



VETERANS FOR PEACE

The President's Message

by Mike Ferner

A few weeks ago we passed the 9th anniversary of the invasion of Afghanistan. Fewer and fewer of our fellow citizens now think we can “win” this war. Once again, as with Iraq, VFP’s position has become the majority opinion.

(A brief aside -- “winning” in Afghanistan reminds me of the great quote from Jeannette Rankin of Montana, the first woman elected to Congress. She voted against entering WWI and cast the only Congressional vote against entering WWII. She said, “You can no more win a war than you can win an earthquake.” Even supporters of the Afghan war find “winning” hard to describe, much less accomplish.)

Watching the continued suffering the Obama administration unleashes on Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen and who knows where else, is not just frustrating. It is heartbreaking beyond description.

We actively protest and demand an end to the wars, but it seems so futile. We want to do more. We want the wars ended now.

So do I. Early on I was fortunate to go to Iraq as “something more.” I joined other VFP members in civil disobedience actions. Some members argued such resistance was not a wise use of time and energy; that the main goal of doing “something more” was simply to feel better personally. That was part of it and that’s OK. Using a powerful tactic makes us feel we’re doing all we can.

Here’s a specific example.

You’ve probably heard of or maybe participated in online discussions about the banner drop in Washington, Oct. 1. Writ large (18 x 25 feet) it said, “Mr. Obama, end these fucking wars. War is the obscenity. Veterans For Peace.”

Some members thought this a mistake; that we turned off some people we’re trying to reach. Others thought it was entirely appropriate, given how long we’ve protested and how obscene the suffering. Setting aside that debate, here’s what it made me think. It did relieve some of the pain, anger and frustration we feel watching the wars continue. It did put our opposition in strong, unequivocal terms. It got lots of people thinking. But actions by themselves, regardless how bold or numerous; whether civil disobedience or high-visibility protests, will not achieve our mission. Yes, we need bold actions, but if we substitute them for the

discipline it takes to channel our rage into organizing, we’re looking for a quick fix that will not replace our current nightmare with a peaceful, democratic, sustainable culture.

That’s why I am pleased to report that at VFP’s October board meeting, in Portland, Oregon (site of the 2011 convention) we discussed and decided to try a serious, purposeful organizing campaign between now and the 10th anniversary of the Afghan war in October, 2011.

Here’s a very brief description.

A pilot program, involving at most a handful of interested chapters, will take an organizing “vehicle” – perhaps a resolution or a call for local public hearings on the war economy, whatever is decided – to one or two specific constituencies in their area, such as labor, churches, neighborhood or civil rights organizations, etc. We will meet with representatives of

these groups, find out what is of greatest concern to them, see if we can tie our campaign to their needs, start building relationships.

After the local union, church, human rights or “Save the Library” group signs on to the campaign, we take it to the state or regional body and eventually the national level, urging their members to spread the word at each level.

I believe this kind of organizing: methodical, patient, persistent – some would say boring – is the only sure way to end the wars and take the first steps to demilitarize our economy and our culture. This is how we will reach the majority of the population



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Fall 2010

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Executive Director's Report

Since starting my position in February of this year, I've had the opportunity to participate in several pivotal events in VFP's history. I attended the 25th Anniversary Convention in Portland, Maine. At the convention, I had the opportunity to meet 350 to 400 of the VFP members. I presented a strategic fundraising program that includes direct mail, major gifts, planned gifts, and an expanded grants program. This program will ensure VFP's financial security. At the convention, I also had the opportunity to listen to several presentations. It was inspiring to hear from people that have dedicated their lives to working for Peace. I have so much to learn from you.



As many of you know, one of the most exciting recent developments has been the establishment of the VFP endowment in Howard Zinn's name – The Howard Zinn Fund for Peace and Justice. This fund was established in collaboration with the Zinn family. The family indicated that this would have made their father especially happy. He was a member of the Boston Chapter for nearly 24 years. The Smedley Butler and the Samantha Smith Chapters hosted a gathering to kick-off the endowment at Sev and Louise Bruyn's home in Newton, MA. Myla and John Kabat-Zinn and long-time Zinn family friend Nancy Carlsson-Paige (the actor Matt Damon's mother), plus VFP members were in attendance. VFP will always be indebted to Pat Scanlon for coordinating this event for the Boston area Chapters. Two hundred fifty one members have donated a total of \$32,682.92 in gifts and pledges to become Founding Donors to the VFP endowment. In addition, a total of \$286,000 in bequests by 6 VFP members has been made to this fund. The founding members of the fund are recognized in this issue.

Over the next couple of months, I will be visiting New York and Washington DC. As you know, VFP has a Non-Governmental Organization seat at the United Nations. I will be attending my first meeting at the United Nations with Ellen Barfield. She has been the VFP representative to the United Nations for several years. Then I will be heading to Washington DC to visit members of Congress and several organizations that we may be developing collaborations with in the future. I am fortunate that Medea Benjamin and Matt Southworth will introduce me to people and organizations with which they will think it will be beneficial for VFP to develop relationships.

Finally, I will keep you updated on the results of these meetings. I believe these meetings will be beneficial to raise our awareness and credibility. Over and over again, I am reminded that, through VFP, as veterans we must use the integrity of our military experience to speak out against The True Cost of War.

Peace.

Dennis Lane

Leave a
Lasting Legacy
of Peace

By leaving a bequest to Veterans For Peace, you will create a legacy that will benefit others for generations to come.

If you have already included Veterans For Peace into your bequest, we hope that you will share this information with us.

Please call the National Office and let us express our gratitude.

Your wishes for anonymity will be respected.

For more information call our office in St. Louis at 314-725-6005.

The 25th Anniversary and Transitioning into a New Era

Two important announcements were made at the 25th Anniversary Convention in Portland, ME. After 25 years the Membership voted to increase basic membership to \$40 annually (a VFP Assisted rate of \$25 will remain available). Also, Veterans For Peace announced the Howard Zinn Fund for Peace and Justice as an endowment that will help National better serve the Chapters.



DUES INCREASED

While the basic membership has increased from \$25 to \$40, VFP will retain a \$25 VFP Assisted option for those that may not be able to afford the increase. Active duty military and IVAW members receive their first year of membership free and there is no charge for incarcerated veterans. As in the past, VFP makes every effort to ensure that no one who wants to join is turned away because of inability to pay. Many chapters support dues for their members who request it. Sometimes dedicated gifts make scholarships available through the national office. This is what makes us a true support network for our fellow veterans.

In voting the dues increase, members recognized that a) inflation has gone up over 100% in 25 years, b) for the last three years we've been using up our small reserves to maintain basic operations and c) the war economy is exacting a toll on individuals, local government, and non-profit organizations like VFP. Our new Executive Director has extensive fundraising experience that will allow VFP to move beyond "basic operations" level.

ON THE BALANCE

While the basic VFP membership dues have increased to \$40, there remains the VFP Assisted option for those members that cannot afford the increase in membership dues. At the same time, National is working aggressively to build a strong endowment that will primarily serve the local Chapters.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact one of us directly, or the National office. As you know our email addresses are located on the VFP website.

For peace with justice,
The Veterans For Peace Board

Patrick McCann	Leah Bolger	Cherie Eichholz
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Donate Your Used Vehicle To Help VFP!

It is very easy now to donate your used vehicle to Veterans For Peace. RV's, boats and even non-running vehicles are welcome. All you have to do is:
call our office, 314-725-6005

OR
call Car Program Inc. 7 days a week, 800 237 5714

OR
fill out the on line form,
http://www.veteransforpeace.org/Alternative_support_VFP.vp.html
That's it!

Within 24 hours someone will call to arrange pick up or towing

ENDOWMENT ESTABLISHED

The 25th Anniversary of any organization is one of the first major benchmarks in its history. Generally, people recognize the organization has longevity and that they can feel secure investing in its mission. The Fund Mission Statement is on the next page.

All of us are proud that Howard Zinn was a member of our organization for over 23 years. As you know, our beloved friend died on January 27, 2010. The Board determined that we needed to establish the VFP endowment in his name. When the family was contacted, they responded by saying, "Of all the things that have been asked, this would have made him the happiest."

The money in the VFP Endowment will be invested in financial vehicles consistent with our mission. Once the fund is established, the annual income will be distributed 80% to Chapter programs and 20% will be designated for the National Office. We want to ensure that this fund grows and will make a difference in VFP's outreach across the nation. It is also an important way of demonstrating that the National Office is here to serve the local Chapters.

Most of the money raised will be coming through planned gifts and major gifts. It is anticipated that by next fall the local Chapters will have the opportunity to apply for the first grants and that, as the endowment grows, the proceeds will benefit all Chapters.

Newsletter

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Roughly 8" by 4 1/2"
in size
\$20.00



Howard Zinn Fund for Peace and Justice Founding Members

Mission Statement

Howard Zinn flew bombing missions for the United States in World War II. After his military experience, he dedicated his life to eliminating war and promoting peace and justice. He was a devoted member of Veterans For Peace for over twenty-three years. The Howard Zinn Fund for Peace and Justice endowment has been named in his memory to ensure that his legacy will continue through Veterans For Peace projects, services and outreach.

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Convention 2010: Back to the Origins

By John Grant

The 25th annual convention of Veterans For Peace took place August 25 to 29 in Portland, Maine, where the organization began in 1985. More than 360 members were in attendance.

Chapter 1 organized the convention, which was held at the Holiday Inn By The Bay – as in Casco Bay. As usual, it was an opportunity for veteran friends to get together to discuss politics, attend the 36 workshops and experience the good fellowship that is the glue in an organization like VFP.

Chapter 1 put together such a fat convention booklet, it made a \$6500 profit for the national organization; Chapter 1 also gave \$3000 in scholarships to attendees from the chapter's Tom Sturtevant Fund.

