By Mike Ferner


We open our 24th annual convention against a backdrop of a crippled economy, sweeping foreclosures, widespread unemployment, millions without medical benefits, wars that now exceed a trillion dollars and have killed over a million people.

It’s a fair question to ask that, with a name like Veterans For Peace, should we be concerned with issues that go so far beyond opposing war? I believe the answer is “yes,” because war and our economic calamities are not only connected, one is the dominant cause of all the others, and VFP is well positioned to make this argument.

The same year “Cool Hand Luke,” played in theaters, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke at Riverside Church in New York, giving what many believe was his greatest speech, “Beyond Vietnam.” In it, he called the United States “the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today.”

“Time” magazine called King’s speech “demagogic slander that sounded like a script for Radio Hanoi.”

But every word in King’s speech was true – and timeless. Here are a couple gems.

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But every word in King’s speech was true – and timeless. Here are a couple gems.

...what we are submitting our troops to is not simply the brutalizing process that goes on in any war...We are adding...
The Agent Orange Act of 1991 requires the Veterans Administration to address the uncertainty about the long-term health effects on Vietnam veterans exposed to herbicides, commonly referred to as Agent Orange (AO). Every two years since 1994, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) has issued a Veterans and Agent Orange Update report analyzing the scientific studies from “the widest possible range of knowledgeable sources,” and make recommendations to the VA. The studies are conducted independent of the VA by a panel of academic experts on the several aspects of herbicide exposure.

The most recent report, titled Update 2008, released in July, is detailed and thorough at 569 pages. The current committee screened 7,000 studies, reviewed 850, and cited around 300 in the Update. Only four of the studies focused on Vietnam veterans, including the well-known Ranch Hand Study. Studies of occupational exposures of workers, environmental studies, and toxicological studies were also used.

By Paul Cox

The Update carefully explains that current science cannot determine causality—that is, it cannot prove that exposure to, say, dioxin or Agent White or picloram, has caused a particular disease in a particular veteran. Therefore, the committee looks for elevated rates of certain diseases among exposed populations. They rate the strength of the evidence and drop studied diseases into one of four “association” categories: Sufficient Evidence of an Association; Limited or Suggestive Evidence of an Association; Inadequate or Insufficient Evidence of an Association; and Limited or Suggestive Evidence of No Association. Over the years, several diseases have been placed into IOM’s first two categories and—with the exception of hypertension—all are now considered by the VA to be presumptively linked to a veteran’s exposure to AO.

IOM Recommendations

This Update made numerous significant recommendations. It moved both Parkinson’s disease and ischemic heart disease into the Limited-or-Suggestive-Evidence-of-an-Association category which qualifies them for consideration by the VA for compensation for presumed AO exposures.

It also made a strong argument in support of extending AO benefits to Blue Water Navy vets that the VA has summarily excluded from its definition as Vietnam veterans. Recent studies reviewed by the committee show that the sea-water distillation process used to get drinking water for use on Navy ships actually transmits and concentrates dioxin in the drinking water.

Agent Orange continued on page 11
In this new political period of the Obama Administration and expansion of war in Afghanistan with less emphasis on Iraq, Veterans For Peace continues to be a leading voice in resisting war and working for peace.

We had a wonderful and exciting time during our annual convention in College Park Maryland. Moving From Hope to Action was the perfect theme as we wrestled with what to do next. Members participated from across the country. Many arrived a little worn out and tired from years of struggle. Who would have guessed eight years ago that we would still be at it, resisting two wars and looking at an expansion of a third? After a weekend of sharing, planning and simply enjoying each other’s company, everyone left with a clear sense of purpose, rejuvenated for the next round of work to end these occupations and wars.

With our nation in the midst of a historic economic crisis and tumultuous political division, our government continues to execute a global war with two major fronts and a possible expansion of a third. The depravity of U.S. foreign policy, its negative impact on domestic policies and its devaluation of each of us as individual people continues to grow. Veterans For Peace will remain in the forefront of resistance to these wars and occupations. We will not rest nor stand aside until they have come to an end.

To address the current crisis we are concentrating our efforts in four areas;

- Vigils, Memorials, forums, actions and other activities: Keeping the wars visible at home.
- Bring the Troops Home Now: Helping to shape the national debate and calling for an end to U.S. wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- Truth in Recruiting: Offering truth in recruiting/counter-recruitment information to young people and their parents, especially in school settings.
- Ban Torture: Ensuring the end of torture now and preventing its future use by demanding accountability for those responsible.

To move this work forward your financial support and volunteerism is the determinant factor. Organizations across the country have experienced a downturn in fundraising revenue. For some the dip has caused staff cuts and reductions in program work. Fortunately for Veterans For Peace, the bulk of our funding is from members like you. We do not have to rely on foundations and investments. But a portion of our funding is from outside of our membership and there has been a dip in our revenue stream. VFP remains on solid financial ground; however we do need your generous support to keep up the pressure to end the occupations and to continue to do the long term work of abolishing war.

We also need your help in retaining our members. Our work is long term and hard. People burnout and become disillusioned with the perceived lack of progress. War has plagued humanity perhaps since the beginning. We have taken on an audacious and near impossible task. It is important to call on your fellow veterans and associate members to have potluck gatherings and other forms of entertainment and relaxation. We must continue to do our work, changing minds one at a time until there is a critical mass of people who believe a different world is possible. But to keep up the struggle we have to take care of each other.

Lastly I would like to thank you for joining Veterans For Peace. To our Associate members I give special thanks for your invaluable support. Veterans cannot end war alone. We need you there with us to help strengthen our cause. Without your work across the country many chapters would collapse. I cannot say enough to fully express my gratitude.

To the veteran members I thank you for heeding the call to serve your country once again, but this time in the secure knowledge that this duty is also in service of all humanity. I know at times it is tough. I know that we have PTSD and other ills that we must overcome. I know that many of us carry anger and cynicism that at times can be debilitating. But I also know that we have a fire burning inside of us that will not go away. Something will not allow us to sit and let this madness go on. Thank you for your perseverance and dedication. You have not let the whispers tell us we are ineffective and wasting our time stop you. That is what the powers that be want us to believe. They do not want the message of Smedley Butler, S Brian Willson, Charles Liteky and David Cline to be told. They fear the message will be spread and heard. They exalt the day it is silenced. I do not plan to give them reason to celebrate, unless they are celebrating my death. And when that day comes I will rest knowing that either war has been ended or my sisters and brothers in VFP continue the struggle.

Veterans For Peace, waging peace since 1985 until there is war no more.

Power to the peaceful.

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Executive Director’s Report
Waging Peace Until There Is War No More

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Photo by John Grant

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By John Grant

The US State Department was miffed by President Manuel Zelaya’s secret return to Tegucigalpa because the behemoth to the north likes to be in control of developing facts on the ground in a “backwater” like Honduras.

Nothing underlines this backwater status better than the treatment Honduras has received this summer from the Obama administration. The only counter to this kind of selective inaction is for American citizens, especially VFP members, to stand up for participatory democracy in Honduras and to speak out.

“Sending mixed messages appears to be the official US policy on Honduras these days,” writes Laura Carlsen, director of the Americas Program in the Center For International Policy.

The Obama administration has rhetorically condemned the coup, cut some aid and cancelled some visas, all of which is good. But beyond that they have stringently avoided anything that would seriously hurt those behind the coup. The low point was the statement President Obama made in Mexico in August.

“The same critics who say that the United States has not intervened enough in Honduras are the same people who say that we’re always intervening and the Yankees need to get out of Latin America. You can’t have it both ways.”

