



VETERANS FOR PEACE

From Portland, ME to Portland, OR: Excitement Builds for 2011 Convention

I first joined VFP in 1997 while living in Santa Cruz, California. In 2002 I relocated to Arcata, California where I became active in Chapter 56, and in 2008 I moved to Portland, Oregon, home of Chapter 72. Lucky enough to have attended five conventions (D.C., Minneapolis, Albuquerque, San Francisco and Dallas), I sometimes fantasized about helping to organize one in my home city. Now that I'm actually doing it, I understand why other chapter members shook their heads so vigorously when the idea was first proposed. Nevertheless, I am excited about hosting a convention in this particular city.

Portland is a very green city, literally and figuratively. My husband Brian and I were attracted by the VA hospital, Amtrak access, and excellent bicycling infrastructure; other notable features include large urban parks, fabulous restaurants, and vibrant activist, arts and culture scenes. Portland's MAX is a model light-rail system, and we encourage convention-goers to utilize it, especially in the city center's "Fareless Square."

Did somebody mention rain? Yes, it's true, Portland gets more than its fair share, but the lush greenery and colorful gardens encouraged by all that moisture can be just as dazzling as the sun. Really! Anyway, being in August, it probably (we hope) won't be raining, and is likely (we hope) to be very warm. That said, I would advise packing both a rain hat and a sweater, just in case.

Now, to whet your appetite for the convention itself, following is a brief list of highlights, day by day:

WEDNESDAY — VFP Executive Board meets from 8am to 4pm and members are welcome to observe. Others are invited to join local historian Michael Munk for a Portland Radical History walking tour starting at 3pm. An opening reception takes place poolside at University Place early evening; at 8pm an open-mic poetry reading begins with readings by featured poets Ed Tick and Don Blackburn (and hopefully one other, to be announced).

THURSDAY — Robert Jensen, professor of Journalism at the University of Texas at Austin, delivers a provocative opening key-

note to kick-start our weekend-long conversation about VFP's next 25 years. In the same vein, the evening public event, themed "The Moral Revolution," features Blase Bonpane, founder of L.A.-based Office of the Americas, described as "a soft-spoken man with a hard-hitting message." Also featured: IVAW veteran Josh Stieber (of the Contagious Love Experiment) and music by dynamic folk duo Emma's Revolution.

FRIDAY — A morning plenary panel on PTSD is followed by workshops, caucus meetings (over lunch), more workshops, and then a presentation by Portland's own S. Brian Willson, fresh off the road from a cycling tour promoting his memoir, *Blood on the Tracks* (PM Press, 2011). The traditional "Speak Out," where veterans line up to speak their "peace" (so much passion in those small speeches!), makes up the program for the Friday evening dinner buffet, broken up with a few musical interludes.

SATURDAY — After the morning VFP business meeting and lunch on your own (possibly at the Iranian cultural festival on PSU's Park Blocks) comes a special film screening and panel discussion about Military Sexual Trauma, a serious, hidden problem in today's military. The Saturday night banquet spotlights Kathy Kelly of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, whose

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**Veterans For Peace National Convention
Portland, Oregon • August 3-7, 2011**

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2011 VFP Convention Schedule

PLEASE NOTE: This is a draft schedule; many details are still being figured out, and some program information is subject to change. VFP convention registration will be set up at University Place beginning on Wednesday morning and will be ongoing.

WEDNESDAY • AUGUST 3

- 8:00am–4:00pm VFP Board Meeting – Location TBA
10:00am–4:00pm Recreational Activities in and around Portland:
Portland Radical History walking tour led by Michael Munk – Meet at University Place at 3pm
Visit to Vietnam Veterans Memorial and nearby tourist sites led by Mike Hastie
5:00pm–7:00pm Opening Reception – Poolside, University Place
Substantial appetizers
Music by Nòs Dois (eclectic acoustica)
No-host bar
8:00pm–12:00am Poetry Reading / Open Mic – University Place Lounge

THURSDAY • AUGUST 4

- 8:00am–10:00am VFP Board Meeting Wrap-up – Location TBA
9:00am Early Risers Film Screening: TBA
10:30am–11:30am Opening Ceremony – Lincoln Hall Auditorium
Native American Blessing
Opening words by “Gandhi”
Bette Lee slide show
Greetings/Welcome from local and national VFP leaders
Stretch break
11:30am–12:30pm Opening Plenary – Lincoln Hall Auditorium
Song by Emma’s Revolution
Keynote: Robert Jensen, “Resistance (to Life) is Futile: Notes on Revolution, Revelation, and Redemption”
12:30pm–1:45pm Lunch on your own
1:45pm–3:15pm Workshop Session 1
3:45pm–5:15pm Workshop Session 2
5:15pm Dinner on your own
7:30pm–10:00pm The Moral Revolution (public event) –
First Congregational Church
Emma’s Revolution
Welcome and introduce VFP/IVAW – what we do; what we stand for
Awards
Remarks by IVAW veteran Josh Stieber
Emma’s Revolution
Keynote: Blase Bonpane, “The Moral Revolution”
10:00pm Night Owl Film: TBA – Lincoln Hall Auditorium
10:00pm–12:00am Night Owl Music – University Place Lounge

FRIDAY • AUGUST 5

- 9:00am–10:15am Plenary on PTSD, MST, TBI and other Veterans’ Health Issues
10:30am–12:00pm Workshop Session 3
12:00pm–1:00pm Pick up Boxed Lunch – Location TBA
12:15pm–2:00pm Lunch Caucus Meetings
2:15pm–3:45pm Workshop Session 4
4:00pm–6:00pm Plenary: Resilience & Resistance
Nicole Mitchell song intro S. Brian Willson:

Schedule continued on page 5

Convention

Continued from page 1

courageous work helps to amplify the voices of those most affected by US war and occupation in the Middle East.

SUNDAY — VFP Chapter 72 leads a No Nukes rally at our own Peace Memorial Park at noon and then a march across the river, flags flying, to the Japanese American Historical Plaza where we join community sponsors for a public commemoration, “How Can We Create a Nuclear-Free World? Not Another Hiroshima, Nagasaki or Fukushima.” This fair-like event runs from 1 to 4 pm. VFP has been asked to participate with a speaker and an activity booth.

This is just an overview. Many more details, including the draft schedule, a list of workshops, speaker bios, and information about scholarships, housing and transportation, awards and resolutions can be found at vfpnationalconvention.org. One last thought: We in Chapter 72 are holding a “fun-raiser” to help defray convention expenses for local members who might not otherwise be able to attend, and we encourage other chapters to do the same.

Hope to see you in August!

*Becky Luening, Associate Member
Host Planning Committee
2011 VFP National Convention*



The convention planning core group members: Seated: Marion Ward and Becky Luening. Standing: Barbara Gurwell and Mike Hastie



Chapter 72, the host Chapter of Convention 2011.

It's Your Convention!

Organize a caucus meeting

On Friday, August 5, a number of caucus meetings are being convened during a 1.75-hour time block (with the provision of boxed lunches). If you are interested in convening such a group, please contact Becky Luening by July 1, 2011 at becky.pdx@gmail.com, tel. 503-774-9197. Meetings planned so far:

- **Women's Caucus** | Ellen Barfield (ellene4pj@yahoo.com)
- **Therapists, Social Workers & Counselors** | Sam Coleman, PhD (sam.coleman5@verizon.net)
- **No Nukes Caucus** (to organize VFP anti-nuke work) | Gene Ruyle (eruyle@csulb.edu)
- **Opponents of the USAPATRIOT Act** | Susan Lindauer (slindauer2008@yahoo.com) & Jerry Riley (lilnjer@earthlink.net)
- **We are the Origins of War: Join the Abolitionist Movement** | Roy Wolff (radicalroy@msn.com)

Advertise in the convention booklet

Deadline for placing ads is Friday, July 1, 2011. For ad sizes and rates, contact Becky Luening (contact info. above).

Reserve tabling space for your chapter or organization

A limited number of six-foot tables are available on a first come, first served basis (\$35 VFP chapters, \$50 nonprofits, \$100 vendors). Contact Barbara Gurwell at lhasaluck@yahoo.com, tel. 971-277-0626.

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Convention Workshops

Race and Class: Unite-and-Resist instead of Divide and Conquer

Robert Jensen – Journalism professor at the University of Texas; author of numerous books including *The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism and White Privilege* (City Light Books, 2005); co-producer of the documentary film *Abe Osheroff: One Foot in the Grave, the Other Still Dancing*.

