



# Exposing the True Costs of War and Militarism Since 1985

# VETERANS FOR PEACE

Organized locally. Recognized internationally.

Convention Report 2013

FALL 2013

## ENERGY & ENLIGHTENMENT

Doug Rawlings

Our annual VFP convention -- #28 and counting -- held in Madison, Wisconsin, this year provided members and guests with a series of enlightening and energizing experiences. The Concourse Hotel lived up to its reputation as a venue open to the political energy of an organization like ours -- it is the only union hotel in the city and has proven to be a welcoming site for the ongoing battles against a repressive state government that Wisconsin activists are engaged in. Staff went out of their way to help us throughout the convention. Add to that an energetic and dedicated group of local chapter members, and we have the formula for a successful convention. Deep appreciation and thanks go out to the Chapter 25, Madison, for their excellent work, especially indefatigable Associate Member Judy Miner, her colleague Steve Books, and many energetic volunteers. The workshop presentations, plenary groups, musicians, and keynote speakers provided the 317 members who attended the convention with plenty of opportunities to sharpen their skills and deepen their knowledge.

The convention began with two wonderful pre-convention events. On Tuesday night many of



Convention participants on the streets of Madison.

us gathered with local Madison activists at their annual Lanterns For Peace gathering to acknowledge once again the immensity of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings through dialogue, song, floating lanterns action. Patrick McCann and Mike Reid added their eloquent voices to the evening. Then on Wednesday night we hosted our annual

poetry reading at an amazing local bookstore (A Room of One's Own) with 25 poets reading to a crowd of 100 VFP members and local activists, plus Power to the Peaceful cake, provided by a local peace vigil group.

The official convention kicked off Thursday morning with a moving welcome from Madison's own

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## New Interim Executive Director of Veterans For Peace

It is with great regret we announce that for personal reasons Mike Reid is no longer the Executive Director of Veterans For Peace. We wish Mike all the best and thank him for his service to VFP and the cause of peace and justice. We are grateful to Michael T. McPhearson, past Executive Director of Veterans For Peace, for agreeing to assume the position of interim director as we begin our search for a permanent Executive Director.



Veterans and Winter Soldiers,

I appreciate the opportunity to share perspective concerning VFP's current situation and potential future.

Our strategic plan has led us to an active 2013. Highlights include:

- helped to avert war on Syria (for now),
- supported Private Manning and other draft resisters,
- opposed drone warfare and calling for shutting down GITMO,
- hosted a VERY successful 28<sup>th</sup> national convention in Madison.

We're expanding the strategic plan to encompass organizational strategy and a conscious attention to demographics. Finances and membership are ongoing organizational projects. Our financial situation is more stable, and we are attempting to institutionalize income (planned giving, recurring credit card donations, etc.). Membership, however, has dropped 5% this year, to 4,000 dues-paying members (80% veterans), and a membership drive is in order! Dues are a primary source of VFP income.

Much of our national leadership is new; half of us arrived this year. We're focusing on protocols, rebuilding institutional memory, and developing and maintaining a positive board culture. Latest additions Margaret Stevens (NJ) and Barry Lahdendorf (CA) have already made significant contributions. Interim Executive Director Michael McPhearson's past experience as ED will

help us smooth the transition to a new ED.

The office staff continues to be consistent and reliable. The board meets four times a year, and has conference calls in the months when we don't meet. We'll be at the site of our 2014 convention (Asheville, NC) on the weekend of October 25-27, and in Newark (NJ) in late January.

I attended the "Legacies of War" event in NYC in February that celebrated the life of Dave Cline (presente!), and the NoCal regional in Ukiah, CA in March. I've since met with chapters in Asheville, Baltimore, Boston, Philly, Raleigh, and South Florida (Miami/Ft. L.), and look forward to expanding travel beyond the East Coast.

My keynote speech at the Madison convention focused on building a culture of mutual respect, and 'laying our hands on the organizational machinery of VFP'. We strongly encourage members to join national committees (development, communications, and membership) and working groups (Latin America, environmental cost of war, etc.). Thanks to everyone for your efforts to achieve a peaceful world!



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# Executive Director's Report

Michael McPhearson



I am excited and humbled to be at the service of Veterans For Peace and its members. To once again have the opportunity to work for an organization that is so in line with my principles and values of peace and justice is a wonderful privilege. Thank you for all the work you do and for sustaining this important association of veterans who understand the futility, waste and immorality of war and who have decided to work together to abolish it.

Since my departure in 2010 Veterans For Peace national has seen three presidents and three Executive Directors. This is a heavy turnover for such a short period of time. Fortunately for me, I am available to step in to help provide a degree of continuity as we transition to new leadership. My five years as your Executive Director and recent time on the Board provides me with the institutional and technical knowledge to help guide our organization as we search for a new executive director. It is the intention of the national Board and me that we take as much time as needed to hire a new ED that will be in the position for several years. Of course as anyone who has hired and fired people know, there are no guarantees. Staff and life changes are unknowable and unforeseeable. Kind of like Rumsfeld's known unknowns and unknown unknowns, the Board will do the best it can to hire a well-qualified person and bring stability to the position.

But in the meantime let me try to answer what is probably of most con-

cern to you as a supporter and member, what is the organizational health of Veterans For Peace and where do we go from here? The financial position of VFP is strong. Of course we work very hard to raise money and would like to raise more to ensure adequate future funding and to implement the goals of our strategic plan, but VFP is in no immediate financial danger. Today we are \$7,500 in the black for the year and we have \$170,000 of reserve in savings.

For 28 years our membership has been the backbone of Veterans For Peace. You are in relentless and consistent pursuit of realizing our mission. Your activities and philosophies continue to run a wide spectrum. We have a highly dynamic core of street activists, others who are speakers at schools and events. Our members write books, songs, opinion pieces and poems. We petition Congress face to face, with phone calls, letters and online. We reach-out to the homeless and veterans in need. And we work to heal the wounds of

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**Thank you for all the work you do and for sustaining this important association of veterans who understand the futility, waste and immorality of war**

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war abroad providing water to villages, demanding the people of Vietnam are recognized as victims of Agent Orange, living as guest and friends with former enemies and helping democracy work by monitoring elections. We continue to do all these things and more.

I want to give a great big thank you to all of our Associate members who are a huge cornerstone of our

success as an organization. Standing alongside veterans supporting us at every turn, you do so much to help keep VFP moving that enough cannot be said to express your importance. Your service as Associate members is invaluable to VFP. Thank you so very much for all that you do.

So the basics of funding and membership are sound, but we do of course have major challenges. For one, our membership is graying and time is diminishing our ranks. Since September 11, 2001 thousands of veterans have joined our rolls, but many of them do not remain paid or active members. We must crack the code on attracting and maintaining new members for our success to continue and to have the impact we seek to make. Attracting members goes in hand with developing a sound plan for the organization's direction and focus. It is the intention of the national leadership to use the strategic plan as a means to provide national direction, grow membership and appeal for funding.

The basic framework of the plan is simple. After surveying the efforts of our membership to resist and abolish war and how that work is done, it is clear that our organization's greatest assets are our stories and experiences as veterans, and our most important tool in our efforts for peace is our veteran voice. We believe increasing the number of veterans talking about and advocating for peace will change the public discussion away from the acceptance of war towards searching for peaceful ways to solve conflicts. We will increase the pool of veterans with knowledge and skills to do all our work, including our ability to address current challenges whatever they may be from year to year, for example, Syria, Iran, drones, Guantanamo Bay and Afghanistan.

We also understand that to abolish war we must change the nation's culture; meaning we must build a culture of peace at the grassroots level to empower citizens to support alternatives to war and militarism. This portion of

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## Congratulations! VFP helped stop a U.S. war in Syria!



Celebrate and take credit! VFP members were very active in creating a context where President Obama and Congress chose talking over bombing. Surely thousands of Syrian lives have been saved. Savor the moment, learn the lessons, build the connections, give thanks.

**We thank you!**

**Thank our friends and allies, even the President.**

## VFP NATIONAL CALENDAR—2014

Over the past year, we have kept a national calendar with monthly themes and ideas for action. Keeping a national calendar provides an opportunity to show our numbers through unified acts. As a grassroots organization, the core of Veterans For Peace is the dedication and hard work of our local members. Your participation increases the visibility and impact, both locally and nationally. By engaging both leaders and citizens within our local communities, we can educate and promote peaceful resolutions.

