



VFP Chapter 113 Coordinator Pete Doktor (right) and Hawaii Peace and Justice's Sandy Yee at the Autumn Day of Resistance held at the University of Hawaii Manoa! Pete is working on counterrecruitment with high school teachers on Oahu.

Chapter member Ann Wright completed an international speaking tour this fall, with stops in Istanbul, Islamabad, Madrid, Berlin, and Bangkok. She was asked to speak in Islamabad by the National Defense University of Pakistan. Certainly, the National Defense University of the United States is not about to ask her to speak, due to her criticisms of U.S. foreign policies.

We welcome a new chapter of Veterans For Peace on the Big Island of Hawaii!

Ann Wright

#114 SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN

Greetings from Wisconsin's windy east coast.

When our chapter staffed a table at the local Earthfest in August, we met an activist named Joanne Freedman, who explained how herbicides and insecticides, toxic to our health and the environment, are a byproduct of our Military-Industrial Complex. She immediately got our attention, and we invited her to speak on this topic at our annual chapter dinner in October. We are considering taking this cause to VFP National, perhaps via a resolution.

Two of us traveled to St. Paul to attend this summer's VFP convention, where it was most memorable for this writer to meet three vets from VFP U.K. Why am I not surprised to see our ideas going global?

Member Frank Koczan, a former music teacher, created "Elegy of the Bells/Litany of Bells" to be either read or sung as bells rang out to mark the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day. We managed to get over a dozen churches to participate on November 11. Koczan's piece is now available on the Veterans For Peace website as a resource for all chapters to use in future Memorial Day or Armistice Day rituals.

At our December meeting, our chapter will vote on annual donations to worthy programs. We wish all our fellow brothers and sisters in VFP happy holidays and a more peaceful new year.

Tom Contrestan

#118 SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

It has been many years since the Nikko Schoch Chapter 118 has submitted a report on its activities. We are in the process of rebuilding, and are determined to honor Nikko and rise again into an actively engaged chapter. Right now, only VFP brother Gary Mesker and myself, both veterans from the American War in Viet Nam era, are actively involved in our chapter.

Gary has participated for a number of years with Utah Tar Sands Resistance and Elders Rising, holding vigils and resisting efforts to mine crude bitumen, the world's dirtiest fossil fuel, near PR Springs in Eastern Utah. So far, the low price of crude has made it economically infeasible for mining efforts to begin.

In October, we both traveled to Creech Air Force Base, 45 miles north of Las Vegas, to participate in a vigil and direct action against assassin drones. *Shut Down Creech* is an annual event organized and sponsored by CODEPINK. I have also participated in the past with CODEPINK, Nevada Desert Experience, and other VFP members.

In past years, I have attended the SOAW Border Encuentro in Nogales, Arizona/Sonora, and taken an active part in climate and social justice efforts in Utah. I regularly attend a monthly peace vigil in Salt Lake City organized by the Quakers.

We hope our next report will include more reactivated past members, as well as new younger veterans.

Ken Kohler

#132 CORVALLIS, OREGON



People discuss strategies to confront imperialism at the Linus Pauling Chapter's Armistice Day public forum in Corvallis, Oregon.

VFP Linus Pauling Chapter joined with the local chapter of Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) to host a public forum for Armistice Day, "Confronting Imperialism." The November 11 event drew 55 people with a wide range of political views and group affiliations.

The objective was not to review the long history of U.S. imperialism, but to discuss various strategies to confront imperialism, colonialism, and militarism. We enjoyed a lively discussion of everything from revolutionary direct action to foreign policy advocacy to international solidarity.

The strong turnout from students, members of DSA, and the local Communist Party group (CPUSA) was very refreshing. They helped stimulate conversations not normally heard among the usual peacenik "choir" here, while emphasizing the connections between imperialism, violence in our streets, non-state actor blowback, and environmental degradation. Our chapter will continue these partnerships for future public education and radical activism.

Bart Bolger

#156 ROGUE VALLEY, OREGON



VFP Chapter 156 Vice President Dan Davis speaks with one of the dozens of Peace Corps veterans honored for their service at a special ceremony on Armistice Day, while Ashland Culture of Peace co-founder, Irene Kai, helps hand out candles.

[Photo: Mark Howard]

The high point of our year was a truly stirring ceremony held on Armistice Day, in which Veterans For Peace Chapter 156, along with the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission, honored members of Southern Oregon Returned Peace Corps Volunteers for their many years of service to the cause of world peace.

