



VETERANS FOR PEACE

Organized Locally. Recognized Nationally.

VFP and The Occupy Movement

The historian Tony Judt wrote shortly before his too-early death that “For many American commentators and policy-makers, the message of the 20th century is that war works.” Many of these same commentators and policy-makers took another message from the 20th century: that unregulated financial and commodity markets also work. As the 21st century began, the view was that the globalized power of the greatest military machine the world had ever known would guarantee peace and security and that the globalized economic power of the most productive engine of growth the world had ever known would guarantee opportunity and prosperity.

Alas. We are now in the 11th year of what the Pentagon refers to as “the long war” a struggle that has left the country less secure and whose purpose beyond the original response to 9/11 has never been adequately articulated. We have just “ended” a 7-year war and occupation in Iraq, a country that despite President Obama’s claim is not sovereign, stable, or secure. Also, we are now in the 4th year of the worst economic catastrophe in the capitalist world since the Great Depression, a catastrophe that has accompanied a 30-year attack on the welfare state and the ethic of common provision necessary to sustain it. We are at perpetual war; we cannot employ our people in honorable work.

The protests against militarism and monetarism have until recently been ineffectual. The “country” is not fighting the perpetual war; it is being prosecuted by about one half of one percent of the population. However, the rise of the Occupy Movement, which is an expression of the frustration and the suffering resulting from the economic catastrophe, from its beginnings on Wall Street to an international movement with broad but inchoate aims has united those who ask for an end to war with those who ask for an end to inequality.

Veterans for Peace has been involved in the Occupy Movement throughout the country. The chapter reports in this issued document the extent of the involvement from Portland (Maine and Oregon) to San Francisco and from Minneapolis to San Antonio. Some of the most iconic events of the young movement have involved VFP members or other veterans. In New York City, Marine Sergeant Shamar Thomas, a veteran of the war in Iraq, famously shamed a phalanx of City police officers trying to disperse a crowd; his cry to them that they should be protecting the people in the street and admonishing the police that “there is no honor in this” eloquently

stated the cause of people attempting to re-take the public space. In Oakland, California, Scott Olsen, an ex-Marine who served two tours in Iraq and who is a member of IVAW and VFP, was struck by a tear gas cannister and severely injured, one of the first casualties of this struggle (see the report of Chapter 69, San Francisco, for an update on his condition). In Boston, members of Chapter 9, The Smedley Butler Brigade, who were at the Occupy encampment formed the first line of resistance to the Boston Police who were attempting to clear the gathering by force. Some of the member of the Brigade were injured and/or arrested (see the report of Chapter 9). Their actions inspired the following response by one of the members of Occupy Boston.

Veterans for Peace,

I am writing to thank you for your courageous actions at the Occupy Boston encampment on Monday evening and Tuesday morning.

You arrived in the middle of our General Assembly. The energy prior to your arrival was frankly a bit low – most of us had been marching, chanting, singing and standing since noon and we were exhausted, yet committed to remaining. When you arrived, however, there was a significant shift in the energy of our group. We were suddenly enlivened again, bolstered by your support, your words, your mere presence. The very act, the theater, of your entrance conjured up an image of knights in shining armor, riding in, proud and brave with your flags held high flapping behind you – and let

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From the (Ex)Acting Executive Director



By the time you're reading this or shortly thereafter, Veterans For Peace will have a new Executive Director. Here are a few things I'd like to let you know about our crew as I'm taking leave.

One very helpful thing was the board's decision to prioritize hiring a development director and follow up with hiring an Executive Director. Elliott pressed for that decision and Leah did a great job chairing the search committees

We now have a cracker-jack development director—VFP's first-ever by the way—**Tammy Severino**.

She brings much good energy and a sense of confident professionalism to the job. VFP will be well represented by her as her efforts get underway.

We should also have the services of a Chapter Support Coordinator by the time you read this. I don't have to tell you how important that position is! I'm confident we will hire someone that's a fine fit for the job, based on the good applications we've received.

And no mention of the importance of good staff can conclude without acknowledging the small but mighty band we already have.

What you may not have known about **Shelly Rockett** when she's taken time with many of you on the phone, is that her main responsibility is shepherding our new website to its successful debut. Once again, you may have already seen it, but if not you'll be getting the announcement any day now. It has been a whale of a job, believe me.