Each month will have an underlying theme to help inspire creativity and peaceful topics of discussion. As before, the national office will provide supportive material to help members spread the word. Petitions, flyers, and graphics will be available. The monthly e-mail will contain sections that provide talking points and ideas surrounding particular issues or themes. The “Never Forgotten” Section, will focus on war and peace anniversaries to remember and educate about the history of this ongoing movement towards peace. The “Take Action” section will contain ideas for action, including suggestions for both individual reflection and group gatherings.

In 2014, we will begin sending out the monthly calendar updates one month in advance. This will allow chapter leaders and members to discuss potential actions, events, and talking points at monthly meetings prior to the upcoming month. This will help us to be more strategic in our planning and more effective in our overall impact. Please join us in keeping this national calendar and continue to wage peace!



**Olive tree—symbol of peace and hope.**

*(Continued from page 3)*

our plan is central to recruiting and efforts. Using our status as veterans to raise awareness and add energy to local struggles will establish our commitment to peace in the streets at home and abroad. We will tell the complete story of U.S. involvement in the affairs of other nations and how these activities led to international tensions and sometimes wars with negative impact on communities in the U.S. and around the world. This frontline work in the streets helping communities understand and build alternatives to violence will make the crucial connection that people are the same across the globe and the policies that destroy or communities here in the U.S. destroy communities around the world.

Thank you again for all your work and dedication to VFP and the cause of peace and justice. We have a lot of work to do and I am excited to continue to be part of such a dynamic and dedicated group of peacemakers and justice-seekers. Power to the peaceful.



### PRINTING SERVICES AVAILABLE AT VFP MEMBERS ONLY WEBSITE

If you haven't visited yet, be sure to check out the Members Only section of the VFP website. There is a link to the site in the Take Action box on the VFP home page ([veteransforpeace.org](http://veteransforpeace.org))

Under the Documents tab you will find a Special Request form where you can order reduced cost printing for your chapter's needs. We are able to offer 100 black and white copies for \$5, \$10 for color. This price is for one-sided copies and includes shipping to most parts of the country. Two-sided copies cost twice as much.

You can pay for your order by calling the office (314-725-6005) or by making a donation on line with a note in the comment box that you are paying for printing.

Please allow 10 days for your materials to arrive.

Also under the Documents page is the form that must be used to request VFP endorsement of national events and campaigns.

# National Project Reports

## GOLDEN RULE PROJECT

### Fredy Champagne

Chapter 22, with help from Chapter 56 members, are preparing the Golden Rule for launch celebration on July 4th, 2014. All are invited. The transom has been lettered with our Golden Rule name and hailing port of Humboldt Bay. Our floors are in, the house and decks are done, and we are preparing to lay the fiberglass next. The masts, booms, and gaff are complete, and we have the sails and rigging. Preparing to install the rudder, tiller, shaft and screw. We would sincerely appreciate a donation from our many VFP members and friends. Our project is 3 years old, and expecting to finish and launch next year. Please help us with your donations. Thank you. VFP Golden Rule Project, a national project of Veterans For Peace.

## IRAQ WATER PROJECT

### Art Dorland

It's probably a safe bet that projects organized and financed within relatively small organizations like VFP will have a limited shelf life. The Iraq Water Project, established back at the end of the nineties by California members Fredy Champagne and the late Edilith Eckart, is on the contrary still going. Support from chapters, foundations, individual donors and one unbelievably generous member has made this possible.

Score to date: Six water treatment plants of various sizes repaired/rebuilt, including an installation at Fallujah, a city none of us had heard of when our VFP delegation visited in 2002. One hundred forty water sterilizers and filtration units installed in Iraqi schools, clinics, and other institutions as recently as this summer. Abu Ghraib prison got two of them, as well as the

reconstructed al-Askari shrine at Samarra, leveled by al-Qaida in 2006. Also a school at Halabja, the Kurdish city infamously laid under chemical attack in Saddam Hussein's Anfal campaign.

How much of this work is itself still working is not known by reason of the persistent violence that precludes continuity, but we are confident much good has been done. We can stand our work alongside the "accomplishment" of our government in Iraq and feel not the worse. US forces have left Iraq, but we are still there. If you want to sight along this project's overall trajectory consult *What's New* at [iraqwaterproject.org](http://iraqwaterproject.org). Conditions permitting---and so far they have---we will keep going while support continues. Thanks for your interest, everybody.



An installed water sterilizer and filtration near Nassiriya

## KOREA PEACE CAMPAIGN

### John Kim

The Korea Peace Campaign (KPC) is a national project of VFP whose mission is to achieve a peaceful end to the Korean War; heal the wounds of the War; and promote genuine reconciliation and friendship between Americans and Korean people. We are proud to have several members of the Korean War, such as Chuck Overby (Air Force) and Peter Shaw (Marine), supporting this project.

This year is an important year for the KPC project for two reasons. First, this year marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Korean War Armistice Agreement. Can you believe that the U.S. Empire has been waging a costly war against North Korea for more than 60 years now? This is the longest U.S. war in its history. It is about time that we end this lingering war finally by replacing the outdated temporary ceasefire agreement with a peace treaty. Secondly, we also observe the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the KPC project this year.

Thus, KPC project has carried out some meaningful activities in connection with the anniversaries. Some of the accomplishments are as follows:

- Produced a short (about 1-minute), educational video on the need to end the Korean War. It is posted on the VFP website, as well as on the YouTube (under title of *End the Korean War Now!*). More than 1200 people watched our video so far. Please watch it if you have not yet.
- Helped in the drafting of a VFP statement (4/12) against the escalating military tensions in Korea during the two-month long US-Republic of Korea joint war drill called *Key Resolve/Foal Eagle*.
- Organized and participated in the Korea Peace Weekend in DC in July, consisting of an outreach visit to the Congress, a peace march and rally across the White House, and a film showing of the *Memory of the Forgotten War*, in cooperation with the National Campaign to End the Korean War, in observance of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armistice. President Obama spoke to a large gathering of pro-war veterans at Korean War Memorial on July 27, while we were picketing the White House with demands for a peace treaty to end the Korean War. Four VFP members participated in the DC events: Peter Bronson (NY), Kevin

Harless (Pittsburgh), John Kim (NY), and Kevin McCarran (DC). Special thanks to Rep. Michael Honda (D-CA) who delivered a statement in the Congress in support for a per-

Please visit our KPC project online ([veteransforpeace.org/our-work/vfp-national-projects/korea-peace-campaign](http://veteransforpeace.org/our-work/vfp-national-projects/korea-peace-campaign)), and join our campaign for an official end to the Korean War.  
Wage Peace!



Participants in Korea Peace Weekend, July, 2013.

manent peace regime in Korea (See his statement at <http://www.veteransforpeace.org/files/4613/7753/7630/hondastmt082613.pdf>)

- Submitted a VFP convention resolution on Korean War under the title of *Declaration of Peace to End the Korean War*, which is co-sponsored by VFP Chapter 47 in Pittsburg.

This year's resolution calls for an end to the war on our own initiative. We are now taking more proactive stand. In this regard, KPC urges all VFP members to vote in favor of the resolution when the ballot is received in the mail. KPC also urges all VFP chapters to adopt the KPC project as their own local project. Thanks to Chapter 47 and 34 doing so!

In 2006, KPC sent a VFP peace delegation to South Korea. One of the five-member delegation was Charlie Atkins, an Army veteran of the Korean War. It is sad to hear that he passed away on July 16. We will miss him.

To carry out the KPC mission successfully, we need a strong support and participation from the VFP members, national board, and local chapters, including financial help.

## WAR CRIMES TIMES

### WCT Team

The *War Crimes Times* is a truly national project of Veterans For Peace. The paper is produced and distributed by VFP members from several states and is supported by the national office. Over the last five years, tens of thousands of issues of the paper have been distributed by VFP chapters across the nation to the general public—from Florida to Alaska, California to Maine—as part of our mission to raise awareness of the true costs of war, of the need to recognize and prosecute U.S. war criminals, and of the fact that *all* wars are crimes in themselves.

From time to time we learn that a VFP member has never heard of the *WCT*. This shouldn't be. The *War Crimes Times* is a valuable tool in advancing VFP's role as an educational organization. If you don't know about the paper, check us out at [WarCrimesTimes.org](http://WarCrimesTimes.org).

As we begin our sixth year of publication, we'd like to thank our readers, donors, contributors, and distributors. We are entirely funded

by donations. But our suggested donation amounts just cover costs of printing, postage, and supplies. Thankfully, the generous donations we receive in excess of costs allow us to expand our reach.