The location was the newly built Thalden Pavilion on the Southern Oregon University campus. The site is home to the World Peace Flame, which originated in The Hague, Netherlands, and has been transferred around the world. To our knowledge, this was the first time an organization of military veterans has formally honored members of President Kennedy's Peace Corps.

VFP 156 Vice President Dan Davis, a Viet Nam veteran, spoke to more than 20 attending Peace Corps volunteers about the true costs of war and the meaning of Armistice Day, and thanked them for their service. Organizers handed commemorative candles to the honorees. The Rogue Valley Peace Choir provided entertainment.

Members of VFP 156 staffed a table featuring VFP's Armistice Day tabloid, pamphlets, buttons, and other informational materials.

Mark Howard

#157 NORTH CAROLINA TRIANGLE

As it does each year, Chapter 157 provided staffing for the Peace Booth at the North Carolina State Fair, this time sponsoring a petition against the privatization of the VA. Also in October, associate member Vicki Ryder represented our chapter at the Women's March on the Pentagon, convened by Cindy Sheehan to "confront the bi-partisan war machine and to put an antiwar agenda back on the table of activists."

Armistice Day found Chapter 157 out in force for the annual Veterans Day Parade with VFP flags flying high. Greeting us as we approached the Capitol Building was our Swords to Plowshares Belltower, the work of associate member Roger Ehrlich and his team, standing in stark contrast to the glorification of war that otherwise characterizes this holiday.

Other chapter activities this fall included the co-sponsorship of two readings by local author Nancy Corson Carter from her book, *The Never-Quite-Ending War: A WWII GI's Daughter's Story*, and participation in a public screening of Ahmed Selim's documentary film, *Sam's Ride for Peace*, about WWII veteran member Sam Winstead, who rode his bicycle from Raleigh to Washington, D.C., five years in a row to plead with lawmakers for an end to war.

Douglas H. Ryder

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VFP CHAPTER REPORTS *CONTINUED*

#161 IOWA CITY, IOWA

Chapter 161 members have been very busy writing and calling our U.S. Senators, Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst, to advocate for an end to U.S. military involvement in Yemen. The senators unfortunately continue to overlook the rampant war crimes the U.S. and the Saudis have committed, while sending meaningless, robotic replies to their constituents.

In August, members John Jadryev and John Ivens traveled with Chapter 169 member Joe Aossey to the VFP Convention in St. Paul, Minnesota, where Jadryev helped lead yoga sessions and screen films. [If you'd like to compare notes taken at any of the plenaries and workshops, feel free to contact John Ivens at bsnevister@gmail.com.]

On November 11, Chapter 161 sponsored an outdoor observance of the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day near the old capitol building in Iowa City. It was a chilly day, but we drew a crowd of 130–150 hardy folks. John Jadryev rang our bell 11 times, and Roscoe Porch provided a solemn Taps with his trumpet. Featured speakers were Chapter Co-president John Christenson and Nicholas Johnson, a retired University of Iowa law professor.

On December 5, Julie Brown, a member of VFP Bill Basinger Chapter 163 and a Des Moines Catholic Worker, gave a presentation in Iowa City on her peacemaking in Kurdistan.

One thing that remains constant in our chapter's schedule is the weekly Friday afternoon vigil-protest of our endless wars.

John Ivens

#162 EAST BAY, CALIFORNIA

Our chapter has increased its involvement with Deported Vets and we anticipate a meeting after the holidays, detailing problems and strategizing possible solutions.

We participated in the Crosses of Lafayette Armistice Day Vigil on November 12.

Two of our members attended the SOA Watch Border Encuentro in Nogales.

We helped host the *Golden Rule* for sailing and educational outreach.

Our chapter supported Camilo Mejia as a speaker on the Nicaragua situation; the event was well received and lively.

We sent a letter to the American Psychological Association to protest the use of psychologists at Guantanamo.

We continue to protest the militarization of Berkeley police by attending meetings and writing letters to the City Council.

We have also been tabling on the UC Berkeley Campus.

To order a VFP License Plate Frame, please send \$10 to Cathe Norman, 113 Rantoul Circle, San Leandro, CA 94577. Checks should be made out to VFP, Chapter 62, East Bay, CA.

Cathe Norman

#168 LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY



Chapter 168 members take a stand for Armistice Day at the 2018 Veterans Day Parade in Louisville, Kentucky.