I’ve been a critic against US intervention in Honduras ever since I was deported from there in June 1984 with five others for speaking with Honduran labor leaders about murders and disappearances. John Negroponte was US ambassador at the time and was running the Contra War against Nicaragua in cahoots with General Gustavo Alvarez Martinez, a ruthless thug who built Honduran death squads on an Argentine dirty war model. During Negroponte’s four-year stint, US military aid to Honduras went from $4 million to $77.4 million a year.

Current military leaders in Honduras are said to pine for those golden days.

This is the kind of intervention critics complain about. No critic wants to send in the 82nd Airborne or CIA covert teams; we want the government of the United States to stop giving aid and comfort to the same oligarchy that has historically oppressed poor people in Honduras. In this sense, the President’s remark was either historically ignorant or politically mendacious.

The ultimate insult is that this sudden delicate sensitivity toward intervention is coming from a guy who wants to escalate an existing intervention in Afghanistan into an unprecedented, full-blown counter-insurgency war to install democracy and totally make the place over.

“We’re asking for the US to freeze personal assets and restrict more visas; to use the US’s veto to quash the IMF’s recent grant of $168 million in aid; to investigate our own State and Defense Departments and intelligence agencies for possible involvement and good-old-boy linkages with coup plotters. The list of tough options is long.

A grassroots National Front is growing in Honduras. And, as in the past, it is being organized in opposition to the United States. The President’s stated reluctance to intervene in Honduras means nothing to ordinary Hondurans. Why should it? It was addressed to the political right, not to them.

Once again, we’re the bad guy in the eyes of the poor in Latin America. And whether or not it is true, a huge swath of Hondurans believe the CIA was involved in the coup and is overseeing the repressive aftermath.

“The workers are participating, and the middle class is also coming out,” said Gilbert Rios, an organizer with the National Popular Resistance Front that formed after the coup out of existing groups. “People communicate with each other, and there is much more flow of information. The oligarchy made the coup with an old manual.”

The resistance is devoted to non-violence, Rios says. But he is quick to add, “The armed forces are small (and) there is a high concentration of weapons in the hands of the people.”

In August, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the OAS sent a commission into Honduras that reported murders, disappearances, sexual violence and arbitrary detentions. Their report concluded:

“The Commission confirmed the existence of a pattern of disproportionate use of public force on the part of police and military forces, arbitrary detentions, and the control of information aimed at limiting political participation by a sector of the citizenry.”

Leticia Salomon is a sociologist and economist and Director of Scientific Research for the National Autonomous University of Honduras. She agrees that grass roots opposition to the coups arose quickly and, despite the repression, has grown ever since. She says the power of the two established parties – the National and Liberal Parties -- has been diminished by the coup, and a new social force has been created focused around the need for a new constitution to replace the 1982 version written under the Negroponte/Alvarez Martinez regime.

The key plotters of the coup were the business community and the military, Salomon says. Both feared the participatory democracy and expansion of rights Zelaya was pushing; business elements particularly feared Zelaya’s effort to raise the minimum wage.

“In the days and weeks before the coup, there were meetings between politicians, the military, the church and business leaders to decide what to do,” Salomon says. She is certain US Ambassador Hugo Llorens participated in some of these meetings. “The US knew, just like the business leaders and the politicians did.”

Born in Cuba, Llorens was appointed ambassador by George Bush in September 2008. Just before the June 28 Honduran coup, in reference to Zelaya’s plan to poll the Honduran people whether they wanted the 1982 constitution re-written, Llorens said: “One can’t violate the Constitution in order to create another Constitution, because if one doesn’t respect the Constitution, then we all live under the law of the jungle.”

Llorens may not be aware of Article 3 of the 1982 constitution. It says:

“No one owes obedience to a government that has usurped power or to those who assume functions or public posts by the force of arms. ... The people have the...
Chapter 1, Portland, ME

Chapter 1 continues as one of the major organizations in anti-war activities throughout Maine.

Over the course of the summer months members protested the launching of another Aegis warship at Bath Ironworks. The chapter leads activists in the state in the campaign calling for conversion from the manufacture of the instruments of war to industrial products related to “soft energy” paths—mass transit, solar panels, and wind generators.

In August, Bruce Gagnon, Coordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, was honored as the featured speaker at the International Symposium for Peace in Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well as at other events commemorating the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. During the nearly month-long tour he spoke 15 times in Japan and Korea for their long-time service—Jack Bussell, Sturtevant.

Veterans For Peace- Republic of Korea accept the banner Bruce Gagnon (far left) delivered on behalf of Maine VFP member Tom Sturtevant.

We recently launched an initiative that will allow veterans who are in recovery from alcoholism or drug addiction to live in safe, affordable, sober housing. With $45,000 in grant money raised to date, a revolving loan fund has been created which will make interest free loans of up to $5,000 to groups of six or more veterans in recovery to allow them to rent a house that will become a sober home. The program, called Vets-Welcome Home, will utilize the Oxford House Sober housing model exclusively. For more information go to: www.vetswelcomehome.org

We will be hosting a fundraiser Sept. 27 in support of Under the Hood Cafe and GI resistance. Members have worked with Doug Zachary and have made arrangements to fly Victor Agosto to the event. Victor is an Afghanistan war resister who just spent 30 days in jail for refusing to deploy to Afghanistan. We are excited to meet Victor and help support GI resistance.

Mike Tork

Chapter 9, Eastern, MA

Since we missed the last two reports I would like to catch folks up on what we have been up to.

The Smedley Butler Brigade hosted a fundraiser for Cindy Sheehan on June 29, in the Boston area. The fundraiser drew about 250 people and we considered it to be a success. Cindy was very pleased with the turnout and as always, gave a great talk. She stayed to sign her book and at at times there were 30 or more people in line to talk to her. Cindy spent the night at one of our member’s houses and we drove her to Maine the next day, where she planned to meet with the Maine VFP folks.

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Mike Tork

Chapter 10, Albany, NY

Over the past few months Chapter 10 sponsored the 11th annual Kateri Tekakwitha Peace Conference, www.kateripeaceconference.org, which featured speakers on racism, the Middle East, and non-violent social change along with workshops on closing the SOA, the play 7 Jewish Children, Single Payer Health Care and St. Francis of Assisi. Members also participated in the Hiroshima Day Event at the Grafton Peace Pagoda. John Amidon produced the DVD, No Running Water - Close the SOA/WHINSEC which has been featured on the VFP National web site (thank you) and now has over 1100 views. Our chapter is presently preparing 500 crosses to ship to the SOAW at Columbus, GA for this Novembers vigil. Ask your Rep. to cosponsor H.R. 2567 to close the SOA! We have several members attend the VFP National Convention in Maryland which was a rewarding experience. We continue to vigil locally. This October we will hold our first VFP Awards dinner. The Thomas Paine Winter Soldier Peace and Justice Award will be given to Ed Bloch, Trudy Quaif and Steve Wickham to recognize and honor their tireless and nonviolent work on behalf of peace and justice in our community.

John Amidon

Chapter 14, Gainesville, FL

Chapter 14 continues to monitor progress on having our Enlistment Guide available in the public schools, following up to ensure that every ROTC student gets a copy, that the guide is available on the library website and that every site with literature from military recruiters also has VFP literature available in order for students to have the full range of information required to make a good decision on whether they should join the military.

Weekly anti-war pickets have been focused on the theme of Healthcare not Warfare for the end of August and the beginning of July. VFP was joined by the local labor party, Sierra Club and members of the Gainesville Unitarian Fellowship for these demonstrations.

In August VFP sponsored several short plays including Theater of War, a series of readings from ancient Greek plays exploring the mental wounds of war, and Seven Jewish children chronicling events in Gaza. Both productions were followed by panel discussions that included Chapter coordinator Scott Camil.