We send complimentary copies, bundles, or subscriptions of the *War Crimes Times* to libraries, GI coffee-houses, prison inmates (including Private Manning), senators, and congressmen, new VFP chapters, and to folks who have the energy to distribute the paper but not the means to provide financial support. (One homeless vet asked for a free bundle to help him "get back on his feet"; now he has a home and he orders, and pays for, multiple bundles).

We also send complimentary copies to our contributing authors, poets, cartoonists, and artists who include notable journalists, legal experts, academics, and activists as well as veterans who speak from experience.

Our reach also extends beyond the U.S.—copies of the *WCT* have been sent to Afghanistan, Australia, Denmark, Germany, Iran, Israel, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, South Africa, Sweden, the UK, and Vietnam.

We're quite sure that after five years and tens of thousands of issues, we have raised some awareness. We're also quite sure that we have more to do.

Thanks again for your readership and your support! If you've not received the paper, let us know. We'll send you a complimentary copy.

In peace and solidarity.



# VFP Chapter Reports

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## CHAPTER 1 - PORTLAND, ME

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**Richard Clement**

The chapter sent a member to Jeju Island, South Korea to help the local farmers, fishermen, and land-owners in their struggle in a major battle over a naval facility being built on their pristine shores. We participated in July parades with our "Bring our war dollars home" theme. We received very positive receptions.

We participated in the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Brunswick, Maine Peace Fair. We had many discussions and had a button-making machine for the children to make peace designs of their choosing. We had an ex-military drone operator speak and show a slide presentation. He explained his job and how drones are everywhere in great numbers. A discussion followed on their widespread use.

Chapter 1 held another War Trauma/ PTSD Symposium in May. Paula Caplan, psychologist and author of *When Johnny and Jane Come Marching Home: How All of Us Can Help Veterans*, was the keynote speaker for this important event.

At three separate locations around the state we and our allies visited our Congress people concerning military strikes in Syria. We added our collective wisdom as veterans to the overwhelming call to not to go to war with Syria.

As the time of this report we are yet again tabling at the Common Ground Country Fair. Upwards of 60,000 people attend this three day event put on by Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association. We have had a prominent location in the Political Action tent for many years.

## CHAPTER 16 - WASHINGTON, DC

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**Mike Marceau**

In May, Chapter members rode the final 40 miles with Sam Winsted of Chapter 157 on his Ride for Peace, which started in Raleigh, NC and ended at the White House. We led worship service at Unitarian Universalist church in Germantown, MD. The topic was "Forgiving Your Enemy After The War."

In June various members attended a Rally for Bradley Manning at Ft Meade, MD and attended the first day of his court martial. VFP-DC members were in the courtroom several days each week through the end of the trial.

In August, we attended panel on whistleblowers with speakers Cornell West and Chris Hedges and a rally at the White House after Bradley Manning's sentencing. Also Mike Marceau spoke at a gathering of peace activists at Lincoln Memorial as part of the Poor People's 50th Anniversary march on Washington, DC and a White House rally in opposition to military action against Syria.

In September, we hosted a vigil of 40 people at Representative Chris Van Hollen's Rockville, MD, office and attended a meeting with Representative John Sarbanes to urge him to vote NO on military action against Syria. We delivered the VFP statement against US military action against Syria to both Maryland senators and all 8 representatives.

On September 16, Mike Marceau was interviewed on RT (Russia TV) about the shootings at the Navy Yard in Washington, DC. Here is the link: [http://youtu.be/6Z\\_yWjAFpcY](http://youtu.be/6Z_yWjAFpcY) on the 18<sup>th</sup>, we attended a reception for Chuck Searcy of Hoa Binh (Vietnam) chapter of VFP.

## CHAPTER 21 - NORTHERN NJ

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**Nancy Nygard**

On Friday, July 26, a delegation of U.S. military veterans of the Vietnam war from the New York Metro area met with a delegation of Vietnamese veterans from that same war. The meeting took place at the Hotel Intercontinental in New York City. The two Chapter 21, New Jersey members attending this gathering were Chapter President and National Board member Ken Dalton, along with National Board member Michael McPhearson. Also in attendance were members of VVAW and New York VFP Chapter 34. In addition, delegates from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam including their ambassadors to the United States and the United Nations, along with Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang also attended this event.

## CHAPTER 23 - CHICAGO, IL

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**Army Stieber**

The Chicago Chapter is on the move. We had a beer-tasting fund raiser for IVAW and netted over \$1,200.00. We've participated in many demonstrations for Bradley Manning, against Guantanamo, and against invading Syria.

We've started an initiative to demilitarize Chicago Public Schools – the most militarized school system in the country. This was kicked off with a presentation to the school board, press releases, an on-line petition, and stickers that read "Military Teaches Violence. Demilitarize CPS".



Larry Johnson



At the gate at Camp Ripley for the Anti-Drone protest Sept 15th

On August 27, the day the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact was signed in Paris in 1928, we held an event at the Frank Kellogg House in St. Paul. Led by Chapter Co-Founder chapter members worked all year to create a media and public awareness event.

Along with many chapter members and supporters were representatives of our federal Senators and Representative, the State Historical Society and the State Humanities Center. Dave Thune presented a St. Paul City Council proclamation honoring the day, Frank Kellogg, and the implications of the Pact. We had wonderful music and a keynote by Peter Rothstein, renowned theater director who created *All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914*. This production premiered on Minnesota Public Radio, and has been broadcast around the globe.

The Historical Society has offered help in archiving our chapter history and telling the Kellogg peace story thru their resources. The Humanities Center has promised to work with us on a major event, looking at the full and true costs of warfare and we are working with a sculptor on casting bells with veterans. We will be exploring the long history of bells, in frightening demons (of war?), being melted down to create weapons, and being used to signal the importance of lasting peace, as we do

every year during the November 11 Armistice celebration.

A sad note was the recent death of former national board member and long-time local chapter leader, Bob Heberle. We rang bells of peace at Bob's service and the local mainstream newspaper created a significant article, *Military Veteran Who Protested War*, honoring Bob's life of service, as well as the important work we all do.

CHAPTER 31 – PHILADELPHIA, PA

Chuck Rossi

After a rather quiet Summer, the Fall began with the chapter once again marching as the only invited non-labor organization in the Tri-State Labor Day Parade. Frank Trotta, Tom Bradley, and Chuck Rossi carried the banner of nonviolence the 2 miles or so of the parade route in a driving rainstorm with our comrades in the labor



Chapter 31 carrying its message in the Phla. Labor Day Parade

movement. A few members of the chapter participated in an early demonstration against the then-planned military intervention in Syria. The demonstration was disappointingly small as many people hastened to the city-sponsored rock show in front of the Museum of Art.

John Grant participated in Peace Day Philly, giving a talk on militarization of American life. John also does a weekly 1-hour radio show for a station in Kansas, and John and Chuck have done

interviews for a green radio station in Central Pennsylvania. Mike Felker represented the chapter in a Cease Fire PA Summit on Gun Violence. Since returning from Vietnam where he was a combat medic, Mike has been a tireless advocate for stricter gun laws and for international controls on land mines and cluster bombs. Newlyweds Frank Corcoran and Cherie Eichholz represented the chapter at the Convention in Madison.

The chapter, along with various peace and justice groups, has participated in the monthly demonstration against the conversion of a part of a decommissioned Naval Air Station in nearby Horsham into a drone command center.

CHAPTER 34 – NEW YORK, NY

Bob Keilbach

The chapter has participated in numerous actions in support of Pvt. Manning and against Drone Warfare, including marches, demos, educational events and street theater. A unified contingent of over 200 marched in the Pride Parade, distributing flyers supporting Manning, and collected donations for his defense.

We participated in a May Day march with union and immigrants' rights advocates, Regional conference on the Veterans Peace Movement, Memorial Day Observance, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary March on Washington, and numerous actions demanding No War on Syria.

Chapter Meetings are held on 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month: recent speakers included National Board Members Michael McPherson and Tarak Kauff, Immigrants' Rights Activist Ravi Ragbir, and a report back on the National VFP Convention. We have set-up a Chapter Facebook page to which members are posting relevant info and articles of interest.

Susan Schnall has been working with Rep. Barbara Lee, who recent-

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ly introduced HR2519, the Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2013, which addresses the needs of all victims of AO/dioxin. The bill currently has 12 co-sponsors. Members are contacting their representatives, urging them to co-sponsor the legislation.



