



VETERANS FOR PEACE

25th Anniversary Convention in Portland, Maine

“...somehow you gotta be there!”

The founding chapter's finest are fully engaged in the planning process which has given us ample appreciation for those who have gone before.

Like our predecessors we're dedicated to presenting the "best ever".

We think we're well on the way to ensuring that.

Look how it's shaping up then make your reservations. [Please refer to pages 4 and 5]

VFP Agent Orange Delegation In Vietnam

by Michael Uhl

Following an early April round of visits in private residences and care facilities with children suffering from a range of debilitating birth anomalies, and classified by the Vietnamese government as “victims of agent orange,” a VFP-sponsored delegation of six American veterans was received in Hanoi by Nguyen Tan Dung, the Prime Minister of Vietnam. Mr. Dung used the occasion to insist that, with hostilities between our two countries, now nearly forty years behind us, the United States government must finally “take responsibility for the aftermath” of the Vietnam War.

“More than two million Vietnamese people were killed, millions were wounded and more than 300,000 are still missing,” Dung said, adding that “three million Vietnamese were exposed to toxic chemicals sprayed by the U.S. military, and that people continue to be injured or killed weekly by bombs and mines left behind after the war.”

Dung's crisp accounting of this grim “legacy” of the American War retains still, in the scope of its carnage and devastation, the power to chill the soul, not least of one former soldier who unwittingly found himself among the forces of destruction.

Dung expressed his hope that the VFP delegation, through its affiliated project, the Vietnam Agent Orange Responsibility and Relief Campaign (VAORRC), would continue to disseminate information about the aftermath of the war to the people and government of the United States. Dung asked for accelerated cooperation on the part of the U.S. in providing assistance to Vietnamese victims of agent orange “to help them overcome the difficulties they face.”



VFP and VAVA in Hanoi.

Responding for the American veterans, Paul Cox, who'd spent eighteen months in Vietnam as a combat Marine, affirmed that the delegation's intimate contact with victims and their families during our ten-day tour had intensified our understanding of their pain and suffering, and deeply committed us to obtain justice on their behalf. Toward that end, Cox announced, VAORRC will soon introduce a bill in the United States Congress seeking a broad legislative remedy to extend care and medical aid to

all veterans and civilians exposed to Agent Orange, and related-compounds, during the Vietnam War, and to underwrite the cost

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Executive Director's Report



by Dennis Lane

It is an exciting time to be the Executive Director for Veterans For Peace since we are celebrating our 25th Anniversary. The 25th is a benchmark in any organization's history. It demonstrates to our membership, and to the general public, that we are an established organization worthy of their investments of time and money. I have enjoyed contacting the previous Executive Directors who have been very supportive, and share my vision to see VFP move to the forefront in leadership of a National Peace Initiative. When you receive this newsletter, I will

have already visited many of you directly in Houston, at the Boston Summit, in Southern California, and in the Northwest. It is my intention to spend as much face-to-face time with our members as possible.

As you know, VFP is a very complex organization, within which our many Chapters engage in an exciting array of programs. I have told members during my visits that I am in the process of gathering information about our most successful programs in order to share them as potential models for the entire VFP community. To facilitate these exchanges of information, National will host web conferences so that the membership can have direct access to coordinators of these highlighted programs, and be able to participate in a Question & Answer session directly with them.

I met some of the members of the Houston Chapter for a breakfast meeting in April. They have requested assistance in coordinating some of their activities with local IAW Chapter. I plan on contacting the Houston IAW Leadership to encourage their collaboration. In addition, the Houston Chapter is planning on attending the IAW Convention in July in Austin, Texas. I found the Boston Summit especially informative. It was an opportunity for me to hear from over 30 members representing a three-state region. It was enlightening to hear their thoughts on specific projects that they would like their Chapters to become involved with. A sampling of the proposed ideas included: creating an outreach program to schools and churches; organizing more proactive/reactive demonstrations; coordinating more closely with other peace groups, and so on. I now look forward to attending the legendary Pigstock event, hosted each July in Hagar City, WI, and sponsored by VFP Chapter 115. Every one of these encounters gives me a different insight into how the National office can better serve the local Chapters.

During these visits, I will also seek out potential major funders who reside in the respective areas of each Chapter. I foresee many opportunities to raise funds for both the local and national initiatives. One of my primary goals is to ensure our growth and future effectiveness in expanding dynamic VFP initiatives at every level. In the next issue of the newsletter I will expand more concretely our developing fundraising strategies.

I am especially looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible at VFP's 25th anniversary convention this summer (August 25th-29th, 2010) in Portland, Maine. You are the heart of our organization.



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Newsletter Editor Passes Torch

In closing out my tenure as editor of VFP's newsletter, I ask the reader to indulge this parting political rant: Listening to NPR recently, I heard a military historian, affiliated with Stanford University's conservative Hoover Institute, claim that war was an unavoidable artifact of human nature. In this view, human nature is a static, unchanging human attribute; it exists in nature, but outside of history. An alternative explanation might expose in that definition an ideological construct, and posit that the warring predilection ascribed to the very essence of being human reflects, instead, stages of human development.

There probably isn't one act of organized violence in human history that can't be understood, at its deepest level, in terms of economic domination rather than as a quest for "glory" and "honor," the motivational drive, contemptible in its cynical superficiality, advanced by the Stanford historian. Certainly there are those who have the tools to make this counter-argument I am suggesting much more convincingly than I can. It doesn't take a trained Marxist, however, to see in the wars of our modern period the exclusive footprint of the economic system we call capitalism. It isn't "honor" or "glory" that capitalists fight for, it's money.

The standard defense of capitalism is that no economic system in history has had the capacity to produce such enormous wealth. Leaving aside the dicey issue that this wealth is based on the exploitation of labor, capitalism's great failing is its refusal to use that wealth to solve the issues of scarcity that bedevil two-thirds of the world's population. There's no doubt that capitalism can produce – there's plenty to go around – it just can't deliver.

Capitalism while posing as a social imperative, is actually inherently antisocial. It places individual profit, greed some would say, over collective well being. Militarism is capitalism's arm of enforcement in its quest to dominate markets, control natural resources, and access cheap labor. When war serves only the interests of the few, and the few control not just the physical, but the intellectual means of production, it is necessary for this dominant elite to set elaborate means of bribery and deception in our paths, and mislead us into believing that war is in our nature. Violence may be; I won't argue that. But war, as General Smedley Butler once put it, is a racket.



Thanks to the whole team who have contributed to the creation and success of VFP's national newsletter over the course of my editorship: Layout Editors Gabriela Inderwies and Dan Ellis; Contributing Editors John Grant, W.D. Ehrhart, Will Shapira, Virginia Druhe in the National office, and Susan Connery for proofing. Please welcome Chuck Rossi, of Philadelphia's Chapter 31, who will assume the editorial reins for the next issue. Happy trails. *Michael Uhl*

Convention T-Shirt

This year you can choose to purchase a T-Shirt with your Convention Registration and receive your T-Shirt at a discounted price! T-Shirts are \$15 and can be picked up at registration. The T-Shirt will have a logo similar to this on the shirt.

**T-Shirt purchased at the convention will cost more!
Pre-Order it today!**

www.vfpnationalconvention.org/register.htm



Newsletter

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25th Anniversary Convention in Portland, Maine

Wednesday, August 25th

Reception and Poetry Reading Kick Off 25th Convention

**5:30 Welcome Home
(VFP Birthplace) Reception**
(open bar and hors d'oeuvres)

8:30 The Poetry Reading has traditionally been enticing enough to bring scores of early registrants and will certainly do that for the 25th. Poet/editors **W.D. Ehrhart** and **Jan Barry** will present work from their two collections of Vietnam veteran poetry, *Winning Hearts and Minds* (1972) and *Demilitarized Zones* along with other collection contributors, including Michael Casey, Michael Uhl and Doug Rawlings.
Open Mic to follow.

Thursday, August 26th

Opening Ceremony – Workshops – Public Meeting

10:30 Opening Ceremony. VFP founding member Doug Rawlings will preside over opening ceremonies largely dedicated to the commemoration of 25 years of working for peace. Doug will be joined on stage by other charter members and former national officers. Founder **Jerry Genesio** will relate the history that prompted him to convene that first VFP meeting in a restaurant in Auburn, Maine 25 years ago. **Maya Kazazic**, a war amputee survivor and beneficiary of VFP's Children of War Project, now a motivational speaker, will join with VFP members involved in that early work of VFP. Welcome remarks from VFP President Mike Ferner. There will be a benediction drumming ceremony by elders and drummers of the Penobscot Nation from Indian Island, Maine.