Virginia Druhe has not only kept the office in good running order, she has also actually been the person most responsible for keeping the whole operation glued together during this period. She is a calm, steady, invaluable presence.

Chrissie Brooks has kept the store inventory hopping and has pleasantly filled no small number of (ahem!) last-minute orders for VFP swag, making sure we're flying the flag in style.

Many of you have remarked how good it is to have **Doug Zachary** back, working his magic over the phone as he separates you from your money. And you gotta admit, you never felt a thing!

When I accepted the board's invitation to serve as interim director back in May, stormy seas were buffeting our little office in St. Louis. We've been on an even keel for a few months now and seas are considerably calmer. Looking back 8 months, I feel my most useful contribution to VFP in this job was weathering a storm and being able to return our attention to the work.

After I hand over the keys I plan to sleep for a couple weeks and then get back at the keyboard and back in the streets . . . and never step inside a Megabus for the rest of my life if I can help it. Thanks to every one of you for supporting VFP. It's been a real privilege and a real highlight of my life to help steer the old boat for a while.

And as "Mr. Mack," my favorite Megabus driver, says each time we pull into St. Louis, "Peace and love, ya'll."

Mike



Direct Costs of War and Occupation As of January 29, 2012

Total: \$1.298 Trillion

Iraq: \$800.6 Billion

Afghanistan: \$496.5 Billion

Source: costof war.com/en

President's Message

As I travel around the country, through the bus or train window, in cities and small towns I keep seeing VFP flags and behind them I see a small city of tents. It makes me proud to be a VFP member. It is a testimonial to what VFP is—grassroots activists out doing the work that makes a difference. At the national level we have no idea that most of these exist.

The Occupy Movement is the greatest step toward democracy in my lifetime. During the last election we tried everything we could to put the war on the political agenda, with no luck. But Occupy has not only put the hyper-concentration of wealth—the plutocracy—on the political agenda, it has re-framed the entire political debate. It has also changed the conversation around the country; suddenly people are thinking in terms of the 99% vs. 1%.

And VFP's connection with it is so fitting. After all we know that war is the greatest concentrator of wealth. Dr King came out



in opposition to the war because he saw that under the cloak of war all the work on racial equality and helping to lift people out of poverty was being reversed. He said "I watched this program broken and eviscerated, as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war"

War is the greatest concentrator of wealth. In 4 years of the Civil War the number of millionaires in the US went from a few to hundreds. In 4 years of WWI 21,000 new millionaires were made. It is only under the excuse of war that the US Citizens could be convinced to allow almost 60% of the discretionary budget be put into one department (Defense Department), forcing the other 11 departments of the government to fight over the scraps. Eisenhower said it this way "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. . . Under the dark clouds of war, it is humanity hanging on a cross of iron."

We all know that we need jobs, what we forget is that the military-industrial complex produces fewer jobs per dollar invested than any other sector of the economy. Education produces twice the jobs per dollar. Looked at the other way, every dollar spent on defense takes away jobs, because that same dollar would have made more jobs anywhere else.

Occupy will need our continued support. In the spring we need to help it grow and spread through the middle class.

Elliott Adams



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me tell you, as an ardent feminist I don't think I've ever referred to a group of mainly men as knights in shining armor!

Further, I had the chance to speak with a few of you as we waited for the police to arrive. Your encouraging words, and again your mere presence, emboldened and bolstered me. Having never been in such a fear-charged, potentially violent situation, somehow, I felt safer because you were there. Frankly, I was not expecting you to stand with us as we defended our encampment; I figured you would stand to the side, supportive but removed. But when the police arrived to disperse us and I realized you all had no plans to move from your position in front of our chain, again, I felt strengthened. From my position in the chain, I could not see fully what was occurring, but watching your proud, beautiful flags held tall, waiver and fall due to the police actions against you my heart wrenched. I could not believe what I was seeing. You all deserve so much more respect than that. And then I watched one of your members be forcefully pushed to the ground. At that moment, something inside me snapped and I was overwhelmed with the deepest feeling of determination I have ever felt. I was filled with fear, but also with pride, knowing that we were all in this together. There was no question in my mind that what I, what we, were doing was right and just.