As in past conventions, some members of the Iraq Veterans Against The War and Military Families Speak Out also attended and had their own meetings during the convention.

It all began on Wednesday with a day-long Board Meeting. Thursday and Friday were taken up by workshops covering many of the issues VFP members are concerned about. Saturday was the annual Business Meeting, which included the usual period of wrangling over a host of resolutions.

Veteran poets Jan Barry, David Connolly, Bill Ehrhart, Doug Rawlings, and Michael Uhl read poems Wednesday night; the reading was followed by an open mike.

The official opening of the conven-



Current President Mike Ferner (left) with founding President Jerry Genesio.

tion was on Thursday morning and featured Chief Kirk Francis of the Penobscot Nation, who welcomed VFP members to Maine. Charlie Clemens, an Air Force pilot in Vietnam who distinguished himself during the war in El Salvador as a doctor working in the war zone, also spoke.

He was joined by Maja Kazazic, a young Bosnian woman who lost both her legs below the knees as a child. She was brought to the United States for medical care under the auspices of VFP's Children Of War Rescue Project. VFP founder Jerry Genesio spoke and recalled those days.

Thursday night there was a Public Meeting at a nearby church that featured writer Terry Tempest Williams; Califor-



March through Portland at the convention's end.

nia congressman Bob Filner, Chair of the House Veterans Affairs Committee; and Maine Rep. Chellie Pingree, a member of the House Armed Services Committee.

Friday evening was taken up with a ferry trip and lobster bake on Peaks Island, all of which was great fun, good fellowship and lots of laughs.

The Saturday night banquet is the convention climax. Former Army Colonel and VFP leader Ann Wright spoke movingly of her experiences with the tragic Gaza Flotilla shot up by Israelis. Noel Paul Stookey of Peter, Paul and Mary sang some great songs. Ben Cohen, co-founder of the ice cream company Ben & Jerry's, gave a great presentation using piled up Oreo cookies to show the absurdities of the defense budget.



Ann Wright describing the attack on the humanitarian flotilla bringing supplies to blockaded Gaza.

Then former war correspondent Chris Hedges unleashed one of the most scorching VFP convention speeches in memory, a jeremiad warning us all of what the future could look like if we don't figure out how to organize alternatives to where things are going. The speech disturbed some, due to its sense of dread, as it inspired others to do more.

Jerry Genesio, one of VFP's founders in 1985, was recognized at the dinner for his important contributions. The dinner wrapped up with Doug Zachary tapping into his Texas Bible-belt background to inspire 23 attendees to come forward to purchase \$1000 life memberships.

The convention was an opportunity to meet new Executive Director Dennis Lane, who announced the formation, in conjunction with the family of Howard Zinn, of the Howard Zinn Fund for Peace and Justice. Zinn, who died this year, was a proud member of VFP.

After breakfast on Sunday morning, a closing march through Portland began to form outside the hotel with banners and signs and the beating of a huge Native American drum. The spirited march passed under a banner dropped over a building by VFP members that said: How Is The War Economy Working For You? The march ended with speeches from a number of attendees, summing up many of the themes of the convention.

VFP President Mike Ferner, who MCed much of the convention, summed up VFP's first 25 years this way:

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Chapter Reports

Chapter 1, Portland, ME

At the first chapter meeting after the convention, while basking in the glow of a job well-done (and finally completed), unanimous gratitude was expressed for the harmonious cooperation between chapter and national staff. We were particularly grateful for Virginia Druhe and Betsy Reznicek as many of us had the pleasure of working closely with them from pre-event planning through to the close of the convention. The chapter voted to bestow on each of these tireless and supremely competent women Honorary Membership in our Chapter. Congratulations and thanks to Virginia and Betsy.

Many elements of the convention were memorable, but from the chapter's perspective, two events stand out as being of particular importance and significance. Jerry Genesio, who convened the initial meeting of founders at a Lewiston, Maine, restaurant 25 years ago, along with his wife, Judy, was honored at the closing banquet. Secondly, our much-loved chapter member, Peggy Akers, was among the handful of deserving women and men to be honored for their extraordinary service.

The 25th Anniversary Convention in August nearly consumed all of our energies, yet we're rebounding. Under the leadership of Bruce Gagnon and Doug Rawlings, the chapter is planning a Peace Walk across the state from November 2-11. The walk will be led by Buddhist monks and nuns and dedicated to engaging citizens about the need to end the war in Afghanistan. We'll cover over 150 miles and end in Portland where we'll make our statement at the Veteran's Day Parade.

And speaking of treks—Chapter 1 wishes to thank all members who made the



Members of Chapter 1 at September meeting promoting Peace Walk.

trip to our corner of the country thereby assuring a happening worthy of a 25th anniversary celebration.

Dud Hendrick

Chapter 9 and Chapter 45, Eastern Massachusetts

The Samantha Smith Chapter 45, Smedley Butler Brigade Chapter 9 and other local peace groups co-sponsored the "Japanese A-Bomb Survivors" event at First Church, Ipswich, MA on May 5th. On May 8th, Mr. Masatoshi Yoshimura, Nagasaki Councilman, personal representative of the Archbishop of Nagasaki, and a second generation hibakusha (sufferer of the atomic bomb), met with about 50 members of Veterans of Peace at the House of Peace in Ipswich.

Mr. Yoshimura brought the Hibaku Maria relic to the United Nations for the Non-proliferation Treaty Review. Hibaku Maria is the head of the statue of Mary from Urakami Cathedral, which was the aiming point for the Nagasaki atomic bomb. This relic is highly revered and an indescribably powerful presence and appeal to humanity.

In Mr. Yoshimura's words, quoted from the Japanese newspaper, *Catholic Shim-bun*, "the meeting with Veterans for Peace touched him most. After his speech, those veterans of war knelt down before Hibaku Maria and prayed. It moved me deeply and the scene is burnt into my memory. First, I was a little afraid of what their reaction would be, because they have no direct relationship to A-bombs, and after all, those were America's A-bombs. But the veterans told him that 'dropping the A-bomb was a mistake.'"

One VFPer blogged the following about the event: "During a ceremony the delegation put up a small table with a linen cover, a small vase of lilacs on the floor and two simple vigil lights. The relic was brought into the room in a custom padded shipping box, was opened and the Madonna of Urakami was placed upon the table. The head of the statue was around 13-15 inches high and 6-8 inches wide. A grandson of one of Nagasaki survivors gave

us a heartfelt speech and others read various pieces of poetry. It was just an amazing moment staring into the relic and looking at the burned-out eyes of Madonna of Urakami. It is a haunting reminder of the follies of nuclear war."

Members of Samantha Smith also participated in the annual Memorial Day event at Christopher Columbus Park in Boston coordinated by the Smedley Butler Chapter. Participants included several Iraqi refugees, Gold Star Mothers, and other Boston-based peace and justice groups.

Paul Saint-Amand

Chapter 10, Albany, NY

Chapter 10 has been busy making 500 crosses for the SOA Watch vigil. Special thanks to Hervie Harris for all the work he has done on this project. On October 2, 2010, several members of our chapter went to Washington, D.C., with members participating in the October 1 banner drop "Mr. Obama: End these Fucking Wars." Our chapter highly endorses this action and the YouTube video *War is the Obscenity*. Anti War Veterans Drop Banner was shown at our October 14, 2010, Tom Paine Winter Soldiers Peace and Justice Awards Dinner where Elliot Adams, Joe Lombardo, and Linda LeTendre were honored for their outstanding work for peace and justice. Members also went to the excellent convention in Portland, Maine. Finally several of us went to Buffalo and then Fort Lee to meet with the war resisters in Canada on October 16, 2010. It was an informative meeting about the current situation in Canada.

John Amidon

Chapter 21, New Jersey

Here in New Jersey the air has turned crisp, the sky's a deep blue and the leaves are starting to change colors. Fresh off the One Nation Working Together rally in Washington, DC, which several members attended, there were many different groups represented. The most noted speaker for peace and linking the war to the economy was Harry Belafonte with his raspy voice and clear and eloquent language.

Six or seven chapter members attended the VFP convention in Portland, Maine and we all had a great time. Chapter 21 member Jules Orkin went on a 700 mile peace walk through upstate New York starting in March



VFP members and others on the interfaith peace walk from New York City to Troy, NY

in the Seneca Indian Nation and ending May 1 in New York City. Jules also walked with the 9-11 Interfaith Peace walkers from New York City to Troy, NY, ending at the Peace Fair in Saratoga Springs. The group also visited with VFP Chapter 90 in Binghamton, NY. VFP members from New York and New Jersey and friends attended a simple memorial to commemorate the 3rd anniversary of the death of David Cline.

Just a note on our son Joe who was deployed to Iraq in April 2010 after being called up off the Individual Ready Reserve. Straight from a soldier's mouth: "COMBAT IN IRAQ IS NOT OVER!"

Nancy and Walt Nygard



From the One Nation Working Together rally in Washington . The child's father was approached by park security and told.. "You can't have that sign here..No political messages are allowed". The sign at the monument dedicated to the over 58,000 Americans who died in a senseless war says "End War."

Chapter 22, Garberville, CA

Chapter 22 is pleased to announce a new endeavor, the Golden Rule Project. Working with members of several VFP chapters along the Left Coast, including the Humboldt Bay chapter 056, the group will repair, renovate, and resurrect the famous anti-nuclear protest sailboat, the Golden Rule.

This little sailboat was the first to attempt sailing into the Marshall Islands in opposition to the atmospheric atomic

testing in 1958. The ship was boarded by the US Coast Guard twice and towed back to Honolulu and the crew arrested. This famous little 30' ketch was the forerunner of a string of protest boats that followed. This boat was found recently in Humboldt Bay, Eureka, CA.