**No war on Syria March**

Susan and Tom Fasy conducted workshops at the VFP Convention. Chapter 34 submitted a Resolution Commemorating the Sesquicentennial of The Emancipation Proclamation to the National Convention. Bill Gilson, Susan Schnall and Tom Fasy spoke to 30 attendees at a "Veterans For Peace Speak Out" at a local Community Center.

Upcoming Events: No-Drones actions during United Nations General Assembly meeting, Armistice Day Parade & Holiday Party.

## **CHAPTER 41 – CAPE COD, MA**

### **Duke Ellis**

Our Memorial Day presence was strong again this year thanks to ninth-grade Poetry for Peace prize winner Anna Davis who read her powerful poem "Remembering Sunday" at the Cape's largest ceremony. Many in the crowd had a tear in their eye and were struck by this young woman's message regarding the impact on a sister who lost an

older brother ("my best friend, my other half"). (See the poetry section of this issue for the entire poem.). This Spring we lost our longtime chapter member Foster Phillips who was born in Puebla, Mexico to missionary parents and grew up in Texas. Foster was a Captain in the Marine Corps and saw action in the South Pacific in WWII the Korean conflict. After living in Mexico again before 'retiring' to Cape Cod he became directly involved in resisting the injustices of the US government in Central America. He had a lifelong commitment to peace and justice and often inspired others to join with him in this cause. Despite his long and difficult military service, he said that he regretted the violence with which he had been involved and at the end of his life said that he had asked for forgiveness each day. In August we participated in the Second Annual Veterans Stand-Down on Cape Cod where the health and wellness community provide a day of free services to local vets in need. As in the past, we got many curious vets asking about VFP. And in the Fall we began again our efforts to educate and activate the public about the "Hidden Costs" of war --PTSD, TBI, MST and suicide -- and to prevent further human damage both military and civilian.



**Anna Davis reciting her award-winning poem *Remembering Sunday***

## **CHAPTER 50 – NORTHERN MI**

### **Tim Keenan**

Members of the Bruce and Char Sanderson chapter have been busy preparing for Interna-

tional Peace Day, September 21, which we sponsor here in Traverse City. The agenda includes the reading of a peace proclamation by our Mayor at our Government Center. This is followed by a presentation from five secular persons and five persons representing various religious backgrounds. The event will be televised. The planting of a peace pole in one of our parks will follow and the event concludes with a peace celebration of music and food.

We succeeded in accomplishing our mission of having a giant WELCOME HOME to our troops sign placed at the airport. Initially, we were to subsidize this through fundraising dollars. We remember coming home from war with no fanfare. We remember if we aware what was going to happen when we went to war, we may not have gone. We felt it important to honor those coming home.

Our proposal was met with much resistance from our local VFW, with Commander's of two counties publicly calling us criminals and unpatriotic, basically saying we had no right to welcome home the soldiers from war.

We were strongly supported by our local media. Letters to the editor and calls to the airport helped our cause greatly, although the airport board ended up paying for the sign themselves, so as to omit our logo.

The most important point was the installation of the sign. Accomplished! And we received more positive publicity than we had ever expected.

## **CHAPTER 55 – SANTA FE, NM**

### **Robert Stearns**

Chapter president Ken Mayers attended the *People's Response* demonstration in Dallas against the newly opened George W. Bush Presidential Library. The Chapter co-sponsored the Democracy School at Quaker House in April. A Chapter delegation placed flowers for deceased members again on

for deceased members again on Memorial Day at the National Cemetery in Santa Fe. Members carrying a banner *Stop The War On Mother Earth* joined a March on Monsanto on May 25. Members marched in a Gay Pride Parade on June 22. Two Chapter members took part in the annual VFP Tour to Viet Nam, bringing help for war victims. VN War vet Ken Stewart spoke of his wartime experience there at a meeting of the Santa Fe Speakeasy.

Ken Mayers went on trial in New York City in July, with 13 other veterans and allies who were arrested in October for continuing to read the names of U.S. soldiers killed in recent wars, despite closing time at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

## **CHAPTER 61 – ST. LOUIS, MO**

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**David Sladky**

This summer, our chapter utilized our scale Drone model at a number of “Hands off Syria” rallies, Aug. 31<sup>st</sup> at Forest Park, on Sept. 3 at Sen. Claire McCaskill’s office and Sept. 4<sup>th</sup> in Columbia, MO with the Mid-Missouri Peace Works. It was also used at Bradley Manning support rallies and a very successful two-day tabling event at the St. Louis Pride Fest, as well as other local festivals. The drone is a great attention getter and brings home the death and destruction caused by them. We distributed over 1000 anti-war DVDs at various events.

Three members, besides office staff, attended the VFP convention in Madison as well as the Democracy Convention held across the street. Over 500 DVDs were distributed at these conventions. Our chapter, in conjunction with the Columbia chapter continues to have six hours a week public access TV. We also get material on the air in Champaign/Urbana, Ill. and Ft. Wayne, Ind.

Chapter members also participated in a Stand Down Sept. 21 –

details yet to come.

Missing from our last report was our participation in the Whiteman AFB drone protest April 14<sup>th</sup> where Col. Ann Wright spoke by phone over our PA system. Veterans Memorial.

## **CHAPTER 67 – LONG BEACH, CA**

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**Horace Coleman**

Several chapter members (who also belonged to the recently defunct national organization MFSO—Military Families Speak Out) recently recorded interviews with StoryCorps. StoryCorps has audio links at its website and National Public Radio broadcasts interview excerpts weekly.

The Library of Congress archives the interviews. Interviewees (veterans of the GWOT, parents, spouses, siblings, and considered citizens—one of whom started a residential house for transiting vets) talked with each other about the problems, issues and concerns they had and the struggle to deal with them.

Chapter member Pat Alviso and her husband Jeff Merrick, also a chapter member, made contact with StoryCorps, contacted potential interviewees, briefed interviewees about the purpose and structure of the recording sessions and coordinated interview times with StoryCorps staff members and interviewees.

The chapter’s Teen Memorial, displayed monthly in Long Beach, CA, recently attracted attention from passersby, vacationing foreigners and a Vietnamese boat person. One member of a group of strolling teen boys stopped to take pictures.

Each of the crosses on display bears a picture and a brief biography of a young service person who was KIA. One woman stopped to ask “What’s going on?” When told she said “I have a brother in the Army!” and helped set up the memorial.

Chapter members attended a rally at a local courthouse protesting the jury verdict in the killing of Trayvon Martin; displayed the Teen Memorial in Santa Monica Memorial Day weekend / Memorial Day. And, held a garage sale with the Long Beach Area Peace Network.

## **CHAPTER 69 – ALBUQUERQUE, NM**

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**Sally Alice-Thompson**

We are represented at all peace and Justice events. We participate in the Gay Pride, July 4, Martin Luther King and State Fair parades. We are members of PAJOLA (Peace and Justice Organizations Linking Arms) at the Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice. We have been prime sponsors of several Manning events.

Thanks to the local ACLU our relationship with the Veterans Memorial Park has changed. We originally were denied entrance to the Park by the veterans group who administer it. Since it is a taxpayer supported city park, the ACLU convinced them that we had a right to be represented there. So now, instead of demonstrating outside the gate, we have a table at any event that we wish to attend. The attitude toward our chapter has completely turned around. We have a rose garden, with Everlasting Peace roses, We ring a bell eleven times at the Veterans Day event. and we were even given a space in the shade to hold our annual PTSD Awareness Day event.

We are still working to remove guns from the Martin Luther King Parade

## **CHAPTER 71 – SONOMA COUNTY, CA**

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**Bill Simon**

The Sonoma County Chapter is primarily focused on planning the VFP Northern California Annual Conference held on the weekend of May 2-4. We lined up some ex-

*(Continued on page 11)*

cellent speakers (Col. Ann Wright, Project Censored) and entertainment. The Conference location is Mountain Home Ranch, a relaxed setting in the mountains near Calistoga, CA. Our Conference theme is *Developing a United Voice for VFP Northern Cal Chapters*.

We also have started a new effort to regularly table at Santa Rosa Junior College where, in addition to VFP information and *The War Crimes Times*, we distribute counter-recruiting information developed by our collaborative partners at the Full Picture project.