Florida Veterans for Common Sense, based in Sarasota, and Chapter 14 have held exchanges with two of their members.
visiting our monthly meeting in August and Scott and IVAW member Anthony attending their meeting in September.

Chapter 14 is monitoring developments in South Florida Everglades of a War Games Training Center proposed for Highlands County. This facility, which would have a live bullets training area and a 6000 foot runway presents environmental and social justice challenges. See details on our blog at School of Americas Comes to Florida.

On a lighter note two chapter members had an opportunity to table at a Crosby Stills and Nash concert in August. Stephen Hunter and Bill Warrick represented the Gainesville, FL chapter of Veterans For Peace. We were joined by two members from the Central Florida chapter.

Graham Nash’s son, Will, came to see us and received the gifts for his dad and the rest of the band. Entire account and photo is on our blog.

Mary L Bahr

Chapter 21, Northern New Jersey

Never been to a convention before. Heard about ‘em often enough; formed a few opinions: a large gathering of people from around the country (or state or world), a lotta speeches and meetings, funny hats and boisterous behavior, good opportunity to meet, drink, push agendas, settle scores, pick up bumperstickers, act like a fool . . . I was filled with prejudices and misconceptions.

But I’d been scorched by the emotional intensity of the Winter Soldier Hearings, March 13-16, 2008. As Security volunteer, I found myself part of the biggest and truest thing happening in America those four days. My particular job was small and anonymous, but I walked with heroes those days. My life was changed in ways marches and vigils, signs and slogans could not match.

So I went to the Convention looking for those heroes.

And in the hallways and meeting rooms, the food court and lit room, I found them . . . guys like Paul Brailsford, Englishman, Massachusetts VFP, activist and poet, who went to sea in 1932 at age 16, stood the lonely watches as a deck officer in the Pacific during World War II and at age 93 remains a stalwart voice for peace and justice . . . and Suel Jones, the Marine rifleman from Texas and the Vietnam War, who now divides his time between Alaska and Vietnam, went from oilfield machinist to gifted memorist and friend to the Vietnamese people . . . and the service brats: Deborah Forster, Navy, M.F.S.O.’s new leader and Donna Edwards, Air Force, Maryland’s new Congresswoman. Dragged around the world as service kids are, these eloquent women learned at an early age to love the warrior and hate the war . . . and everywhere I turned, there was Carlos - just like at Winter Soldier - a curly-haired Saint Everyman, tirelessly holding heaven and earth together, his presence our whole meaning, his tragedy our fight . . . The names and faces go on and on, anchored by a corps of Vietnam veterans and their good spouses, enriched by those of other eras and re-affirmed by the strong, young faces of the men and women of the Afghan and Iraq Wars.

We had many members at the convention. Bravo! Next year in Maine!

Walt Nygard

Chapter 26, Chicago Area, IL

On Memorial Day weekend, Chicago-Area Chapter 26 members marched in the Chicago Parade with the Combined Veterans’ Organization (May 23rd) and participated in the combined VFP/IVAW/VIV Memorial Day Ceremony (May 25th).

In June, VFP and IVAW members tabled at the CSN Concert (4th), staffed the Chicago Homeless Veterans’ Stand-down (11th-13th), attended the Chicago Peace Fest (19th-20th) and Chapter President Ray Parrish took part in “Light the Darkness,” a suicide prevention walk (27th-28th).

We marched in the Oak Park July 4th Parade and on July 17th-19th Ray Parrish, a military counselor, spoke at the National Counter-Recruiting Conference at Roosevelt University.

We sent five Chapter members to the VFP and IVAW Conventions in College Park, MD. on August 5th-9th.

For future actions, Chapter 26 Treasurer Bob Gronko donated home-brewed beer for the “Beer, not Bombs” fundraiser on September 19th. We will attend a Chicago demonstration against the Afghanistan war on October 3rd, hold a combined Veterans’ Day Dinner/Chapter meeting on November 7th and take part in the annual combined VFP/IVAW/VIV Veterans’ Day Ceremony.

Mike Woloshin

Chapter 27, Minneapolis, MN

Steve McKeown has collected most of the nearly 8,000 signatures from 314 cities and towns in Minnesota which Chapter 27 will present to our U.S. senators, asking them to invite President Obama and leaders of all nations which have nuclear weapons to join Obama at the Pipestone National Monument to implement nuclear disarmament. Pipestone is still quarried there for making Peace Pipes and it is one of the most important Native American sites in the world. The goal is to meet there between October 18-29, 2009, the anniversary of the Cuban missile crisis.

Our Chapter is also going to ring bells on the state capitol grounds on Armistice Day, November 11, to replicate what was done on November 11, 1918, ringing 11 times, on the 11th hour, of the 11th day of the 11th month at the end of World War I, the “war to end all wars”. We do this at funeral services for our members, rather than the rifle salute. We encourage other Chapters to follow suit.

Chapter President Larry Johnson and John Sherman with other chapter members attended a meeting of over 150 Minneapolis secondary School Social Studies teachers to offer our Speakers Bureau services for their classes. Over 20 teachers signed up. Thanks to Larry and John’s efforts, we are now “Community Partners” with Minneapolis Public Schools and have equal rights to our schools as do military recruiters.

Jim Steinhagen and Bob Heberle

Chapter 31, Philadelphia, PA

The Philly chapter has been working with other local peace organizations on the issues of Afghanistan, the Honduran coup and military recruitment. Chapter 31’s goal is to become visible as a regional veterans voice countering a profligate, runaway militarist machine. Members have kept themselves informed, written letters to the editor and to congress and published newspaper op-eds. Due to good labor connections, CH31 again marched as the only non-labor entity in the Philadelphia Labor Day Parade. The chapter worked with activists from up and down the east coast on a September 12 march to close the Army Experience Center at a working class city mall; CH31 led the march and did some post-march publicity. Members joined labor activists in a September demonstration for health care reform. Our annual dinner in October was a good vehicle to bring mem-
bers and friends of CH31 together. A CH31 member has joined with a Philadelphia labor leader he recently accompanied to El Salvador in a series of speaking gigs on the post-Honduran coup Left in Latin America. CH31 is co-sponsoring a discussion and showing of Robert Greenwald’s “Rethink Afghanistan” documentary. Members were in Washington October 5th for the march and CD at the White House.

John Grant

Chapter 34, New York City

Chapter 34 has over 100 members and conducts monthly meetings in NYC. Members participate in numerous events throughout the NYC area, including the Vietnamese Victims of Agent Orange tour, Arlington East, and JROTC defunding actions. 26 chapter members attended the annual VFP Convention in College Park, MD. For many it was their first convention, and a great experience; looking forward to the 2010 Convention in Portland, ME.

Recent chapter actions include:

- A public education event called “War & the Economy”, where speakers addressed the effect of spending for the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan on our recession economy.
- Annual Memorial Day observance,
- VFP contingent in the NYC Heritage of Pride parade on June 28,
- Tabling and literature distribution at the Veterans Conference on 125 St in NYC
- Chapter 34 members participate in five ongoing weekly peace vigils at various locations, and a monthly event in front of Grand Central Station. We distribute flyers outlining peaceful alternatives to war in Afghanistan, encouraging folks to contact their elected representatives.

We are currently planning a screening of Rethink Afghanistan on September 25th at a local church, participation in Rape Awareness Week, and an antiwar veterans contingent in the annual NYC Veterans Day Parade up 5th Avenue on Nov. 11.