**1:00-5:00 – Plenary Sessions
and Workshops** (see page 18 for details).

7:00 Public Meeting: Following the convention theme, *Lifting the Fog of War*, participants will speak to the social and economic impact of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

*Keynote by **Congressman Bob Filner (D CA)**—a Freedom Rider in the '60's, now Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and a member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

*Keynote—**Terry Tempest Williams**—acclaimed author (*Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*, *The Open Space of Democracy*) and fierce advocate for justice.

***Mike Brennan**—former Maine Senate majority leader, former Maine House Chair of Education Committee and of the Health and Human Services Committee.

***Dawud Ummah**—Military veteran. Muslim Chaplain at University of Southern Maine, NAACP Executive Committee.

***Gkisedtanamoogk**—Mashpee-Wampanoag, Instructor of Peace Studies at the University of Maine and Bangor Theological Seminary, and author (*Anoqcou, Ceremony is Life Itself*).

***Geoffrey Millard**—Board Chair of Iraq Veterans Against the War.

***Betsy Smith**—executive director EqualityMaine—working for equality for all citizens.

Entertainment by **Inanna, Sisters in Rhythm**, the celebrated Maine women vocalists and drummers.

**Make your reservation by July 24
And refer to the VFP Convention
Holiday Inn By The Bay
Reservation Number: 1-800-345-5050**

25th Anniversary Convention in Portland, Maine

Friday, August 27th

9:00-5:00 Workshops (see page 18 for details).

7:00 Lobster Bake

*Cruise by ferry to spectacular Peaks Island on Casco Bay

*Classic Downeast feast of lobster with all the trimmings (or steak, chicken or vegetarian for those who prefer)

Saturday, August 28th

9:00-5:00 VFP Business Meeting

7:00 Reception/Open Bar

8:00 Banquet

*Entertainment by singer and activist **Noel Paul Stookey** of Peter, Paul, and Mary.

*Keynote by journalist and war correspondent **Chris Hedges**, author of *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning* and *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle*.

Sunday, August 29th

March and Rally

9:00 March and Rally in downtown Portland.

Night Owl Screenings – Movies at 10:00

***Atomic Mom** – Two women, two mothers and their intimate experience living downwind of the open air atomic bomb tests.

***The Good Fight: The Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War** – with producer **Mary Dore**.

***Agent Orange: A Personal Requiem** chronicles the history of the toxic defoliant and its effects on American servicemen, the Vietnamese countryside, and generations of Vietnamese with filmmaker Masako Sakata.

***No Gun Ri** – Three part documentary produced in Korea (English subtitles) exposes the truth of the massacre. Never before screened in America.

**And much, much more...
Art exhibit featuring the portrait
series by Rob Shetterly,
Americans Who Tell the Truth.
Tabling. Musicians Open Mic...**

Follow convention developments
on the VFP website,
www.vfpnationalconvention.org.
Financial assistance may be available.

Nominations sought for VFP Awards

Each year at the convention, VFP recognizes outstanding contributions to VFP and the cause of peace by members and supporters. Do you know someone who deserves to be recognized by VFP? Please don't keep it to yourself. See the convention website for more information.

You can contact the committee at VFP.awards@gmail.com or 718-805-6341

President's Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

VFP is living proof that the military is not the only place you can experience real camaraderie and esprit. I've belonged to many organizations and I can't think of another one in which every woman and man-jack from side to side and top to bottom have as much pride in their mission, are so willing to sacrifice for the common good.



Every day I am heartened to think of the legion that has toiled to bring us this far. Over the last couple years we have steadily laid the foundation that will allow us to take a big step toward being more professional and better equipped to carry out our mission. And I'm humbled by the privilege to be president of this motley multitude – and at our 25th anniversary, to boot.

A couple examples of what I mean by preparing for big steps.

Last October, your board began a planning process with a goal of determining a central message succinctly describing VFP and our work. This is not just helpful, it is absolutely essential for successful fundraising and communications.

On the way to that message, we decided it was important to state that “Over the next 5 years, VFP will strengthen our national capacity through an increase in Visibility, Fundraising, Coherence and Communication which will support our local chapters.”

At our last board meeting, we decided on our central message: “Veterans For Peace: Exposing the true costs of war,” and then added a particularly catchy phrase coined at the October session, “Veterans For Peace: Organized locally. Recognized nationally. Exposing the true costs of war.”

That well-crafted phrase may not be magic, but it will allow us to clearly describe what we do and how we propose to carry out our exemplary Statement of Purpose. It will allow us to keep working on important projects and when the time comes, adopt new ones that fit within a coherent, visible frame.

So yes, things look bright for VFP. But we know how quickly our thoughts can return to the devastation and suffering generated by our government's occupations and war-making. We are reminded how far we are from our goal of abolishing war, from creating the kind of world we need and deserve.

Daily we see our militarized, commercialized society turn everything into a commodity for sale or conquest and what flows from such a system: schools that produce not critical thinkers but workers and consumers trained just enough to keep the wheels turning; media that fill public airwaves with ever more sensational and lurid offerings; more people sliding into deep poverty regardless how many jobs they work or how much time they spend chasing one; more people feeling alienated from any chance of governing themselves in this land of the free.

Those are formidable obstacles, to be sure. But we are not only veterans, we are Veterans For Peace. We belong to an organization like no other, primed with a clear purpose and equipped with the wisdom that only 25 years of experience can provide.

Happy birthday and many more, Veterans For Peace!

Mike Ferner

Board of Directors Requests Dues Increase To \$40

by Nate Goldshlag, Treasurer

The financial picture of Veterans For Peace is rather grim at this point. Last year the deficit was about \$26,000, and in 2008 we had a deficit of about \$37,000. If we do not do better than the budget this year, we will lose about \$52,000. The only reason we have been able thus far to sustain these kinds of losses is because of reserve funds we have, but they are rapidly being depleted. We have a very small staff of an Executive Director and three full time employees, and the deficit is not due to their expenses being extravagant, but rather our inability thus far to raise donations beyond dues from both members and non-members. In fact, we really should have more staff — a media person to raise our visibility, a fundraiser to keep us going, a person to help us develop programs, etc. But we obviously cannot afford that now. Our expenses last year were significantly under budget but our donations were way under budget, creating a net loss.

I did a survey of other non-profits and found that the average membership dues is close to \$40. Nobody seems to be able to remember a time when our dues were not \$25, which means that if they were raised to that level from a lower amount then it was done a very long time ago. Meanwhile inflation has increased by roughly well 100% since 1985. The Board of Directors in January voted to raise the membership dues to \$40 a year. This increase must be approved by the convention in August, according to our bylaws. I hope the members understand and approve this one component of VFP becoming financially stable.

There are other things we are doing to increase our fundraising. Dennis Lane, our new Executive Director, has a lot of nonprofit fundraising experience and is hoping to raise significant money from outside our organization, something we have never been real good at. But we also need to increase donations from our members, and bring back lapsed members to a paid status. So everyone in every chapter should consider doing the following:

- Call all the lapsed national members on your roster and talk to them about the importance of the only national veterans' organization with the word “peace” in its name. Try to get them to become paid-up national members and also to become active with your chapter and work for peace.
- Become a recurring donor to VFP. You will never again be bothered to remember your dues renewal. A recurring donation of \$30 per quarter is approximately equivalent to a large coffee per week! Many of us can afford this level of support for VFP.
- Become a lifetime member for a donation of \$1000, which can be spread out over a period of time. Encourage others in your chapter to do the same.
- On your computer, add a bookmark to Amazon that gets VFP a percentage of the money that you spend at Amazon. Go to <http://www.veteransforpeace.org/Amazon.vp.html> and learn how to create such a bookmark to Amazon. Publicize this to members, your friends, and activist email lists. If widely utilized, this can become a significant revenue stream for VFP.
- Ask friends and family members to donate to VFP. How many of us have done that?

I am confident that with your help we can make Veterans For Peace a financially stable and growing organization that works for peace even more effectively.

Chapter Reports

Chapter 1, Portland, ME

National Convention planning continues to dominate chapter activities. We're pleased to report that noted author and activist Terry Tempest Williams joins Chris Hedges Congressman Bob Filner (D-Calif.), Chair of the House Veterans Affairs committee, and Noel Paul Stookey as "headliners". The field of workshop applicants and movie screenings is extremely exciting.



Many Chapter 1 members at a news conference at the State-house in Augusta, ME kicking off the Bring Our War \$\$ Home campaign. At podium, Lisa Savage from CodePink.

We urge all chapters to support the convention by sponsoring member attendance and by advertising in the program booklet. Check vfpnationalconvention.org for details. We're developing the Tom Sturtevant Fund to help subsidize attendance costs for those who could use some help.

Chapter members and other activists in the state, led by Bruce Gagnon, have been engaged in the Bring Our War \$\$ Home Campaign which has gained national recognition and has played a prominent role in exposing the consequences of our war spending on Maine's fiscal well-being.