[www.thefullpicture.info](http://www.thefullpicture.info)

And finally, we are working in collaboration with Helping American Veterans Endure (H.A.V.E.) to put on a fundraising event to include a speaker, music and refreshments. ([www.HAVE-Vets.org](http://www.HAVE-Vets.org))

## CHAPTER 72 – PORTLAND, OR

### Marion Ward

It was a busy summer for chapter members. We participated in vigils and marches for Chelsea Manning, closing Guantanamo and No War on Syria. A successful public program on Guantanamo, with standing room only, was held in July. On August 6<sup>th</sup>, VFP members marched from the peace park to the annual Hiroshima event held at the Portland waterfront. Members participated in rally and march in Portland commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. The VFP national convention in Madison was attended by five chapter members.

In September, the chapter had a booth at the Vancouver Peace and Justice Fair. The chapter also sponsored the Portland premier of the film, "Targeting Iran". In October, VFP was a co-sponsor for the forum held on the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bombing of Afghanistan. Other activities include: (a) supporting the Elliott Adams' west coast tour; (b) publicly showing the

film *Ghosts of Jeju Island*; and (c) undertaking sponsorship of Project Unspeakable.

Work on the peace park is ongoing and the planting of perennials is essentially complete. However, there is a continuing need for funds to support park maintenance. VFP72 will be holding its annual commemoration of Armistice Day on Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> in Pioneer Courthouse Square at 11:11 a.m.



Malcolm Chaddock speaking at No War on Syria rally.

## CHAPTER 75 – PHOENIX, AZ

### Richard Smith

The Winter Soldier Chapter continues its battle with the Phoenix Veterans Affairs Hospital (PVAH) over its unlawful conduct during the 2012 Phoenix Veterans Day parade. At that time, PVAH engaged in content-based discrimination, in violation of the first Amendment, by censoring and removing part of our chapter's Parade entry description. (See *R. A. V. v. City of St. Paul*, 505 U. S. 377, 382, content-based restrictions of speech are presumptively invalid.)

PVAH edited out the following paragraph that was to be read to attendees along the Parade route:

*Members of Veterans for Peace use their military experience to testify to the brutal consequences of war and seek peaceful and effective alternatives. As veterans, they embrace a heightened sense of responsibility to serve the cause of peace through non-violence as exemplified by Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Cesar Chavez.*

Our attempt to obtain a remedy from PVAH's Regional Counsel was unsuccessful. Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Eric Shinseki, never responded to our letter requesting that he intervene on our behalf. As a result, WSC sent a letter to resident Obama asking for his assistance in the matter.

We are now engaged in a struggle with the City of Phoenix and Honoring Arizona's Veterans, co-sponsors of the 2013 Parade. It now appears that they have adopted PVAH's Parade rules in order to ban the Winter Soldier Chapter from "Our" Parade. We'll keep you posted.

## CHAPTER 99 – ASHEVILLE, NC

### Ron Harayda

In addition to participating in Mountain Moral Monday, joining with A. N. S. W. E. R. to publicly stand against taking aggressive action against Syria, taking part in the local observation of the International Day of Peace where we presented a Proclamation to the City of Asheville and our ongoing Peace Vigil held each Tuesday at Pack Place in downtown Asheville; we are looking forward to hosting the Veterans For Peace Board of Directors' meeting here in October as we gear up for hosting the 2014 International Veterans For Peace Annual Convention.



## CHAPTER 102—MILWAUKEE, WI

### Bill Christofferson

Continuing to use author appearances as a way to educate the public and provoke discussion about the real costs of war, Chapter 102 sponsored a talk and signing by Nick Turse, author of *Kill Everything That Moves: the Real American War in Vietnam*, at a local bookstore.

Ninety people attended to hear Turse and to take part in a thoughtful, lively question-answer session and discussion afterward. Turse spoke at the national VFP convention in Madison the next night.

We are planning our annual Armistice Day observance at City Hall on November 11, and also will be the beneficiaries that night of proceeds from a Veterans Day dinner being planned and prepared by a group of chefs at the Milwaukee Art Museum.

Many of our members continue to volunteer with the Milwaukee Homeless Veterans Initiative, which was launched by our chapter in 2008 but now operates as an independent non-profit organization. It has served more than 1000 homeless and at-risk veterans and their families in a variety of ways. The executive director, Tracey Sperko, is a VFP member, and two other chapter members, President Paul Moriarity and Roger Quindel, also serve on the board.

## CHAPTER 104 – EVANSVILLE, IN

### Lynn Kincade

On September 3, Chapter 104 members participated in the 127th Labor Day Parade in Boonville, IN, one of the oldest in the country, in support of justice for workers at a time when union membership continues to dwindle and veterans continue to face obstacles in finding meaningful employment in an anemic economy.

In commemoration of the 12th anniversary of the attacks of September 11, 2001, the chapter stood for the cause of Peace at the flag-raising ceremony organized by local firefighters and co-sponsored by a university students veterans organization and an ROTC unit. Gary May, professor of social work at the University of Southern Indiana, saw the invitation to "raise the flag" on that



Chapter 104 at Peace Day 2013

day, and decided that that flag should be the Peace Flag, which chapter members carried along with the Veterans For Peace banner that was affixed to a freeway overpass for drivers to observe along with the American flag that flew from a fire truck.

The chapter celebrated the International Day of Peace on September 21 with an action at the Evansville Four Freedoms monument. Members and supporters carried signs advocating peace and offered literature that emphasized the way everyone can seek peace in meaningful and ongoing ways in their lives. Passing motorists rewarded supporters with honks and gestures of support of the cause of Peace.

## CHAPTER 112 – VENTURA COUNTY, CA

### Michael Cervantes

The projection of Chapter 112's public face can be found primarily in its diverse tabling events. Tabling events make it possible for us to turn a community invitation into a peace action. Our tabling events include: invitations with

BAPAC (Black American Political Association of California); City of Ventura 4<sup>th</sup> of July festival (attended by 30,000 visitors); eight days of Ventura County Fair tabling where tens of thousands arrive over a 2-week period; Bradley Manning special event tabling giving away 150 whistles; Labor Day Union-sponsored tabling in Camarillo; and a Native American pow-wow presence thanks to chapter VP Joe Asebedo. Tabling results in further contacts like invitations to junior colleges and other community based functions.

Member, Michael Cervantes, attended the "Extremely Patriotic July 4 So. Cal. Counter Recruitment Meetup" in Long Beach, CA. The meeting reviewed the topic of counter-recruitment at its most in-depth and current perspective. Future actions will spring from this meet up.

The chapter's high school scholarship and on-campus counter-recruitment tabling will continue for this coming season. Anthony Whitaker, past chapter president, attended the 2013 national convention and brought back a report to the latest chapter meeting.

Plans are being made for a local presentation given by Elliot Adams during his visit to southern California in November.



Chapter 112 at the Ventura County Fair



**Tom Contrestan**

Greetings from the city of beer, brats, blues and bicycles where this summer giants walked the earth.

In March, hosting our 9th annual Anti-war Concert, we combined entertainment with consciousness-raising. In the past five months, we've signed up four new members. Now four new names may not sound like much to you folks in the larger chapters, but for us they nearly doubled our dwindling membership and we are quite thankful.

We enhanced our new Peace Park in June by planting dozens of flowers around the peace pole. Thanks to Claudia Bricks and her employer Home Depot for donating the plants and a crew. We co-hosted an old fashioned hootenany at the same garden in July. Our friend Judy Stock led some 60 people who showed up, singing old Guthrie, Seeger, Dylan, and Prine songs.

Five of us attended the VFP convention in Madison in August. People like Kathy Kelly, Brian "more powerful than a locomotive" Wilson, and Madison's own Will Williams are an inspiration to all of us.

We will celebrate our chapter's first decade with a dinner. What began with two vets meeting at an anti-war demonstration before the invasion of Iraq led to years of standing for peace (rain or shine) to raise funds to bring speakers into town, support local activists who traveled out of state, produce nine concerts, support VFP Iraqi Water Project, help homeless vets, save 10 Afghan children from freezing in refugee camps, amongst other projects. We've proudly showed our colors in local parades, a massive protest in Washington and at the gates of Fort Benning with the SOA-Watch. I'd call that a good start! Keep the faith.

**Emma Onawa**

The Red Wing Chapter held its 12<sup>th</sup> annual Peacestock, July 13 at the Schaeffer's Wind Beam Farm in Hager City, Wisconsin. Approximately 120 attendees gathered to share their passion for peace and hear from:

Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, Associate Professor of Justice and Peace Studies at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota; founder Minnesota Arms Spending Alternatives Project (MNASAP) [www.mnasap.org/](http://www.mnasap.org/). US foreign policy impacts those who pay the biggest price, the poor and vulnerable and the governments that stand up to US imperialism. "National security" is militarism, imperialism, and support for repressive regimes worldwide where Eisenhower's military-industrial complex "culture of war" glorifies war.