Bob Keilbach

Chapter 54, Santa Barbara, CA

Chapter 54’s original Arlington West continues albeit now once a month on the first Sunday and has been expanded to include the cost of the war in Afghanistan. Additionally, the chapter sets up its Iraq Moratorium on the third Friday of the month at Santa Barbara City College. This project, initiated by Dr. Gilbert Robledo, features hundreds of tombstones on the college’s lawn and the students are asked to place a nametag with photo of one of the hundreds of teenagers killed in action in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan on the tombstones. Students are assisted in preventing the military recruiters from getting their contact information and petitions to ban depleted uranium, and get the USA out of Iraq are signed at this monthly event. The weekly Inconvenient Booth features the connections between war and our consumerism. Dr. Robledo is formerly head of counseling at SBCC, now retired and a member of Chapter 54.

We are currently updating our website www.vfpsb.org and invite you to follow the progress and have an active membership recruitment and renewal effort. Recently we have learned that the wars are costing the city of Santa Barbara millions of dollars in salary supplement, overtime and pensions due to the activation and federalization of city employees who are members of the California National Guard or the reserves. We are contemplating an effort named “Cost of War Comes to Town...our town” that will press the city to seek compensation from the DOD for this cost.

Lane Anderson

Chapter 55, Santa Fe, NM

Our VFP Chapter hosted a two-night Torture Awareness program. We showed the film Taxi To The Dark Side the first evening and then hosted an inter-denominational service to commemorate victims of torture; acknowledging both victims and perpetrators—victims themselves. VFP member Charlie Clemens was our keynote speaker. We conducted a Doing Democracy training that was well-attended. During the Labor Day holiday we set up an information table at the Railyard Park and had a good number of people stop and talk as well as a handful who got on our local email information list and a couple of veterans who took VFP applications and committed to joining. Two members of our chapter marched with Lisa Law’s Peace Bus in the Santa Fe Fiesta’s Historical/Hysterical Parade and were given the honor of leading the float and a contingency of African Dancers. Our entry was well-received by spectators. Peace.

Daniel Craig

Chapter 63, Albuquerque, NM

With the help of the local ACLU we now have access to the Veterans Memorial Park, where we tabled at the event on Memorial Day, to favorable response. We are also tabling at numerous other public events.

We had our float and marchers in the State Fair Parade September 12. We were joined by Santa Fe and local IVAW members. We were well received by the onlookers.
property.

with permission of the owner, on private

arrested recently for sleeping overnight,
two homeless men who were among those

ground on which to sleep at night. Many

local homeless people are looking for safe
cities and how to afford needed services,
issues involving ordinances against tent
lation. While Sacramento struggles with

veterans to a local attorney who is working
information about increases in homeless
president, Daniel Costa, recently provided
do this at least monthly. Our chapter vice-
help in this way and we plan to arrange to
homeless community center. It felt good to
of September 11 serving lunch at a local
McGovern. What a weekend that will be!

Elliot Adams, David Swanson, and Ray

The five are Anne Wright, Cindy Sheehan,
age with Taos, Santa Fe, and Albuquerque.
Pentagon, five dynamos for peace and jus
Pentagon of Peace will be occurring. The
second weekend in October, when the
Chapter 91, San Diego

Although spring and summer of '09
seemed to have flashed past, San Diego’s
Chapter 91 managed to accomplish a bit.

Our Memorial Day Arlington West dis-
play on the beach in Oceanside, CA was well
attended by both locals and active duty ma-
rines stationed at nearby Camp Pendleton.
The following weekend SDVFP hosted
Southern California’s first Regional VFP-
Conference. The success of this Oceanside
gathering can be attributed to the diverse
and informative workshops and the dedi-
cated SoCal VFP members who attended.

Additionally, teams of SDVFP
constituents led by Jack Doxie,
made seven visits to four of San
Diego County’s Congressional of-
ci ces. The district offices of Repre-
sentatives Filner, Hunter, and Davis were called upon. A visit with Congressman Darrell Issa is pending.

August found Dave Wiley and
Jan Ruhman, Chapter 91’s president
and vice president, in Maryland to
present workshops at VFP’s 24th
National Convention. Immigration
lawyer Heather Boxeth, Marine
veteran Luis Alvarez (a possible
deportee), and his sister Angelica
Madrigal, who formed the panel for
Ruhman’s workshop on “Banished
Veterans”; accompanied them. Dave
Wiley led a workshop on non-
vio lence and teamed with Sharon
Kufeldt for another titled, “Hearts
and Minds”.

And so it goes...

Deb Schneider

Chapter 99, Western, NC

The HUD-VASH (Housing and Urban
Development and Veterans Affairs Support-
ive Housing) program helps homeless vets
find and maintain housing.

That’s great—but a roof, floor, and
walls aren’t quite enough. With Mary and
Ken Ashe coordinating our efforts, WNC
Chapter 99 members collected truckloads
of dishes, towels, and other goods and fur-
nishings to help the vets get started. Three
of the program’s beneficiaries spoke at a
program during which we presented our
gifts. Our feelings on that day were well
expressed by chapter member Ed Sacco:

“Tears welled up in my eyes as I listened
to the former homeless veterans tell their
stories. It was the joy they expressed—not
the troubled years of struggling outside of
mainstream society, but the powerful emo-
tions of gratitude. They were touched and
energized by people who cared.

“My part was simple: I merely loaded up
a few laundry baskets of various goods and
drove them to a storage place. I, myself,
was touched and energized by the other
volunteers. Even though I felt as a ‘strang-
er,’ I also felt that I was part of a commu-
ity doing our small thing to heal in a world
too often broken by violence and fear.”

Kim Carlyle

Chapter 102, Milwaukee, WI

A Homeless Veterans Initiative, to find
and assist veterans living on the streets in
the Milwaukee area, has been a major chap-
ter priority for the past year.

VFP volunteers go to shelters, meal
programs, homeless encampments and onto
the streets to locate homeless veterans. We
offer them help in obtaining food, shelter,
clothing, transportation and medical care;
standing opportunities to engage the public in Eugene, Oregon. Both events offered out-

ting the International Day of Peace, a UN-sanctioned holiday. We obtained the endorsement of the Corvallis City Council and sponsorship of numerous church, civic and business partners. The Fair was created to raise awareness about the International Day of Peace, build community, create a positive and welcoming event for foreign-born residents, and build on relationships with Corvallis’ sister cities in Ukraine and Ethiopia.

It featured music, dance, arts & crafts and games and offered many children’s activities.

Bob Stebbins

Chapter 134, Tacoma, WA

Our biggest event every year is Arlington NW - borrowed from the Seattle chapter (many thanks!!). It was displayed along our waterfront on Puget Sound on Labor Day weekend 2005 - the fall before our chapter was formed. We have continued the tradition each year - this will be our fifth year. This year and last year we will have the display up for two days. (The newspaper will never print a picture in advance - thus the photographer will come out Saturday and it will be in the paper Sunday - so we get a little publicity). We do produce flyers and business card notes that we put on the windshields of cars of military and retirees (just look for the base access stickers on the windshield). We have had good cooperation from the park board to use the park. The fee has been $300, with a damage deposit. However when they also asked for $1 million in liability insurance last year we found out that National’s insurance no longer covers chapter activities, so we have to pay another $300 for event insurance. This year my VP, Ray Nacanaynay and I appeared before the regular park board meeting to plead our case. They waived not only the fee, but the insurance requirement as well. We made the case that we are putting on the display as a public service. So I would encourage other chapters to do this (after you have a good history).

Dave Dittemore

Chapter 136, Central Florida

Considering the same rules of law applied by VFP National in its 2004 call for the impeachment of President Bush, members of the Central Florida chapter voted on and approved a resolution to call for the impeachment of President Obama for the commission of war crimes under his command, authority and knowledge relating to the U.S. wars on and occupations of Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

We were both surprised and disappointed that VFP’s national leadership and members in attendance at the National Convention voted against our resolution to impeach President Obama for what are indisputably war crimes being committed under his command and authority. As VFP remains silent on the issue of impeachment, President Obama continues to expand and
escalate the wars and their atrocities while on our watch.