VFP's Role in Nuclear Disarmament Education

Bill Wickersham – Army veteran; founding director of Missouri Peace Study Institute; Adjunct Professor of Peace Studies at the University of Missouri; member, Missouri University nuclear disarmament education team. Former peace education consultant to 20 colleges and universities.

Healing Journeys for Combat Vets and Their Families

Dr. Edward Tick – Author of *War and the Soul: Healing Our Nation's Veterans from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*; founder of Soldier's Heart. Practicing psychotherapist specializing in veterans with PTSD.

Creating a Homeless Veterans Initiative

Mark Foreman – Vietnam veteran; public school art teacher; board chair of Milwaukee Homeless Veterans Initiative.

Counter-Recruiting in High Schools and Model School District Policies

Jim Murphy and Mike Dedrick – Vietnam veteran counter-recruiting activists in Ithaca and Seattle, respectively. Murphy is a retired high school dean for the NYC Board of Education who established NY Veterans Speak Out. Dedrick is a counselor with the GI Rights Hotline and board member of Washington Truth in Recruiting, a statewide counter-recruiting organization.

Campaign to Support Bradley Manning and All War Resisters

Panel presentation (panelists to be announced)

Lifting the Veil of Silence on Military Sexual Trauma

Panel presentation (panelists to be announced)

Breaking the Corporate News Barrier: Earning the Mainstream News Coverage VFP Chapters Deserve

Eduardo Cohen – Vietnam veteran; producer of the *Other America's Radio Journal* for 15 years; media relations consultant. Conducts workshops and counsels organizations on strategies and techniques for successful communication, media relations and campaigns.

Writing Through the Wounds of War

Julie Thi Underhill – Attends and teaches at UC Berkeley as doctoral student of ethnic studies; writer, photographer and filmmaker; managing editor of *diaCRITICS* blog of the Diasporic Vietnamese Artists Network; member of Maxine Hong Kingston's veterans writing group.

The Moral Revolution

Blase Bonpane – Director and Chief Executive Officer, Office of the Americas; Senior Research Fellow at the Council on Hemispheric Affairs; long-time social justice activist.

Local Chapters of IVAW and VFP Working Together

Panel discussion consisting of Western Massachusetts IVAW and VFP members.

Citizen Activism: The Gaza Flotillas

Col. Ann Wright – Retired U.S. Army Reserve and former U.S. diplomat who resigned in 2003 in opposition to the Iraq war. Col. Wright was one of fourteen Americans on the 2010 Gaza Freedom Flotilla.

Death and After in Iraq

Jessica Goodell – Iraq veteran and a PhD candidate in Counseling at the University of Buffalo; served in Iraq at Marine Corps' first officially declared Mortuary Affairs unit at Camp Al Taqaddum cataloging bodies and personal effects of dead Marines.

The Movement Action Plan: Building the movement to end war and militarism

Janet Chisholm – Nonviolence trainer; founder/executive director of national training program; former executive director and trainer at Fellowship of Reconciliation; VFP associate member and trainer.

Elliott Adams – VFP President; state mediator; nonviolence trainer.

Veterans in the Criminal Justice System and How Their PTSD Got Them There

David Philipps – Author of *Lethal Warriors: When the New Band of Brothers Came Home*. Features writer for *Colorado Springs Gazette*, winner of the Livingston Prize for National Reporting and finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

Bud Brown – Vietnam veteran; Professor of Sociology at Western Oregon University with expertise in PTSD; testifies as expert witness at trials of veterans caught up in the criminal justice system.

U.S. Military Interventions in the Middle East, Northern Africa and Latin America

Panel presentation (panelists to be announced)

Viet Nam: Continuing Destruction and Strategies for Healing

Panel presentations (panelists to be announced):

(1) The Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign and public pressure for legislation

(2) Peace Trees Vietnam and ridding rural areas of unexploded ordnance (UXO)

Unmaking War Now: A Workshop from Empathy to Action

Kathleen Barry – Professor Emerita of Penn State Uni-

Convention Workshops

versity and author of numerous books; lectures widely throughout the U.S. and abroad. With the publication of *Unmaking War, Remaking Men: How Empathy Can Reshape our Politics, Our Soldiers and Ourselves* (2010), she brings the message of empathy to life as a source of action.

Intelligence, Surveillance and Drone Payloads

Rob Mulford – Vietnam era veteran; active in the Industrial Workers of the World (the Wobblies) and chair of the Alaska Peace Center. Presentation utilizing information gathered while operating undercover at two Institute for Defense and Government Advancement conferences.

Social Media for Activists

- (1) Panel Presentation by BMedia Collective in Portland and;
- (2) Jeanette McDermott on using simple web technology to promote chapter activities.

How is the War Economy Working for You?

VFP members John Amidon, Sandy Kelson and Ken

Mayers will discuss tactics and strategies for continuing to link war to the U.S. economy.

The Cost of War and the Price of Peace in Afghanistan

Kathy Kelly – coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence. Traveled to Afghanistan three times in 2010 and was joined by VFP's Mike Ferner on the last trip; has traveled widely throughout the Middle East and lived in Baghdad during 2003 "Shock and Awe" bombing.

Pursuing Veteran Claims and Advocating for Veterans' Justice

Panel presentation (panelists to be announced)

Organizing 101

Leah Bolger: Vice President, VFP Board of Directors
Mike Ferner: Past President, VFP Board of Directors

This workshop will cover organizing, outreach and building alliances, messaging, public relations and networking, with a primary focus on organizing within the peace movement and within the VFP statement of purpose.

Schedule

Continued from page 2

"Going AWOL from the American Way of Life"
"Fish Bowl" discussion: Future of the Veterans
Peace Movement, or, How DO we end war?

7:00pm–9:45pm Buffet Dinner

Beer, wine & appetizers available at 7pm; buffet
served at 7:30

Speak Out / Open Mic begins at 7:45

10:00pm–12:00am Night Owl Film: TBA –
Lincoln Hall Auditorium

10:00pm–12:00am Night Owl Music –
University Place Lounge

SATURDAY • AUGUST 6

9:00am–1:00pm VFP Business Meeting

1:00pm–2:45pm Lunch – Eat at Iranian
Summer Festival on Park Blocks, PSU

3:00pm–5:00pm Plenary: The Silent Truth
Screening of the film about the LaVena Johnson
case followed by panel discussion

6:15pm First shuttle bus pickup from
University Place and Broadway Dorms

6:30pm–7:30pm Banquet Social Hour –
Tiffany Center
No-host bar and light hor d'oeuvres
Ambient acoustic music

7:30pm–10:00pm Banquet Main Event –
Tiffany Center
Buffet Meal
Musical Entertainment TBA
Awards

Featured Speaker: Kathy Kelly

More details TBA

10:00pm–12:00am Night Owl Film: TBA –
Lincoln Hall Auditorium

10:00pm–12:00am Night Owl Music –
University Place Lounge

SUNDAY • AUGUST 7

7:00am–11:00am Breakfast & personal logistics
(check-out, etc.)

11:00am–12:00pm Travel by bike / foot / MAX / van to
Peace Memorial Park

12:00am–1:00pm No More Nukes Rally –
Peace Memorial Park
Speakers and Entertainment TBA

1:00pm–1:30pm VFP March from Peace Memorial
Park to Japanese American Historical Plaza

1:00pm–4:00pm "How Can We Create a
Nuclear-Free World? Not Another Hiroshima,
Nagasaki or Fukushima" – Commemorative event
sponsored by Oregon PSR, Japanese American
Citizens League, Oregon Hiroshima Club, Oregon
Nikkei Endowment, Peace & Justice Works Iraq
Affinity Group, Veterans For Peace Chapter 72,
and Women's International League for Peace &
Freedom.

Program from 2:00 to 3:00 pm.

TBA Post Convention Party at private home
(location TBA)

Request from the Bradley Manning Support Network

Dear Friends,

One year ago today, on May 26, 2010, the U.S. government quietly arrested a humble young American intelligence analyst in Iraq and imprisoned him in a military camp in Kuwait. Over the coming weeks, the facts of the arrest and charges against this shy soldier would come to light. And across the world, people like you and I would step forward to help defend him.

Bradley Manning, now 23 years old, has never been to court but has already served a year in prison— including 10 months in conditions of confinement that were clear violation of the international conventions against torture. Bradley has been informally charged with releasing to the world documents that have revealed corruption by world leaders, widespread civilian deaths at the hands of U.S. forces, the true face of Guantanamo, an unvarnished view of the U.S.'s imperialistic foreign negotiations, and the murder of two employees of Reuters News Agency by American soldiers. These documents released by WikiLeaks have spurred democratic revolutions across the Arab world and have changed the face of journalism forever.