Michael Uhl, having traveled as a mem-

ber of the VFP delegation to Vietnam, was instrumental in developing the itinerary of visiting Vietnamese Agent Orange victims and advocates in Washington. In the coming months, through a lecture campaign, he'll be bringing the A.O. "legacy" to the attention of Maine citizens.

It's the 25th Anniversary in Portland! Be sure your Chapter is represented.

Dud Hendrick

Chapter 3, Bangor, ME

Chapter 3, the Jim Harney chapter of Bangor, Maine Has been active with full disclosure (counter recruitment) in our local high school. Dan Avener and student member Will Whitham recently facilitated an "adopt a school" workshop at a "bring our war dollars home" program. Peter Phillips has been working to help homeless veterans at our local shelter. Al Larson spearheaded our peace poetry project with participation by elementary and middle school children. The students poems were published in a book, with a copy given to each student and teacher.

Extra copies are being sold to raise funds. Dana Williams is our webmaster and is doing a great job with our site. The chapter

is down to about five members who are active and is busily looking for some new recruits.

Dan Avener

Chapter 10, Albany, NY

5 Members of VFP Chapter 10 traveled to NYC for the May rally for nuclear disarmament to join with thousands of others in support of the NPT. Dan Wilcox participated

in Split the Rock in Washington, DC and reported that it was an exciting and dynamic event focusing on the role of art and poetry in resistance and peace and justice issues. John Amidon participated in the

Nevada Desert Experience Sacred Peace Walk at the end of March and early April. He has written about the experience and his articles may be found at www.vfpchapter10.org. Our chapter has partnered with Women Against War in the Afghan Well Project supporting the project financially. Several members plan on attend the US Social Forum, in Detroit and Chapter 10 is registered. We also continued to support the Muslim Solidarity Community in Albany calling for the release of Y. Aref and M. Hossain, two Albany Muslim men entrapped by the FBI. Chapter 10 also sent a member to protest drones at Hancock in Syracuse NY and members continue to vigil locally against the war.

John Amidon

Chapter 14, Gainesville, FL

The First Annual Peace Poetry Contest for the Gainesville Chapter had an auspicious beginning on the night of conjunction of the Crescent Moon with The evening Star, Venus, The Goddess of Love. We had no idea of this when we chose the date. It went very well. Some, but not all of the kids came and read their poems. After the program there was pizza, cookies and drinks for all. The winners received gift certificates to use at a local bookstore. The parents and teachers were really happy about having the contest and next year we expect more contestants as the word spreads about it and us.

Things are all set for "Arlington Gainesville", also known as "The Memorial Mile", on Memorial Day Weekend. We remade all the tombstones which were damaged by 3 days of rain last year. There will be a 1 mile plus display of tombstones of every GI who sacrificed their lives since we invaded Afghanistan and Iraq, which now is approaching 5,500 soldiers. There is also a display of The Cost of War. Setup will begin at 0200hrs Saturday morning and last until sundown on Monday. The local blood bank, which has a great publicity operation will have its bus there for donations.

Bill Gilbert

Chapter 26, Chicago, IL

Chicago Area VFP Chapter 26 members rallied and marched against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan on March 18, 2010. On April 16th, we and VVAW co-hosted a



Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign Delegation dines with VFP Chapter 26 members at Chapter Dinner."

fundraiser for recently released G.I. Rap- per/Resister Marc Hall.

Chapter members Steve Nelson and Bob Gronko hosted, toured and publicized the "Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign Tour" 3 member delegation from Vietnam. The 5 Day tour included a panel discussion at Loyola University, presentations at 2 High School history classes, a press conference, meeting with VVAW members and dinner with the Chicago Area VFP Chapter. There was also sightseeing and shopping.

Several Chapter members are going to the commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of the Kent State murders. Information on the commemoration is at: <http://www.may4newsroom.kent.edu> Other activities will include commemoration of the 35th Anniversary of the end of the Vietnam war, May 1, 2010, and Memorial Day, May 31, 2010, both at the Chicago Vietnam Veterans' Memorial. We will also take part in the Chicago Homeless Veterans' Standdown, June 17-19, 2010.

Mike Woloshin

Chapter 31, Philadelphia, PA

The progressive community has been very active in the Philadelphia area in the first part of 2010, and Chapter 31 has been in the midst of the action. The Chapter was one of the participating organizations in Legs Against Arms, an annual event sponsored by organizations dedicated to eliminating gun violence in the city and consisting of a 5-kilometer run/walk followed by a Celebration of Youth organized by Education Works, which provides educational programs and services in communities confronting high rates of poverty and other barriers to educational achievement. Two members of the Chapter ran in the race, and others created a Peace Wheel to teach and to test young people about the values of nonviolence.

Opposition to unfet- tered recruiting continues: the Chapter participated in the latest protest at the infamous Army Expe- rience Center, which exposes young people to the technological Army in a video game-like setting; one member of the Chap- ter spoke at the protest. The Chapter worked with the Philadelphia Granny Peace Brigade to produce

an information source for high school guidance counselors to present to students in response to military recruiters who have almost open access to the city's high school students.

Several members of the Chapter par- ticipated again this year in annual Armed Forces Day at Graterford Prison. One member of the Chapter spoke on the ef- fects of Agent Orange at an event for Bob Edgar, a former congressman and President of Common Cause, who is preparing for a trip to Vietnam on a fact-finding tour about Agent Orange.

Cooperation with Philadelphia labor groups also continues. Various members of the Chapter joined the picket line in a suc- cessful strike by nurses at Temple Univer- sity Hospital.

Charles Rossi

Chapter 34, New York, NY

Chapter 34 has 105 members, who participate in numerous actions, includ- ing a protest the day after the 1000th US troop death in Afghanistan, March 19-20 Iraq War 7th Anniversary Demos in NY and DC, and Conference on the "Crisis in Mental Health Care for Soldiers and Veter- ans". A member crashed a Tea Party "Tax Day" protest, handing out flyers addressing the obscene costs of the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, all paid for with borrowed money.

Members partici- pated in the International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament at Riverside Church, May 1st March for Labor, Immigrant Rights & Jobs for All, and May 2nd International Nu- clear Disarmament March

& Rally, followed by a VFP literature table.

Other actions: Community screening of "The Good Soldier"; St Pat's for All Parade; and distribution of local Peace Veterans' newsletter. Members participate in six weekly peace vigils and one monthly event, distributing flyers outlining peaceful alternatives to war in Afghanistan.

Upcoming: Tabling at the Brooklyn Peace Fair, Memorial Day Observance, Heritage of Pride Parade, community screening/talkback "Why Are We in Af- ghanistan?", and support for City Council Resolution urging Congress to cut the military budget to help support urgent hu- man needs.

Bob Keilbach

Chapter 41, Cape Cod, MA

Late winter found Chapter 41 members, as part of a Cape-wide coalition, pursuing our US Congressman Bill Delahunt to hold a community forum on the continuation of the Afghan war. The forum was held on April 11 and was very well attended by local people from across the political spec- trum. We are still waiting for Mr. Delahunt's decision on the supplemental war funding bill.

On May 1 we held our 15th annual Peace Poetry Contest Reading and Awards Ceremony which is the culmination of the three-month contest.

Many parents, friends, teachers and oth- ers from 'outside of the choir' were there and teachers were given special recogni- tion.

Early Spring saw VFP once again a key participant in the planning of the largest Memorial Day Commemoration on the Cape and again bringing one of our peace poetry winners to be part of the program.



VFP Chapter 34 and Friends and Family of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade (FFALB) at the May 2 International March for Peace & Human Needs-Disarm Now! in NYC.

Finally, on May 1 chapter members attended a 'regional summit' just north of Boston which included VFP members from MA, ME, NH, VT and RI. This day-long think-tank meeting was both energizing and fruitful. New VFP Executive Director Dennis Lane attended and added more energy and ideas - we were truly excited to see the talents he brings to the job! Several issues important to our chapter were discussed and we look forward to bringing them to the convention in August.

Duke Ellis

Chapter 54, Santa Barbara, CA

Chapter 54 continues to install the original Arlington West regularly, usually the first Sunday of every month. Our June installation will be on Memorial Day Sunday, May 30th and take down on Monday, May 31st. We hope to meet and greet national executive director Dennis Lane on Memorial Day. As is the norm now, Chapter member Dr. Gilbert Robledo and crew will set up the teen memorial in front of Arlington West and nametags of the hundreds of teenagers whose lives have been lost in the two wars will be displayed. It is set up at Santa Barbara City College the third Friday of every month in conjunction with the War Moratorium. Chapter 54 also sets up the Inconvenient Booth every week, a display at SBCC that makes the connection between wars, resources and consumerism and where students are assisted in resisting recruiters.