Chapter 136 will continue to put our commitment to defending the Constitution and to VFP’s Statement of Purpose before politics and political correctness. We encourage our fellow Veterans For Peace to do the same, especially in regards to this issue.

Our chapter has generic 4.25” x 11”, “War Crimes are War Crimes, PROSECUTE BUSH, IMPEACH OBAMA” bumper stickers available. Stickers can include local contact or other info. Email CentralFlaVFP@aol.com for details.

Phil Restino

Chapter 139, North Olympic Peninsula, WA

We’ve had a busy summer hosting Kit Siemion (a VFP Associate) of Code Pink. Kit brought us up to date on the situation in Gaza and efforts to bring in medical and other aid. We joined a Single Payer Healthcare Coalition in the Port Angeles, Washington 4th of July parade. Cindy Sheehan made two appearances sponsored by our chapter in Sequim and Port Townsend, Washington on her Pacific NW tour with excellent turnout and contributions to her effort. August is county fair month and Chapter 139 had booths at both Clallam County and Jefferson County Fairs featuring our focus on Iraq Water Projects, Military Sexual Trauma and Truth in Recruiting.

We voted to officially change our chapter name to the VFP Tony Van Renterghem Chapter in honor of Tony who passed away recently from age related causes. Tony was a Dutch resistance fighter with a Gestapo death sentence on his head. His memoirs will be published shortly and are certain to contain recollections of his Veterans For Peace activism in Arizona and Washington State.

David Jenkins

Chapter 151, Far West, TX

We struggle to find common ground in our remote rural community. The economic crisis triggered our organizing a Transition Town Initiative. Townspeople participated and Transition Alpine is expanding via a campaign for 1000 Edible Gardens and an informal Sunday brunch discussion group.

At our weekly Alpine demonstration, our banners read BRING OUR TROOPS HOME NOW and PROSECUTE WAR CRIMINALS, REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS. Our local newspaper published an Op-Ed piece by a chapter member, Joe Goldman, describing the meaning of this 2-year action.

In September of this year, we arranged for Dahr Jamail to speak locally about his new book, The Will To Resist. He was warmly received by a small but totally engaged audience.

Bob Fischer

VFP Chapter 136 - June 25, 2009 National Torture Accountability Action Day, Daytona Beach, Fl. Left to Right: Heidi Brehmer (VFP), Phil Restino (VFP/MFSO), Jim Virene (VFP Assoc).
VFP Women Talk

by Georgia Wever

A lively Women’s Caucus at the 2009 Convention came up with ideas and concerns enough for a caucus of many times its size.

Building VFP

Upon learning that nearing 1/3 of VFP members are non-veterans, participants volunteered to write an outreach flyer directed specifically to women veterans. There were a few proposals for chapters:

- Post and distribute the women’s flyer at battered women’s and homeless shelters, since many residents are veterans.
- Visit the women’s coordinator at the VA and try to get the flyer posted.
- Post the flyer in the women’s room at the VA, Social Security offices and welfare centers, and distribute it at entrances.
- Ask local peace and justice groups to ask on their membership forms, “Have you ever served in the military?” Collect the names periodically and invite them to chapter meetings.
- Make friends with the aide in your elected officials’ offices. They receive calls and letters from veterans requesting assistance and, with encouragement, may keep a list and forward names to local chapters.

Attention to anti-recruitment

The discussion reflected special concern about the recruitment of young women in the military. The group applauded the recruitment of young women congregate.

It was pointed out that military recruiters recognize that victims of incest may seek the military in an attempt to find safety from a violent home life. Anti-recruitment efforts must emphasize that the military is not a safe haven for women. Commanding officers do not know how to address charges of assaults against women; several participants related personal experiences of poorly handled issues regarding women or minorities.

The Miles Foundation was mentioned as an information clearinghouse for victims of sexual violence in the military, as was Servicewomen’s Action Network (SWAN). (The speakers for the Military Sexual Assault workshop at the convention provided good sources too; Pack Parachute Charity and MilitarySexualAssault.com.)

Building Visibility

Caucus participants will advertise the Women’s Listserv in the VFP newsletter and on flyers. They suggested improving the visibility of women in the newsletter by re-establishing a permanent women’s column (or column about women with both men and women contributors). Also, a periodic conference call would enable those without computers to participate in discussion.

There is hope for a film version of the book, The Woman Soldier. Two books were recommended: The Lonely Soldier by Helen Benedict (Beacon Press) and Bringing Vincent Home by Madeline Myisko (Plainviewpress.net).

Many would like a magnetic (removable) auto sticker or license plate holder that reads “Woman Veteran” with the VFP web address on it.

Statistics on women veterans in prisons may be useful. What organizations keep such information? How can veteran’s organizations use it to reach out to women vets in prison and upon release? Does VFP have prison chapters or homeless chapters? How do they work?

There was understanding of the situation of military wives who also “serve” by living overseas with husbands. One participant described her loneliness at leaving her family at 16 years of age to accompany her husband overseas. Because she “had two tours” she identifies with veteran’s issues. Is there a place for the voices of military wives to be heard in VFP? Their desire to have a vote in VFP must be balanced with the need to remain a primarily veteran’s organization.

Agent Orange

Continued from page 2

Since it was standard procedure for ships to move near the mouths of rivers to take on less-salty seawater for the distillation system, they conclude it is reasonable to assume that those ships could have taken on herbicide-contaminated runoff water.

The committee also complained about a lack of focused scientific information and repeated past recommendations for further prompt and comprehensive studies. Seven recommendations involve reopening, completing, or mining data from existing studies or databases such as the Ranch Hand Study (which was shut down in 2006) and National Vietnam Veterans Longitudinal Study (stopped in 2003). The Update also called, not for the first time, for collaborative studies of the Vietnamese population. To date, the US government has failed to successfully cooperate with the Vietnamese government on study protocols. The IOM also recommended studies to focus on the possibility of birth defects and developmental problems in children and grandchildren of exposed veterans.

Limitations of the IOM AO Updates

For all that these Updates have added to our understanding of AO, this and all previous IOM Updates have serious flaws. The committee does no independent study; their Updates are studies of studies, and only synthesize and summarize other research that happens to intersect with the IOM’s mandate from Congress, and attempt to relate it to Vietnam veterans’ health. Update after Update complains that “there has been
group, A Gathering Of Eagles, stood behind the glass panels smiling and mugging for protesters’ cameras.

It was quite a ruckus for about 20 minutes.

Earlier in the day, my wife Lou Ann and I wandered up to the entrance of the AEC to see what was going on. The active-duty commander of the center told us the center was closed for the day due to a 9/11 commemoration event with members of A Gathering Of Eagles. The Eagles all featured their usual denim jackets and motorcycle regalia with POW-MIA patches and other obligatory, right-wing identity symbols.

I asked the young captain if, as a veteran, I could join the commemoration event, since I also felt obliged to honor the sacrifices of that day, especially the brave civilians who took matters into their hands over Pennsylvania. “No!” I was told firmly.

For the record, in May the Philadelphia VFP chapter formally requested permission through veteran director Al Flood to set up a modest, respectful table for presenting alternative views to the youth entering the AEC. Flood assured us he would submit the request and get back to me. We have heard nothing.

A tall, bearded Eagle remained at the entrance, and we began to make cordial conversation with him. He was from North Carolina so we exchanged pleasantries on entering the AEC. Flood assured us that he would submit the request and get back to me. We have heard nothing.