For his act of courage, Bradley Manning now faces life in prison—or even death.

But you can help save him—and we've already seen our collective power. Working together with concerned citizens around the world, the Bradley Manning Support Network has helped raise worldwide awareness about Manning's torturous confinement conditions. Through the collective actions of well over a half million people and scores of organizations, we successfully pressured the U.S. government to end the tortuous conditions of pre-trial confinement that Bradley was subjected to at the Marine Base at Quantico,

Virginia. Today, Bradley is being treated humanely at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Thanks to your support, Bradley is given leeway to interact with other pre-trial prisoners, read books, write letters, and even has a window in his cell.

Of course we didn't mount this campaign to just improve Bradley's conditions in jail. Our goal is to ensure that he can receive a fair and open trial. Our goal is to win Bradley's freedom so that he can be reunited with his family and fulfill his dream of going to college.

The U.S. government has already spent a year building its case against Bradley, and is now calling its witnesses to Virginia to testify before a grand jury.

What happens to Bradley may ripple through history — he is already considered by many to be the single most important person of his generation. Please show your commitment to Bradley and your support for whistle-blowers and the truth by actively supporting his defense.

With your help, I hope we will come to commemorate all those who risk their lives and freedom to promote informed democracy — and as the birth of a movement that successfully defended one courageous whistle-blower against the full fury of the U.S. government.

To learn more and find out what you can do, go to www.bradleymanning.org

*In solidarity,
Jeff Paterson and Loraine Reitman,
On behalf of the Bradley Manning Support Network Steering Committee*



A Victory for Veterans

The United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ordered an overhaul of mental health care for veterans, who are killing themselves by the thousands each year because of what the court called the “unchecked incompetence” of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In a scathing 2-to-1 ruling on May 10, the judges said delays in treating post-traumatic stress disorder and other combat-related mental injuries violated veterans' constitutional rights. The delays are getting worse as more troops return from Afghanistan and Iraq, the judges said. About 18 veterans commit suicide on an average day.

The government's obligations are clear. Veterans are entitled by law to be treated for injuries and illnesses. Benefits claims are supposed to be dealt with in days or weeks, but it takes an average of more than four years to fully adjudicate a mental health claim. When a veteran appeals a disability rating, the process bogs down drastically. The problem is an overwhelmed bureaucracy and a chronic inadequacy of resources and planning.

The judges said the system for screening suicidal patients was ineffective, and cited a 2007 inspector general's conclusion that

suicide-prevention measures were mostly absent. The same report found that the veterans department's regional medical centers have suicide-prevention experts, but its 800 community-based outpatient clinics — which veterans most often use — do not. This crisis plagues active-duty soldiers, too, and the Pentagon has lagged in responding effectively. The government has long known what it was up against with PTSD and brain injuries — the signature afflictions of current wars.

This new ruling came two years after the appeal was filed, during which lawyers for the government and the nonprofit advocacy organizations that sued, Veterans for Common Sense and Veterans United for Truth, were trying to negotiate a plan for fixing the system. Those negotiations did not succeed, so the judges have remanded the case to the district court to order one.

The government can keep appealing, but it should work with the advocates and enact a plan to fulfill the promise of the veterans affairs secretary, Eric Shinseki, to do better. For 25 million veterans, including 1.6 million who served in Afghanistan and Iraq, the choice is clear.



Chapter Reports

Chapter 1, Portland, ME

VFP's founding chapter recently presented its fourth PTSD Symposium. Several chapter members played significant roles in the April 23rd program, which drew more than 100 health care practitioners, veterans, and family members both from within and without the VFP community. Doug Rawlings, one of VFP's founders, emceed, and former national board member and author Michael Uhl was one of four featured speakers. Peggy Akers (Refugees from War-Torn Countries) and Kristina Wolff (Military Sexual Trauma) were among the workshop presenters.

Other featured speakers included Vietnam veteran, physician, and human rights activist Charlie Clements and Iraq War veteran Camilo Mejia.

The chapter is committed to presenting the symposium annually. It has become a signature event that has contributed significantly to both VFP's image in the state and our credibility with the larger veterans' community.

The Bring Our War Dollars Home campaign, spear-headed by Bruce Gagnon and other activists in the state, continues to expose the connection between militarism and economic woes at home. It is fast-becoming the model for activists across the country.

Through Bob Lezer's work, the chapter has developed an association with Community Television Network in Portland, which enables us to bring our work to the attention of public access TV viewers in Portland and surrounding communities.

Dud Hendrick

Chapter 9, Eastern MA

The Smedley Butler Brigade in Boston did it again! The Smedleys only wanted to walk in the traditional Saint Patrick's Day Parade. Tony Flaherty, a senior member of the Smedleys and a resident of South Boston had been advocating the Smedleys participation for the past couple of years. This is the biggest Saint Patrick's Day Parade in the country with an estimated 700,000 Irishmen and women (everyone's Irish on St. Pats Day) watching the parade.

The Smedleys only wanted to walk, carry their flags and banners and be part of this traditional festivity in South Boston.

An application was submitted to the Allied War Veterans Council, the group that runs the parade. Two days later Pat Scanlon, the Coordinator of the Smedleys received a phone call from Phil Wuschke, the parade organizer and was informed that the council had decided to deny the application. When asked why they had turned down the request Pat was told, quote: "They did not want the word Peace associated with the word Veteran" and that the Smedleys were too political. Regardless of the fact that every politician who can walk is in the parade and there are military bands, formations, equipment, JROTC from one end of the parade to the other, but the Smedleys were too political because of the word "peace" in their name.

Some background: Sixteen years ago the gay and bisexual community was denied permission to walk in the traditional parade. They sued and it went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, resulting in the Hurley Decision which states that the group that sponsors the parade has the exclusive right to say who is in and who is out, no



Chapter 9 in the St. Patrick's Day Peace Parade (Photo by: Patricia Westwater-Jong)

questions asked. In 2011 it was the Veterans For Peace who were out. The Smedleys immediately caucused and decided to put in their own permit application for a permit for the same day and walk one mile behind the traditional parade. The Smedleys then reached out to the gay/bisexual community telling them, "You folks were not allowed to walk in their parade sixteen years ago, how would you like to walk in our Saint Patrick's Peace Parade."

With only 3 weeks to organize the alternative parade the Smedley's gathered other VFP chapters, area peace groups, the gay and bisexual community, church groups, labor groups, the Leftist Marching Band, a Scottish Bag-piper not to mention a Boston Duck Boat. The labor folks at the end of the parade had a sound truck, which played music all day. The parade was led by two convertible automobiles carrying some of the Smedley and Samantha's senior members. Six hundred strong proudly walked, danced, and sang through the streets of South Boston carrying peace signs, banners, posters, flags etc. The reception from residents in South Boston was phenomenal. It was a great day, this parade stole the press; every major newspaper, television and radio station ran positive stories. One of the large Smedley banners read: "Peace is Patriotic, Not a Dirty Word". The Smedleys invite every VFP member to join them next year at the 2nd Annual Saint Patrick's Peace Parade.

Pat Scanlon



Lead car in the St. Patrick's Day Peace parade with one of Chapter 9's senior members Sev Bruyn (Photo by: Patricia Westwater-Jong)

Chapter 10, Albany, NY

Members of Chapter 10 went to New York City on April 9th, 2011 and participated in the peace demonstration and march to End the Wars in the Middle East. On May Day, May 1, 2011, members returned to New York City and participated in the rally and march on immigration issues from Union to Foley Square.

This Spring, John Amidon assisted the Nevada Desert Experience in Las Vegas Nevada to protest nuclear weapons and nuclear power and to help the Western Shoshone Nation secure their homeland from the U.S. occupation. The Western Shoshone Homeland is illegally occupied by the Nevada Test Site recently renamed Nevada National Security Site. VFP members, John Amidon, Will Covert, and Mark Kelso were arrested on Easter Sunday at the site for crossing the line. In Albany, VFP members have been participating in local vigils including a new vigil at the Leo O'Brien Federal Building. This vigil focuses on jobs and the war economy. Dan Wilcox continues his peace work in the medium of poetry. Also check out Protest Drone Warfare at Creech Air Force Base and Hancock Air National Guard Base <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CluZyTZx5Y0>

John Amidon

Chapter 12, Houston

The Chapter prepared a flag display of sacrificed young Texans in Afghanistan and Iraq. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee joined us in placing flags, which contained a brief bio of more than 600 fallen, in Dis-



Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee placing flags at Chapter 12's Memorial Day flag display.