Louisville Chapter 168 continued to produce our monthly radio show, the *Veterans for Peace Radio Hour*, broadcast on Forward Radio, WFMP-LP, 106.5 WFMP, with 2018 episodes hosted by members Carol Rawert Trainer (interview with Lindsey Gagotto), Steven Gardiner (moral injury), Patrick King (interview with Greg Abati), and John Wilborn (nonviolence).

Chapter 168 participated in the 2018 Armistice Day (“Veterans Day”) Parade in Louisville, bringing a peace message to the event. Chapter president Steven Gardiner spoke at the First Unitarian Universalist Church in Louisville, at their Armistice Day service, on the topic, “Moral Injury and the Consequences of Endless War.” This was organized by Chapter 168 member Kyle Elison, who also did a talk on antiwar history and presented other versions of the song most of us know as “When Johnny Comes Marching Home.”

Steven Gardiner

#178 NORTHERN COLORADO

The year 2018 started with bringing Paul K. Chappell to Fort Collins. Paul spoke on the campus of Colorado State University, on the topic, “Restoring Hope in a Traumatized World.” Paul and associate member Nat Kees met with counselors in the local school district about incorporating peace literacy in the schools.

Our chapter participated in Memorial Day and 4th of July parades in Fort Collins, Colorado. Paul K. Chappell returned in August and presented at the Cheyenne, Wyoming, VAMC Mental Health Summit.

Thanks to the leadership of Roy Bath and Bill Mygdal, our Quaker liaison, our chapter has initiated peace literacy study groups and we are exploring ways to expand the concept of peace literacy into the greater community.

On Veterans Day, our chapter had a public meeting and celebratory event to Reclaim Armistice Day. We had 25 attendees,

though no non-VFP veterans attended. We still have work to do on Reclaiming Armistice Day every day, as well as reclaiming the narrative of illegal wars and mending the wounds of war and militarism.

We are in the early stages of developing Reverse Boot Camp as a path to waging peace for U.S. military service members upon discharge from active duty.

Paul Gessler

#180 FRESNO, CALIFORNIA



September 20, 2018—Members of Chapter 180 and the local group Peace Fresno rally in support of the Women's March on the Pentagon.

On September 20, 2018, VFP Chapter 180 members gathered to rally, along with local group Peace Fresno, in support of the Women's March on the Pentagon. Chapter President Joshua Shurley made appearances on four area radio broadcasts, between September and November, to discuss the work of Chapter 180 and to promote the local events and national campaigns of Veterans For Peace.

On November 12, after leafleting at the Fresno Veterans Day Parade, Chapter 180 held a Reclaiming Armistice Day event in Fresno, along with local co-sponsors Peace Fresno, the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, and the Fresno Branch of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). After a musical performance by the Raging Grannies, featured speaker Mitch Jeserich of Pacifica Radio delivered an informative and inspiring talk about the history of Armistice Day and the importance of its legacy today.

Joshua Shurley

#182 TIJUANA, MEXICO

November was a busy month for VFP Sgt. Barrios Memorial Chapter 182/Unified U.S. Deported Veterans Resource Center. Our border rally reclaiming the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day was followed by participation in the SOA Watch 2018 Border Encuentro, which focused on the causes of the present migrant exodus from Central America. We called out the U.S. for historic politics of destabilization of the region, and its shameful avoidance of its responsibility to the refugees it has created.

U.S. Deported Veterans vow to continue to serve, in the true



Sent as a Christmas greeting from Unified U.S. Deported Veterans Resource Center/VFP Sgt. Barrios Memorial Chapter #182: "May 2019 bring the joy of Peace and Justice we all seek."

This group shot of veterans was taken after a very special dinner. The tall man in the middle of the back row is Alfredo Figueroa [see page 24], who came from Berkeley with individual gifts for every deported veteran. Many other folks, not pictured, were there providing love and support, including veteran Gary Loutzenhiser-Cárdenas, who not only cooked dinner, but opened up his home for the gathering.

spirit of what a soldier is trained to do—to protect those that cannot protect themselves! VFP Chapter 182 will continue to support our asylum-seeking brothers and sisters, with emphasis on children and women.

Robert Vivar

#1001 UNITED KINGDOM

VFP U.K.'s annual gathering meeting (AGM) took place November 8–11, 2018. At the AGM, new members were elected to our Policy Group, and the gathering enjoyed the world premiere of the film *War School*, an independent documentary that looks at militarization of children here in Britain. Our public conference featured discussions by German veterans who conscientiously objected to their country's deployment to Afghanistan, a talk by Viet Nam veterans Dennis Stout and Barry Ladendorf, and academic Silvia Binenti talking about research into the "Poppy Brand."