Chapter 54 members have produced several books and films. Chapter President Dan Seidenberg's "Vietnam Ambush" is now available online and we hope will soon be available at the Veterans For Peace website. Chapter member and Iraq veteran Paul K Chappell's new book "The End of War" joins his recent book "Will War Ever End?", available online and at the Veterans For Peace website. Chapter member and Korean War veteran Dr. Thomas Scheff has a dvd available of interviews in the context of the original Arlington West in Santa Barbara. The title of the dvd is also the title of his poem, "A Wake on the Pier". Chapter troubleshooter Ron Dexter's award winning film "On The Edge" continues to be available online and is recognized as one of the earliest warnings of environmental degradation. Chapter 54 Vice President Bob Potter's book of poetry "Poems in Transit" continues to be available online and we hope an edited film of his production of "Mother Courage" will soon be available.

Lane Anderson

Chapter 55, Santa Fe, NM

Good Spring to all! I want to dedicate this update to an individual and the program which he so ably led during his tenure. He is Nathaniel Mahlberg and he was the leader of our "Full Disclosure Recruiting Project" (FD). FD is our chapter's version of "counter-recruiting"...we decided at its inception that we wanted a word that more fully described our endeavor to inform people, predominantly our youth, of a more full description of military service, its ramifications, as well as the potential aftermath that recruiters will not disclose. Nathaniel has been an Associate Chapter Member for a few years and approximately 3 years ago he took charge of Full Disclosure. He did a phenomenal job getting VFP into schools, into job fairs, as well as exposure in Santa Fe and in North Central New Mexico. He has been inspirational in his leadership and accomplishments and we will be hard-pressed to replace him. Nathaniel is moving on to attend Union Theological Seminary, a Divinity School in New York City. I offer Nathaniel a warm "Thank You!" on behalf of the Joan Duffy Chapter of Veterans For Peace.

Daniel Craig

Chapter 58, Catskill Mountain, NY

The VFP Maury Colow Chapter 58 in Ulster County, New York is discussing how to handle the upcoming Woodstock Memorial Day event, in light of the local American Legion's disruptive activities in Woodstock over the years.

Goings on: Jay Wenk, chapter contact, recently completed his WW 2 memoir, "Study War No More" which will be published and available by this posting. In addition, two other members' poetry chapbooks, published by Post Traumatic Press, were launched this past year, "Love And War" by Thomas Brinson and "Basic Load" by Dayl Wise. All three have been giving well-attended readings in the area. Other members are and have been working with Dutchess Peace Coalition (www.dutches-space.org), Enlist for Peace, Middle East Crisis Response (www.mideastcrisis.org), UU Social Justice Committee (www.uupok.org) and continue, as all members of VFP, to work toward peace and justice, both locally and globally. We expect to continue our demonstration at the local military recruiting office and to reach out to High School and college students in the Hudson River Valley and NYC.

Maury Colow was a founding member

of our chapter, a volunteer in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and a WW 2 veteran.

Jay Wenk

Chapter 61, St. Louis, MO

Working with the local Veterans Consortium, we have participated in four Homeless Veterans Stand Downs during the year; fall, spring, Christmas and Thanksgiving, where the homeless receive legal counsel, medical and dental attention, clothing and other supplies as well as hot food and companionship.

With few exceptions, we have put on monthly movie nights at a popular local restaurant and pub, exposing the bankrupt policies that lead us into war.

We have participated in the launching of the "Ride To The End" project initiated by Afghanistan veteran Jacob George and his brother, Jordan. They are bicycling across the country carrying a powerful anti-war message based on Jacob's own bitter experiences.

The chapter turned out in support of the "Guitars For Vets" project, Tyler Boudreaux's book tour, David Swanson's book tour.

We paraded in Kirkwood at the "Green Tree Days" festival and manned our own booth for the second year in a row. We will be doing it again in September.

We provide speakers for events at schools, churches and other venues and various members continue to stand at a Sunday night Vigil that has gone on weekly since the invasion of Iraq.

Don Connors

Chapter 63, Albuquerque, NM

We co-sponsored screenings of the documentary, "The Good Soldier," at Guild Cinema. Chapter VP Willard Hunter, Corresponding Secretary Sally-Alice Thompson and Member Lorna Clark tabled in the lobby.

President Charles Powell talked with the West Mesa High School Peace Club and showed excerpts from "The Good Soldier."

Member Bill Prinkey and Charles helped congratulate newly sworn citizens at Naturalization Ceremonies in March and April.

Jack Pickering and Sally-Alice staffed a table at the Annual University of New Mexico Peace Fair.

The NM Legislature designated a Vietnam Veterans Day. Several chapter members marched in the parade with our

impressive VFP float created by Recording Secretary Terry Riley. We were greeted with applause, waves and finger formed Vs for peace. Bill and Charles attended the unveiling of the monument to Vietnam Veterans.

Our chapter accepted a request to maintain a plot of flowers at the New Mexico Veterans' Memorial. It is fitting, that plot consists of Everlasting Peace Roses.

Bob Anderson, Will Covert and Charles gave support to Mitzi Kraft, Military Families Speak Out, who conducted an overnight Easter Campout to bring attention to JROTC in our high schools and middle schools.

Jack and Bill tabled at UNM Disability Awareness Day.

Sally-Alice, Bill, Will and Charles staffed table at Earth Day Festival.

Charles Powell

Chapter 69, San Francisco, CA

Sent 3 members to the California Regional Conference of Veterans and Military Families, April 16 – 18, Ventura, CA

Hosted the National GI Rights Hotline Conference, April 23 – 25, SF Veterans Memorial Building, Steve Morse Coordinator.

Coordinated book tour for Suel Jones, VVAW and President of the Viet Nam Chapter of VFP, May 3 – 9. Book, about living in Viet Nam since 1998 & volunteering with Agent Orange Victims, is called "Meeting the Enemy" – available on Amazon.com

Hosted the 5th National Agent Orange Justice Tour, (April 14 – May 16) for their San Francisco Bay Area meetings and presentations, May 12 – 16)

Worked closely with local peace, anti-recruitment and IVAW groups and projects. Revived San Francisco VFP website

Nadya Williams

Chapter 87, Sacramento, CA

In addition to our regular monthly activities, Sacramento VFP members have other news this month. On April 15, tax day, we conducted a war-spending protest at the California State Capitol.

Two of our members have qualified as candidates for state offices! Daniel Costa, our VP, is running for the California State Assembly, District 9, and Debra Reiger (associate member) is running for California State Treasurer. Both are running unopposed in their 3rd party primaries and will

appear on the November ballot. They plan to discuss the human and dollar costs of war during their campaign appearances,

Other highlights:

– Delivered a letter to US Representative Doris Matsui, asking that she pledge to vote against the upcoming war funding bill. And successfully urged her to support the Military Sexual Assault bill.

– Protested our local library's hosting of a violent video game tournament. The library will probably not do it again.

– Passed out 'Bikes not Bombs' anti-war fliers at the Amgen Tour bicycle race event.

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

John Reiger

Chapter 90, Broome County, NY

The Cost of War Project and Binghamton NY Mayor Matt Ryan made a national splash regarding the installation of a digital sign on City Hall. While the project stalled briefly, the sign will be installed late May/early June with the opening of the COW art display in the City Hall gallery. All details are available at www.binghamtonbridge.org. Other plans include going to our legislators to bring our war dollars home.

BCVFP was host of the Mother's Day celebration of Peace and Non-Violence honoring the 140th anniversary of Julia Ward Howe's Proclamation of 1870. The event was attended by 66 local community members. Our performers were the excellent folk singer Colleen Kattau, actor Pat Donohue who did a dramatic reading of Howe's Proclamation and BU History Grad Student Carol Linskey, who gave us some historical perspective.

Later that evening, our successful fundraiser for the Veteran's Sanctuary located near Ithaca NY,



Broome County WW II Vets and spouses, left to right Arvid and Ruth Antonson and Stu and Peggy Naismith at our Mother's Day for Peace event in Binghamton NY.

Photo by Joyce Donohue

featured Colleen with the addition of her band Some Guys. And we enjoyed hearing her recent new single "Combat Paper".

George McAnanama

Chapter 92, Seattle, WA

It has been a busy year for Greater Seattle Veterans For Peace. In January, VFP 92 facilitated a well-attended counter-recruitment workshop at Seattle's annual Martin Luther King march and rally. In February, we organized a memorial celebration of the life of O'Kelly McCluskey, a World War II veteran and VFP 92 member who was a passionate and unforgettable advocate for peace. In March, over 30 VFP members led the Seattle march and rally marking the 7th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

In April, VFP 92 produced a benefit concert with three radical folksingers - George Mann, David Rovics and Jim Page. Over 30 peace and justice groups co-sponsored, contributed and participated. It was a wonderful concert, and we raised over \$3,000 for the work of VFP 92. In May, VFP 92 participated in a series of events calling for the abolition of all nuclear



VFP 92 leading the Seattle march marking the 7th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Photo by Helen Jaccard

weapons. Cherie Eichholz, VFP 92 board member, spoke at a rally organized by the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action.