John Amidon and Johnnie Bobb, Chief of the Western Shoshone National Council. The sign was used at the Easter Sunday Vigil and civil resistance against nuclear weapons.

covery Green Park in Downtown Houston on May 28, 2011. The Chapter has been preparing this display in conjunction with Code Pink and their remembrance of innocent civilians since 2001. This park attracts thousands of Houstonians each Memorial Weekend. Stan Merriman has also started a new blog that can be accessed at <http://pitchforksandpopulists.blogspot.com/>

Stan Merriman

Chapter 14, Gainesville, FL

The Gainesville Chapter has been busy this year with two big events – the Jack A. Penrod Award and the 2011 Peace Poetry Contest.

The Chapter sits on a committee with two other progressive organizations that present the Penrod Award to an exceptional activist every year or so in the Gainesville area for dedication to the movement and outstanding work for peace and justice. The award is named after Jack A. Penrod, a VFP member and Gainesville activist who fought in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War and also in World War II. This year's winner, Joe Courter of the Civic Media Center and the Gainesville Iguana, was presented the award at a large public gathering and received \$1,500 for his lifelong commitment to movements here in Gainesville and around the country.

From January to May of this year, Chapter 14 organized the second annual Alachua County Schools Peace Poetry Contest. After inviting all students in the county to submit one poem on what peace means to them, we had more than 200 participants, a public reading and a published booklet, which can be found on our chapter's Website along with photos (<http://www.afn.org/~vetpeace/>).

We received great feedback from the parents and K-12 students who participated in this year's contest, and local media outlets (print, radio and TV) gave the event great coverage. One parent in particular mentioned that after receiving the assignment, their fifth grade son came home and engaged them in a discussion about peace. "I believe this was really the beginning of the shaping of a peaceful worldview, and we want to thank you for that," the parent said.

The following poem is the first-place winner for students in grades 10 to 12 written by Kendall McClellan, Eastside High School.

Peace is Still

Still flat water on a lake;
A mighty eagle on its perch;
Rain falling for any sake;
Bowed heads in a silent church.

Peace is still,
But not man's will.
Men get lost,
Especially in the dark.
Everything as cold as frost,
The world is filled with savage sharks.
Peace is silent;
Man is violent...

Scott Camil

Chapter 16, Washington DC Area

The Chapter has been busy the past few months. In March members coordinated a fundraiser for Bradley Manning as part of the planning for the rally and civil disobedience action in Lafayette Park on March 19. In addition to the rally, members attended the demonstration and acts of civil disobedience at Quantico Marine Corps Base where Bradley Manning was then be-

ing held. In March members also attended the meeting at the Institute for Policy Studies on military spending in preparation for a demonstration the following month.

In April, Mike Marceau represented VFP and spoke briefly at a School of the Americas Watch rally at Lafayette Park in DC and spoke later at Global Day Against Military Spending rally at Lafayette Park in DC. In May, Mike met with staffers of Representative Chris Van Hollen (D-Maryland) on Capitol Hill about Bradley Manning and represented VFP at Move Over AIPAC rally in Washington, DC. The Chapter was also represented at a workshop on Ending Military Aid to Israel and at a Press Conference: Responding to Prime Minister Netanyahu's Congressional Address.

Mike Marceau

Chapter 31, Philadelphia

In the past few months, several members of the chapter participated in workshops on posttraumatic stress disorder to become veteran volunteer leaders with the organization Healing Ajax, a unit of Resources for Human Development that provides support and mental health services for veterans. Frank Corcoran has been working with the local director of Healing Ajax and attended a state conference on vets-helping-vets programs. The chapter co-sponsored and several members participated in the 2011 Legs Against Arms event sponsored by Physicians for Social Responsibility to bring attention to the problem of gun violence in Philadelphia and to show young people alternatives to violence. Mike Felker and Chuck Rossi participated in the 5-k run at the event (both finished in the top 10 for their age group), and Thom Bradley, Frank

Corcoran, and John Grant manned the chapter table at the Celebration of Youth that followed the run. Thom and John also attended the Armed Forces Day ceremonies at Graterford Prison organized by the Vietnam Veterans of America chapter at the prison. The Chapter has finalized its plans for an antiwar film series and discussion group to be held at the Christian Association at the University of Pennsylvania, and it is hoped that veterans groups from the university and the nearby Drexel University will also participate. The Chapter will also participate in June's Gay Pride Parade; in last year's event the Chapter won first prize in the political group category.

John Grant/Chuck Rossi

Chapter 41, Cape Cod, MA

The Corporal Jeffrey M. Lucey Cape Cod Chapter held our formal dedication on March 18 at a well-attended program, "The Hidden Wounds of War: An Evening of Remembrance and Dedication." Jeffrey Lucey was an Iraq War Marine Corps vet who suffered from PTSD and took his own life in 2004.

An audience of about 200 representing a wide spectrum of peace, justice, veterans, labor, and human services groups joined us for the event. Included were presentations, music and poetry in solidarity and support of the work of advocacy and healing for veterans and active duty military suffering from post traumatic stress disorder.

Highlights of the occasion included moving statements by Jeffrey's mother, father and sister, Gold Star Parents, the Massachusetts Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Will Hopkins of IVAW (and the VFP National Board). Chapter members Bob

Silverberg, Max Money, and Billie Stewart provided emcee duties, and there were poetry readings, the dedication ceremony itself and the benediction. Musician and Smedley Butler member Pat Scanlan added several songs that really amplified the impact of the event (and the fund-raising!). The press coverage was excellent and the coalition that came together will be mobilized for future peace and justice action.

Also this Spring Chapter 41 completed our sixteenth year of the Peace Week Poetry Contest, which is open to all Cape and Islands poets, grades kindergarten through twelfth and adults. This year there were 561 entries representing 27 schools. Every grade from K-12, including the adults was strongly represented. Thanks to the superb direction of chapter member and Contest Coordinator Nina Tepper, we exceeded our goal to increase teacher participation with a total of 67 teachers facilitating student submissions. Also unique to the process this year was the inclusion of eight teachers who volunteered along with our local Guyer Barn Poets to judge the entries. Many of the participating teachers were honored at the Poetry Reading and Awards Ceremony on April 30 which concludes the contest.

During the sixteen years since it began in 1996, more than 7,000 Cape and Island poets have participated. Each year, contest winners march with us and read their poems at the largest Memorial and Veterans Day events on Cape Cod.

The following winning poem was written by Grace Crowell, grade 12 Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School, Cape Cod.

Moonshine

I watch you get out of your car,
Still in uniform from the funeral.
The seal on your hat reflects the setting
sun's rays.
You walk towards me,
And when you embrace me,
I can feel the weight that keeps you
From flying.

You're no longer a man.
You're a ghost,
Floating through a foreign life.

I remember when you laughed
Louder than anyone.
I remember you in black,
And white—
Decked out for prom.
Now, you shiver in the ocean air,



Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard teachers were recognized during the Peace Week Poetry Contest Awards Ceremony on April 30th.

Your body unaccustomed to the place
you once called
Home.

There's something in your gaze
Lost in some faraway land
Where you're still fighting.

You'll go back tomorrow.
So. I kiss you goodbye.
We kiss each other,
Under the moonshine
And the speckled sky.
What else is there to do?

I kiss you.
Because I know I may never see you
again.
Because in the air,
We both feel a sense of urgency so
cold and rough and concrete,
That we can grasp it with our touch.

Duke Ellis

Chapter 63, Albuquerque, NM

With the support of our chapter the Albuquerque City Council designated an annual Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day. To make the proclamation more than just a token gesture, our chapter, along with the GI Rights Hotline, and Military Families Speak Out planned and led an observance on Saturday April 30 at Bataan Memorial Park. A constituent liaison from U.S. Congressman Heinrich's office added encouragement and advice. Agencies that provide services to veterans were invited to bring tables to display their literature and consult with attending veterans. Ten agencies took part. Two local TV stations taped the event. We are already planning next year's event.

Our Chapter continued its participation in an annual Earth Day Celebration at a local food co-op, the periodic naturalization ceremonies for new citizens and monthly New Mexico United Veterans Council meetings.