The Golden Rule Project is more than a restoration of a famous wooden boat. The purpose is to sail the boat again in opposition to militarism, and the current wars being waged in our name. We will be accepting VFP crew members to sail the boat, in attempts to carry out the mission of Veterans For Peace. We will carry on the tradition of the original brave and courageous men that once sailed this boat.

For more information, please see our temporary website at:

<http://www.heritech.com/goldenrule/goldenrule.htm>

Fredy Champagne

Chapter 27 , Minneapolis, MN

On September 24, 2010, the offices of the Twin Cities Anti-War Committee and six homes in Chicago and Minneapolis were raided by the FBI. The Anti-War Commit-

tee's data base as well as the individual activists' personal computers, cell phones, and political papers were seized in order to investigate "material support for terrorism" and to discover how they "indoctrinate people into joining the Anti-War Committee." Fourteen anti-war activists have been subpoenaed to testify before a Grand Jury in Chicago, including a member of Women Against Military Madness.

These raids and subpoenas are an attack on the First Amendment right to freedom of speech and are a blatant attempt to silence those who speak out against U.S. foreign policy. A number of these people have traveled to war-torn Columbia and Palestine to learn first hand about the devastation caused by US military aid and have shared their experiences upon their return.

For more than 18 years, Chapter 27 has



The sailboat Golden Rule awaiting restoration.

rung a bell 11 times at 11 am Armistice / Veterans Day, November 11 in a special ceremony to celebrate and recognize the ending of World War 1, "the war to end all wars." The National VFP adopted the Armistice Day theme at its convention three years ago. It was suggested that each chapter recognize Armistice/Veterans Day by ringing bells. Congress passed legislation in 1938 making November 11 a holiday "a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be hereafter celebrated and known as Armistice Day."

Freedom Farms in the Twin Cities area has a veterans program that is free to veterans to help in their rehabilitation from the effects of war. Chante Wolf of our chapter has been involved in the program for a year and a half.

Chapter 31, Philadelphia

As we do every year, the Philadelphia VFP chapter marched as a contingent in the Labor Day Parade with our Stop The War banner. We raised \$2400 for water filtration units that we sent to the Iraq Water Project. October was a busy month, beginning with

an October 2 fundraiser picnic in honor of Vietnam vet member Bob Hennel, who died in February. The event raised nearly \$10,000 for Healing Ajax, an apolitical organization that arranges counseling and other things for returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans with PTSD and other adjustment problems. The chapter is establishing a relationship with Healing Ajax so members can train to work with returning vets. On October 9, we had our annual dinner with around 65 people attending. The featured speaker was Dr. Sigal Ben-Porath, an Israeli army veteran and currently a professor in the Education Department at the University of Pennsylvania; she wrote a book on the challenges of teaching peace in schools during times of war. On October 30, working with a city union leader, the Chapter organized a well-attended major conference on the Community College campus called The Town Meeting For Jobs Not Wars with panels and workshops. Several members will attend the SOA demonstration in Fort Benning for the umpteenth time.

John Grant

Chapter 41, Cape Cod, MA

With three of us well-energized by the Convention in Portland in August, we began the Fall with plans for Veterans Day Ceremonies on the Cape when we join with other vets groups and the wider community - and this year possibly add our voice for peace in a follow-up action using the "War Economy" message to highlight neglected domestic US needs during this economic disaster made worse by war spending. We also have begun planning for our SIXTEENTH annual Peace Poetry Contest, which starts in January.

Finally, we are very pumped about a proposal to name our chapter after a young Iraq veteran who died in 2004. We hope to receive the OK from the National Headquarters soon and will immediately start planning for an event to announce the naming as well as an educational project dedicated in honor of this young veteran and to highlight the personal cost of war.

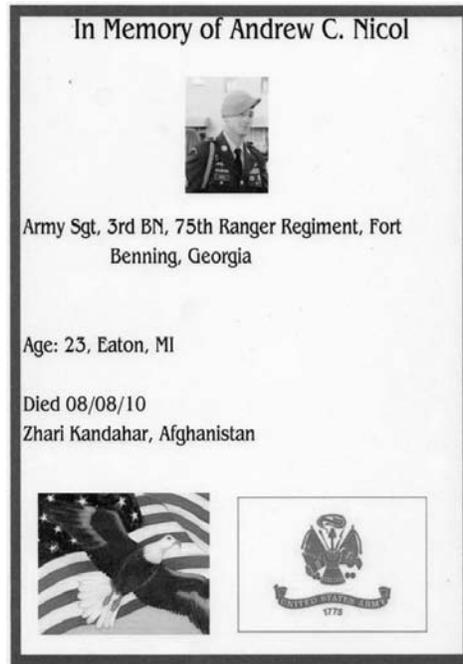
Duke Ellis

Chapter 50, Traverse City, MI

I'm the new President of chapter 50, and we have several items in the works, including a pamphlet on the costs of war that we can hand out/pass through the neighborhoods, a request for some grant money being worked on by one of our new-

est members, Dave Lannen, to designate Traverse City as a "Peace City." Dave has also done some great articles for our local paper about the costs of war, in fact several articles that have appeared in the local paper, written by our members can be seen on our site (www.vfp50.net) on the "Our Mission" page.

One project that I have been personally working on for the last couple months was to re-work our Cross display that we call Arlington North for our Veterans Day and Memorial Day honors. We had gotten a little flack for using crosses in the past. Some people saw the crosses as having a Christian bias so we tried to come up with something that eliminated that problem.



The result was to place memorial Plaques over the crosses so the plaque was the visual focus, not the cross itself. We will be using the plaques for the first time this Veteran's Day. To date I have prepared almost 200 plaques that will be placed in the Open Space, next to the water in Traverse City on November 11th. It has taken many hours of looking up the soldiers who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan, producing the plaques on paper and laminating them, alphabetizing them for easy mounting, and the final rush will be the morning of 11/11 when our chapter volunteers hustle to get the crosses and plaques on display for the general public. We have done this on every Memorial and Veterans Day for at least the past five years so we are all excited to see how this works out vs. just a cross with a very small bio on the cross.

Do Storing

Chapter 87, Sacramento, CA

In addition to our regular monthly activities, Sacramento VFP members have conducted a second protest against the Sacramento Public Library's use of violent war games in its Video Gaming Program. Members of the local Grandmothers For Peace joined us. The library's stated intent with this program is to get young people into the library. We believe that a public library should not be sponsoring violent war video games.

We also had a special 9/11 version of our monthly Second Saturday vigil featuring flyers telling folks about another important 9/11 event - Gandhi's Non-violence Proclamation on September 11, 1912. We passed out more than 100 of these "Gandhi's 9/11" flyers.

Two of our members are candidates for state offices! Daniel Costa, our Vice President, is running for the California State Assembly, District 9, and Debra Reiger (associate member) is running for California State Treasurer. Both are running as Peace & Freedom Party candidates and appear on the November ballot. They discuss the human and dollar costs of war during their campaign appearances.

We continue to hold weekly and monthly anti-occupation vigils at busy street corners, and we help serve lunch to the homeless one day a month.

John C. Reiger

Chapter 92, Seattle, WA

Greater Seattle Veterans For Peace has been keeping busy on many fronts. In August we joined protests against the massive nuclear firepower of the Trident Nuclear Submarine Base near Seattle on the Olympic Peninsula. We protested against the arrival of Navy ships into Seattle's Elliott Bay as part of the annual Seafair festivities. We distributed leaflets informing people of the murderous Israeli military attack on the USS Liberty during Israel's 1967 war against its Arab neighbors. Our Palestine Action Team has been very active supporting the Boycott, Divest, and Sanctions campaign against Israeli products and cultural events.

In September our War Resister Support Action Team spearheaded several days of outreach to GIs at Fort Lewis. We baked cookies and handed out "goodie bags" to 100 GIs, along with DVD's of Sir, No Sir!, a flyer supporting GI whistle-blower Bradley Manning, and whistles with a sticker that reads "Blow the Whistle on



VFP 92 helped unite and lead Seattle's October 11 march and rally against the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan.

War Crimes.” On September 18 we held a support vigil for Bradley Manning at Fort Lewis, which drew members of VFP chapters around the region and garnered surprisingly positive TV news coverage.

In early October, VFP 92 took the lead in organizing Seattle peace and justice groups to protest against recent FBI raids on the homes of peace activists in Chicago and Minneapolis. We spearheaded a protest rally outside FBI offices in downtown Seattle and we helped organize a meeting to coordinate the ongoing response of Seattle activists to FBI repression and Grand Jury inquisitions.

On October 11, VFP 92 formed the lead contingent in the Seattle march calling for an end to the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan. VFP 92 members played key roles in pulling together this broad-based march and rally. We are making new friends and attracting new members.

Gerry Condon

Chapter 98, Taos, NM

The Taos chapter explores different media to inform about the high Cost of War in precious resources, treasure, and lives lost and altered. Available online is our discussion on PTSD at our Website and radio program “Cultural Energy.” At last summer’s World Peace Week, people were moved by our Winter Soldier event with Iraq Veterans Against the War, veterans from Desert Storm and Vietnam, and two former Israeli soldiers who co-founded “Grassroots Jerusalem.”

During Memorial Day weekend, member Nan Nielsen shared the story of

her father’s struggle with PTSD and survivor’s guilt at the annual Healing Field ceremony in front of 1,000 American flags displayed along the highway in Questa, NM. We joined with other citizen volunteers to set up and take down the individual flags.

We created a “Cost of War” poster for the Taos Library that was displayed the entire month of May. Member Carrie writes online memorials for fallen brothers and sisters at Daily Kos blog.

Our bi-monthly fundraiser is a speaking event in Taos at Metta Theatre. Writer Monte Doeren, students and other guests,



VFP associate member Nan Nielsen and daughter Annie at the Healing Field in Questa, NM. May 29, 2010 by Carrie Leven

read from his book-in-progress about Monte’s time in the Infantry and as a door-gunner in Vietnam. The stories appeared in Monte’s newspaper column called “A Grunts View,” archived online at Taos Horsecfly along with other Taos Veterans for Peace member pieces.