Every Tuesday, VFP 92 members participate in a weekly peace vigil at the Federal Building in downtown Seattle.

Gerry Condon

Chapter 93, South-Central, MI

The Chapter recently concentrated on an Earth Day event with a display (banners, information table) set up on one of the busiest intersections of Ann Arbor on the actual Earth Day. A few days later the Chapter held another display at a Jackson, Michigan event. Both events were well worth the time, as it seems little attention is ever given to how militarism and war affect the environment. Also, Earth Day events are now quite often used for corporate “green-washing” (i.e. the Dow Chemical “Run For The Water”) and “feel good” displays, masking the real threats our planet faces.

Chapter 93 is also working on displays of “Arlington Michigan” (one cross for every Michigan soldier killed in Iraq/Afghanistan), peace scholarship and our annual John Lennon birthday “Give Peace A Chance” concert fundraiser in October. Our Chapter website is www.vfp93.org

Bob Krzewinski

Chapter 99, Asheville, NC

In March, Chapter 99 of Western North Carolina held an open house to celebrate and publicize our new HQ in downtown Asheville, NC. We have rented a corner of a larger space that is used for weekly film screenings and an open mike event. The small stage with its audio equipment and the screen and projector nicely accommodated the program that chapter member Stack Kenny developed to showcase the hidden talents of some of our vets and attract and educate the public.

The live program—sandwiched between the films “Rethink Afghanistan” and “Scarred Lands, Wounded Lives: the Environmental Footprint of War”—included music, poetry, and a tribute to Howard Zinn. Lyle Petersen’s poignant rendition of “And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda”; Ken Ashe’s

extemporaneous rant on war, history, and politics; and the vocal duet of Stack and his wife Donna Schutt were among show’s highlights.

The event was so successful—a packed house and generous donors—that we’re planning a similar, much larger event for the fall. Meanwhile, our subterranean office—“the Bunker”—with its library and Bunker Boutique featuring the finest in VFP-wear, is open each weekday afternoon for VFP business and public access.

Kim Carlyle

Chapter 102, Milwaukee, WI

Chapter 102’s main focus continues to be on refining, expanding and funding our Homeless Veterans Initiative to find and assist homeless veterans on the streets of Milwaukee. The project includes five programs – advocating for the homeless to help them secure their rights and benefits, street outreach to identify vets who need help, a Housing First program to get them into safe housing, a food program, and a homeless prevention program to help vets furnish their apartments with basic necessities. We have had some real successes since launching the program in 2008, helping more than 100 vets get access to housing, education, counseling, health care and employment opportunities. We have done it all so far on a shoestring, relying on individual donations, but we have recently expanded our board to include more community representatives and are seeking foundation grants and support. You’ll find many more details at our new website, www.never-homeless.org

Bill Christofferson

Chapter 111, Bellingham, WA

Bellingham, Washington’s Chapter 111 spent most of winter and early spring sponsoring or co-hosting a variety of activities and venues to keep the juices flowing and

expand community connections.

An alliance with the Western Washington University Socialist Alternative student activists resulted in a successful No to the Afghanistan Troop Surge rally in December, one of the largest of its kind in the country.

A screening of *The Good Soldier* at the Bellingham Human Rights Film Festival on February 27, facilitated by three Chapter members, drew a crowd of over 100 to close out this annual community arts event.

Also in February, Chapter 111 held its first annual Risk tournament, Domination for World Peace, a brainchild of board game enthusiast and Chapter member James Gillies. The event, based on the Hasbro favorite for over 50 years, netted a tidy sum, and could catch on next year.

The Chapter was also the recipient of a Community Shopping Day on March 20. VFP-111 was awarded a percentage of the take on a busy Saturday at both Bellingham Food Co-Op locations, with members tabling at both stores all day.

On a sad note, one of our original members, Curt Versteegen, passed away on March 27 after a year-long bout with cancer.

Gene Marx

Chapter 112, Ventura/Oxnard, CA

Chapter 112 recently tabled the city of Oxnard’s multi-cultural day at Plaza Park plus Santa Paula High School’s Career/Expo event. We were able to interact with parents and students of low income families targeted by military recruiters with our informed enlistment informational pamphlets and brochures.

Our chapter along with VVAW Central Coast, VFP-L.A., MFSO Orange County & Gold Star Mom Jane Bright, organized and hosted the CA Regional Conference



Chapter 99’s Open House was a big success.

of Veterans and Military Families April 16-18th The conference was attended by many Calif. vets, incl. Doug Zachary, Nat'l VFP. We had many workshops, i.e. Sexual Assault in the Military, Effects of PTSD, Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility, Courage to Resist, War's Hidden Wounds. Plus a public event on Saturday evening with a speaker line-up of Col. Ann Wright, Michael Parenti & Marjorie Cohn. Some of the attendees posed for this group shot (see below).

Our chapter recently awarded three \$500 scholarships to Ventura County area High School Seniors for submissions related to the VFP-mission statement. These will be given out at their respective awards nights; Santa Paula HS-May 25th, Camarillo HS-June 1st and El Camino HS-June 9th.

Various members have been tabling at many community/public events for several years now. These efforts have resulted in peace clubs forming at some high schools, namely the Santa Paula H.S.-"Sespe Club", and the Rio Mesa H.S. "Spartans for Peace". The Spartans For Peace recently held their first Peace week celebration from May 17-21st on campus.

Several chapter members have been attending a newly-formed "Ventura Peace Alliance" group. A "talking circle" bringing together various peace-community activists from the county to discuss what we can do to keep the word out there that "War is not the answer!"

Anthony Whitaker

Chapter 114, Sheboygan, WI

Our chapter attended a rally at the state capital in early March to support an assembly bill to help bring our state Nat. Guard troops home and keep them home. Later that month we hosted our sixth annual Anti-War Concert. (see poster). We dedicated



this one to Oscar Romero, Rachel Corey, and Howard Zinn. Six musicians and two poets railed against an unjust war, now in it's eighth year and the military-industrial complex that runs it and profits from it. Our favorite humorist John Heckenlively came as the Rev. Billy-Bob Farright, ultra conservative pundit from cable TV, and chair of the Anti-Socialism Dept. of Freedom University, Langley, VA. He chastised the cast for performing and the audience for enjoying "Blasphemous entertainment aimed at undermining God and Capitalism!" Another regular who drove up from Chicago was Mike Felton, long-time veteran of the Windy City folk music scene. When asked in December ...How good his John Prine [repertoire] was he answered, "yah, I remember when he was a mailman".

As Memorial Day approaches, you may recall that this chapter was asked not to carry our flag-draped coffin in the Parade last year, this year we were told "you can carry signs". We feel that this is a 1st Amendment issue and are considering carrying the signs that say "IMAGINE THAT

WE ARE CARRYING A FLAG-DRAPED COFFIN."

Tom Contrestan

Chapter 115, Red Wing, MN

We here at VFP, Chapter 115 in the Red Wing, Minnesota area have been working to increase our exposure in the community by participating in local events like the annual Diversity Festival where we let children and adults play The Cost of War Game. They all seem to enjoy playing for prizes and learning. We also held a Cost of War public forum where Tom White, VFP Chapter 27 was the presenter at this well-attended event.

Chapter 115 is now busy planning our annual Pigstock event to be held on Saturday, July 17th, 2010 near Red Wing, MN. Our eighth annual Pigstock should be one of the best. The keynote speaker will be Cynthia McKinney, a six term congresswoman from Georgia. She will talk about her recent actions in Israel/Palestine.

VFP President Mike Ferner will also be on a panel to talk about his recent fact finding trip to Viet Nam concerning the long term effects of Agent Orange.

In the morning at Pigstock there will be a regional meeting of Veterans for Peace and the proceedings will be open to any VFP member. All VFP members are welcome to attend. For further details call Bill Habedank at 651-388-7733 or email at habedank@charter.net or check out the website www.wipigstock.com

Bill Habedank4

Chapter 129, Pueblo, CO

The 2009 VFP Convention passed a resolution that supports ranchers who oppose the Army adding 42 million acres to its existing 24 million acre live fire zone called the Pinon Canon Maneuver Site.

It is 80 miles South of Pueblo, CO. There was a good turn out of Puebloans when VFP hosted speakers and a DVD presentation in opposition to the Army land grab. In May 2010, the Federal Court Ordered the Army to pay \$200,000 to attorneys representing



CA state VFP regional conferees.

© Photo by Mathieu Grandjean

the ranchers who prevailed in the lawsuit against the Army's expansion in the SE corner of CO. U.S. Army would have enlarged its live fire site in CO to 80% the size of the State of Rhode Island.