After the march, the Eagles had camped out in the Mall for its experiment in high-tech youth entrapment. Might it have something to do with the working class demographics of the Northeast Philadelphia and the dismal economic climate for jobs and careers facing young kids graduating from high school? The rumor spread during the march that the Army had decided not to invest in centers like the AEC in malls across America. One can only hope, its Gathering Of Eagles support aside, that the Army sees the real deal is something much more insidious.

We can only speculate why the US Army picked the Franklin Mills Mall for its experiment in high-tech youth entrapment. Might it have something to do with the working class demographics of the Northeast Philadelphia and the dismal economic climate for jobs and careers facing young kids graduating from high school? The rumor spread during the march that the Army had decided not to invest in centers like the AEC in malls across America. One can only hope, its Gathering Of Eagles support aside, that the Army sees the real deal is something much more insidious.

In the end, the Philadelphia Police Civil Affairs Unit arrested seven demonstrators who refused to leave the mall after the rowdy period of loud questioning. Once everyone had been swept out of the Mall, its Red Entrance was protected by the phalanx of Philly cops. The AEC and the Mall were again safe. All the gravely serious questions the motley gathering of angry, tax-paying citizens still harbored had been deflected.

But if the foolish escalation of Afghanistan isn’t stopped, we can all be assured more kids recruited out of cynical places like the AEC will die there.
Vietnam: American Holocaust
A documentary film by Clay Claiborne
Narration by Martin Sheen
90 minutes

When Saigon fell on the last day of April 1975, the American defeat in Vietnam was punctuated by the immediate re-unification of that war-torn nation, North and South - the very objective the U.S. had fought ten years to prevent. For their victory the Vietnamese would be severely punished under economic embargo for the next decade. But what would really matter now for the U.S. political mainstream was how the Vietnam War was to be packaged historically for U.S. domestic consumption - public and educational - in the years ahead.

A consensus would be struck around the neutral formula that the Vietnam War was simply a well-intended mistake. Naturally, this interpretation was found wanting by the war’s die-hard apologists who, in the words of Ronald Reagan, claimed Vietnam as a “noble cause.” But the real point for managers of the National Security State was not to defend the war, but to forget it, and to repress the more authentic views of the broadly constituted, but minority progressive community that the U.S. invasion of Vietnam was a war of aggression and, subsequently, a crime against humanity.

If the public, especially emerging generations, were to retain the memory of Vietnam as an ignoble defeat, the illegal invasion, occupation and wanton devastation of a small, powerless and sovereign third world country, then the strategic pursuit of “endless war” to sustain U.S. global dominance would be severely undermined. Public amnesia on the realities of Vietnam was essential in convincing that same misguided populace to invade first Afghanistan and then Iraq as the appropriate response to terrorism. The predictable consequence: déjà vu all over again. Or as one bumper sticker recently spotted puts it, “Quagmire Accomplished.”

As keepers of the truth about Vietnam, antiwar progressives have labored persistently to demonstrate parallels between that fiasco in S. E. Asia and the militaristic adventures of the present, always linking them to the imperial aims they are designed to serve. This perspective has been steadily assembled over the years in an abundance of popular and scholarly writings, and, on occasion, in film, dramatic and documenta-

Vietnam continued on page 19
THE AMERICAN SOLDIER

Deep in a vale, a stranger now to arms,
Too poor to shine in courts, too proud to beg,
He, who once warred on Saratoga’s plains,
Sits musing o’er his scars, and wooden leg.

Remembering still the toil of former days,
To other hands he sees his earnings paid;—
They share the due reward—he feeds on praise,
Lost in the abyss of want, misfortune’s shade.

Far, far from domes where splendid tapers glare,
‘Tis his from dear bought peace no wealth to win,
Removed alike from courtly cringing ‘squires,
The great-man’s Levee, and the proud man’s grin.

Sold are those arms which once on Britons blazed,
When, flushed with conquest, to the charge they came;
That power repelled, and Freedom’s fabrick raised,
She leaves her soldier—famine and a name!

— Philip Freneau (1752-1832)

Freneau, a veteran of the Revolutionary War, became a vocal critic of the post-war treatment of former enlisted men by the US and state governments. George Washington called Freneau a "rascal," which Washington meant neither to be cute nor complimentary.

UNTITLED

Socrates and Porcius
two scrofulous
right hands of Consul Piso
synonymous with greed and plague
devouring our country. The great god Priapus,
erect, had served your pleasure:
look, a banquet spread at noon,
you feed and spawn,
drunken in the sunlight.
And, my friends, dear Fabullus
And my little Veranius, starve, forever walking
down city streets to find a meal,
gazing at banquets, wondering who
will take them in for dinner

— Catullus

I saw the masked men
throwing truth into a well.
When I began to weep for it
I found it everywhere.

Claudia Lars
BOOK REVIEWS
by Will Shapira

The Progressive: 100 Years: 1909-2009
130 pages, $3.95 paperback
www.progressive.org

Just 300 miles southeast of where I live in Minnesota is Madison, WI, home of The Progressive one of the best, most enduring peace and justice publications ever. Marking its 100th proud anniversary, its publishers have issued a 130-page special issue of the magazine which, at $3.95 paperback, is a steal. It is a compendium of stories showing first and foremost how little progress we’ve made in so many areas, especially the prevention of war and combating the influence of the American War Machine.


While many of the stories were written by founder Wisconsin Sen. “Fighting” Bob LaFollette, others were written by his wife, Belle Case LaFollette, Lincoln Steffens, Jane Addams, Carl Sandburg, Louis Brandeis, Samuel Gompers, Scott Nearing and Leo Tolstoy, among many other historic figures over a century of American history.

There are a number of histories of liberal thought in the United States but I defy you to find one that packs so much into so few pages and is available at such a low cost. From the VFP standpoint, there are many stories dealing with war, those who promulgated it and those who opposed it with all of their might.

You owe it to yourself (and maybe family, friends and associates) not only to order this remarkable document but to sign up for The Progressive monthly under the editorship of Matthew Rothschild who carries on in the great tradition of William T. Evjue, Morris and Mary Rubin and Erwin Knoll. Like the compendium, the monthly also is available at a bargain rate. Congratulations to all who have made The Progressive the vital magazine it remains today and who will keep it at its high level for years to come.

Rothschild also has edited You Have No Rights: Stories of America In An Age of Repression www.thenewpress.com $16.95 paperback. Though it came out during W’s administration, it seems to have lost none of its relevance and timeliness in the first year of the Obama regime. It is, says Rothschild in the introduction, a compilation of 82 case histories of “innocent individuals simply minding their own business or exercising their First Amendment freedom” and those who would take those freedoms away and in many cases, did. No doubt this has happened to people you know or admire from afar or even to yourself. No doubt about it---activism comes with a price.

by Don Philpott and Janelle Hill
14 pages paperback, $30
Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group
www.rlpbgbooks.com

Beyond keeping our brave troops out of hegemonic, capitalist wars, beyond trying to get such existing wars ended and heading off new ones, there are other things we in VFP can do to “support the troops.” One of the most important these days is helping them transition back into society.

This book will help a lot and I urge all VFP chapters to get a copy and pass along copies of this review to your local media, employers, business organizations and government at all levels so they, too, can help support the troops by easing their return to civilian life.

At the same time, the national VFP leadership should champion this book by making its existence and contents known to Pres. Obama, his cabinet and advisors; Secretary of Defense Gates; the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and all members of Congress plus the national media via op-eds and letters to the editor. You all can get professional PR materials by contacting Nancy Hofmann or Lisa McAllister at reviews@rowman.com.

Philpott and Hill and have compiled an invaluable list of things that vets, their families, other loved ones, friends and even private citizens can do to help vets return to society. They are spelled out in some detail in the book and in greater detail on the authors’ website www.homelanddefensejournal.com .