Carrie Leven

Chapter 99, Western North Carolina

In August, our booth at Goombay (Asheville’s annual African-Caribbean style festival) attracted hundreds of visitors. By engaging folks in conversation and handing out

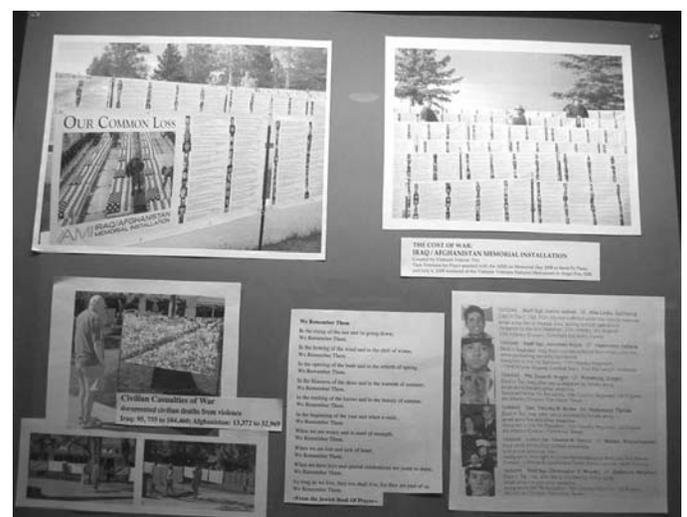
copies of the *War Crimes Times*, we raised awareness of the many costs of war and of the work of VFP. Our first experience at this event was so successful that we will likely repeat next year.

Also in August, our chapter had an entry in RiverLink’s annual “Anything That Floats” raft race on the French Broad River. Our team made a big splash—literally—but no hands were lost. In September, we elected James Latimore as chapter president. James announced he will make new member recruitment his priority.

In October, our VFP-TV show moved into a larger studio. We’re still at URTV in Asheville, but we’ve shifted to Wednesday evenings from 8:00 to 9:00 pm. We’re now able to receive phone calls during the live broadcast. Watch us (and call in) at <http://wncmc.org/urtv-live-webcast/>. Our programs are recorded for rebroadcast, and the audio portion is aired several times each week on MAIN-FM (<http://main-fm.org/>).

We had to cancel our big event scheduled for November. In the course of planning and organizing a day of entertainment and education aimed at military age youth and their families, we made a few missteps. But we’re using this experience (experience is what you get when you don’t get what you want) in a positive way. We’re taking measures to guide future projects that will reduce the chances of such failure, and when we recover from our bruises we’ll be a much stronger chapter.

Kim A. Carlyle



Taos Veterans For Peace’s “THE COST OF WAR” poster display at the Taos Library. May 28, 2010 by Carrie Leven



Chapter 99 members Ronald Harayda, Susan Oehler, and Claire Hanrahan paddling for peace.

Chapter 102, Milwaukee

Milwaukee VFP Chapter 102 sponsored an Armistice Day program at City Hall on Nov. 11 as a reminder that what has become Veterans Day -- and often a glorification of war -- actually began as a day of peace.

November 11 marked the end of World War I in 1918, and Armistice Day began to be observed the next year. In 1926 Congress said, "the 11th of November 1918, marked the cessation of the most destructive, sanguinary, and far reaching war in human annals and the resumption by the people of the United States of peaceful relations with other nations, which we hope may never again be severed."

In 1938, Congress went further, declaring Armistice Day to be a national, legal holiday, "a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace." It became Veterans Day in 1954 and over the years the tone has changed in many cities as a day not just to honor veterans but to glorify war.

The traditional observance of a day of peace is the tone of the VFP observance at City Hall, held the last two years, which includes speakers, music, and a remembrance of fallen veterans. This year's program focused on the costs of war, and Matt Rothschild, editor of *The Progressive*, was one of the speakers.

Milwaukee's VFP chapter is barred from the annual Veterans Day parade on the grounds that it is "political." Instead of marching, chapter members for the last two years have walked the parade route and collected money from spectators for its Homeless Veterans Initiative aimed at getting veterans of the streets.

Bill Christofferson

Chapter 104, Evansville, IN

In the past Spring and Summer, the chapter members participated in the Mother's Day Peace Rally at Evansville's Four Freedoms Monument on the banks of the Ohio River with Native American Drumming to welcome all bystanders. We also had a contingent at the Haubstadt Sommerfest Parade and the Hot Dog Cookout for veterans at local VA Center. We were represented at the "Walk a Piece for Peace" event at

local Native American Archeological dig; Angel Mounds. Again welcoming drumming was provided and at the used book sale at the "Funk in the City" art fair.

Our fall events included a march with local Jobs with Justice group and a march in the parade at our local street fair event, the "Fall Festival." This event is the second largest street fair in the country. On Veterans/Armistice Day, we will read the names of those who have fallen during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. These names will be read at the Four Freedoms monument on the banks of the Ohio. As usual welcoming drumming will be provided. We have also set up an essay contest for secondary level students on the topic of "Peace vs. War." The chapter will sponsor the 10th annual John Lennon Night on December 8 to raise funds for the Iraq Water Project.

Hardin Rathgeber

Chapter 114, Sheboygan, WI

It's been a great summer in the city of chairs, cheese, children, and churches; we couldn't have asked for nicer weather. We begin where we left off last newsletter... the Memorial Day Parade. Forbidden to carry our flag draped-coffin, we did carry a large sign saying "Imagine that we are carrying a flag draped coffin" which reported the number of U.S. killed in action in both of Mr. Bush's wars. To our pleasant surprise, no complaints from the management or boos from right wingers in the crowd.

In July we were honored by a visit from

VFP National Director Dennis Lane who was making a tour of about a half dozen Midwest chapters. Among other things, we discussed the proposed increase of annual dues to National and its impact on low-income members and membership in general. Our chapter passed a provision last year to help renewing members and associates with \$10 reimbursement incentive.

August was a busy month. Once again we staffed a rest stop for a bicycle tour, serving food and drinks to hundreds of riders, a great fund-raiser for us. At a local Earthfest event, we spoke to people about the cost of war, depleted uranium ammo, and military recruitment in our public schools. The festival was the brainchild of founding member Craig Wayh and his wife Kathy. Three of our members heard Father Roy Bourgeois speak in Milwaukee, but none of us could get out to the convention in Maine.

As the fall colors wax and wane we vote funds to some of our favorite causes including a \$50 scholarship for any local resident who will travel to the SOA-Watch in Georgia, and money for a bicycle ambulance to go to a third world village. Hope to see you at the SOA-Watch in November.

Tom Contrestan

Chapter 115, Red Wing, MN

Chapter 115 held its annual Pigstock event and again the event was a resounding success. The weather was perfect and the speakers and musicians were terrific. Present this year were Mike Ferner, Dennis Lane, Woody Powell, and other VFP members from around the area. Wes Davey was present representing IVAW. Total attendance was 225 people.

The speakers included Michael and Cynthia Orange who spoke about PTSD and its treatment. Mike Ferner and Susan Schnall spoke of their trip to Vietnam studying the long term effects of Agent Orange. Cynthia McKinney was going to be our speaker,



The Vietnam Traveling Healing Wall

but because of the unfortunate death of her father, she had to decline. Ray McGovern became our keynote speaker at the last minute via Skype and spoke of the failed wars and the U.S threats to attack Iran and did an outstanding job.

Planning has already begun for next year's Pigstock which will be July 16, 2011. Hope you can attend.

Bill Habedank

Chapter 129 Pueblo, CO

The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall was on the Campus of Colorado State University-Pueblo from September 29 thru October 3. At a cost of \$50 a day, we in the Howard Zinn Chapter rented booth space for October 1 and 2. From 8:00 am to 8:00 pm our members staffed our VFP-flagged booth decorated with colorful peace slogans. Leaflets on the facts of war and its costs were freely given out as well as listening to those who talked about visiting the "Healing Wall". Some cried. In was moving, unforgettable, and encouraging to have so many warriors sign for further contact.

On the night the "Healing Wall" was being shipped out, our oldest Howard Zinn chapter member, a WWII Navy brown water combat PT boat veteran, Doug Gale and his wife, Dorothy, were down at the Arkansas River again working the "Peace Flotilla" as he has continuously since he started the Peace Flotilla 15 years ago. This year at the shore of the Arkansas River three miles before it runs thru Pueblo, there gathered Boy & Girl Clubbers and Boy & Girl Scouts (over 100) to place in the river their self-made little 6-inch by 12-inch wooden boats printed with "peace messages" and names. In the darkness the boats with lit candles glowing were clearly visible as they floated 100 yards downstream



Chapter 132 members, Leah Bolger and Todd Allen, conduct a 'freeway blog' over I-5 on Memorial Day, 2010.

where they were retrieved by adults wearing waders and life jackets who returned the boats with the child's name.

Chapter 132, Corvallis, OR

Our chapter hosted a group of Latino veterans and peace activists from The "No Soy El Army" Tour touring the Northwest to lead community discussions on the targeting of minority youth by military recruiters. We joined several local peace groups to staff a peace booth during the 3-day county fair. Our focus was on "the cost of war" and "truth in military recruiting." This was an excellent opportunity to discuss the issues and provide factual information to a very philosophically diverse group of fair-goers.

Our chapter co-hosted a talk by former U.S. Marine and peace activist, Ken O'Keefe, who was on board the Mavi Marama as part of the Gaza Freedom Flotilla. The Flotilla attempted to break the blockade of Gaza in May 2010, but was attacked by Israeli commandos, killing 9 civilians. The talk was well attended, very inspiring, and informative.