Monthly anti-war DVD showings attract from 10 to 20. Hopefully there will be T.V. & newspaper coverage for Seventh Annual Memorial Day Program. Music and speakers, including Jim Benkenhaupt & Marvin Read, should get about 90 mostly seniors "choir members" and maybe 10 newcomers.

Chuck Butler

Chapter 132, Corvallis, OR

Highlights of our activities over the past quarter:

— Sustainability Fair: VFP 132 joined the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition at their annual Fair. We tabled and provided information about the environmental impact of war and the Defense Department's massive carbon footprint.

— Iraq War 7th Anniversary: We joined other Corvallis peace groups and produced a short video, a portion of which was incorporated by the Peace, Justice and Environment Project (www.pjep.org) in their video documenting protests around the country.

— ASVAB & Student Privacy: VFP 132 joined Don Chapin of VFP 156 (Rogue Valley, Oregon) to prepare and submit state legislation, modeled after a recent Maryland law, to prohibit release of ASVAB scores to recruiters without parental consent.

— PeaceJam Northwest: For the second year, we conducted a "Truth in Military Recruiting" workshop for high school students at the weekend-long PeaceJam Northwest. We began with a role-playing exercise



Our Chapter Treasurer and Vietnam Marine veteran, Emmet Band of Grants Pass, OR, adjusting wheel chairs as a volunteer for United Cerebral Palsy Wheels For Humanity in Kosovo, during the week of May 9-15, 2010.

involving a student's encounter with a recruiter. Then we led a discussion exploring war's moral issues and fielding questions about recruiting and the military. We then gave the students a homework assignment: See if there is counter recruiting group that regularly visits their school and if not, contact us for help in finding or establishing one.

Bart Bolger

Chapter 156, Rogue Valley, OR

Thanks to our new media consultant, Tracy Phillips, on April 30, 2010, VFP156 President Hal Anthony had a live 55-minute interview with host Leo Goodman on TakilmaFM streaming radio. Also, there are spot public service announcements being rotated on four FM radio stations about our chapter's capabilities, as well as a special message funded by a Grants Pass church's Social Action Committee which advertises the availability of the DD4 Enlistment Contract on our website.

Our chapter is entered and preparing a 22' Peace dove for the 51st annual Boatnik Memorial Day Parade in Grants Pass, Oregon this coming Memorial Day weekend. This is the second most attended parade in the state annually. Last year, 22,000+ people lined the streets to see the first ever Peace group march through town in over 100 years. This year, they'll get to see a GI-ANT Peace dove! (Big Bird Build in progress, updates and pictures forthcoming).

Hal Anthony

New England VFP Chapters Hold a Joint Chapter Summit

On Saturday May 8 the Smedley Butler Brigade and the Samantha Smith Chapters of Veterans for Peace organized and hosted a Summit of VFP members from throughout New England at the House of Peace in Ipswich Massachusetts. Six chapters were represented with over thirty-five members participating in the day long Summit. Dennis Lane the new national executive director of VFP was in attendance. The title of the Summit was "How to increase our effectiveness? Where we are and where do we go from here?"

The Summit was called to discuss, plan and strategize potential effective actions to promote peace



New England VFPers socializing at a break during May Summit meeting.

and oppose these two on-going wars and occupations. The peace movement and vfp members in particular are demoralized, marginalized, frustrated and viewed as fairly ineffective as the body bags keep coming home. The Summit lasted the entire day with members exploring ways Veterans for Peace can work together to effectively. We had two professional meeting facilitators keeping us on task and guiding us through a process that resulted in some very meaningful strategies that will focus our efforts in the future. We narrowed our focus down to four areas that will be developed over the next few weeks and months.

The four areas are:

1. Direct action and rapid response.
2. Membership development on the local level, incorporating diversity into all publications with high visibility in all presentations, events and actions.
3. Service projects furthering VFP's mission to respond to victims of war to include working with Iraqi refugee families and helping veterans recovery from alcohol and drug addiction to start their own sober homes.
3. Educating young people and citizens at large about the true economic and human cost of war through media such as local cable outlets, local newspapers, speaking engagements, counter recruiting in schools etc.

Not only was a lot of work completed and some meaningful results realized but the coming together as a group of committed veterans for peace was very helpful in developing relationships with other chapters which will hopefully result in future efforts together.

A final report of the Summit is being put together and will be available to other chapters upon request. Send your request to: Pat Scanlon, Coordinator of the Smedley Butler Brigade at: patscanlonmusic@yahoo.com.



VFP Member Embeds In 'Stan

by Ted Engelmann

In November 2008 I embedded with the 4th ID at FOB Falcon and COP 803 in Baghdad. From December 2009 to late January 2010 I embedded with a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) at FOB Lion in the Panjshir Valley, and with another element of the 4th ID at COP Pirtle-King in Kunar Province, Afghanistan.

The purpose of my embed was to compare and contrast the experience of today's soldiers with my 1968-'69 tour of duty in Viet Nam. My photographs tell the story of the effects of war on soldiers and others... our families and nation. The soldiers care for each other and work hard to accomplish their mission. Others appear to ride a gravy-train.

Below is my concern about the number...

...of American women in the combat zone operating .50 cal., driving MRAPs, being an integral part of the war...and Military Sexual Trauma (MST)...and the potential effect of war on these young women.



...of Americans who no idea where their loved ones serve in Iraq and Afghanistan due to OPSEC (operational security), and self-censorship.

...of American women in the combat zone operating .50 cal., driving MRAPs, being an integral part of the war...and Military Sexual Trauma (MST)...and the potential effect of war on these young women.

...of American contractors with Fluor, KBR, Blackwater and many others making tax free incomes. No recession there. If there's anyone in the Military-Industrial-Political Complex who doesn't want these wars to end, look no further.

...of suicides in the ranks and among veterans. A violent red flag that something drastic is wrong with the system and/or mission; not the soldiers and veterans.

...of families suffering the loss of their loved ones as a result of these wars.

...of the American dollars wasted nation-building by the US government.

The numbers keeps growing, daily.

Ted Engelmann

Photographer - Educator - Veteran

VFP Charter Member, Hoa Binh Chapter 160, Ha Noi, Viet Nam



Introducing Our New Board Members

Dear VFP Membership:

At our May meeting, the VFP board voted to fill vacancies left by the resignations this year of Gary May and Pierre Williams. I'm proud to introduce Darcella Craven and Sam Feldman, VFP's two new board members.

Peace,
Mike Ferner
VFP Board President

Darcella Craven

Darcella has over 15 years of experience in corporate, government, non profit and military organizations. She is currently the Executive Director of the Veterans Business Resource Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting Honorably Discharged Veterans, National Guard and Reservist and Active Duty personnel transitioning back into civilian life with starting and expanding businesses.

Darcella has worked with several nonprofit organizations specializing in program implementation, change management and creating group training programs. Her career has taken her to several corporations and positions including corporate commu-

nications and project management. She is a requested speaker on business development, life management, human capital and nonprofit management.

Darcella is featured in numerous articles for her transition from the welfare system to an accomplished business woman and is actively involved in many civic organizations. She was recently named the 2009 YWCA Leader of Distinction in Nonprofits, 2009 Small Business Administration Veterans Business Champion for Eastern Missouri and Region 7 (MO, IA, NE, KS), recognized by the St. Louis Business Journal as one of the Most Influential Minority Business Leaders and Who's Who of Black St. Louis as a community leader to know.

An Army veteran, she holds a diploma of Secretarial Sciences from Sanford Brown, Bachelors and Masters of Arts in Management from Webster University. She is currently pursuing her Doctors of Management and is the proud mother of two daughters.

Sam Feldman

I served in the US Army from December 19, 1972 - January 19, 1976 as a

Field Medic. I was stationed at the 33rd Field Hospital, Wurzburg Germany and at HHC 82nd Airborne Div, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina.

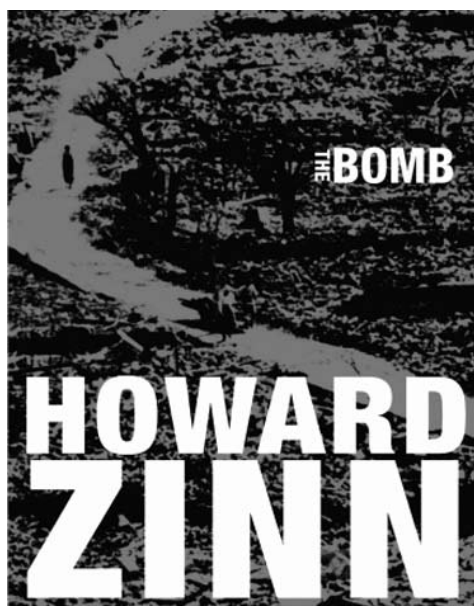
I have been active in VFP Chapter 32 since January 2005, serving as VP until January 2009 and currently as President. I have organized annual participation in the Martin Luther King Jr. parades, Veterans Day Parades and Arlington Miami and Arlington South Beach, establishing a relationship with the local press and developing an extensive press contact list. I have represented VFP at numerous events, demonstrations and protests and I have lobbied local officials and Congressional Representatives as well as the Homeless Trust and the Regional VA Medical Center.