On Sunday, November 11, Veterans For Peace U.K. members paraded to the Cenotaph in London to remember all those killed by war. On the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War, which was supposed to be the "war to end all wars," we marched under our "Never Again" banner, the phrase originally used by veterans of that awful war, but a message forgotten in our modern age of warfare.

Our wreath, a mixture of white and red poppies, was placed at the Cenotaph, the center of Britain's Remembrance, by a German veteran, Florian Pfaffand of Darmstädter Signal [tagline (translated): "the critical forum for citizens in uniform"]. D-Day veteran Jim Radford [who turned 90 in 2018] sang "1916," and James Florey read the poem, "Suicide in the Trenches."

#NeverAgain.

Phillip Clarke

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#1002 IRELAND

VFP Ireland had a successful year. Chapter Chairperson Edward Horgan spent six weeks in Russia in February and March observing the Russian presidential elections with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and learned a lot about how the Russian people feel about the increasing encroachment of NATO along their western and southern borders, given their history of being invaded at huge cost to the Russian people by Western European leaders, Napoleon and Hitler. Horgan also attended peace conferences and presented papers in Switzerland, Syria, and at the Veterans For Peace U.K. 2018 annual gathering in London.

Our biggest activity, in conjunction with the Irish Peace and Neutrality Alliance, was facilitating the very successful International Conference Against U.S./NATO Bases in Dublin. The role played by Veterans For Peace members from the USA at this conference was very substantial, and we thank them for their great efforts, especially their attendance at the peaceful but very impressive and vocal demonstration at Shannon Airport which is one of the U.S. military bases in Europe. Over three million armed U.S. troops have transited through Shannon Airport since 2001, on their way to and from U.S. wars in the Middle East.

Edward Horgan



VFP members from the USA, Ireland, and the U.K. show off an art banner commemorating children killed in wars, at the International Conference Against U.S./NATO Military Bases held in Dublin, Ireland, on November 18, 2018.



Veterans For Peace members from the USA and Ireland staged a protest at Shannon Airport on November 19, 2018.

Four-Corner Foundation

...continued from page 4

way to convince people of that is to be an example of what that world can look like. To work for peace, it is not enough to resist war. We must be willing to be peace-makers and justice seekers in our own lives. We must be willing to examine our own biases and failures. We must work to dismantle the vestiges of the greater society's oppression that are active in our hearts and personal circles. We cannot have the attitude that just because we work for peace and justice we do not also participate in the systems of oppression. Peggy McIntosh coined the phrase "Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack of White Privilege." Each of us must be willing to acknowledge and unpack the invisible knapsack each one of us wears.

As a man, I must listen to women and work to recognize my own learned misogyny, so that I can work to dismantle it in my world. I must become comfortable with being uncomfortable at times and

develop enough self-confidence to be vulnerable. This means having the humility to accept that I am not always right and the maturity to admit when I am wrong. And even harder is to discern when being right is not as important as going,

EACH OF US MUST BE
WILLING TO ACKNOWLEDGE
AND UNPACK THE
INVISIBLE KNAPSACK
EACH ONE OF US WEARS.

together, through a learning process that will help everyone involved grow. Each of us must do this in the context of our own experiences and lives. We must build a culture of peace in our organization and throughout the movement. If we believe a peaceful and just world is a better place, then we must build that place. No one is going to build it for us. As we build it, people will come. People will be happy to join in a place where they feel respected

and valued. A place where, when there is conflict, there is real interest in resolving it by collectively examining the issues and considering other's feelings, not just our own. And as we grow personally, the movement will grow, and political transformation will follow.

Finally, we must persevere. Perseverance holds the foundation together. We must maintain our efforts. We must not give up. We can rest. We can take time off as needed for mental and physical health. We can walk away for a time as we go through the cycle of life: children, caretaking parents, jobs, etc. But we must stick to it. Don't forget that the struggle is long and the powers that be bank on us feeling powerless and giving up. We must endure.

Thank you again for the incredible experience of serving you as executive director of Veteran For Peace. Our work is far from done, but we have a great family of friends and comrades to confront war and work for peace together. I am honored to be counted as one of you.