Charles Powell

Chapter 97, Kansas City

Chapter 97 initiated an effort last summer to enhance bullying education in elementary and middle schools in the greater Kansas City area. The main objective of the chapter's project, "Resist Bullying," is to buy and distribute books to assist schools in the Kansas City area in satisfying state requirements mandating bullying education. The chapter distributes a children's book titled NO! and a Parents Action Guide to Bullying.

The theme of war underpins the children's book, NO! (see the graphic depicting airplane bombing from the book). At its core, the book addresses peer harassment and abuse and the intersection of a culture that presents violence and militarism as the norm. Bullying among primary school age children has become recognized as an antecedent to progressively violent behavior. Like war, bullying can have devastating long-term effects on both victims of bul-



lying and the bullies themselves. Bullying was once accepted as an inevitable rite of passage, but researchers have demonstrated the causal relationship between bullying and the development of psychological complications.

The parent action guide helps parents whose children have been killed, injured, humiliated, or bullied in school. Chapter 97 is planning to host five public symposia this year with education expert Edward Dragan, author of *The Bullying Action Guide: How to Help Your Child and Get Your School to Listen*. The purpose of the discussions is to empower parents and equip them with the resources necessary to creating a safe scholastic environment. Parental outreach also enables the community to ultimately address the relationship between generational violence in the home and increased aggression towards peers.

The "Resist Bullying" project ties into the Veterans For Peace national Strategic Plan for coalition-building through community organizing to diminish conflicts

in society and build peace through public education and awareness. Statistics indicate that bullying is getting worse in American schools. As the problem progresses, there is a burgeoning movement to prevent it. Anti-bullying laws are on the books in 44 states, and states without laws are considering them.

Resist Bullying begins in the Kansas City area through Chapter 97, but chapter members hope to work with other VFP chapters to expand the project. Dale Kuhn can provide more information about the project and answer questions about how your chapter can get involved in the project. His email address is dkuhn@nutri-shield.com.

Dale Kuhn

Chapter 99, Asheville, NC

On April 30, Chapter members participated in "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" – The International Men's March to Stop Rape, Sexual Assault & Gender Violence. Team VFP099 slipped on women's pumps, high heels, and flats and took a stroll through downtown Asheville with hundreds of other men including city council members, county commissioners, business folks, and a dozen other "teams." During this event to raise funds for the local crisis center for women, we were able to connect our work to theirs. In a brief recorded interview, I explained that the violence that permeates our society expresses itself as both domestic violence and foreign war and that we must work together to heal our culture. Along the march route, we engaged bystanders and gave them copies of Sandy Kelson's military rape awareness flyer and copies of the spring War Crimes Times, referring them to the page 19 article, "17 Veterans Sue Pentagon for Indifference to Military Rapes."

You can't measure goodwill, but I know our chapter gained some stature in the community (in addition to the stature we gained in high heels!). I'm sure, given our long-standing weekly vigil against the wars, we're typically perceived as narrowly focused on a single issue. But now our neighbors have seen us more as regular, community-minded folks who share their concerns as well.

We would do well to find more opportunities like this to give us a chance to connect our concerns to those of our communities.

Kim Carlyle

Chapter 105, Baltimore, MD

On March 14 and 21, the Phil Berrigan Memorial Chapter participated in rallies in the Maryland State capital, Annapolis, in support of the Wisconsin workers and of Maryland's public workers. There were 15,000 demonstrators on the 14th, including about 40 Tea Party counterdemonstrators who tried to tell us how much they like Scott Walker. The crowd was heavily labor, with other supporters.

We are a local endorser of Fund Our Communities; Bring the War Dollars Home, whose parent organization is the New Priorities Network. We participated in a Fund Our Communities "mini-conference" on March 26 with 60 representatives from 45 regional organizations. The conference culminated in the establishment of a Steering Committee and start-up funding with a \$5,000 contribution from a motivated UFCW local. FOC is one of the coalitions organizing for the National Mayor's Conference, which meets in Baltimore 17-21 June.

A coalition of a dozen groups organized a May Day rally in downtown Baltimore. In a steady drizzle that turned into real rain, the crowd of about 50 exhorted passersby with posters and signs and VFP and VVAW flags. Drivers and pedestrians responded supportively and a few stopped to join us. Members of both chapters 105 and 16 (DC/Virginia) spoke before the rain got too heavy for the rally to continue. It did last nearly two hours, and the wet participants all thought it was a good event.

17 May 2011 marks the 43rd commemoration of the Catonsville 9 draft record burning in the suburb on Baltimore's west side. Chapter 105's namesake and the other 8 activists plus dozens of Catonsville 9 supporters are remembered every year with a gathering at the Post Office and a vigil next to the Knights of Columbus building in which the draft board rented space during the Vietnam War. This year the commemoration was on May 21.

Jim Baldrige

Chapter 109, Olympia, WA

The Rachel Corrie Chapter cosponsored Representative Dennis Kucinich's (D-Ohio) speech to a packed theater in Olympia, Washington in February. Rep. Kucinich spoke forcefully against American economic and military policies that strangle our domestic economy, squander the sacrifices of US service men and women, and create greater hostility and antipathy

toward America around the world. When asked about his policy on Afghanistan, the Ohio Congressman answered simply and directly, "bring our troops home."

The chapter has joined with the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation in its campaign to "Bring Our Billions Home", a campaign to educate people about the true costs of war. Chapter members provided "How's the War Economy Working for You?" signs and materials to a festive event that raised awareness about how war and a militarized economy hinder economic prosperity in the US.

Chapter 109 continues to support Coffee Strong, the GI coffee house outside the gates of Joint Base Lewis McChord. Two chapter members provide weekly assistance to veterans filing claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Dennis Mills

Chapter 115, Red Wing, MN

Our chapter remains small but active. This year's Minnesota VFP Peacestock (hitherto called Pigstock) will take place again at Paul and Trudi Schaefer's farm on the weekend of July 8-10. An outstanding program on Saturday includes Daniel Ellsberg, Vietnam Veteran of Pentagon Papers fame, Palestine activist and former Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, and former CIA officer now antiwar spokesman Ray McGovern. As always, camping and room stays are available. Delicious food will be served, and music, singing and socializing will inform the young and rejuvenate the old. Cost is \$30/person and \$50 for couples, with discounts as usual for anyone requesting financial assistance – contact Bill Habedank (651-388-7733) or David Harris (651-388-5863).

With the Red Wing Peace Group, we have continued our anti-war vigil each Friday evening in the central park since 2002, which could be construed as a testimony to either our endurance or our stupidity. In addition to our monthly meetings, we have formed a reading and (often quite animated) discussion group with recent books including "Rules of Disengagement" by Marjorie Cohn and Kathleen

Gilberd, and "Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism" by Naomi Klein. We continue a close working relationship with our "big brother and sister" VFP Chapter 27 in the Twin Cities, frequent lobbying efforts with Minnesota Congressional members, and writing letters to local and regional newspapers.

David Harris

Chapter 118, Salt Lake City, UT

On February 21, a special operations team comprised VFP/VVAW activists made an incursion into the most conservative county in the reddest state in the union. VFP Chapter 118 member Rick Miller, VVAW member William Cobb, along with Vietnam vet Lewis Downey, presented a panel for 2 hours to high school history students of the Walden Private School in Provo, Utah.

Walden school history teacher Eric Beecroft said, "Just wanted to say a huge thanks to all of you for the panel. It was a very powerful event for the students, some said it was the best thing they had participated in all year. I appreciate both your time and willingness to share such powerful and difficult aspects of your experiences in war. Hope to have you back again soon."

The Nikko Schoch chapter 118 planned and led a march around the city county building on March 19. Leading the way with the banner were Rick Miller, Jim Rosetti and Michael Durrant. Also attending were Gary Barkley, Larry Chadwick and Andy Figorski.

April 30th Gary Mesker and Kathy French led the chapter marching with the Utah Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

Aaron Davis



VFP member Rick Miller (middle) speaks about his experiences in Vietnam while VVAW member Bill Cobb (right) and Vietnam Vet Lewis Downey (left) listen.



VFP member Rick Miller (middle) speaks about his experiences in Vietnam while VVAW member Bill Cobb (right) and Vietnam Vet Lewis Downey (left) listen.

Chapter 132, Corvallis, OR

“Peace Tree” Planting Helps Heal Community. Following an arson attack on Corvallis’ only mosque late in 2010, VFP 132 member John Gaylord proposed planting a “Peace Tree” at the mosque as part of a series of actions to help heal the wound of the attack and demonstrate solidarity with and support for our Islamic neighbors. We also wanted to create an enduring symbol of the Corvallis community’s commitment to peace and harmony among all our neighbors, regardless of ethnic, religious or cultural heritage.