I would like to see a VFP grow to become a powerful force in support of our mission statement, which, significantly, includes veterans' advocacy. I have worked very hard on anti war activities and recently focused on the advocacy for veterans at the local level. The diversity of chapter members has grown as result and I would like to work to ensure that VFP grows in these areas at the national level as well.



BOOK REVIEWS

by Will Shapira



The Bomb
by Howard Zinn
83 pages, paperback
City Lights Publishers
www.citylights.com

This is in all likelihood the final original book by long-time VFP member and WWII vet Howard Zinn. It has a publication date of August 2010 to mark the 65th anniversary of America's two atomic bombings of Japan. The much-loved, greatly admired Zinn died in January, 2010 at 88, just a month after completing this volume. Now come the anthologies.

A bombardier in WWII, Zinn was transformed from a dutiful combat soldier to an activist against the horrors of war best (or worst) exemplified by Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well as what little he could see of it from 30,000 feet in his B-17 in the European Theater.

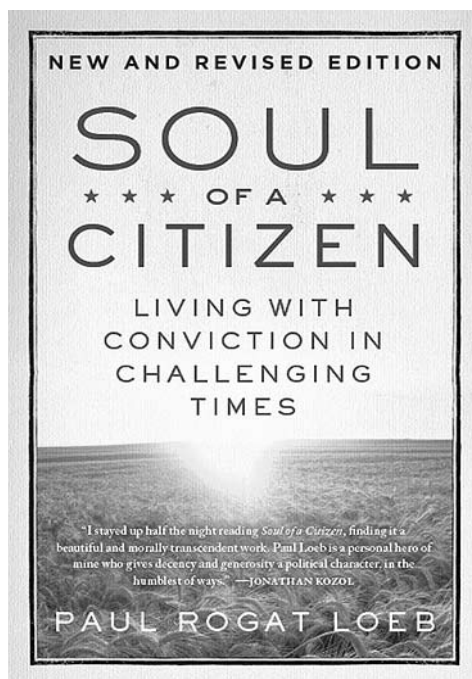
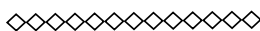
His epiphany came after the war, after he traded his uniform for civvies and read John Hersey's account of Hiroshima and its mangled, seared survivors. He spent the rest of his life looking back while also writing his magnum opus, "A People's History of the United States."

After years of reflection and remorse, Zinn wondered, "What can we learn to free us from the thinking that leads us to stand by while atrocities are committed in our name?"

Perhaps the best way we as individuals can honor Zinn's memory is to ask that

question of ourselves and our elected political "leaders."

And VFP should establish an annual lifetime achievement award in Zinn's name to be awarded our best peacenik writers.



Soul of a Citizen:
Living with Conviction in Challenging Times (New and Revised Edition)
by Paul Rogat Loeb
St. Martin's Griffin Press
382 pages, paperback
www.stmartins.com

Paul Rogat Loeb, 57, of Seattle, spoke in the Twin Cities recently. Loeb has a lot to say to VFP members in their role as social activists. Is there ever a time when social activists of any bent don't need encouragement and affirmation? Loeb, who was arguing against the Vietnam War as a 7th grade debater, understands this full well. In a personal letter to me accompanying his book, he wrote "'Soul' is based on 35 years of my work examining the psychology of social involvement. It explains how ordinary citizens can make their voices heard and actions count at a time when we're told neither matter. It examines how people get involved in larger community issues and what stops them from getting involved; how they burn out in exhaustion or maintain their commitment for the long haul...I really think it can play a key role in getting people past their political demoralization,

paralysis and despair."

I could not agree more and I urge every VFP chapter (if not each member) to get a copy of this book and when those days come when you feel nothing is going right, no one cares and it's all futility and frustration, Mr. Loeb and his wonderful book will be there to help you pick yourself up. He would make a great speaker at a VFP national convention, board meeting or chapter meetings: lecture@paulloeb.org

Onward!



TONY VAN RENTERGHEM
WWII Dutch Resistance Fighter 1919-2009



Tony was serving as one of the last mounted cavalry officers Netherlands Armed Forces, when he fought the Germans during the Blitz, and later served in the Dutch Resistance during the German WWII occupation of Holland, where he helped hide those fleeing Nazi persecution, and ran the film and photo units of the Dutch Resistance (known as the "Underground Camera").

He emigrated to the USA in 1948, where he spent thirty-five years in the motion picture and television industry, working on such films as "The Diary of Anne Frank" and the biblical epic "The Greatest Story Ever Told."

Tony co-founded, and served as the first executive director of, the Northern Arizona Veterans for Peace "Bud Day Chapter 108". He designed and helped produce the "Voices for Peace" traveling exhibit, a series of quotations about war that was displayed in schools and libraries. He later became a founding member of the North Olympic Peninsula Chapter of Veterans for Peace in Port Angeles when he moved to Washington State,

The book, *The Last Hussar - Resistance without Bullets*, completed just before his death, is the autobiography of his Resistance memoirs, to be published in 2010 by Dutch publisher, Conserve.





P O E T R Y

by Joe Cox

Fathers and Sons

for ILT Matthew D. Cox

My boy lives a half a world away, a man
leading other men, but he will always be my boy.
I see curly blond hair and sky-blue eyes
sparkle, a face filled with smile as he
plucks a big bass from a Tennessee pond.
I see the tense stare, the elbow held high,
as he hangs in on first curve balls of Babe Ruth.
I see the sweetness of a face in the glow of midsummer
fireworks, and long eyelashes on sleeping lids
as I carry him to bed and lay him next to Boo.
I am proud that he is a man leading men
and miss him because he is so far away,
but what I miss most is the little boy who
will always and never again be my little boy.

First Snow Fort Wayne

Under the wing, Fort Wayne, Indiana, white with first snow,
thirty minutes left to go. Thirty years of memories including
Larry, one of my soldiers in Vietnam, a father at fourteen,
illiterate, hard working, always there to please.
Oh how he missed his dark, cold, prairie city
how he bragged of bowling strikes, his beautiful
wife, and the high life in Fort Wayne.
Today my son leads similar boys
who kill illiterate boys in shattered
desert towns, angry boys armed with resentment
of having been under too many heels
for too long a time. The pilot tells us
its right around freezing at O'Hare
and the winds are light. On the other side
of the world, my son is thankful for cool nights
and his soldiers' ability to fight in the dark,
but when he tries to sleep, his two friends
lost to suicide bombers crowd his cot.
Larry, too, has trouble sleeping and lingers
too long in the bowling alley where he works
after locking up. The snow in Fort Wayne
is early this year and heating oil at an all-time high.
He thinks of his son who drives a truck on roads
where angry boys carefully wire their gift of death.

Second Tour

The night before Thanksgiving
my son told me he's going back to Iraq,
again. The first cost him his two best friends
and his CO's legs. He doesn't talk about it much.
This time he goes to Fort Riley
for two or three months first.
I told him that after that shit hole,
Iraq might even look good.

His grandfather went to Germany,
got shot twice, came back an angry,
sullen man, still picking shrapnel out of his legs
as he fought the middle-aged battle of the bulge.
I had my time in Vietnam, never shot,
but came back different, or so my
first wife told me before she left.

Every soldier's war is unique, every minute,
every step, every square foot, even for those
in the same country at the very same time.
My only wish is that my son will find peace,
but I honestly don't know how to tell him that,
and when I try, it sounds like just one more lie.

Homecoming

Walking with my son on the sandy hook, we stare at a full moon
that he finds hard to believe polishes the rough desert he just left.
We gaze across at the lights of a great city and the dark spaces.
The spirit of atrocity fades in soft rhythms of Jersey beach.

The more we talk, the more we realize we are cowards, retreating
into a common bond of camaraderie, medicating ourselves with myths
of old soldiers. On his left wrist he wears his best friend's name,
tangible reminder of a man disintegrated by a suicide bomber.

In this sweet air, it is hard to recall the daily dragon's breath
that claimed a family's only son. My son has difficulty talking.
He made this pilgrimage to explain love in a time of fear,
but it is easier to trade clichés and swap sanitized sound bites.

On the drive back, my son mentally walks a soldier's stations of the cross:
go to war, glimpse the darkness in your soul, try to find your way home.
Haunted by survivor guilt, he will learn that even those who lived are lost.
After war the homes we try to come home to are no more.

Agent Orange
Continued from page 1

of clean-up in areas of Vietnam where high levels of the herbicide's highly toxic contaminant, dioxin, persist in the environment.