So again, I want to thank you for your actions and presence. I don't think that words can accurately convey my deep appreciation for you all, and what it meant to me to have you with us that night. I will never forget it.

Thank you,

Sefira Bell-Masterson

Standing with such as this young woman should make all of us proud. There is honor in this.



Newsletter

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Chapter Reports

Chapter 1, Portland, Maine



Tom Sturtevant holds a sign during the Global Network protest in Bath, Maine that kicked-off our 2004 annual event. Tom came to every Global Network event

A charter member of the original Veterans For Peace Chapter 001 died on January 9, 2012. Tom Sturtevant was a former President and current Board member. He was the epitome of a nonviolent direct activist in line with our organization's pledge to refrain from violence of any kind. His words, "The only way to achieve peace in this world is to act peacefully, forcefully, with dignity, and integrity" still guide our chapter's actions whether during protests or answering questions about our mission statement.

In his memory, we will continue to work to abolish war, keep peace in our hearts, and make this a better world for our children and grandchildren. Rest in peace, good friend.

Continuing the struggle that Tom epitomized so well, members of the chapter have been active in the Occupy Manchester (New Hampshire) movement and the Occupy Portland movement.

Clarence Smith

Chapter 9, Boston, MA

On October 10 at a Chapter 9 monthly meeting, associate member Sue Serpa received a text message asking for support at Occupy Boston. Earlier in the day the en-

campment spread from Dewey Square into the adjoining Rose Kennedy Greenway, and the second camp was facing eviction. We decided to wrap up our business and stand in solidarity with Occupy. We were warmly greeted by the Occupiers who welcomed Vietnam vet and Chapter 9 Coordinator Pat Scanlon to the front of the "stack" to give a rousing statement of support and gratitude to the Occupiers.

Iraq vet and Chapter 9 member Rachel McNeill led us with the people's mic in saying our oath: "I do solemnly swear to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic!" At approximately 1:20 a.m. (October 11), the police closed in on the camp, knocking veterans young and old to the ground along with their VFP and American flags. Six of our members were arrested.

Videos of the incident went viral on YouTube and Twitter, becoming what we refer to as "the shots seen 'round the world." The Smedleys believe (modesty aside) that this action in the early hours of the morning was the catalyst that inspired other veterans around the country to stand in supporting and defending Occupy encampments. The actions of the police also drew some new veterans into VFP, and it highlighted the presence of veterans who had been at Occupations across the country all along. Occupiers came out to support our Veterans (Armistice) Day Peace Parade, making it the biggest one yet.

On a sad note, VFP associate members and dear friends Carlos and Melida Arredondo tragically lost their son Brian, 24, who took his own life on December 19. Brian was 17 when his older brother Alex, a Marine, died in Najaf, Iraq, in 2004. The Arredondos asked Chapter 9 to provide an honor guard at Brian's funeral, which we were privileged to do.

Lara Hoke

Chapter 10, Albany, NY

Chapter 10 members have participated in Occupy Albany, Occupy Wall Street and the VFP sponsored

Freedom Plaza Occupation in Washington, DC. Members have strongly supported the Hancock 38 both by attending the trial and working to publicize the trial so more folks will be more aware and resist the expanding presence of drones both locally as well as a deadly instrument of U.S-sponsored terrorism world wide. John Amidon has produced several excellent videos. Unmasking the Illusion - Drones on Trial may be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxmKlIdfL4s>. Our Chapter marched in the Veterans Day Parade with a large contingent of Occupy Albany Members. Dan Wilcox participated in a meeting of representatives of Tri-County Council of Viet Nam Era Veterans with folks from Occupy Albany to work through some concerns some local veterans expressed about the Vietnam Memorial. We continue to participate in local vigils and have written to Rep. Paul Tonko requesting a meeting to strongly express our concern over the 2012 military budget. We have also changed the location of our meeting to a local coffee house and have moved the meeting from evening to morning which we hope will work towards an increased attendance and better serve our members. We continue to support the VFP "How is the War Economy Working for You?" campaign and encourage other chapters to do so. Our web site is www.vfpchapter10.org.