We have resumed our visits to local high schools to offer information regarding careers in the military. We feel these visits are especially important now, given the depressed economy and somewhat limited career options for high school graduates.

Bart Bolger

Chapter 139, Olympia Peninsula, WA

Veterans for Peace "Tony van Renterghem Chapter 139" Olympic Peninsula, marched in the Port Angeles, Washington 4th of July parade. This is the first time the Chapter has marched in the 4th of July parade as the re-named "Tony van Renterghem" chapter, in honor of the WWII Dutch Resistance fighter who was a co-founder of the Northern Arizona and Olympic Peninsula VFP Chapters before his death in 2010.

David Jenkins

Chapter 160, Vietnam

The Hoa Binh (Peace) Chapter 160 in Vietnam is determining how and where we want to concentrate our efforts. We have about \$1500 in donations for Vietnam projects. We have agreed our humanitarian efforts will be concentrated in central

Vietnam, the Quang Tri area and south. This is where most of us served. Several VFP members have worked in the region, and so we have the contacts and understand the needs.

Michael Cull who lives and works in Nha Thanh has requested funding for a school for the blind. They need Braille textbooks among many other things. While there are many ways to get money to the local level where the need is greatest, those of us who have lived and worked in Vietnam have learned that sometimes moving slowly, taking the time to understand the people and their needs and to create relationships will bring long-term and positive results.

We invite other VFPers who may have a project idea or dream to contact us. I am sure we can help in many ways, from finding the right contacts and people to work with to offering some good advice, sharing some things we all have learned while working here. If you come to Vietnam individually or as a group, you are welcome to contact us and we can help with meetings or travel arrangements.

We are thinking of inviting 20 vets to come as a group next fall and asking each to bring \$1000 as a donation. We don't care how you raise it. The visit would be positively received by the Vietnamese and media, and you could learn more about Agent Orange and unexploded ordnance issues.

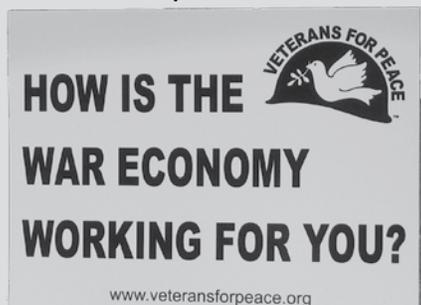
How about some feedback on this idea?

We have officially launched our Group's website. We invite those who live in or are actively working with others in Vietnam, to join us. Please check us out at:

<http://vfp-vn.ning.com/>

Suel Jones

**How is the War Economy
Working for you?
Yard Sign
\$5.00**



Onward!

Jeanette McDermott
Chapter Outreach and
Membership Coordinator

I've been climbing a steep learning curve for the past month while learning my new job as the Veterans For Peace Chapter Outreach and Membership Coordinator. All of you who told me that I would have a tough job filling Woody Powell's shoes were right. But thanks to a competent and cooperative staff, I am getting a good handle on the nuances of the job and understanding the complexity of our challenging databases. And thanks to the patience and outspokenness of our members, I'm start-



Woody Powell, Chapter 61, recounts tales of his involvement in the Korean Conflict during an interview with Ben Cohen during the 2010 VFP convention.

ing to hit a stride in learning what chapters need from national and how I can best be of service to meet your needs.

One of the highlights I can reflect upon in my first month with VFP is the highly spirited convention in Portland, Maine, and the friendships I made with members while there. Hearing so many of your stories and the successes of your chapters has inspired me to create a Best Practices toolkit that we can use to strengthen VFP by sharing stories and successes to cross pollinate our chapters.

Another highlight is being at ground level of new collaborations VFP is building with allied organizations. The collaborations portend good, if not great, solidarity and innovations in programs and services to support the peace movement and move our organizations forward.

Being eye witness to the rapid success of the Howard Zinn Fund is especially exciting and leaves me in awe of the staff, board and members whose vision for the fund is exceeding all expectations. The Fund

Open Letter to VFP Members

Dear fellow veterans and activists,

During the Vietnam War, Martin Luther King called our government "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today." That was true then—and is even more so today.

A few years before that, in 1964 Mario Savio made his great speech at Berkeley; at the end he says, "There is a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part; you can't even passively take part, and you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop. And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all!"

There are children being orphaned, maimed or killed every day, in our name, with our tax dollars; there are soldiers and civilians dying or being maimed for life in order to generate profits for the most odious imperialistic corporate war machine ever, again in our name.

How long are we going to let this go on? Until it is too late, until this destructive machine destroys all of us and the planet to boot?

It's time we express what we feel directly and powerfully by putting ourselves on the line, once again—honestly, courageously and without one drop of apology or shame for doing so. It is not we who are the murderers, torturers or pillagers of the earth.

promises to be a vibrant way for national to support the good works of VFP chapters across the nation.

The Zinn Fund, chapter successes, camaraderie, and the plethora of emails I receive each day, tell me that VFP is here to stay. Veterans For Peace is an important voice for social change, and our potential as change agents is remarkable if we continue to put our best foot forward and apply our strengths to advance the cause.

Call on me and let me how I can best serve and support your chapter. Onward!

Profit and power-hungry warmongers are destroying everything we hold dear and sacred.

In the early thirties, WW1 vets descended on Washington, D.C., to demand their promised bonuses, it being the depths of the Depression. General Douglas MacArthur and his sidekick Dwight Eisenhower disregarded President Herbert Hoover's order and burned their encampment down and drove the vets out of town at bayonet point.

We are today's bonus marchers, and we've come to claim our bonus—peace.

Join activist veterans marching in solidarity to the White House, refusing to move, demanding the end of U.S. wars, which includes U.S. support—financial and tactical—for the Israeli war machine as well.

If we can gather enough courageous souls, nonviolently refusing to leave the White House, willing to be dragged away and arrested, we will send a message that will be seen worldwide. We will carry forward a flame of resistance to the war machine that will not diminish as we effectively begin to place ourselves, as Mario Savio said, "upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus." and we will make it stop.

We believe that the power of courageous, committed people is greater than that of the corporate warmongers. But we will only see our power when we use it collectively, when we stand together.

With courage, persistence, boldness, and numbers, we can eventually make this monstrous war machine grind to a halt, so that our children and all children everywhere can grow up in a peaceful world.

We haven't yet set a date for this action but if you want to be involved and notified, please email Tarak Kauff at takauff@gmail.com, Kim Carlyle at kcarlyle@main.nc.us or Mike Hearington at mikehear2000@yahoo.com.

For a world in peace,

Nic Abramson, Elliott Adams, Ken Ashe, Ellen Barfield, Bruce Berry, Leah Bolger, Elaine Brower, Scott Camil, Kim Carlyle, Gerry Condon, Will Covert, Dave Culver, Ellen Davidson, Mike Ferner, Nate Goldshag, Mike Hearington, Tarak Kauff, Sandy Kelson, Joel Kovel, Erik Lobo, Ken Mayers, Fred Nagel, Bill Perry, Ward Reilly, Mike Tork, Jay Wenk, Diane Wilson, Doug Zachary

The War Crimes Times — News a Press That's Free Would Print

With the release of the winter issue in December, the *War Crimes Times*, a publication of Veterans For Peace, begins its third year as a tool to help inform the public about the true costs of war.

Conceived and initiated in December of 2008, the *WCT* was intended to be a one-time handout for an action at the Newseum in Washington, DC. This January 2009 event at the “interactive museum of news and journalism” was meant to call attention to the mainstream corporate media’s complicity in advancing the Bush administration’s agenda by repeating the lies and suppressing the inconvenient facts. More than 3,000 copies were distributed that day.



A second special issue was prepared two months later for distribution at events commemorating the March anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. This issue was another hit and we haven't stopped yet. We've increased the size (the fall issue was 24 pages), added color, and recruited staff. Our volunteer team of VFP members represents chapters in five states: New York, Ohio, Florida, California, and North Carolina.

Although we have individual subscribers, most copies are distributed by VFP chapters and like-minded groups. We send bundles of papers all over the U.S., including Hawaii and Alaska; and many single copies are sent abroad. Our printing and shipping costs are often (but not always) covered by generous donors. We sent free bundles of the fall issue to GI coffee houses around the country and to Quaker House outside of Fort Bragg.

WCT has featured academics Noam Chomsky, Lawrence Velvel, and Deborah Nelson; human rights and constitutional lawyers Marjorie Cohn, Michael Ratner, and Frank Goldsmith; journalists John Pilger, Dave Lindorff, and Robert Sheer; activists Laurie Arbeiter, David Swanson, and Pat Elder; as well as many VFP members.

WCT can also be a very effective teaching tool. Engage in a conversation with someone who needs to be better informed,

Iraq Water Project Report Update - 2010

Over the past four years your Veterans for Peace Iraq Water Project has funded placement of more than 80 water treatment devices—ultraviolet and reverse osmosis—in various Iraqi schools, clinics, and other institutions (Abu Ghraib Prison, even). One recent installation was at a village school near Nassiriya, southern Iraq. At this school, boys and girls attend class together--though girls are manifestly outnumbered. Several of our previous water units have been placed at schools designated for boys or girls exclusively. Contrary to what many of us assumed, however, our Iraqi engineer friend Faiza informs me that coeducation of young children in her country is not unusual. Surprises never fail to surprise, and it shows how misinformed some of us can be, even after years of involvement with Iraq and Iraqis. Later the kids are schooled separately.

LA chapter member Dr Marcus Erikson, formerly of the United States Marine Corps and now a marine scientist, raised almost all the money for this installation among acquaintances in California. Chapter 31 in Philadelphia raised money among its members and friends for two reverse osmosis units that were recently installed in Kumayt Medical Center and al-Majar al-Kabeer Medical Health Center in Missan Province in southern Iraq near Basra. Several of our VFP chapters have also made generous and vital contributions to IWP, and we thank them on behalf of the many Iraqis our project tries to help.