Kathy Kelly, peace activist, author, founder of Voices in the Wilderness and co founder/leader of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, shared her travels to Afghanistan, with the ordinary people in Afghanistan: mothers who have lost children, boys looking through trash for something to sell, and poor mountain villagers who were shelled almost constantly and gathered spent shells for fuel. Kelly also shared her work with the Afghan Peace Volunteers, a group of ethnically diverse youth dedicated to peace.

Keynote William Blum, U.S. foreign policy documentarian, author of several books, former State Department employee, and recipient of Project Censored's Exemplary Journalism award. US foreign policy dominates the world, Blum described decades of US infiltration, assassination of disfavored leaders, and toppling of democratic governments worldwide. US foreign policy isn't about democracy, freedom, or other moral imperative, but greed

and maintaining power worldwide.

Throughout the day poet Misty Rowan shared her rap style poetry on women and patriarchy, drones, and making positive change. The day was closed with a burrito dinner and music.

On August 15<sup>th</sup> representatives from MNASAP spoke at a town hall meeting to educate the public on the impact of military spending on local economies. Paul Riedner, veteran and Red Wing native shared the impact of his military service, Lance Derrick, described the work of Beyond the Yellow Ribbon, and Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, educated all on the how 12 years of war has impacted the local economy. Chapter 115 plans to present the MNASAP resolution to the Red Wing City Council.

**CHAPTER 136 – CENTRAL FLORIDA****Phil Restino**

On August 22, 2013 our friend and comrade Dr. Bob Bowman passed away at the age of 78 after a long courageous 8-year battle with cancer. Dr. Bob leaves behind his wife of 57 years Maggie Bowman, their 7 children and 21 grandchildren.

Bob was well known as the Pentagon insider who courageously blew the whistle in the early 1980s on the U.S. government's plans to use as an offensive "first-strike" weapon the "Star Wars" missile defense system (aka SDI) which he directed in the 1970s when the program was top secret. Prior to his work with SDI, Bob Bowman served as a USAF fighter pilot with service in Korea and Vietnam. It was Col. Bowman's war experience in Vietnam that led him to dedicating the rest of his life to working for peace as a member of Vietnam Veterans Against the War and later as a celebrated member of Veterans For Peace, serving as its keynote speaker at 4 separate VFP national conventions.

Colonel Bowman was the National Commander of the non-partisan veterans' organization The Patriots, whose motto is "*Follow the*

*Constitution. Honor the Truth. Serve the People.*" (See [ThePatriots.us](http://ThePatriots.us)) That same motto served as a campaign slogan when Bob ran for U.S. President in 2000 and for U.S. Representative in 2006 and 2008.

Bob Bowman was quick to speak out against the U.S. government's improbable, if not impossible, official theory explaining the conspiracy behind the attacks of 9/11/01. Dr. Bowman provides more in-depth interviews concerning both aspects of the 9/11 official theory can be seen in the 2012 documentary from AE911Truth.org entitled "9/11: Explosive Evidence – Experts Speak Out".

Hopefully after more than 12 years now of the "War on Terror", enough of us will finally see 9/11 Truth as the necessary ingredient to actually stopping the 9/11 Wars. Those of us who remain in Bob Bowman's home chapter of Veterans For Peace will continue his work for peace by continuing to carry his message.

#### CHAPTER 139– N. OLYMPIC PENNINSULA, WA

##### Milton Patrie

The chapter holds weekly Saturday demonstrations on busy Port Angeles Lincoln Street, coordinated by Lou Sarna. On the 9/11 Anniversary, Milton Patrie appeared on a radio station KONP call-in program, discussing Questions and Criticisms of the 9/11 Commission Report by experts in their fields, aimed at developing support for a new impartial 9/11 investigation.

"Bad Politicians are elected by Good People who just don't vote"

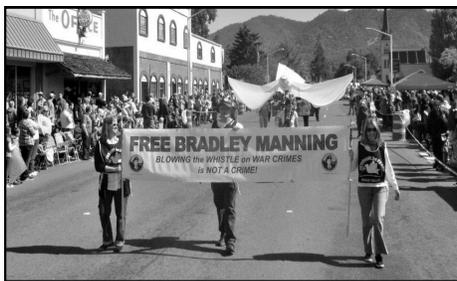


#### CHAPTER 156– ROGUE VALLEY, OR

##### Jim Woods

The chapter marched in the Grant's Pass Boatnik Parade on May 25, the largest parade in Oregon except Portland's Rose Parade. VFP 156 participated in a "Free Bradley Manning" rally and march on Saturday, June 1st. After rallying at Medford's Veterans Park we marched to an I-5 overpass and hung our banners over the freeway.

We marched in the 4th of July Parade in Ashland, Oregon along



Chapter 156 on parade.

with the Ashland Peace House, the Ashland branch of Women's League for Peace and Freedom, Citizens for Peace & Justice and the local Friends community. Hundreds of whistles were handed to children to support whistleblowers.

In August we supported the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Vigil in downtown Ashland. We answered questions, handed out literature, and discussed nuclear disarmament and guided members of the public through the "Nuclear Maze." Linda Richards, from the Linus Pauling Chapter, led a mini-lecture on nuclear disarmament.

Chapter 156 sponsored a fundraising potluck for the Collateral Repair Project on August 20<sup>th</sup>. The Project is a non-profit that provides food and educational assistance to refugees from Iraq and Syria in Amman, Jordan. More than \$600 was raised for this worthwhile project. To learn more about the Project go to [collateralrepairproject.org/](http://collateralrepairproject.org/)

On September 11 we participated in a rally in downtown Medford, urging Congress and the President **not** to bomb Syria. VFP participated with Peace House, Citizens for Peace & Justice, Women in Black, WILPF and Campaign for Liberty (a libertarian group) and invited members from all political spheres to participate.

#### CHAPTER 157– NC TRIANGLE

##### John Heuer

The Eisenhower Chapter has had 12 chapter members among the 900+ North Carolinians arrested during the Moral Monday protests at our state capitol this spring/summer. During the past several events, members served as an honor guard bearing US, NC, and VFP flags to lead the procession of protesters from the Halifax Mall to the General Assembly.

Our founding president and webmaster, Wally Myers, has posted members' stories and videos explaining the reasons for their civil disobedience at [ncveteransforpeace.org](http://ncveteransforpeace.org).

We are also hosting a webpage for an alternative Vietnam War commemoration to the \$65 million official government beatification, to make the future safe for war, since war provides opportunities for generations of young men (and now women) to demonstrate their valor and courage under fire. Add your name to the hundreds who have already co-signed our invitation letter at: [ncveteransforpeace.org](http://ncveteransforpeace.org).

The chapter is hosting Hoa Binh Viet Nam Chapter 160 Vice President Chuck Searcy and two Vietnamese colleagues, who are speaking in Carrboro, NC on September 24. Chuck and his colleagues, Ngo Xuan Hien and Luong Tuan Hung work for Project RE-NEW, working on remediation of unexploded ordnance in Vietnam, just one of the tragic legacies of what the Vietnamese call the American War.

WW II Marine combat veteran, 88 year old Sam Winstead is inviting riders for part or all of his 2014 Ride for Peace from Raleigh, NC to DC. This will be Sam's 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Ride for Peace, and will include 4 generations of Winstead peace-makers.



**Wally Myers leading Moral Monday protesters before his arrest for trespass at the NC General Assembly.**

## **CHAPTER 160 – VIETNAM**

### **Suel Jones**

The Hoa Binh Chapter announces the 3rd annual information, reconciliation, and pleasure trip to Vietnam. The trip begins in Hanoi March 29, 2014 then departs Ho Chi Minh City April 12, 2014. The tour includes Hanoi, Da Nang, Hue, Quang Tri, A Luoi, Nha Trang then Ho Chi Minh City. The goal is touring and learning about present day problems associated with Agent Orange and Unexploded Ordnance. While this is a work trip it is designed to give participants time to enjoy the beauty and culture of Vietnam and to explore its ancient cities.

Each person is required to bring a minimum \$1000 donation. At the tour end participants will decide where and how they want to distribute the funds after visiting organizations and individual families. Our goal is to aid those who have been affected by Agent Orange and unexploded ordinance, and to inform the world of the legacies of the war and the ongoing problems the Vietnamese continue to experience.

Tour payment includes round trip flight from San Francisco to Vietnam and hotel and travel costs while in Vietnam. Most group meals are included. Opportunity is allowed for personal time.