There are words of encouragement from Secretary Gates, Ret. Gen. Barry McCaffrey and the authors. But the real action must come from us, to spur those in power to exercise it on behalf of those brave men and women who laid their lives on the line for us and to do it now, when they need us most. Vets helping vets.

*****
cynicism to the process of death, for (our soldiers) must know after a short period there, that none of the things we claim to be fighting for are really involved.

“Americans, who calculate so carefully…military victory, do not realize that in the process they are incurring deep psychological and political defeat.”

Then, 42 years ago, Dr. King spoke words that could be addressed to us here today:

“This war is but a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit, and if we ignore this…reality we will find ourselves organizing…[antiwar] committees for the next generation. They will be concerned about Guatemala…Cambodia…South Africa. We will be marching for these and a dozen other names and attending rallies without end unless there is a significant and profound change in American life…”

My daughter brought this home to me right after the invasion of Iraq, when she said, “This is my generation’s war, just like Vietnam was yours, isn’t it?”

So here we are, organizing another generation of antiwar committees, attending rallies without end. It’s still necessary. We’ll keep doing it, but I’m sick of it. I’m tired of being that Vet For Peace guy who makes history dance at another rally by revealing what Smedley Butler had to say. I long for the time when Veterans For Peace can build its membership on a reputation for creating a peaceful world and its practical nonviolence skills, not just because we left to the front ranks against yet another war.

Chris Hedges wrote “war is a force that gives us meaning.” Could it also be true that antiwar is a force that gives us meaning? If we are content to be an antiwar movement or peace movement in name only, we’ll have work that will give us plenty of meaning for this generation, our children’s generation, and the one after that if the planet is still breathing.

No, what we need is a peace movement that is true to our chant in the streets: “No justice, no peace!” Peace with justice means stopping the few from making policy for the many; from robbing us blind; denying our right to health care; destroying Earth’s life support systems; as well as sending us to war.

Peace with justice needs a foundation. That foundation is democracy. Not democracy “as advertised on TV,” or banded about during elections, but the real thing. We must govern ourselves, for we have seen what happens when we don’t.

Imagine a peace movement that is part of a larger democracy movement. We talk about “outreach” to other groups. We talk about defining the war to fund human needs. But brothers and sisters, what is our vision? Stopping the F-22 or trading an aircraft carrier for a housing program? It has to be more than that! What we need is to govern ourselves so we can create the kind of life to which we have an indisputable, inalienable right.

But we aren’t going to gain the power needed to govern ourselves if we expend our precious time toiling in an isolated peace movement that merely wants to get our troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan, just as we won’t become self-governing with an environmental movement that aims only for more solar panels and cars with better mileage.

We need to get our minds right so we can see ourselves not as mere workers and consumers but as human beings with an absolute right to define what kind of life we need – and then take it!

We need to create a culture of democracy from the bottom-up, to replace our culture of death. We need to change our government from what it is today – a huge roadblock, guarded round the clock by greed and private interests, into a vehicle that nourishes the public interest; that helps us express our love for each other and our planet.

I believe there is a hunger for self-governance and democracy in America and that hunger is the fundamental link between the peace movement and every other movement working to address human needs.

I don’t need to remind this audience of war’s real cost. We can’t even identify all the categories into which we pour war’s staggering sums. Less than 5% of what we’ve spent in Iraq and Afghanistan would pay the tuition in the U.S. of every student attending public university this year. Beyond dollars, we know war’s human toll on individuals, families and whole communities is as impossible to quantify as the heartache of a single loved one; as impossible to calculate as the multiples of misery endured by those under our bombs.


What’s astounding is that so many insist this kind of madness is practical, is realistic…..and yet would look at VFP’s bottom line, “To abolish war as an instrument of national policy” and say “now, that’s crazy!”

How can this be? Well, think how much we pay this system every year to produce this culture of death, and then define it as normal, in fact as the only way to live. There is one good thing about all this – when we realize what a constant, Herculean effort the system must make to construct such a massive delusion and maintain it in the face of everything rational, we can sense how fragile the empire really is. If you doubt that, recall the toppling of the Berlin Wall in 1989, when just two years before such a thing was unthinkable – and it didn’t require passing any legislation.

And so we’ve come full circle, back to the demand of Cool Hand Luke’s prison boss to get your mind right! We can either do that, or stand dumbfounded on the side of the road, waiting in awe for the Imperial Oz to give us direction.

Well, we’re here to tell the nation that Veterans For Peace knows what we see today is not the only way forward. War is not an unavoidable absolute. Human beings decide to create injustice, to promote empire, to whip up public fears. But veterans know human beings can make different decisions. We can create better outcomes. We can build a just society. We can create a culture of democracy. We can abolish war. We can, and we will!

But remember this other passage from that great speech of King’s. “We may cry out desperately for time to pause…but time is deaf to every plea and rushes on. Over the bleached bones and jumbled residue of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words, "too late."

Sisters and brothers: Let us begin!
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miscellaneous Items</th>
<th>QTY</th>
<th>UNIT PRICE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wristband - Read, &quot;Bring them home now&quot; &quot;www.veteransforpeace.org&quot;</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>$1.00 =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFP Dog Tag - Has a beautiful raised VFP logo on the front along with the words &quot;Veterans For Peace&quot;. The back reads, &quot;Dedicated to the abolishment of war&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>$8.00 =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Canvas VFP Tote Bag - with VFP logo</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5.00 =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFP Armbands - Black fabric with white VFP logo. Says &quot;SUPPORT OUR TROOPS - BRING THEM HOME NOW!&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2.00 =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFP Banner Flag - With VFP logo and website on it. Measure 3' X 5' and printed on nylon</td>
<td></td>
<td>$30.00 =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFP Sew On Patch - Helmet shaped sew-on patch with logo and &quot;Veterans For Peace&quot; on it. Actual size is about two inches wide</td>
<td></td>
<td>$3.50 =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pins and Buttons</th>
<th>QTY</th>
<th>UNIT PRICE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helmet and Dove Lapel Pin - Beautiful, small lapel pin. Black with white dove.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5.00 =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace is Patriotic Button - Red, White, and Blue with dove and words, &quot;Peace is Patriotic.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>$0.50 =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Wage Peace&quot; Button - Green wording with a VFP Logo</td>
<td></td>
<td>$0.50 =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFP White Button - VFP logo and says, &quot;Veterans For Peace&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>$0.50 =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wooden Dove Pin - Made in Palestine with Olive Wood. Small, wood carving of dove.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5.00 =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stickers &amp; Magnets</th>
<th>QTY</th>
<th>UNIT PRICE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Another Veteran Against War With Iraq&quot; Bumpersticker</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1.00 =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black and White Bumpersticker. Contains VFP Logo and address.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1.00 =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Peace is Patriotic&quot; bumpersticker - red, white, and blue with &quot;Veterans For Peace&quot; on it</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1.50 =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holiday Cards (10 cards, 11 envelopes)</th>
<th>QTY</th>
<th>UNIT PRICE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holiday Card - In Memory Of Our Truce</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>$7.50 =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Or order on line at www.vfpstore.org
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Books and Literature</th>
<th>QTY</th>
<th>UNIT PRICE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Outposts of Empire - The case against foreign military bases</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>$6.00</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Will War Ever End - A Soldiers Vision of Peace for the 21st Century</em> by Captain Paul Appell</td>
<td></td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Sword that Heals</em> by George Lakey</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Road from ar Ramadi: The Private Rebellion of Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejia</em> by Camilo Mejia</td>
<td></td>
<td>$19.95</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Veterans For Peace - The First Decade</em> by Jerry Genesio</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>From Warriors to Resistors</em> edited by Margaret Knape</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4.00</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>War is a Racket</em> by General Smedley Butler.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Addicted to War Comic Book</em> by Joel Andreas</td>
<td></td>
<td>$6.00</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Misuse of Power</em> by Ed Asner and Burt Hall.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>No, George No!</em> by Kathy Eder - Illustrated by Clay Butler</td>
<td></td>
<td>$7.00</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hats</th>
<th>QTY</th>
<th>UNIT PRICE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseball Cap - Adjustable cap with VFP logo on the front and the VFP website on the back.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$18.00</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey</td>
<td></td>
<td>$18.00</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
<td>$18.00</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
<td>$18.00</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garrison Cap - Blue cap with red trim. <em>Veterans For Peace</em> in white embroidery</td>
<td></td>
<td>$30.00</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movies &amp; Music</th>
<th>QTY</th>
<th>UNIT PRICE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Arlington West</em> DVD - Compilation of conversations with U.S. soldiers traveling to and from war zones, military families, veterans, and children. (Fall 2006 version)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$10.00</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Soldiers Speak Out</em> DVD - A powerful, first-hand testament to the reality of the military experience,</td>
<td></td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>What I’ve Learned About U.S. Foreign Policy</em> DVD - The War Against the Third World</td>
<td></td>
<td>$10.00</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>From Mills River to Babylon and Back… The Jimmy Massey Story</em> DVD - by Joseph Stillman</td>
<td></td>
<td>$21.00</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Vietnam: American Holocaust</em> DVD - by Clay Claiborne</td>
<td></td>
<td>$19.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Take Me Home</em> CD - A sampler of American artists for peace</td>
<td></td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Please include a check, cash, or money order with order form.**