The people who actually did the work, with assistance from locals, belong to an Iraqi NGO called Student and Youth Cultural Organization of Nassiriya. In other projects IWP has its own team in Baghdad at the disposal of our friend Faiza.

If you would like more information about this work go to www.iraqwaterproject.org. Reports of previous installations are available on the site at “What’s New.”



give them a copy of the *War Crimes Times*, point to an article and say, “This woman is president of the National Lawyers Guild and she says that Obama is obligated to prosecute war criminals!” or “Here’s an army general who says there is no doubt that the Bush administration committed war crimes” or “Here’s an interview of young vets who are speaking out against the wars.”

Submissions are due by the 10th of each month that the seasons change. Donations are welcome at any time. And if you’d like to help in the work, we’ll find a task for you.

Check us out at <http://warcrimestimes.org/>.

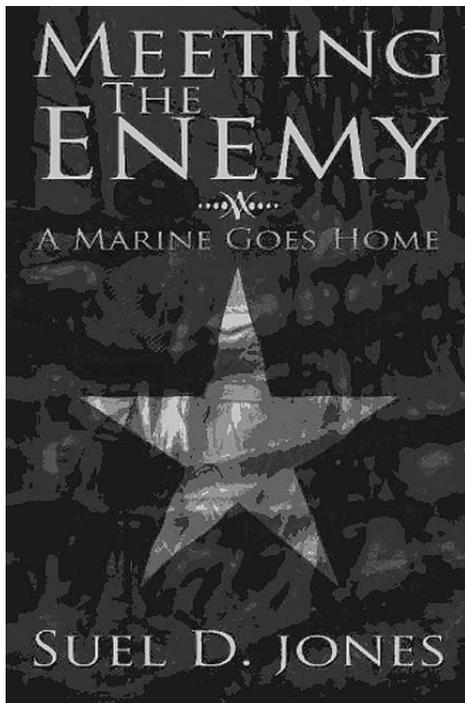
Kim Carlyle, editor@WarCrimesTimes.org, member of Chapter 099



**Veterans For Peace
Dark Green T-Shirt**

**VFP union made green
t-shirt with white letters
and logo.
\$17.50**





Meeting the Enemy A Marine Goes Home

Suel Jones

236 pages

www.booksurge.com

Meeting the Enemy, A Marine Goes Home, by Suel Jones, is a first rate memoir of the Vietnam War. I resisted reading it. I'd grown weary of the subject to which, for decades, I've devoted more than my share of professional and emotional attention. I'd once hoped that the harsh lessons of Vietnam would make a repetition of that fiasco, if not impossible, then at least very difficult. They haven't. Vietnam is no longer a war for most people, it has become a country, a fascinating destination. As a touchstone for resisting U.S. military adventures, Vietnam seems outdated. For those of us who fought there, however, the war battles on in our thoughts, conscious and unconscious, worse for some than others. I wasn't sure I needed to add someone else's head trip about that war to my own.

But Suel Jones' memoir possesses the best bait there is to draw a reader into his narrative. Somewhere along the trail, despite the handicap of a course in undergraduate journalism, brother Jones has learned to write extremely well. And what you get is Suel Jones, combat Marine, unadorned and tightly framed, not just as actor in his fractured, but totally convincing, representation of combat which I return to below, but the complex inner-landscape of an

introspective and highly developed thinker who has spent years, often under solitary - almost monkish - conditions, fighting his demons and mapping the man who went to and survived Vietnam.

Our protagonist's operative persona was acquired in rural East Texas, his family, working poor and church-going Southern Baptists. This is redneck country. It seems to toughen people in some enviable ways - Suel's language is hard edged, but appealingly direct - but also keep them in their place though the usual social controls to which we sometimes give the name *community*, inculcating deep provincial attachments to clan and place that those with upward economic mobility are often lacking. It's a double-edged sword, and Suel's life has been cut by both sides. For years after Vietnam, even as he rejected the straight behaviors and values of his hometown familiars in favor of the long haired, dope-smoking counterculture, an inability to break with his family's non-negotiable red, white, and blue patriotism prevented Suel from politicizing his rebellion and becoming an antiwar vet, a decision he seems to regret even more than going to war. Expressing a commonplace that many vets would readily endorse, Suel claims that Vietnam made him who he is today, not just the bad stuff, but especially the good.

Suel's unit in Vietnam operated in a virtually depopulated area around the DMZ, engaging in conventional combat against a uniformed enemy from the North, there to infiltrate the border and secure the supply lines going South. Constant patrolling over the same rough terrain, loaded with eighty pounds of gear, ammunition, and water, filthy or wet for days on end, eating out of a tin can, walking point and the gut-twisting job of manning a listening post with the rest of your platoon dug-in to your rear, their claymores and M-30 machine guns pointing right up your backside until, assuming there was no attack, daylight freed you to rejoin your unit. Over eleven months, Suel received two purple hearts for relatively minor wounds (which, a centimeter one way or the other, could have been fatal), suffered a bout of malaria and was bitten by a rat. Toward the end of his tour, he went on R&R to Sydney, and kept largely to himself for five days. His description of this interlude in Australia, the depth of conflict in his thoughts and feelings, charged by fantasies of desertion, all intensified by

the dangers and horrors he'd been exposed to in the preceding year, is a stunning and thoroughly original piece of wartime prose.

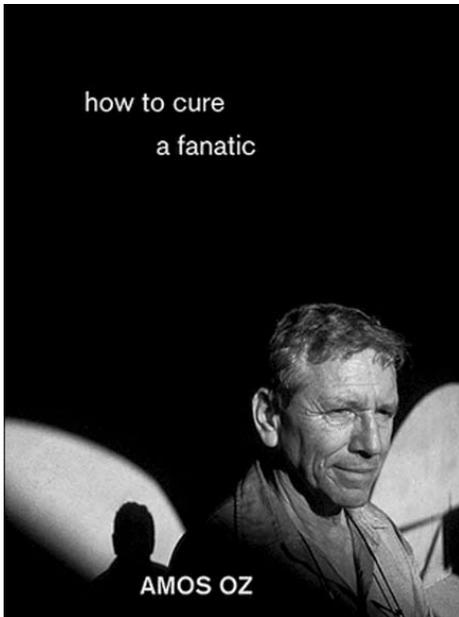
After the war, as the years rushed by, Suel Jones found himself living in a cabin near an Arctic oil field in Alaska, 60 miles from the nearest town, growing uncomfortable in his isolation, and still filled with deep regret over whatever small role he had played as a U.S. invader in the devastation wreaked on the Vietnamese and their environment. He came to imagine that, by returning to Vietnam, "meeting the enemy" face to face, he might finally outdistance those inner demons and put the war to rest.

Suddenly in 1998, he decamped from the remote Alaska wilderness and traveled to Hanoi, an act he describes as "coming home." That might sound like a catch phrase, but the theme is deeply embedded in Jones' ultra-existential tale, and we are shown at least that he certainly inhabits Hanoi as a denizen, not a transient veteran on a battlefield pilgrimage or delegation of friendship. His home is in an alley in Hanoi's Old Quarter. He wanders all over the city, communes with his neighbors, and volunteers at the Vietnam Friendship Village, working with disabled children and Vietnamese war veterans identified as victims of Agent Orange. His descriptions of these routines, and of life and living in Hanoi, his probing ruminations on the puzzling dialectic of foreignness, his own and *theirs*, are entertaining and thought provoking, and perhaps threads for more detailed future writing.

At one point, the author connects with a former comrade from his unit, and convinces him to come for a short visit. For two weeks they meet every morning in a Hanoi coffee shop, and Suel distributes throughout his narrative bits of discussion between these two sixty-something war vets who trade faded memories of combat, and reflect on how those experiences shaped and complicated their lives ever since. The friend is a tourist. His return to Vietnam has been salutary. He may even come back again with his two sons. Suel Jones abides, and ponders still one insoluble conundrum. It never ceases to amaze and humble him that the Vietnamese, despite the suffering we caused them, find it so convenient to forgive us. You know that if the shoe were on the other foot, and this was East Texas

Meeting continued on page 18

BOOK REVIEWS



How to Cure a Fanatic Amos Oz

104 pages
Princeton University Press
www.press.princeton.edu

I just read two essays by the Israeli novelist Amos Oz in a tiny book titled *How To Cure A Fanatic*. The essays and an interview present a pragmatic approach to peacemaking well worth thinking about.

Oz is the author of 18 novels including *Panther In The Basement* and *A Tale Of Love And Darkness*; he also publishes frequent essays.

After his mother committed suicide when he was twelve, he was adopted into a family in a socialist kibbutz. He, then, changed his last name to Oz, which means strength in Hebrew.

He served in a tank in both the Six Day War and the Yon Kippur War. Following that, he became a founder of Shalom Achshav (Peace Now) and has worked in the Israeli peace movement ever since. He is a strong supporter of a two-state solution and recently criticized the Israeli assault into Gaza and the deadly attack on the Mavi Marmara, the Gaza flotilla boat.

He starts out his essay "Between right and right" by saying well-meaning Europeans and Americans are always asking, "Who are the good guys?" His point is there are no good guys in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

"The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not a Wild West movie. It is not a struggle between good and evil, rather it is a tragedy in the ancient and most precise sense of

the word: a clash between right and right, a clash between one very powerful, deep, and convincing claim, and another very different but no less convincing, no less powerful, no less humane claim."

This tragedy, he writes, is not about religion or culture; it is a "real estate dispute" between "two peoples rightly claiming the same small country as their one and only national homeland in the whole world."

"What we need is a painful compromise," he writes. For him, "The word 'compromise' means life. ... (T)he opposite of compromise is fanaticism and death."