—Michael T. McPhearson

DUBLIN CONFERENCE REPORT

VFP members from the U.S., Britain, Ireland, and Okinawa traveled to Dublin, Ireland, to attend the first International Conference Against U.S./NATO Military Bases held November 16–18, 2018.

Over 300 people from six continents came to the conference, which was held at Liberty Hall, of Irish Industrial Union fame. Experts from all over the world presented on their work opposing U.S. and NATO bases, including, from the U.S., David Swanson of World BEYOND War, Medea Benjamin of CODEPINK, Ajamu Baraka of Black Alliance for Peace, and Dr. Margaret Flowers of Popular Resistance. These presenters not only shared their expertise with the attendees, but also served on the conference coordinating committee, which was chaired by Bahman Azad of the U.S. Peace Council, a VFP member from New Jersey. VFP member Tarak Kauff from New York was a lead coordinator and also spoke at the conference.

Currently, there are over 1,000 military establishments in over 170 countries, including tens of thousands of U.S. and NATO troops encircling Russia, so that Western oil companies and corporations can continue their exploitative practices around the globe. (“Freedom isn’t free!”) Everyone present



VFP member John Spitzberg traveled from Alaska. [All photos this page: Ellen Davidson.]



Bahman Assad, U.S. Peace Council / Veterans For Peace

was in agreement that the U.S. Military-Industrial Complex and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization must cease and desist from invasive assertions of authority and military occupations throughout the Americas, the Caribbean, Europe, the Mideast, Africa, Okinawa, Korea—i.e., wherever there are resources to steal, big business to protect, and cheap labor to exploit. Conference attendees gained a more sophisticated understanding of how the U.S. and NATO take control over lands that do not belong to them, and came away with new insights and a vast array of information and talking points that can be used in building public pressure for the removal of these bases.

Perhaps most important, the three-day conference provided valuable opportunities for activists to form and strengthen working partnerships, and sparked new determination to work together to rid the world of this cancer. The framework of the event facilitated networking between activists of more than 35 groups, and concluded with preparations for a follow-up meeting to be held in Washington D.C. in April 2019, timed to coincide with a major NATO anniversary gathering. It is anticipated



Paola Renada Gallo Peláez, President, MOPASSOL, Argentina

that VFP will play a significant role in organizing that event, and we hope many veterans and peace allies will turn out in April to demonstrate against NATO power. Here is the draft schedule for protest activities being planned in D.C. for the week leading up to and including April 4, 2019:

- **Sat., March 30: Mass rally and march beginning at 1 pm in Lafayette Park, across from the White House, followed by additional speakers and cultural activities.**
- **Tues., April 2: Alternative summit.**
- **Wed., April 3: Peace festival to advocate for the abolition of NATO, the promotion of peace, and the commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech against war, and his assassination a year later.**
- **Thurs., April 4: Black Alliance for Peace open meeting. More rallies are also being planned for this day.**

Endorse the March 30 rally at no2nato2019.org. This site will be updated with all activities happening in D.C. in opposition to the NATO anniversary. Also stay tuned to worldbeyondwar.org.

To learn more about the ongoing campaign against U.S./NATO military bases, visit noforeignbases.org.

Thanks to John Spitzberg for contributing to this report.



Dr. Aleida Guevara, Member of Cuban National Assembly, Cuba



Ajamu Baraka, Black Alliance for Peace, U.S.



Chris Matlhako, South African Peace Initiative, South Africa



Tarak Kauff, Veterans For Peace, U.S.



Anne Atambo, President, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Kenya

MEMBERS' STORIES

SHERRY CONABLE

SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA
VFP MEMBER SINCE 2008

I worked alongside veterans during the whole Nicaragua–El Salvador period in the 1980s—not providing services for vets, but working in solidarity with them on issues that we all cared about. As I did that, I couldn't help but see how many veterans were homeless, and how badly they were being treated because of that. It seemed awful to me, and that's when I began advocating for the needs and rights of homeless people. This was my main focus throughout the 1990s.

Then along came the Bush-Cheney Regime, and I was horrified at what they were doing, not only to the rights of folks in this country, but especially to the Muslim folks of the world, first in Afghanistan and then in Iraq. So I began putting a lot of energy into the peace movement again.

I don't remember when the Santa Cruz VFP chapter was formed, but some of the same veterans I'd worked with in the 1980s to stop the wars in Central America were part of it. I'd seen their VFP banner and really loved it, so I invited them to bring it to regular protest actions we were doing at our local military recruiting center, which they did!