Contact Nadya Williams <nadyanomad@gmail.com> for details on tickets and travel arrangements.

## **CHAPTER 161 – IOWA CITY, IA**

### **Ed Ivens**

In 2013, the chapter has joined with other groups to raise public awareness about the use of weaponized drones. The 132nd Iowa Air National Guard Fighter Wing at the Des Moines airport is replacing its F-16 operations with a control center for Reaper drones. In January we joined with Des Moines VFP Chapter 163 and Leah Bolger for a rally at the gates of this base. After the rally we invited Leah to Iowa City for her presentation on her recent trip to Pakistan with other peace activists. On May 1 we joined again for another rally with VFP Chapter 163 and invited Robert Naiman to speak the next day at the Iowa City Foreign Relations Council. In June we helped to host walkers from Voices for Creative Non-Violence in their "Covering Ground to Ground the Drones" walk from the Quad Cities to Des Moines. Kathy Kelly and Brian Terrel. gave presentations on drones on their way through Iowa City and the walk ended with another rally at the gates of the 132<sup>nd</sup> Air Wing. We have communicated with legislators and published a number of letters to the editor protesting the use of this Iowa Air National Guard base as a control center for Reaper drones.

In August Chapter 161 hosted presentations at the Coralville Public Library by Ben Griffin and Michael Lyons on their work organizing VFP chapters in the UK. Recently Chapter 161 has participated in several rallies voicing op-

position to planned air strikes against Syria.

## **CHAPTER 166 – KNOXVILLE, TN**

### **Jerry Bone**

The highlight of Chapter 166 news was the visit of Paul Chappell, VFP member and eloquent spokesman for peace, who came to town in early May. At Maryville College Paul appeared at the Center for Campus Ministries. The audience of about sixty people included Sr. Megan Rice and her Transform Now! Plowshares comrades Greg Boertje-Obed and Michael Walli, in town to face punishment for exposing the lax security at the nuclear bomb plant in nearby Oak Ridge. Paul then spoke to a class and gave a great interview on NBC affiliate WBIR-TV in Knoxville. After a dinner with VFP members, he met with a group of about 35 at the Buddhist Center.

On Saturday, Paul led a great "veterans only" meeting at the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in the morning and conducted a peace training at the Beck Cultural Exchange Center in Knoxville. Paul made two more appearances at TVUUC on Sunday—at an hour-long dialogue between services in the morning and at a peace leadership talk in the afternoon. Thanks go to veteran member Doug Cox and new associate member Rosanna Iosso for their leadership on the Paul Chappell visit to Knoxville.

On Hiroshima Day, August 6, members Jack Hoefler, Joel Morris and Bill Myers joined other members of the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance (OREPA) near a gate at the Y-12 nuclear bomb plant for the reading of names of the victims of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs dropped on August 6 and 9, 1945.

At our August 22 meeting, a committee was formed to move our anti-bullying award project forward. Thanks to member Jack Currie for

*(Continued on page 16)*

his leadership in getting the anti-bullying award off the ground. We're also planning to get to the SOAW rally at Fort Benning in November.

**CHAPTER 168 – LOUISVILLE, KY**

**Carol Rawert-Trainer**



**September 2013 reorganization meeting of Chapter 168**

We held our re-organization meeting on September 11 and appointed the following officers: Carol Trainer President; Harold Trainer Vice President; John and Janet Wilborn Treasurer and Secretary; Joe Kopacz Press and Political Coordinator; and Patrick King, Coalition Liaison. The VFP mission, recent accomplishments, and future plans were reviewed. One of VFP's original members (lifetime VFP member) and a Korean War veteran, Jim Butler, joined the Chapter.

A demonstration supporting Chelsea (Bradley) Manning in August was attended by VFP members. Harold Trainer's Letter to the Editor criticizing U.S. military intervention in Syria was published on September 4. On September 8, we organized a demonstration and vigil against a military strike and involvement in Syria, which was attended by about 80 people. The *Courier Journal* interviewed several VFP members and demonstrators and published a positive article. Several TV and other media representatives also interviewed attendees and broadcast reports.

On September 19, we participated in the University of Louisville Community Service Fair in conjunction with the International Peace Day. We hope to expand our membership to include the younger generation of today's wars. One student veteran may even be able to get his class to take on creating a Website for us as a project for their CIS class.

On October 13 we participated in the monthly peace/anti-war vigil held in conjunction with members of Louisville Peace Action Community. This vigil, now coordinated by VP Harold Trainer, has been operating since pre-Afghanistan War. In addition, our Press Liaison will write a Letter to the Editor community recruitment of new members. We have applied to participate in the November 11 Veterans Day Parade. VFP also plans to participate in the local National Public Radio Fund raising event in October in exchange for publicity regarding the chapter.

**CHAPTER 172 – PRESCOTT, AZ**

**Bill Papineau**

The new VFP Tom Pettit Chapter in Prescott is standing up and speaking out against U.S. plans to bomb Syria. Prescott VFP has a visible presence every Thursday and Saturday in front of the War Memorial at the iconic Yavapai County Courthouse. We also organized an "Opt-Out" info-action on the first day of school at Prescott High School where military recruitment and paramilitary training for students reveals the extent of militarism in our schools.

The new chapter made its debut on July 6 in the annual "World's Oldest Rodeo" parade when 25 VFP and friends walked for peace, justice, tolerance, and nonviolence in our community. Following the parade theme, "Honoring Our Heroes – Past and Present," we honored our heroes Martin Luther King, Dorothy Day, Cesar Chavez, and Camilo Mejia, receiving unexpected applause and support from watchers along the parade route.

Prescott VFP's info-action at the War Memorial is being noticed by the community and by the local newspaper as we speak out against an imminent military attack on Syria. We're working together with Grandmothers For Peace, Pax Christi, and Prescott Peace Action and are continuing to attract new members.



**Americans are in hiding**

Americans are in hiding

only the dog knows how much

we suffer

No one seems to know

how deep the rot goes

I can't say if they care

or not

If I care or not

Actually everyone cares

But no one out there knows

what the dog knows

Americans are in hiding

Michael Uhl  
9/11/13

## Book Reviews

### Dead on a High Hill: Essays on War, Literature and Living, 2002—2012

W. D. Ehrhart

McFarland & Co. Publishers, Inc.  
2012

Jefferson, North Carolina

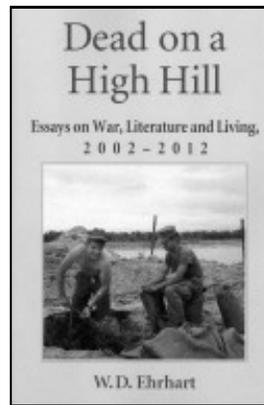
www.mcfarlandpub.com

Reviewed by Chuck Rossi

Bill Ehrhart has for more than 40 years produced a consistently fine and large body of work consisting of hundreds of poems, essays, prose narratives, and memoirs. He has also edited collections of poems and is now teaching history and literature at an all-boys preparatory school. His work has been a constant meditation on the world that made the Vietnam generation and the world that generation remade and attempted to wring knowledge and to make a life --and beauty--from.

This latest volume consists of 25 essays, some previously published, written since 2002 and addressing various subjects, persons, personal biases and irritations (see the short essay *The Value of Your Name*), remembrances of things past, and meditations on permanent things. The collection follows directly on the 2002 collection *The Madness of It All: Essays of War, Literature, and American Life*. Some of the essays in the current volume are works of resurrection and reconsideration, such as his examinations of the poetry of the largely forgotten and as-yet unended war in Korea (see *Hell's Music: A Neglected Poem from a Neglected War*, the piece of reluctant poets of the Korean war, and the title essay) and the long essay describing the return of two aging comrades to the spot in Vietnam where on the same day they were both wounded.

There are several essays in which accident predominates; the



author unaware of the power in a small gift of letters, or poems by a friend that he didn't know wrote poetry and making of these two acts of chance touching remembrances.

The essays are, like all Bill's poems and essays, written in a simple, direct style that quickly reveals the man and, like all good essays, makes the reader feel in the presence of a unique person and a unique sensibility. Some of the essays were originally talks or speeches and the voice comes through.

Two of my favorite essays are about failed men and how from their failure they have in action and in word made a permanent. One is a eulogy to Bill's swimming coach at Swarthmore College, James J. McAdoo, Jr, who held the position for 34 years and taught and influenced hundreds of young men. The essay *Knock Their Jocks Off, Boys* describes the special relationship of benign coach and his swimmers who know their debt to a man who could share with others the only thing he seems to have loved. The essay ends with the poem *Jimmy*, words from which are on a plaque at the Swarthmore poll.