This is the view of a novelist, a person who daily immerses himself in the lives of people in conflict. He envisions the situation as two patients waking from an anesthetized sleep in a "bad hospital" to find that each has had a limb amputated. Their respective families are outside the hospital cursing at each other and at the lousy doctors.

"This is the picture of the Middle East right now. But everybody at least knows that surgery is unavoidable."

The title essay is about fanaticism and its cures. Fanaticism is found among Christians, Muslims and Jews; it's everywhere. He says he was a "brainwashed little fanatic" as a kid throwing stones at British soldiers.

Studying fanaticism, which he says he has done much of his life, one finds "uncompromising self-righteousness." Fanatics "are hopelessly sentimental ... they prefer feeling to thinking." They suffer a "lack of imagination" and "the desire to belong and to make everyone else belong." Finally, they fall prey to "cults of personality."

What is his cure for fanaticism? It sounds pretty simple. One, imagination, and two, a sense of humor. In the former category the cure is the capacity to see, to imagine the humanity of "the other," the person on the other side of the border, the battlefield or the peace table.

Humor is the cure that I cherish. He writes:

"I have never once in my life seen a fanatic with a sense of humor, nor have I ever seen a person with a sense of humor become a fanatic. ... Some of them have a very pointed sense of sarcasm, but no humor. Humor contains the ability to laugh at ourselves."

John Grant

What Makes a Man

The Bodies Beneath the Table W.D. Ehrhart

83 pages
Adastra Press, Easthamptom, MA
<http://www.wdehrhart.com>

The Bodies Beneath the Table is Bill Ehrhart's eighth book of poetry, and because it is the first in 11 years, an event for those of us who have followed his work. Bill, who is a member of VFP Chapter 31 Philadelphia and Editor at Large of this Newsletter, has also written some of the best memoirs and contemplations of the years and times and tumult simply known as "Vietnam," especially *Ordinary Lives: Platoon 1005 and the Vietnam War*, *Passing Time: Memoir of a Vietnam Veteran Against the War*, and my favorite *Busted: A Vietnam Veteran in Nixon's America*.

This new collection of forty-one poems, some previously published but collected here for the first time, shows the poet at his best and most representative. They form six distinct parts: Secret Lives, Gravestones, Extras, Epiphanies, Bodies, and One Hand Clapping; the final part a lovely adaptation of a Japanese Buddhist Temple poem. The poems are short, the language simple and direct, the themes often intimate and personal, and the insights broad and universal. The poet acts in many of the poems, sometimes as son, lover, husband, father, student, teacher, and always a veteran of a long sad war that lacerated a country and formed a poet.

Our age of permanent war intrudes often in such poems as "The Bombing of Afghanistan," ("...somewhere/in the darkness bombs are falling,/lives are ending in the time/it takes to write these words") "Kosovo," ("we must teach our children," the president/solemnly says, "that violence is not the answer.)/This in the week he begins the bombing of Belgrade"), and "September 11th", a wonderful piece of historical and poetic imagination.

But there is humor here also in "Artsy, Fartsy, Whiskey & Girls" and the hilarious "Meditations on Pedagogy," written it says "(while listening to a presentation by a well-paid famous Learning Expert)." The deep pleasures of fatherhood appear in "What Better Way to Begin" as his

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daughter understandingly holds his hand tightly as the veteran of bombs bursting in air watches with her the great fireworks display of the new millennium. The shame of fatherhood also intrudes in “The Sins of the Father” as the poet hears the sobs of his daughter, “A decent child, lovely, bright, considerate” taunted by her schoolmates, and he brokenhearted remembers his schooldays as the helpmate of taunters of other decent, lovely girls.

The poet as teacher, or as coach in this case, looks upon his charges in “Coaching Winter Track in Time of War,” and marvels at their eagerness and wonders how to tell them to “Question everything. Even a coach./Even a president. How do you tell them:/ask the young dead soldiers coming home/each night in aluminum boxes/none of us is allowed to see,/an army of shades.”

The poem I found most poignant is “What Makes a Man,” a great, short two-sided meditation on the conundrum of war and the lives of the young who fight it. The two survivors, the poet at first uncomprehending of their differences and his father dying a slow, modern, antiseptic death from cancer see their negation in each other. The father who did not serve in World War II, ashamed saying “I should have fought,” and the son who fought a Marine in the senseless war in Vietnam cynical and dismissive of all such collective fighting looking beyond each other. The father preferring death as a young man in war to his slow debilitation and the poet unable to respond.

The title poem “The Bodies Beneath the Table,” is a harrowing memory of Hue City 1968 of what appeared to be a couple—husband and wife, lovers, brother and sister—long dead having taken refuge from the war, a simple completely human action against horror. The memory of these human forms cannot be expunged: “All these years I’ve wondered/how they died. Who they were/Who remembers.”

The final new poem in the collection is a rumination on the aging of the poet and, in many ways, of a generation, “Turning Sixty.” Thirty years before, Bill Ehrhart had written “Turning Thirty,” a frightening prospect for many of the rebellious, forever-young generation of “Vietnam.” However, “Turning Sixty” is the same poem as “Turning Thirty” with only the age and hair color changed. It is a tribute to the poet’s

Get INVOLVED with a Working Group!

VFP members work on a lot of different issues every day. In an effort to combine resources and create a central source for information, VFP has implemented a national Working Groups program. This is a great way for individual members, whether you are a member of a chapter, or a member-at-large, to get more involved with the issues that matter the most to YOU! These groups are designed to:

- Provide a vehicle for individual VFP members who are interested in, or knowledgeable about a specific issue to become more deeply involved.
- Focus the efforts of individual members and chapters; eliminating duplication of effort and raising the level of interest in a specific issue.
- Create a “go-to” source for position papers, talking points, and updates which is credible and accurate.
- Allow all members and chapters to benefit from the knowledge/experience of others.

Groups have already been formed around the following issues: GI Resistance; Depleted Uranium/Cluster Bombs/Land Mines; Israel/Palestine; Latin America/School of the Americas (SOA); War Crimes Prosecution; Viet Nam/Agent Orange; Nuclear Weapons; Legislation & Lobbying; Democracy/U.S. Constitution/War

confidence in the power of wonder and to the gift he has given. The poems end:

“And just like that these
Sixty [Thirty] years have come and gone,
and I do not understand at all
why I see a gray-haired man
inside the mirror when a small
boy still lives inside this body
wondering
what causes laughter, why
nations go to war, who paints the startling
colors of the rainbow on a gray vaulted sky,
and when I will be old enough
to know.”

Plato claimed that it is wonder that gives rise to philosophy, also to poetry I’m sure. I hope the final stanza of “Turning Ninety” will still wonder about these things.

Charles Rossi

Powers; Afghanistan/Pakistan/Iraq/Iran; DADT/Vets’ Services/PTSD; Women’s Issues/MST; War and the Environment; Korea; War Economy; and Religiosity and Spirituality.

Here’s how it works:

- Sign up for one of the groups listed above, or suggest a topic—just click on the big red button on the home page of the VFP website: www.veteransforpeace.org.
- If you don’t have a computer, you can call Betsy at national: 314-725-6005, and she can sign you up.
- The Working Groups Coordinator will forward your contact info to the chair person for the group(s) you are interested in.
- You do not need to be an expert in the area you apply to work in. We are looking for thoughtful, motivated members who are interested in working with others to explore specific issues.
- These are called “Working” groups, because there will be “work” involved. You will not be asked to do anything you do not want to do, but the groups as a whole will be expected to meet regularly, and produce some “products,” i.e. these are more than just “discussion” groups.
- You are welcome to sign up for as many groups as you like, but please keep the above point in mind.
- The working groups will meet via conference call on a periodic basis to be determined by the group.
- The group leaders will make periodic status reports to the Board.
- The groups may establish their own priorities, however may be tasked by the Board for specific projects.
- A new section on the Website will be created for posting the products from the working groups.

The Board is very excited about this concept and we hope that it will enable our membership to get involved at a new level. Hopefully, we will be working better together, more productively and effectively to WAGE PEACE! If you have any questions about this program, please contact the Working Groups Coordinator, Leah Bolger, 541-207-7761 or leahbolger@comcast.net.



Awards Presented at the 2010 Convention

The **VFP Special Service Award** was presented to **Jerry Genesis** for his inspiration and dedication to VFP. After his service in the US Marine Corps, Jerry Genesis began doing humanitarian aid work in Central America and envisioned a veterans' organization that would be dedicated to peace. In 1985, this vision came to fruition through the efforts of Jerry and other founding members and VFP was born.

The **Service To Veterans Award** was presented to **Joyce and Kevin Lucey**. Joyce and Kevin Lucey's son Corporal Jeffrey Lucey killed himself after returning from a tour in Iraq. Since Jeffrey's death, Joyce and Kevin Lucey have dedicated their lives to seeking treatment and justice for soldiers. In Massachusetts, they have been instrumental in having state veteran's services recognize the psychological issues faced by veterans. This has led to the SAVE (Statewide Advocacy for Veteran's Empowerment) program that was dedicated to their advocacy and Jeffrey's memory.

The **Creative Spirit Award** was presented to **Ben Cohen**. Ben Cohen, co-founder of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, has been working for peace and justice with wit, inventiveness, and tireless commitment. He personally funded the launch of both Business Leaders for Sensible Responsibilities and True Majority, which are dedicated to persuading the nation to forsake its lust for war and bring our troops home.

The **Lifetime Achievement Award** was presented to **Woody Powell**. Woody's resume in peace work is lengthy: he has served as a human rights observer in Chiapas and Oaxaca, and has had the honor of having been banned from Ft. Benning after multiple actions at the School of the Americas. Woody served as Executive Director of VFP from 2001 to 2005, and for almost two decades he has consistently given his time, his heart, and his support.