The tree planting took place following a brief ceremony on February 13, 2011. The mayor of Corvallis and several local religious leaders offered remarks before setting the four-foot mountain hemlock in place. Then members of the community each added some compost around the tree roots to help enrich its new life. One member

of the clergy put it best: This planting should not be considered closure after a painful event, but rather a new beginning of understanding, acceptance and cooperation in our community.

Iraq 8th Anniversary Memorial and Procession. Members of VFP 132 led approximately 100 people in a memorial gathering at our Central Park followed by a march through Corvallis to the National Guard Armory. Participants carried mock coffins

draped with American and Iraqi flags. Some of the Iraqi coffins were child-sized to more clearly demonstrate the horrific Iraqi civilian death toll.

Bart Bolger

Chapter 160, Viet Nam

The Hoa Binh (“Peace”) Chapter announces the election of officers: Suel Jones, president; Chuck Searcy, vice-president; and Chuck Palazzo, secretary/treasurer. The chapter is sponsoring a 2-week visit to Viet Nam in April, 2012. Each member of the delegation is to raise \$1,000 for donations as we travel through Viet Nam meeting with local people, veterans from all sides, and key officials. Our aim is to continue showing the world that severe problems caused by Agent Orange and cluster bombs, landmines, and other unexploded ordnance still exist in Viet Nam. Those interested in coming to Viet Nam should contact Nadya

Williams at nadyanomad@gmail.com.

Also, please contact us through our webpage <http://vfp-vn.ning.com/> to keep up with information concerning the April trip or just to stay informed about Agent Orange and unexploded ordnance.

Suel Jones



At this moment a man, presumably carrying a message to an officer, jumped out of the trench and ran along the top of the parapet in full view. He was half-dressed and was holding up his trousers with both hands as he ran. I refrained from shooting at him. It is true that I am a poor shot and unlikely to hit a running man at a hundred yards....Still, I did not shoot partly because of the detail about the trousers. I had come here to shoot at “Fascists”; but a man who is holding up his trousers isn’t a “Fascist,” he is visibly a fellow creature, similar to yourself, and you don’t feel like shooting at him.

George Orwell,
Homage to Catalonia, 1938



“It is, therefore, necessary to be suspicious of those who seek to convince us with means other than reason, and of charismatic leaders; we must be cautious about delegating to others our judgment and our will. Since it is difficult to distinguish true prophets from false, it is well to regard all prophets with suspicion. It is better to renounce revealed truths, even if they exalt us with their splendor or if we find them convenient because we can acquire them gratis. It is better to content ourselves with more modest and less exciting truths, those one acquires painfully, little by little and without short cuts, with study, discussion and reasoning, those that can be verified and demonstrated.”

Primo Levi, A Self-Interview.
Afterword to the 1986 edition of
If This is a Man
(translated by Ruth Feldman)



Chapter 132, Corvallis, OR led the Iraq 8th anniversary community procession to the National Guard Armory



P O E T R Y

Iraq's Night is Long

For Sa'di Yusuf

Iraq, Iraq is blood that the sun does not dry
And the sun is God's widow over Iraq. The murdered Iraqi
says to the people standing on the bridge: "Good morning
to you, for I am still alive." They say: "You are still
a dead man looking for his grave where the doves cry."

Iraq, Iraq, Iraq's night is long
Dawn only breaks for the dead to pray half a prayer
and they never complete a salutation to anyone, for the Mongols
are coming from the gate of the Caliph's palace on the bend of the river
and the river runs south, south, and carries our dead
sleepless to the palm trees' kin

Iraq, Iraq is open graveyards like schools
open to all, from the Armenian to the Turcoman
and Arab. We are equal in the study of the science
of the Last Day. There should be a poet asking:
"Baghdad, how many times will you betray the legends? How many times
construct statues for the future? How many times
demand marriage with the impossible?"

Iraq, Iraq, here the prophets stand
powerless to pronounce the name of heaven. For who
is killing who now in Iraq? Victims are fragments
on roads and in words. Their names are tufts
of words disfigured like their bodies. Here
the prophets stand together powerless to pronounce the name
of heaven, and the fallen

Iraq, Iraq, who are you when suicide is all around?
I am not I in Iraq and you are not you, and what
is he except another. The deity has abandoned the helpless
So who are we? Who are we? No more than an item
In this poem: Iraq's night is very long!

Mahmoud Darwish, 1942-2008

(translated by Catherine Cobham)

Together with You

I mourn with others
who also cared.

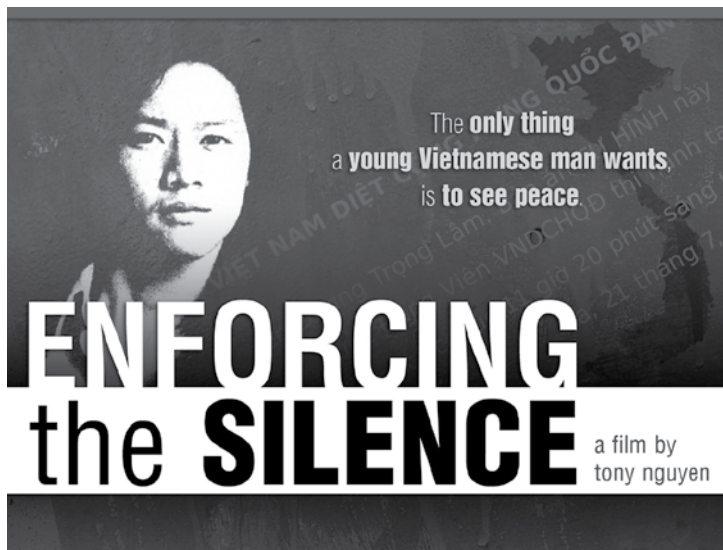
I remember with joy
the times we shared.

I grieve for that person,
now lost from view,
that person I became,
together with you.

Paul William Smart

(US Navy 1944-1946)

FILM REVIEW



Political Murder in Viet Nameese America: A New Film Enforcing the Silence

We all know that the Viet Nam War did not end in 1975: the 20-year U.S. embargo, boat people, re-education camps, sick and disabled veterans from all sides, the never-ending effects of Agent Orange and unexploded ordinance, and much more. An unexplored and deadly consequence of the war, however, occurred on US soil – the political assassinations of six Viet Nameese-Americans, five of them journalists – between 1981 and 1990. *Enforcing the Silence* is a brave new hour-long documentary film by Tony Nguyen, a 35-year-old Bay Area-based community worker turned filmmaker.

Nguyen was only 5 when a handsome young journalist and community organizer named Lam Duong was shot and killed in broad daylight on a San Francisco street as he stepped out of his apartment building on July 21, 1981. More than 25 years later, Nguyen came upon the story while working at his former job with the American Friends Service Committee (the Quakers). It was then that he intersected with the Vietnamese Youth Development Center in San Francisco, where Duong had worked and had found-

ed in 1977. Inspired to tell this hidden story, Nguyen interviewed former colleagues, classmates, reporters and police investigators who handled Duong's case, but was struck by the refusal to this day of the victim's family members to speak on camera for fear of reprisals. Within a week of the murder, a Viet Nameese group had claimed responsibility for the assassination; not surprisingly, Nguyen was unable to interview any members of local Viet Nameese anti-communist groups for the film.

Many members of the large San Francisco-Bay Area Viet Nameese community still assert that Duong, then 27, was killed for his unpopular political views, which included reprinting stories from communist post-war Viet Nam in his self-published community newspaper *The Village Temple*. Some also said that his successful social work, which he combined with his liberal views, made him a target.

Tony Nguyen's moving documentary premiered at the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival, to a rave review in the *L.A. Times*, on April 30th - the 36th anniversary of the war's end (<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/la-et-enforcing-the-silence-20110430,0,190968.story>). With growing funding, it will be screened across the nation, including a San Francisco premiere on July 21st - the 30th anniversary of Lam Duong's death.

A vociferous, and sometimes violent, right-wing political current still courses through the Viet Nameese-American community today – enforcing a silence over many issues that the youth especially feel need to be openly aired. As Lam Duong himself said, "The only thing a young Vietnamese man wants, is to see peace." This is clearly the sentiment of the filmmaker and many of his generation. As America finds itself entrenched in conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and now Libya, this film offers fresh insight into the long-term costs of war.