Then VFP Santa Cruz brought Iraq War resister Camilo Mejia to town to speak, along with Courage to Resist founder Jeff Paterson, and packed our local Veterans Hall. I saw what an amazing, heartfelt organization it was. That's when I decided to



Sherry Conable speaks at the Armistice 100 event in Santa Cruz, California, on November 11, 2018. One of Sherry's signature hand-drawn peace messages is visible at far right. [Photo: Becky Luening]

formally become an associate member and start working with VFP, because I was so impressed by the work that was being done, locally and nationally.

I fundamentally believe that if we are going to stop the war machine, veterans' voices need to be at the microphone. Because of the way veterans are made into cultural heroes, when they step up and say NO, it's an incredibly powerful voice! People can't just dismiss it or look the other way.

I am proud and grateful to be a part of supporting that voice.

JAY JAY FERRARI

SOMEWHERE, USA
VFP MEMBER SINCE 2017



Jay Jay Ferrari in action.

It all started after I returned from Viet Nam, while stationed at Quantico. The antiwar movement was in full bloom, and a small group of us traveled to D.C. to protest our involvement in Viet Nam. Since then I've always opposed the ongoing wars this country has participated in, by protesting at local demonstrations and writing letters/calling my representatives.

There was a moment a few years ago, with wars being fought in Iraq and Afghanistan, that I wanted to help in some way to end these horrible forms of aggression. At that time, just before Standing Rock (deciding factor), I heard about Veterans For Peace, along with the usual veteran groups. When it came down to who I wanted to support, there was no question: VFP.

I always make sure to wear my VFP hat or shirt when I vote, go to the VA, demonstrations, or very public outings. There are the stares, but also the support from other vets.

Alfredo Figueroa: Keeping our Promise to Deported Veterans



Alfredo Figueroa at this year's VFP convention in St. Paul. [Photo: Ellen Davidson]

Veterans For Peace member Alfredo Figueroa (East Bay Chapter 162) is heading up a project titled "Leave No Man Behind: Keeping our Promise to Deported Veterans."

Alfredo is an OIF and OEF combat veteran with an amazing story. He is a recent graduate of the Haas School of Business at UC Berkeley, and was awarded the 2018 Judith

Lee Stronach Baccalaureate Prize, which funds his work with veterans that have been deported. He is also on the board of VFP's Deported Veteran Advocacy Project.

Based in California, Alfredo is currently doing workshops around the Bay Area, and is available to come to local communities to talk about his project. Also, Alfredo visits the Unified Deported Veterans (VFP Chapter 182) about once a month, and is happy to take donations. A list of needed items and his shipping address can be found online at bit.ly/2LYIUUV.

Alfredo can be reached at alfredo.figueroa01@berkeley.edu.

VFP ON THE BORDER

STAYING HUMAN *continued from page 1...*



A boy waits patiently for his family's number to be called—a wait that could go on for months.

more problems than we solved, which is something you need to consider when you don't have enough for everyone.

For the asylum seekers relocated to this crowded shelter on the outskirts of Tijuana, the daily trip into town to see if their number was selected is another hardship added to an already very long list of hardships. And of course having their number selected only means they can start the long process of being considered for asylum. They are not being granted asylum. Unfortunately, most will not make the cut.

We also visited the area known as Little Haiti, where the Church of Iglesia Embajadores de Jesus is being used as a shelter for asylum seekers from Central America and Haiti. We met with the pastor to see what his needs were, but our main reason for going there was to get some idea of how many children were staying in this shelter. We wanted to buy them gifts for *Posada* (the Christmas nativity celebration), but first needed to know how many boys/girls there were, and their ages. So we set up tables with lots of crayons and coloring books, and out came the kids. We talked with them while they colored, gathering their names and ages. With a list of at least 28 children, Deported Veterans planned on shopping for gifts with money they had already collected. [Robert Vivar reports they were able to purchase over 60 toys thanks to a few generous donations.]

While in Tijuana, I also visited the encampment known as Bonito Juarez. This was the encampment that was at first contained inside a small sports field, but ended up being pushed out onto the street (Cinco de Mayo Avenue). The sports field was never cleaned up after the asylum seekers were displaced, I think in part to discourage people from re-settling the space, but also to be used for negative propaganda ("Look what a mess they made!"). There are encampments located throughout the city—perhaps as many as 38. During the week in December that I was there, I only visited three of them. These were all shelters the Deported Veterans had visited previously.