The **GRUNT Award**, which is given to rank and file Veterans For Peace who have done an exemplary job of doing the hard daily work of moving VFP forward, was presented to the following three members. **Will Thomas** has undertaken significant counter-recruitment activities in the Manchester, New Hampshire, schools despite serious resistance from the school system administration, as well as promoted opt-in policies, in lieu of the

opt-out programs that are currently in place and not well understood by students and parents. **Steve McKeown** has been a leader of a movement in the Twin Cities that has successfully prompted over 30 churches to ring bells or acknowledge the true meaning of Armistice Day on November 11; he is engaged in speaking with kids and in schools and has been instrumental in the development of Chapter 27. **Suel Jones** has spent much of the past 12 years working in and out of Vietnam and promoting peace and the causes VFP espouses. Since 1999 he has lived part time in Vietnam and been a board member and volunteer in the Vietnam Friendship village. Suel's book, *Meeting the Enemy: A Marine Returns Home* recounts his journey from a grunt to a recovered human being, from Vietnam to the present (see the review of the book in this issue).

The **Lifetime Achievement Award** was presented to **Muhammad Ali**, the most public and articulate draft resistor during the Vietnam War who spoke deep truths about racism and militarism in the process.

The **Cost of War Awareness Award** was presented to the following persons. VFP Associate Member **Sue McAnanama** who was one of the keys to the Broome County (New York) Cost of War Awareness Project that seeks to raise awareness about the cost to taxpayers for wars and U.S. militarism. **The VFP Members who have contributed to Arlington West**, a somber memorial that began in 2003 in Santa Barbara, California, and consisted of crosses to symbolize the soldiers who had died in Iraq and that continues not only in Santa Barbara but also in Santa Monica and San Diego.

The **VFP Public Citizen Award** was given to **Marybeth Verani** and **Adeline Koscher** school students from Cape Cod, Massachusetts, for their courageous protest against military recruitment of children in our schools.

The **Courage of Conscience Award**, which is given to the individual or organization who/which has gone the extra mile to expose a concern that threatens the well being of military personnel or civilians, was awarded to PFC Bradley Manning. PFC Manning, who is in a military prison as a true prisoner of conscience, released information of war crimes perpetrated by the United States military.

The **VFP Service Award**, was presented to the following five members. **Peggy Akers** of Chapter 1 Portland, Maine, a former Army nurse in Vietnam who has been active in, among other peace activities, helping homeless veterans and others devastated by war in the Portland, Maine, community. **Gene Marx** of the Cpl. Jonathan J. Santos Memorial Chapter 111 in Bellingham, Washington, is a Vietnam veteran and father of an army captain who served two tours in Iraq who has worked tirelessly in the peace movement and was a member of the Troops Home! Committee that advocated for the passage of a resolution calling for an immediate commencement of withdrawal from Iraq and reparations for the Iraqi people.

Ted Sexauer of Chapter 71, Sonoma, California, a former flight medic in Vietnam has been involved in the peace movement for 30 years, serving as a founding member of the Veterans Writers' Group, helping to found Sonoma Valley Peace & Justice, and doing hurricane relief work in New Orleans. **Michael Kramer** of Chapter 21 Northern New Jersey, went to Israel as a young man and is a veteran of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. He served as VFP secretary for many years, and has been working for peace and justice both here and abroad for more than a decade. Michael has been a strong advocate for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza. **Bob Wilkinson** of Chapter 116 in California served in the Marine Corps, became an accountant and handled all accounts and recordkeeping for the one half million dollars donated for Katrina nationally in 2005 and 2006 and been a leader in the campaign to ban depleted uranium.



Book Review

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or Staten Island, or French Lick, Indiana, forgiveness might not be so quick in coming.

Michael Uhl

Michael Uhl is a member of VFP Chapter 1 in Maine and the author of Vietnam Awakening: My Journey from Combat to the Citizens' Commission of Inquiry on U.S. War Crimes in Vietnam. Suel Jones founded VFP's Vietnam Chapter 160.



A Giant Step Forward

“A giant step forward, beyond all of my expectations”, were my thoughts after The Tom Paine Chapter, Albany, NY sold 100 “How is the War Economy Working For You?” lawn signs before the weekend ended at the National Assembly peace conference on July 23-25, 2010. Everyone thought the sign was terrific and both individuals and organizations purchased our new sign. The question asked truly resonates with a good cross section of the American public and Veterans For Peace has a major opportunity to come out strong in its opposition to the ongoing wars, educate the public about the cost of the war, recruit new members and re-energize our current membership.

Dan Wilcox and John Amidon of Chapter 10 and Jack Rossbach and Kim Doss Smith of Chapter 27 did the lion's share of tabling at this conference which featured Noam Chomsky, Kathy Kelly, Ann Wright, and a host of others. Michael McPhearson was part of a panel discussing the current status of the war, considering ways to end the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and other parts of the world. Jim Murphy and Daryl Wise conducted an exceptional counter recruitment workshop.

Our new campaign, still in its infancy has found its legs and is up and running. Chapters are encouraged to purchase lawn signs and do banner drops asking the question, “How is the War Economy Working for You?” If we unite soon our campaign will grow wings.

Learn more about the “How is the War Economy Working for You?” project

Order your yard signs here - <http://www.vfpstore.org/index.asp?PageAction=VIEWPROD&ProdID=109>

John Amidon

Convention Continued from page 5

“Through dramatic bursts of all-out all-nighters and the more typical periods of slogging, slogging, slogging — we’ve been through it all. But what the hell else can you do after you’ve seen up close and personal what lies in Empire’s wake?

“There could be no better work, and we could find no better family in which to do it.”

Videos of many of the convention's events and workshops are available at the VFP website veteransforpeace.org.



Condition Black

by *Dave Lannen*

On any given day NATO hospitals in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan enter “CONDITION BLACK” – a status that alerts military tactical commanders that hospital beds are full and patients should be diverted elsewhere. Commanders' options are limited, however – in the south NATO has only two Role-3 hospitals – those that are capable of dealing with complex polytrauma that is a common result of IED blasts.

It's typical for a soldier to arrive from the battlefield with injuries requiring vascular, orthopedic, burn, and general surgery. The most seriously wounded will stop at Helmand or Kandahar for stabilization surgery before the long flight to Europe for further care. These hospitals are modern-day “trauma factories” dealing with scores of brutally battered patients daily, not all of whom are soldiers. Many of the wounded are innocent Afghan civilians whose neighborhoods have become battlefields. In fact, *Afghanistan Rights Monitor* reports that 1074 civilians were killed and more than 1500 were injured in the first six months of 2010.

And that's where this gets complicated. Even though the NATO hospitals will report CONDITION BLACK, they will always make room for NATO troops requiring care; there just is not another option. Not so for the civilian casualties; in CONDITION BLACK, NATO will either refuse to collect them from the battlefield or deliver them to the poorly-staffed Afghan Army hospital near Kandahar – the only Afghan Army hospital in the entire southern region and not capable of complex polytrauma surgery. The result is that NATO is triaging patients based on nationality rather than medical need.

Although the Geneva Conventions require warring parties to protect civilians and provide medical care to the wounded, the US chose to escalate the war knowing that civilians would increasingly be killed and wounded – without a proper level of trauma care in place. Although *Afghanistan Rights Monitor* attributes 60% of civilian casualties to the Taliban, they are not a signatory to the Geneva Conventions and have no medical facilities. Such is the condition of conducting a counterinsurgency – the burden lies with the nation states – NATO members.

The General: In July 2009 General Stanley McChrystal issued a directive that

required commanders to consider civilian casualties while engaging the enemy. A 29 June 2010 article by Amnesty International credits this policy with a 28% reduction in civilian deaths. Ironically, on that same day, *The New York Times* quoted General David Petraeus as having a “moral imperative” to protect his troops. General Petraeus has since directed a review of the rules of engagement; the result will likely lessen restraint and increase civilian deaths. As the principle author of the US counterinsurgency doctrine, General Petraeus must realize what this failure to protect the population will cost in terms of civilian support of foreign forces and the central government.

The Senator: A small group of veterans – part of Veterans For Peace in Traverse City, Michigan – appealed to Senator Carl Levin, the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, to investigate the lack of medical care to civilians. Two months later Senator Levin has yet to respond.

Meanwhile, in this poor isolated nation with few true allies, the most innocent continue to bear the brunt of the suffering. It's time to end the war. Short of that, President Obama must do the morally right thing – the true moral imperative – and provide medical care to wounded civilians at the same level offered to NATO forces.

Dave Lannen is a retired US Air Force colonel, a veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan, and a volunteer with Veterans For Peace in Traverse City, Michigan. Afghan.Rights@gmail.com



President's Message Continued from page 1

that agrees with us but hasn't yet taken any action. This is how we will generate the kind of political power it will take to force Congress to quit sending more money down the sewer of war.

Compared to direct action or banner drops, some may say organizing isn't very exciting, but wait until you see the faces of people who grieve about these wars as much as we do and now have a way of making their voice heard. There's nothing more exciting than that.

If you'd like to find out more about this organizing project, drop me a line. mike.ferner@sbcglobal.net

Thank you for all you're doing for peace.



VFP NEWSLETTER FALL 2010

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HOW IS THE WAR ECONOMY WORKING FOR YOU??



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Order supplies at www.vfpstore.org

Bumper stickers \$1

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Postcards to Obama, 10 for \$2

Yard signs \$5 each,

includes wire stake

Pack of 10 Yard Signs, \$45

no wire stakes

“How Is The War Economy Working For You?” is a national campaign organized by Veterans For Peace. Our primary goals are to connect the cost of the ongoing US wars with the collapsing US economy and to present VFP membership and other peace organizations with a powerful and vital campaign to end the Middle East Wars. It is also a great way to recruit new members.

Get involved! View the website for stories, ideas, and actions — www.wareconomy.org/

Exposing the true costs of war and militarism since 1985