See www.enforcingthesilence.com for a trailer and reviews and to leave comments.

Nadya Williams
Chapter 69 San Francisco



Costs of War: Memorial Day 2011

Costs of war since 2001

\$1,199,799,350,555

Source: costofwar.com

Department of Defense Press Release

Immediate Release No. 448-11, May 28, 2011

DOD Identifies Army Casualties

The Department of Defense announced today the deaths of six soldiers who were supporting Operation Enduring Freedom.

They died May 26 of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked their unit with an improvised explosive device in Kandahar province, Afghanistan. They were assigned to the 4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 159th Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Fort Campbell, Ky.

Killed were:

1st Lt. John M. Runkle, 27, of West Salem, Ohio

Staff Sgt. Ergin V. Osman, 35, of Jacksonville, N.C.

Sgt. Louie A. Ramos Velazquez, 39, of Camuy, Puerto Rico

Staff Sgt. Edward D. Mills Jr., 29, of New Castle, Pa.

Sgt. Thomas A. Bohall, 25, of Bel Aire, Kan.

Spc. Adam J. Patton, 21, of Port Orchard, Wash.

For more information on these soldiers, the media may contact the Fort Campbell public affairs office at 931-561-0131.

Chapter 100 Awards 2011 Scholarships

VFP Chapter 100 Juneau, Alaska announced the winners of its essay contest on the theme of popular music's role in building a movement for peace. The contest was open to Southeast Alaska high school or home school students graduating in the 2010-2011 academic year. The winners received a scholarship providing financial assistance to a post-secondary school of their choice. The students were asked to write an essay on one of selected songs about peace. Megan Behnke and Cameron McLean were cowinners of the contest, with honorable mention going to Laurel Stark; all three are from Juneau. Megan Behnke wrote on the song "The Sun is Burning" sung by Simon and Garfunkel; Cameron McLean on "Handsome Johnny" sung by Richie Havens; and Laurel Stark on "We Want Peace" sung by Emmanuel Jal.

Information about the contest and the three essays are available at Chapter 100's web site: <http://vfpjuneauscholarship2011.blogspot.com/>

Here is Megan Behnke's essay.

The Sun Is Burning

The thing about music is how quietly it brings its message. It does not blare it from megaphones, nor hit people over the head with its meaning. Instead, it lures one into the beauty of its harmonies, its rhythm and rhyme—and then the words cut deeply, and suddenly the heart is hurting with an understanding of what has been said. A song can instill a longing for peace and a weary and painful realization of the need to end war better than many other communication forms because of its ability to touch the heart while bypassing any initial resistance of the mind.

"The Sun Is Burning," sung by Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel and written by Ian Campbell, epitomizes this power of music. The gentle, simple, and almost playful tune invites the audience to relax and listen. At first the words fit the sounds:

"The sun is burning in the sky
Strands of clouds go slowly drifting by
In the park the lazy bees
Are joining in the flowers, among the trees
And the sun burns in the sky"

A lovely image of a lovely day, this is: the perfect picture of a lazy summer day.

"Now the sun is in the West
Little kids go home to take their rest
And the couples in the park
Are holdin' hands and waitin' for the dark
And the sun is in the West"

We know these people. They are our children, our friends, taking in the last of a day filled with love and life.

"Now the sun is sinking low
Children playin' know it's time to go
High above a spot appears
A little blossom blooms and then draws near
And the sun is sinking low"

A blossom floating down from the sky--a lovely image. A perfect end to a perfect day.

"Now the sun has come to Earth
Shrouded in a mushroom cloud of death
Death comes in a blinding flash
Of hellish heat and leaves a smear of ash
And the sun has come to Earth"

And our dreams are scattered, broken. The sun--our protector, our source of life--is hidden in the shroud of death that we invented and deployed. No longer is the song gentle. The tune's simplicity that we have come to trust has twisted, has lashed out at our unprotected hearts. We are dropped from a cloud of peace into the dark and horrid valley of war.

"Now the sun has disappeared
All is darkness, anger, pain and fear
Twisted, sightless wrecks of men
Go groping on their knees and cry in pain
And the sun has disappeared"

And our illusions have disappeared. Our imaginary distance from war and separation from its horrors have vanished, leaving us painfully aware that we are not separate from the pain of war, even those of us who have never been directly touched. Never again can we simply dismiss war as something foreign, glorious, or far away. This desolation, this hell has come to the playing children and the lovers holding hands--to people like our neighbors. To people like us.

Simon and Garfunkel capture this. They show us how the ones in the sights of the guns, and the ones under the bomb-dropping airplanes are just like us. This realization punctures our preconceptions of war. For our ability and will to fight are strongest when we can dehumanize the enemy, and pretend that they are a something other, something separate. When we can make it "Us versus Them," and turn the "Them" into monsters and the "Us" into heroes. It is when we realize that the "Them" are just like us, just as heroic and frightened and human, that we begin to question the validity of war and to feel the craving for peace.

War is not an immediate part of my life. There are no soldiers in my immediate circle of family and friends, and I know nothing of the actual fear and horror of battle or its effects. What I know, I know from music and from stories--on the stage or in a book--that perhaps cannot show the reality of war, but can convey something of its essence. When these art forms are used not to glorify war but rather to humanize it, I am able to understand on a visceral level something of what it is to suffer war.

Compassion comes from understanding, and music and stories are able to bring, if not the full understanding of having been there, at least the understanding that comes from standing witness to the truth. When I hear "The Sun Is Burning," my heart clenches. Simon and Garfunkel are successful--I cannot see war the same way I did before hearing their song. It is beautiful, so I listen, and the war it depicts is terrible, so I cry.



IVAW Operation Recovery: Fort Hood Commander on Watch

The Iraq Veterans Against the War started Operation Recovery: A Campaign to Stop the Deployment of Traumatized Troops 9 months ago on October 7th 2010 the 9-year anniversary of the invasion of Afghanistan. The campaign began with a march from Walter Reed Medical Center to Capital Hill where members of the Senate Arms Service Committee were put on notice that persons responsible for deploying traumatized troops will be held accountable. Since that time IVAW has researched these issues at military bases across the country. From Ft. Lewis to Ft. Campbell, the IVAW has filed Freedom of Information Act requests for documentation on the deployment of traumatized troops.

During the week before Memorial Day, the Operation Recovery Team announced its first target of the Operation Recovery Campaign by putting Gen. Campbell, the Commander of Fort Hood, Texas, on watch for the deployment of traumatized troops. Six members of the Operation Recovery Team went to General Campbell's office to deliver a letter requesting he meet with the team about the plight of traumatized troops under his command. The six were turned away, and then surrounded by Fort Hood security officials who became sympathetic to the cause when the members identified themselves as veterans dealing with PTSD. The team members were then escorted off base.

They then held a press conference about the issue of untreated trauma ravaging the Fort Hood community as well as the military at large and erected a guard tower across from the gates of Fort Hood as a symbolic act to let General Campbell know that his actions (or lack thereof) affecting the health and well-being of soldiers at Fort Hood were being watched.

VFP Members can support the work of Operation Recovery by signing the Operation Recovery Pledge (http://org2.democracynaction.org/o/5966/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=4159), joining the Operation Recovery Facebook group (http://www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=group_150686925000528&ap=1), getting fact sheets and other materials at the IVAW Website (<http://www.ivaw.org/operation-recovery>), or making a donation and putting "Fort Hood" in the Special Projects box (https://org2.democracynaction.org/o/5966/p/salsa/web/common/public/content?content_item_KEY=3055).

There is also a video showing the Fort Hood project at <http://www.ivaw.org/blog/operation-recovery-deployment-welcome-ft-hood>



VFP Logo Peace Bronze Pendant

1" x 1.25" pendant
contains approximately
4 grams of Peace
Bronze, on a 20" black
waxed cord with a
magnetic clasp

\$20.00

www.vfpstore.org



A Sailors Creed: Smashing the Illusion

An active-duty Sailor speaks out

The Sailor's Creed

"I am a United States Sailor.

I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America and I will obey the orders of those appointed over me.

I represent the fighting spirit of the Navy and those who have gone before me to defend freedom and democracy around the world.

I proudly serve my country's Navy combat team with Honor, Courage and Commitment. I am committed to excellence and the fair treatment of all."