The directness of Mr. Dung's remarks prompted one veteran to ask a staff member of the delegations' host organization, Vietnam Agent Orange Victims Association (VAVA), whether such explicit public language on Mr. Dung's part represented a shift in policy in Vietnam's position on demanding what might be seen as reparations for the staggering and persistent destructiveness caused by the U.S. invasion and decade-long occupation of southern

simply that, in the past, every time the Vietnamese sat down with their U.S. counterparts to map out postwar relations, the Americans let it be known that, if Vietnam put Agent Orange on the table, the session would be terminated. Given that Vietnam's short term needs in the years immediately following reunification in 1975 were most urgently to reform the country's dysfunctional command economy - especially after the collapse of the USSR and the Eastern Block - and to convince the U.S. to dismantle its crippling



VFP delegates meet Prime Minister Dung in Hanoi."

Vietnam? And why only now, forty years after the final spraying mission was flown in January 1971, was Vietnam making such an insistent push to resolve the agent orange aftermath?

The response to the latter question was unanticipated, but, ultimately, not surprising. The VAVA staff member, a former colonel in the North Vietnamese army, noted



IVAW Board Chair Geoff Millard at Friendship Village, Hanoi.

economic embargo, moral restitution linked to what our host characterized as "the most horrific war of the twentieth century" had to take a rear seat to the issues surrounding immediate survival.

As to the suggestion implying that a "policy shift" would put long repressed "moral outrage"

back into the center of historical judgement on the Vietnam War, our host revealed how vividly the memory of the U.S. establishment's perfidious disregard for fair play remains in the mind of at least one old revolution-

ary. The former colonel's response was measured, devoid of obvious emotion, typical, perhaps, of someone schooled in a political culture where taking the long view should never be confused with abandoning the objective. Dung's words, he said, did not represent a policy shift, but were "a matter of emphasis" defined by context, presumably the presence of former soldiers of the enemy's armed forces converted to reliable allies, and fully in agreement with the Prime Minister's message. "In a diplomatic setting," the colonel added, "we



Agent Orange Children at Thien Phuoc Catholic Charity, Near Cu Chi.

would be more polite."

And then came the colonel's stunning explanation that Dung's words traced a continuity in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's policy toward U.S. dating from the Paris Peace Accords of January 1973. At the time, Richard Nixon, in a secret letter to then Premier Pham Van Dong,



Children at My Lai Grammar School.

promised Vietnam \$3.3 billion "to contribute to healing the wounds of war and to postwar reconstruction of the DRV." Even since, in one form or another, Vietnam has never ceased to demand that the U.S. live up to that unfulfilled promise, and to acknowledge its responsibility for the war. A generous resolution of the Agent Orange issue would go a long way toward marking "paid" to that outstanding debt.

The six members of the VFP/VAORRC Agent Orange delegation, were Paul Cox, who also represented VVAW and Swords to Ploughshares, Susan Schnall, Ken Mayers, Mike Ferner, Michael Uhl, and Geoff Millard, Board Chair of IVAW.



The Other Business Meeting at the Convention

By John Grant

I'm not quite sure whether to call it the convention salon, in the sense of a gathering of people for intellectual discussion, or the convention saloon, given that some VFP members always dedicate themselves to making sure the salon/saloon is stocked with beer and ice.

I must confess, for me, it is one of the most enjoyable aspects of a VFP convention. I get to hang out with old friends who sometimes feel more like a surrogate family of peace-loving recalcitrants and contrarians. Like any family reunion, there's an over-arching sense of belonging to something much greater than yourself at the same time there's that pain-in-the-ass cousin and crazy uncle Fred.

Of course, I'm only kidding. We know everyone in Veterans For Peace is respectful, fair, well-mannered and of sterling character.

One of the high points (no pun intended) in the history of this informal salon was the time at the San Francisco convention when presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich and his lovely wife dropped by in a hotel hospitality suite.

I can't say who was involved – I refuse to name names! – but when Kucinich stepped into the room and extended his hand to the nearest salon attendees, he was overcome with a cloud of Humboldt County's finest.

Needless to say the presidential candidate made a quick but graceful retreat. As he fled you could imagine him envious of Janice Joplin. "Freedom's just another word for nothin' left to lose."

Then there was the time at a 1980s convention in Lancaster, PA, when the salon was held in an anonymous member's room. Somehow, in an act of physics equally as amazing as Senator Arlen Specter's single bullet theory, a beer bottle jumped off a table and flew out the fourth floor window to land with an explosive crash on the pavement below.

Local constables converged on the lobby and things looked tense. Until then-President Charlie Bonner, a well-connected resident of Lancaster, had the cops eating out of his hand. I think they saluted as they left.

The Dallas convention was held in a small college, and the salon that year convened outdoors in the middle of a soccer field. It was here that President Dave Cline and others worked out the "platoon" that would accompany Cindy Sheehan the following day to W's scrubby little ranch in Crawford.

This was Texas, famous for drive-in beer stores, so the salon was well stocked and went into the wee hours of the morning, at which point several of us crashed on folded-up mattresses in an empty dorm building nearby.

The next morning, all salonistas were up and at 'em. The Crawford platoon gathered its gear and hit the road. So many members wanted to go to Crawford that it was thanks to Dave Cline's leadership skills the night before that there was a quorum for the Saturday business meeting.

The salon is never scheduled or listed in any official convention materials. The spirit of the get-together is totally inspirational and dependent on member initiative. One certainty: There are no Resolutions read and voted on during these salons. And there are no records kept.

Everything is forgotten in the morning.



Convention Plenary Sessions and Workshops

Friday, August 27th

Plenary # 1

10:30-12:00 - **Strengthening Our Movement: Linking War and the Economic Crisis**, featuring Jo Comerford from the National Priorities Project and Jose Vasquez from IVAW. Other panelists to be announced.

Plenary # 2

3:00-4:30 - **Will feature David Cobb, former Green Party Presidential Candidate** and Co-Chair of the "Move to Amend" campaign focusing on the recent Supreme Court decision to legitimize the "personhood" of corporations. Other panelists to be announced.

Update on Workshops

(Check the VFP convention website for the final list:
www.vfpconvention.org)

Fifty proposals have been submitted for workshops this year. The workshop committee is designing a format to accommodate as many as possible under five themes:

- ***Impact of US Imperialism**
- ***Social Activism and Community Organizing**
- ***Chapter Development**
- ***Inequality & Justice at Home**
- ***Healing the Soldiers and Their Families**

The quality of the proposed workshops is outstanding and the credentials of workshop presenters impressive. Activists, authors, artists, academics, and those sporting a combination of these credentials will offer up forums ranging from the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to the wars in Palestine and Colombia; from organizing in your hometown to organizing on a regional and national basis; from alternative healing practices to suicide prevention strategies; from those past wars that still linger with us — from Korea to Vietnam; from racism to sexism to homophobia within the military and within our larger communities; from practical strategies to educate within our schools to strategies to educate our legislators; and much more. A Women's Caucus is planned as well as a Speakers' Bureau Session

CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

VFP National Convention 25th Year Anniversary Celebration!

Please type or print the information requested below. When filling out the registration form, please enter all information as you would like it printed on your nametag.

First Name Last Name

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The VFP National Convention is ADA accessible. If you require special accommodations, please check below and complete the information needed. We will call you to discuss any specific needs.

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This year we will include a list of convention attendees (Name, phone, email, location) in each registration packet. If you would like, you can opt out of being on this list.
 Please DO NOT share my contact information.

REGISTRATION OPTIONS

Full Convention Registration includes both Convention Banquet and Lobster Bake, please indicate your meal choices.

Convention Registration (before July 15, 2010): \$200 _____
Convention Registration (between July 15 & August 1, 2010): \$225 _____
Convention Registration (after August 1, 2010): \$250 _____

One Day / Two Day Convention Registration: \$75 / \$150 _____
 Lobster Bake Only: \$45 _____
 Convention Banquet Only: \$40 _____

I cannot attend, but would like to donate to Veterans For Peace
I would like to add a Convention T-Shirt to my registration cost: \$15 _____
*T-shirts are being sold at discounted rates prior to the convention.
They can be picked up at registration. Design will have logo above.*



Banquet Meal Options:
 Beef Seafood
 Veggie Chicken

Lobster Bake Options:
 Lobster Steak
 Chicken
 Pasta w/ Veggies

Size: S M L XL XXL

TOTAL: _____

We realize that the cost of accommodations at the convention hotel, the Holiday Inn By the Bay, are steep. If you need financial assistance, please check one of the options below:

- I am looking for a roommate to share accommodation costs at the Holiday Inn.
- I/We can't afford a room at the Holiday Inn. Send me information about alternative housing.
- If a room subsidy becomes available add my/our name(s) to the list.

VFP NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2010



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