_Mail to Veterans For Peace, 216 S. Meramec Ave., St. Louis, MO  63105_

_Veterans For Peace, Inc. (VFP) is a non-profit 501(c)(3)_

*educational and humanitarian organization dedicated to the abolishment of war._

**Name:** ___________________________ **Address:** ___________________________

**City, State  Zip:** ___________________________ **Phone Number:** ___________________________

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Continued from page 13

ry. A recent offering in this latter genre by VFP member Clay Claiborne is Vietnam: American Holocaust, a provocative recap of that war through archival footage that will be new to most viewers.

Structurally, Claiborne’s 90 minute film is organized into info-packed “chapters,” with headings like, TV War, History, Puppets, Tonkin and Air Power. By choosing a didactic approach in lieu of a conventional narrative synthesis, Claiborne has adapted his documentary for the classroom. Given his use of graphic news and military footage which make no effort to distance the viewer from the horrors of war, American Holocaust is best suited for more mature students in senior high school and college, most effectively absorbed, given the volume of information, by presenting it in halves for two separate screenings.

But the film is also of interest to scholars and old anti-Vietnam War activists who are unlikely to have seen what appears to be freshly mined footage from a number of archival sources. Even in retrospect after so many years it’s shocking to see the degree of vulnerability expressed in their own words by our leaders in the planning and execution of the war.

The villain par excellence remains the late Robert McNamara, and former Secretary of Defense who, visiting Hanoi long after the war for an exchange of historical views with the former enemy, is filmed asking his hosts, “Do you mean to say that [having lost]... on our population base the equivalent of 27 million people, the war was not a tragedy for you? What did you accomplish?” They gained their independence Bob. Makes you wonder where McNamara would have stood in 1776.

Adroitly narrated by actor and peace activist Martin Sheen, American Holocaust must now confront the perpetual challenge of our progressive minority to find the audiences that are most in need of learning - or being reminded of - the lessons of Vietnam. Of course, no single medium assumes the full burden of retrieving the inconvenient facts of history, but every honest initiative increases the odds that one day the public will demand that conflicts be resolved by peaceful means rather than by force.

Michael Uhl
www.veteranscholar.com

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little or no action toward implementing several investigations that the committee regards as imperative;” but the committee’s mandate gives it no power to implement its recommendations, and the VA and DoD have consistently ignored and sabotaged comprehensive research efforts. Thus, nearly 40 years after the last AO spraying in Vietnam, there are as many questions as answers. This is not a scientific failure. It is a political failure.

A final glaring deficiency is that the research mandate is limited to Vietnam vets. Even though there were only four studies of Vietnam veterans included in this Update, there were NONE that considered Vietnamese or Vietnamese Americans. How can this be?

This sorry state of affairs is really not surprising if one considers the history of non-treatment of atomic veterans, or ill-treatment of the First Gulf War veterans. As Fred Wilcox titled his book on chemical warfare, they are simply “Waiting for an Army to Die.” In the case of Agent Orange, there has been sufficient political pressure that the US government has given a little ground in support and treatment of Vietnam veterans, but it avoids funding hard scientific studies that would illuminate the hard political choices.

Agent Orange Campaign News
Please visit the Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign website www.vet-orange.org for more information.

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training “does a great job of putting that warrior ethos in effect. It gives the ability to kill at least once. After that, it’s on you.”

Former Army Captain, Michael McPhearson, a veteran of the First Gulf War, added, “I can tell you this, if you have a pack of hungry dogs and you let them loose, you can’t just whistle and call them back. They’re gonna go after what you sent them after till they catch it. Unless you get there and pull them off that thing you had them catch, they’re gonna kill it. I’m not trying to justify anything. I’m just saying this is the nature of war. You can’t turn on and off the faucet. It doesn’t happen like that.”

Today, McPhearson is Executive Director of Veterans For Peace.

Massey is a founding member of Iraq Veterans Against the War. In one scene where he’s shown holding a picket sign with the words, “I killed innocent civilians for our government,” he adds, “I sold my soul a long time ago. I’m just here trying to recover it.”

Perry retired after 29 years in the Army and attended his first protest during the Iraq war.

Williams is a leader of the anti-war group in his Wisconsin hometown. He closes The Good Soldier with these exquisitely words: “The greatest generation is yet to come. It won’t be the WWII vets; it’ll be the people that take away all the reasons behind us going to war. That will be the greatest generation.”

Mike Ferner

Continued from page 4

right to recur to insurrection in defense of the constitutional order.”

While Salomon feels, in its miscalculation, the military leadership is holding out now “to protect their dignity more than anything,” she fears a “veto power” precedent set by the coup in both the business community and the military. This fear spills over into neighboring countries like El Salvador, where the FMLN just inaugurated a weak president.

She is uncertain exactly how the coup will collapse, but she says, “One thing is for sure, and that is they cannot sustain this government until November and the day of the elections.”

Some VFP members may monitor that election election if and when it occurs. In the same vein, we need to monitor our own government and press it to better stand up for democracy and expanded rights in places like Honduras.

John Grant is a writer/photographer and a member of VFP Chapter 31 in Philadelphia.

Honduran Coup

Continued from page 4

Agent Orange

Continued from page 11

Good Soldier

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Veterans For Peace Flag
(size 3’ x 5’)
$30.00

Please visit the Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign website www.agent-orange.org for more information.

VeteransForPeace.org

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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. While we recommend that you meet with your own estate attorney or financial advisor to determine the method of giving that best suits your individual needs.

Please call the National Office and let us express our gratitude. Your wishes for anonymity will be respected.

Here's how you can be PART OF THE LEGACY:

- Prepare a will. Only 50% of those who pass have one.
- Leave a gift for Veterans For Peace.
- Less than 3% of all wills contain a charitable provision.
- Consider using assets for your charitable gift.
- Name VFP as the beneficiary of your IRA or pension account.
- Name VFP as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy.

Support the mission of Veterans For Peace to create a sustainable future for generations to come. For more information call our office in St. Louis at 314-725-6005.