His joy was boundless  
As the love which binds  
him to us  
Even now.

The other, "*That Damned Bad*": *Fragments from the Life of Robert James Elliott*, is one of the accidents in the book. Bill is given by a colleague a collection of papers from a relative from Scotland and finds in them correspondence between Robert Elliott and his wife and a few poems by Mr. Elliott written to his wife while he was in the British Army in France in 1917. This was a time when spouses wrote to each other as *Dear wife* and *Dear husband*. The correspondence is deeply touching and as Bill writes "when one takes time to listen, there is no such thing as an ordinary life." One poem is of his concern for his wife left at home and subject to the predation of the men (the *dirty scoundrels*) who did not go off to war. The beginning of the poem is a wonderful expression of the motivation and anxiety of the common soldier:

I am fighting for my home in 9  
Back Sneddon  
With my wife and children always  
on my mind  
And I very often wonder what  
would happen  
If by any chance with rent you lag  
behind

The rest of this poem (he wrote "I had nothing else to do so I thought I would compose these lines") and the three others endear the man Robert Elliott, husband and unknown poet, to any reader. The man was killed in December 1917. He was 37 years old. He left behind his dear wife and five children. He had four brothers, three of whom were killed in that war.

We are fortunate that Bill Ehrhart took time to listen to Robert Elliott. We are better off for knowing him. This book contains many such small treasures, big ones too. The next installment of essays is 2022, I suppose.



## Remembering Sunday

Momma don't smile no more;  
Not since the knock at the door;  
that echoed through the Sunday mornin' dew;  
a pot of coffee brewin';  
a copy of the Sunday mornin'  
paper waitin';  
would never be attended to.

I remember their faces;  
so scarred from death;  
I remember their uniforms;  
cap resting between arm and chest;

Momma sees no light now;  
her dark and sallow face;  
tells the whole world;  
the problems she tried to erase;

I can see it in her eyes now;  
that her son is gone  
and who is she to thank?

Daddy hasn't talked in awhile;  
that mighty, cheerful laugh;  
is just a distant memory;  
one that will never last

I remember the scream;  
the shrill scream of mamma;  
the thump on the floor;  
running to my room;  
slamming the door;  
thrusting my limp body;  
onto the flowerprint bed;

They took my older brother;  
my best friend;  
my other half;  
I can't explain to you'  
the problems that they cast.

The days are getting longer;  
especially without him here;  
every night I slip away;  
and dream a dream that could  
never appear.

I dream of peace;  
that one day, they will see;  
that life is just so precious;  
so treasured and so free;

Who are they to steal  
my brother's life from me?



## PTSD

In the fibers torn  
are memories of gun battle  
where bullets scream Allah  
and the deafening song of explosions  
dance where human flesh  
once stood  
There have been nightmares  
that had made more sense, but  
when dreams are reality  
and clarity is non-apparent,  
the gunpowder  
sacred to our veins  
is by all means the means of expression  
when true meaning is burnt crisp, and  
the screams fending for themselves  
are still alone  
in the desert

## Jon Turner

from the collection  
*Reasons to Find a Stream*

So I sit at the top of the stairs  
glance out the etched window  
at the rolling fields  
and remember Sunday.

**Anna Davis**, Grade 9  
Dennis-Yarmouth High School,  
Cape Cod, Massachusetts

## war, survival, guilt and choice

redemption starts in a dark nightmare

i can't forget the light behind my eyes  
not only when i sleep but when i hide

inside, forgiveness bursts a fireworks  
display of every choice i made to survive  
and its cost in lives

not dying became a muscle memory

living a habit to survive  
then a habit to forget  
then just a habit practiced  
in a dark nightmare

tears exploding  
i choose not to die  
at anybody's hand  
not even mine  
and step into the light  
and cry: all i did  
was to survive

**gregory ross**  
1990/2013

(Continued from page 1)

First Nation Native Americans drummers. After Mayor Paul Soglin presented VFP with the key to the city, Carlos Arredondo set the tone for the convention through his gracious tribute to VFP's spirit of camaraderie and dedication as we all fight for world peace. Ben Griffin, our first international chapter president, informed us of the actions taking place in England and Ireland, and labor activist David Newby sent us an important message from the rank and file -- there is a direct connection between the work of anti-war activists and labor activists. VFP president Patrick McCann closed the opening plenary with a rousing call to action and our plans to organize at regional and local levels for the long haul ahead.

Before we went into our traditional convention workshop mode, we embarked on an action that became the hallmark of this year's convention -- we purposively strode (we ain't marchin' anymore) to the state capitol building to join the Madison Solidarity Sing Along activists for their daily protest against Governor Walker's repressive administration. Included among those arrested for doing so were VFP members Mike Hearington, our national treasurer, and Steve Bray (at least his fifth time.) Thursday afternoon, evening, and all day Friday had over fifty presentations, not including the nightly film series. Go to the VFP Web site to get a sense of the breadth and depth of these remarkable gatherings, many led by our own VFP members from around the country.

Thursday evening keynote speaker -- Nick Turse, the author of *Kill Everything That Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam*, through a combination of graphic slides and passionate reporting that featured the voices of the Vietnamese people further drove home the need for all of us to work on the behalf of all victims of war.

In the first plenary session on VFP's new strategic plan, Michael McPhearson discussed how VFP could move forward using the strategic plan to most effectively implement our activism. Mike Reid and Patrick McCann fleshed out a much-needed national game plan to best use our resources and to empower our local chapters.

In the second plenary session, Brian Willson reminded us of the need to live our lives in the true spirit of our commitment to protecting the natural world; Kathy

tion about the need to resist war. Editorialist for *The Nation* John Nichols discussed how veteran activists continue to inform the discussion of domestic and foreign policies. Finally, to close the evening off, Kathy Kelly provided a personal and moving account of how deeply committed, courageous, and intelligent activism cannot only lead to personal fulfillment but also to social change (her remarks are in the September issue of *The Progressive*).

The traditional Saturday business meeting began with a "ringing



Presenters for the Iraqi Student Project workshop.

Kelly called on us to deepen our empathy for the victims of American imperialism, such as the Iraqis and Pakistanis; and Diane Willson described her work as a spokesperson for the "invisible victims" that suffer here at home under the yoke of misguided economic priorities

At the Friday night banquet we recognized the fasters committed to closing down Guantanamo. We recognized and congratulated all the local Madison peace activists, including the Raging Grannies, the Solidarity Singers, and Madison VFP chapter members - with a special award for Will Williams. And finally we recognized Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning as our annual international peace prize winner.

Editor of *The Progressive* magazine Matt Rothschild spoke to how veteran peace activists can impact a national conversa-

of the bells" from the Minnesota Chapter of VFP to commemorate the lives of VFP members who died over the past year. After presentations about VFP's business, the members present heard from this year's candidates for the national board and then listened to and commented on a host of resolutions and by-law amendments.

The convention closed with a Sunday morning tribute to one of VFP's long time, stalwart member, Lincoln Grahls, lifelong anti-nuclear war activist, who spoke powerfully to local activists and VFP members about what it takes to dedicate one's professional life to creating a world of peace. Mike Reid and Patrick McCann closed the convention formally by recognizing Lincoln's contributions to our organization.





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veteransforpeace.org  
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# VFP NEWSLETTER FALL 2013

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## VETERANS FOR PEACE

### 3rd ANNUAL SPRING TOUR TO VIET NAM

Saturday, March 29 to Saturday, April 12, 2014 in-country

**Sponsor:** VFP the *Hoa Binh* (Peace) Chapter 160  
**For:** Up to 20 veterans, spouses & activists

The mission of the tour is to make some amends to the Viet Nameese victims of America's war, as well as tour a beautiful country & form lasting ties of friendship & peace.

The group will meet with Viet Nameese families & veterans struggling with the legacies of the war: Agent Orange, Unexploded Ordinance & poverty.

In keeping with this mission, each person is required to bring a **\$1,000 donation** for Chapter 160's humanitarian projects in Viet Nam (hospitals, orphanages, schools, etc.).

**We also invite donations to support this mission from organizations and individuals not participating in the tour!**



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#### COST:

In-country cost of \$2,000 per person, all-inclusive, single room.  
Airfare to & from Viet Nam (group flight approx. \$1,000).  
Visa fee \$100. \$1,000 Donation.

#### MORE INFORMATION:

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