ONGOING NEED

I would like to see other VFP members travel to Tijuana not only see the crisis on the border for themselves, but to meet, and join, the Deported Veterans who are there helping asylum seekers. Chapters might consider sending small delegations to the border. After they return from the border, those members could then engage their chapters and communities with two very important issues: Deported Veterans and the crisis on the border. I can promise that the time and effort will be worth it.

Things on the border are not going to get better quickly. As people in the last caravan said, "We are not the first, and we won't be the last." The crisis will remain, and a plan is needed if we want to provide any kind of help or aid over the long term. For the time being, it will be important to stagger VFP visits so as not to overburden the Deported Veterans.

Even if you can't make it to the border, please consider supporting the Deported Veterans via their donation page on the Veterans For Peace website [bit.ly/VFPDeportedVets]. Your money will go to good use, of that I have no doubt. Also, Alfredo Figueroa, VFP member from the Bay Area, is happy to accept material donations on their behalf [see p. 24].



Elliott Adams (yes, all the way from upstate New York) and Hector Lopez finish loading truck with items for asylum seekers.

Remember, drugs and terrorists aren't coming into the U.S. with asylum seekers. No terrorist is joining heavily scrutinized groups of asylum seekers. And of course, 80 percent of all the drugs that enter the U.S. do so in trucks crossing at ports of entry. Real, comprehensive, immigration reform is needed, but in the meantime, people are dying and living in unacceptable conditions. We need to remain compassionate.

Mike Tork is a lifetime VFP member, CIS (Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad) El Salvador Board Member/Treasurer, and SOA Watch Treasurer. Anyone wanting more information, please feel free to call him at 774-392-7567 or send an e-mail to im4peacenow@yahoo.com.

Crash Course

By H. Bruce Franklin

Rutgers University Press, 2018

Reviewed by Denny Riley

H. Bruce Franklin's 20th book, *Crash Course: From the Good War to the Forever War*, is out, and you should read it. It's a blend of the life he's led and of the world around him since he was a kid. It's an irreverent story, like his description of Public School 99 as "...a massive four-story brick edifice for teaching obedience..." but it's almost poetic in the way he paints the picture of being seven and hearing the Pearl Harbor news on the big family radio, and four years later celebrating V-J Day on the streets of Flatbush. Then he draws away from his American life to tell us the Vietnamese on the same day celebrated their victory over the Japanese, while the French nurtured plans to recolonize Indochina, and how the United States bankrolled them, how we began our war in Southeast Asia on August 22, 1945. It's like that, this book.

Dr. Franklin tells of being a tugboat crewman in New York Harbor when the mob took over the waterfront, and of being a navigator on a Strategic Air Command air refueler over the Arctic ice cap, where navigation is complicated by no direction being north. While he explains the use of a sextant, he also makes clear how phony the cold war was, how the Soviets had zero deliverable nukes while our government scared us into digging bomb shelters.

Franklin went on to become a flaming radical, a leader in the civil rights movement and the peace movement, and the only tenured professor ever fired by Stanford. Like I said, you should read this book. And if you haven't already, be sure to read his book, *MIA: Mythmaking In America* (Rutgers University Press, 1993), which exposes the hoax behind the POW/MIA dirge, an invention of Nixon and Kissinger, who needed to save face.

Denny Riley is a member of *Veterans For Peace San Francisco Chapter 69*.

Don't Thank Me For My Service

By S. Brian Willson

Clarity Press, 2018

Reviewed by Larry Kerschner

I often say that my political education began in the jungles of Viet Nam. I'm sure Brian Willson would say something similar. Using his training as a lawyer, his new book, *Don't Thank Me for My Service: My Viet Nam Awakening to the Long History of U.S. Lies*, reads like a prosecutor building a solid case, brick by bloody brick.

Beginning with his vision of "countless human bodies scattered across the ground," Brian dissects the true nature of his "service" in Viet Nam. Looking to place his war in a historical context, Brian likens the United States to a spoiled child who has never been held to account for years of genocide, slavery, and racism, both at home and abroad. This child has inevitably grown into the psychopathic American Empire of today. But, he explains, this nation was designed as an empire from the very beginning.

Especially following the Second World War, government and corporate media propaganda supported a near total indoctrination of the public in the unquestioned belief in the exceptional nature of the American Way of Life. Confusing material comfort with the ideal of freedoms that must be fought for, Americans could not recognize "what would be considered criminally insane behavior if carried out by others."