As an active duty, enlisted member of the U.S. Navy, I have had to recite the Sailor's Creed, upon receiving the order from my superiors on numerous occasions. It is custom to stand up and snap to attention with a sense of pride and patriotism while reciting the Sailor's Creed. However I have always found the Creed to be not a source of pride, as it is for many of my fellow shipmates, but a constant reminder of how our imperialist policies have not helped build democracy around the world, but have in fact undermined true democracy wherever and whenever it was about to take root.

When we say we "defend freedom and democracy around the world," as the Creed tries to cement in a young sailor's mind, are we referring to U.S. support for democracy in places like Nicaragua, Guatemala, Cuba, Vietnam, and Iraq, just to name a few places? Were we defending democracy when the U.S. government attacked and undermined the popularly-elected Sandinista government? Were we defending democracy when the CIA overthrew democratically elected Allende, attempted to assassinate Castro and successfully overthrew Mosaddegh in Iran? Were we defending democracy when U.S. imperialism waged war on the majority supported government in Vietnam? The list of popular, democratically elected governments overthrown by the U.S. military is quite long.

History shows that U.S. foreign policy is much less about "supporting democracy" than it is about placing in power puppet governments that are friendly towards U.S. business interests. The fact is that the U.S. government only accepts "democracy" if it obeys the dictates of Washington and Wall Street.

What happens when the population of another country finally decides that they are tired of being exploited and enacts democratic reforms to use their resources and the products of their labor to benefit themselves instead of some foreign investor's portfolio? You can count on the U.S. war machine to rear its ugly head in response. Just look at Iraq, put on the "terrorism list" the day it nationalized its oil. Whenever a local population has the "insane" notion that their country's wealth should benefit them instead of some Wall Street banker, the U.S. media will attempt to cast this "terrorist" or "socialist" country as an eternal threat to U.S. national security.

It is important to note that all of the so-called enemies that the U.S. identifies pose no real threat to our collective security. Instead they pose a threat to the profits of a very small portion of our population, and it happens that this small minority are the ones responsible for crafting U.S. foreign policy.

The U.S. Navy, and in fact all branches of the Armed Forces,

Sailor's Creed continued on page 19

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Please DO NOT share my contact information.

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Full Convention Registration includes both boxed lunch and Convention Banquet. Please indicate your lunch choice.

Convention Registration (before July 1, 2011): \$200 _____

Convention Registration (after June 30, 2011): \$225 _____

One Day / Two Day Convention Registration: \$75 / \$150 _____

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. Size: S M L X 2X 3X

TOTAL: _____

Friday Boxed Lunch:

- Ham, honey-mustard on baguette
- Ham, honey-mustard on gluten-free bread
- Grilled chicken on baguette
- Grilled summer veggie on baguette
- Grilled summer veggie on gluten-free bread
- Turkey & swiss on gluten-free bread

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Please DO NOT share my contact information.

HOUSING OPTIONS

PLEASE NOTE: If you plan to stay at the University Place Hotel rather than the dorm building, reservations must be made through University Place (Call 1-866-845-4647 or email uplace@pdx.edu).

Broadway Housing Dorms :
of nights _____ x \$50 \$ _____

Cafeteria Breakfast:
of breakfasts _____ x \$6.75 \$ _____

TOTAL:

Broadway Housing Dorm:
(Please indicate nights you will be staying)

Wed Thu Fri
 Sat Sun

Cafeteria Breakfast:
(Please indicate days you need breakfast)

Wed Thu Fri
 Sat Sun

The Golden Rule Project

The mission of the Golden Rule Project of Veterans for Peace (VFP) is to repair, restore and renovate the famous sailing ketch, the Golden Rule. This little ship was sailed by four brave crewmen, led by Albert Bigelow, in an attempt to stop atmospheric nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands. They were boarded by the US Coast Guard, arrested, and the boat towed back to Honolulu, twice.

The Golden Rule committee is developing plans for a 10-year tour of the USA. The Golden Rule will be spending the 2012 and 2013 seasons in San Francisco Bay. We expect to be in the middle of the hoopla surrounding the America's Cup Yacht Races, and promoting VFP and its goals of nuclear disarmament, abolishment of war.

The Golden Rule Ketch will then begin a years long tour of the nations coasts, bays, rivers, canals, waterways and Great Lakes. In the wake of recent disasters in the nuclear industry, it has become even more apparent the need for this anti-nuclear protest boat, the very 1st protest boat.

This ketch will serve as a working, floating classroom, a museum to teach the history of the early protests of nuclear bomb testing. The Golden Rule is a true relic of the cold war, and therefore deserves to be sailed again, working for the cause of peace, and a protest against nuclear weapons. The project will focus on ending nuclear radiation in all its forms, including nuclear waste disposal, or lack thereof, and the issue of depleted uranium munitions, aka low intensity nuclear war, a war crime against the civilian population.

When visiting different cities along the way, our program will consist of visits to VFP Chapters and peace and justice centers. Classrooms of children will be invited for tours and presentations of the history of the Golden Rule. Media will be invited, and a speaking engagement will be coordinated locally. The Golden Rule ketch is a media magnet, and using the boat to attract attention to local peace and justice issues will help promote the values and aims of Veterans For Peace and allied groups.

Chapter contacts may write for copies of our flyers, or you may download flyers from our website. Please consider a donation to our project. It may be 3 or 4 years, but...Guess who's coming to dinner? The Golden Rule Ketch will sail again.

Two VFP Chapters, 022 and 056, have donated more than one thousand dollars, and members of several other NorCal chapters have also donated \$500 or more. We would like to issue the "VFP Golden Rule Chapter Challenge" asking VFP chapters to match our donation. We realize not all chapters are active, and we understand some chapters are financially challenged, but we would like to respectfully ask that your chapter consider doing a fundraising event of some kind to support our cause. We would greatly appreciate the help.

Our chapter will not be able to sail this vessel around the United States for ten years. Our plan is to hand off the boat to different chapter crews as we sail around the country visiting. Of course, we will have our own Captain and crew member present, but we hope to use locals familiar with the bays, rivers and lakes we visit. Wherever we go, we need chapter coordinators to arrange our visits. If you can help, please contact us.

If you are coming to this year's convention in Portland, Oregon this summer, come visit us at our table. The Golden Rule Project announces that our project now has its own facebook page. Please log on and join and let's be friends. Please share this info throughout your lists and contacts. Thank you for your support. See you

in Portland. Fredy Champagne, Chapter 22, VFP Golden Rule Project.

<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.221122767914065.73890.221122271247448#!/?closeTheater=1>

Veterans For Peace Golden Rule Project
<http://www.vfpgoldenruleproject.org>



Sailor's Creed

Continued from page 16

do not "promote democracy" in any way whatsoever. The Armed Forces can better be seen as the apparatus that enforces Wall Street's war against oppressed people asserting their independence.

As much as this short essay identifies the failings of the Sailor's Creed to correspond to real U.S. foreign policy, it would be an error not to mention the factors that do determine U.S. foreign policy. It is well known, by those who read and understand history, that U.S. foreign policy is largely determined by the interests of the super-rich here in the United States. They benefit from these imperialist adventures. It is the rich who gain from war, while working class people are sent to die on their behalf.

Protecting United Fruit Company's interests in Latin America is not in the interests of the Marine who is sent to kill or be killed. Occupying numerous countries in the Middle East is in the interest of companies like Halliburton and Exxon, not the service member's interest. This is what U.S. foreign policy is reduced to when profit runs the show. The super-rich will continue to seek new markets, and will vigorously defend old markets in the most savage and brutal manner. They will send the young and poor, against their own class interest, to die for increased profits. The problem here is systemic, and the only remedy is true democracy.

I would like to propose a new "Sailor's Creed." A new creed that strips away the layers of propaganda and myth that has been planted in the minds of many young sailors. A new creed for a new ethics based on democracy and brotherhood:

"I am a United States Sailor.

I will support and defend the United States of America from the Wall Street bankers, their cronies in Congress, and the brutal system of exploitation.

I will obey the orders of those appointed over me only if the U.S. government follows international and national law. When the U.S. government chooses to disobey international and national law, so will I choose to disobey the unlawful orders given to me by my superiors.

I no longer represent the imperialist spirit of the Navy and Department of Defense nor those who have gone before me to undermine democracy, drop bombs on innocent civilians, and fight for corporate interests around the world.

I am committed to excellence and the fair treatment of all, including those detained and tortured illegally by the U.S military and security establishment."

Anonymous

First published in March Forward (<http://www.answercoalition.org/march-forward/statements/the-sailors-creed-smashing.html>)

Anonymous is a 2nd Class Petty Officer onboard a U.S. Navy submarine.



VFP NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2011



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