Willson chronicles the criminal and barbaric lengths to which the United States has gone to force our industrial "civilization" on people around the world. He explains the extent of corporate collusion in the chemical warfare, concentrated especially on the men, women and children of developing Southeast Asian nations with a desire for sovereignty. He also catalogs the significant upheaval and resistance to the American War in Viet Nam that developed both among the

U.S. public and among those fighting in Viet Nam.

"Healing our nation," Willson asserts, "depends on our removing the wool that remains in our eyes—that we seek to understand and grapple with these [deep historical and psychological] forces, these lies that continually drive us to war and violence. We must strive to unravel the pretend U.S. America—its skewed origin stories, its false mythologies, and its phony sense of 'exceptionalism'—in an honest pursuit of 'liberty and justice for all.'"

Reading this book is a great way to begin that healing journey.

Larry Kerschner is a poet and a long-time member of *Veterans For Peace*. He resides in western Washington.

OTHER 2018 BOOKS OF NOTE

Guys Like Me: Five Wars, Five Veterans for Peace

By Michael A. Messner
(Rutgers University Press)

How the U.S. Creates "Sh*thole" Countries

Edited by Cynthia McKinney
(Clarity Press)

Inside Iran: The Real History and Politics of the Islamic Republic of Iran

By Medea Benjamin (OR Books)

A Shadow on Our Hearts: Soldier-Poetry, Morality, and the American War in Vietnam

By Adam Gilbert (UMass Press)

Soft as Water: 52 Meditations on Peace

By Charles P. Busch (Irene Publ.)

BLACK OR WHITE

Momma lied.
I am black on both sides.
Braggadocious,
literate,
bastard boy.
Skin the color of mahogany on wood.
Thick as the cast
that mends broken bones, crushed underneath
aspirations of disillusioned generations.
Skin black as the tar
that lingers on her rosy lips.
I desire a kiss.
Skin black,
so
the bruises blend
but still poison,
like grey goose bottled like water.
Camouflage
like negro soldiers eating lead
for a Country that left them out to dry
underneath a storm cloud.
My love for them
is thunder loud.
Resembling raucous arenas and testimonial subpoenas.
To be authentically black,
you must have ideas,
only to lose your soul
never to be seen again.
Like George Washingtons in between seat cushions
or like the hearts of black men
who dare become fathers.
My daddy never lied
when he bestowed me the only treasure in his possession,
skin black like his.

—Tyler Campbell

[Tyler Campbell, The Haverford School Class of 2018;
from, *What Would Malcolm X Do with an iPhone?*]

GOT MEDIA?

We are compiling a VFP media list for publication. If you or your chapter are involved in producing a radio show, TV show, podcast, blog, zine, literary journal, or other media devoted to peace and justice topics, please email the details to: editor@veteransforpeace.org with the subject, *Got Media*.

HANDS

You huddle together in the bunkers
Count the incoming with
Lips together in silent unison
You carry buddies to the dust-off chopper
Red hands in black
Black hands in white
White hands in brown
No one knows whose blood
Is whose drying
On the red sun-baked clay
—Or cares; the man's the thing
And finally the endless year is by
And you're short and you board
That big silver bird at Bien Hoa
And you—the lucky ones I guess—
Return to the World, and the fingers loose
Their clasp, and
You go your separate ways
And the lesson
Is lost

—James A. Johnson

[James A. Johnson, USAF; from, *Flat Sunlight: Poems 1967-1972*]



VFP continues to thrive—
thanks, in part, to generous, thoughtful
people who, in the past, remembered us
with charitable gifts in their wills.

You can easily do this, too.

For more information, contact:
314-725-6005 + vfp@veteransforpeace.org

Wanted: Your Story

In your own words (max. 300, please), describe the path that led you to VFP. Include a high-res image of yourself, past or present (or both). Send (as attachment or pasted in the email) to: editor@veteransforpeace.org with the subject, *My Story*. Please remember to include your name, your home chapter or city, and the year you became a member of VFP.



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#NeverAgain



On Sunday, November 11, 2018, VFP U.K. members paraded to the Cenotaph in London (above) to place a wreath of white and red poppies in remembrance of all those killed by war. This year, on the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War, which was supposed to be the "war to end all wars," VFP U.K. marched under a banner proclaiming "Never Again," words originally used by veterans of that awful war, but forgotten in our modern age. [Photo: Rachel Clarke, twitter @Razdaa]