John Amidon

Chapter 14, Gainesville, FL

The final quarter of the year was very eventful for the chapter. Along with several other local Peace and Justice groups, we succeeded in getting the meal limit lifted at the Gainesville Homeless Shelter, St Francis House, so they can feed everyone



Chapter 9 (Smedley D. Butler Brigade) marching with Occupy Boston on October 15, 2011, just a few days after the dramatic events of Oct 11.

who shows up for food every day. Right around the same time the Occupy Movement began and we immediately joined up with them. One of our members, John Fullerton, is with them daily and he stores their kiosk setup at his house every night. They have a sleep-in core group that sleeps at The Bo Diddley Downtown Plaza and they table all day, have General Assembly sessions nightly. We featured them prominently at the 25th Annual Winter Solstice Concert with an ad in the Program and recognized one of their members onstage at the intermission.

The concert was a great success with various local organizations tabling at the event, great music as usual by various local musicians led by emcee Bill Hutchinson. They are the best musicians in the Gainesville area and we get a full house every year. Two of the Peace Poetry winners were thrilled to read their poems to the crowd. We raised the largest amount ever. At the January meeting we immediately gave a total of \$3600 to various groups including the Arredondo Family to help with the funeral expenses for their son, Brian who committed suicide on Dec 19th, the Bradley Manning Defense Fund and Courage to Resist.

Bill Warrick

Chapter 15, Tallahassee, FL

The chapter has been involved with Occupy Tallahassee since its first General Assembly, in October, providing logistical and tactical support and advice. We gave a presentation on Veterans Day weekend to Occupy on the costs and effects of war, both on the home front and those down range. We organized and participated in the Scott Olsen Candlelight Vigil 1 November in front of Florida's Old Capitol and a march on 2 November at Lake Ella. We attended and tabled at the School of Americas Watch in Columbus Georgia,



Chapter 21 5th annual fund raiser party.

19-20 November, getting dozens of cards signed and sent to Bradley Manning for his birthday. On 17 December, we organized and joined with the worldwide demonstrations in support of Bradley Manning. Members have continued their activity with the Bradley Manning Support Network.

Tom Baxter

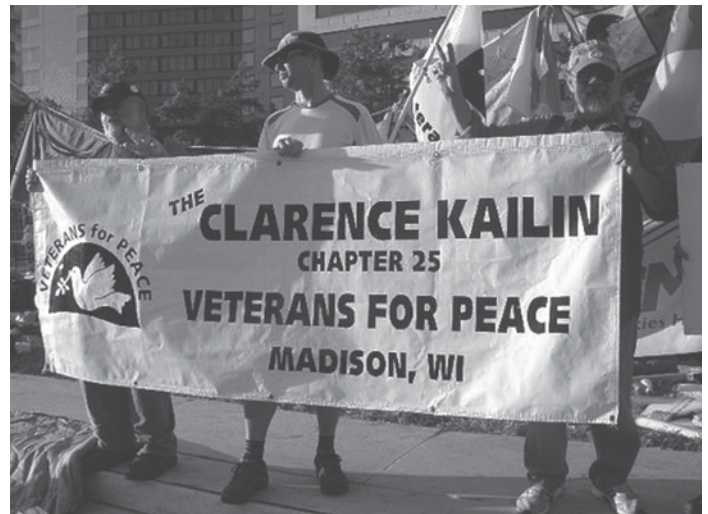
Chapter 16, District of Columbia

The chapter drew approximately 20 people to an Armistice Day rally in Rockville, MD, and a few of our members traveled the following weekend to Fort Benning, GA, to participate in the School of the Americas Watch. We also participated in the march and rally in support of Bradley Manning at Fort Meade (MD) in December, and have made frequent trips to Freedom Plaza in DC to support Stop the Machine.

Patrick McCann

Chapter 21, Northern NJ

2011 was a watershed year for our chapter as it probably was for others. The Occupy Movement captured the imagination of activists everywhere. Arriving at Zuccotti Park on a bright Saturday in October and unfurling our VFP and VVAW banners, a roar went up in the crowd and they yelled, "The veterans are here!" Moving through the crowd and speaking to the young activists and displaying our flags near the drum corner, we realized the torch has been passed to a new generation. Hearing their voices and reading their signs we were inspired by the bravery of these young people. We marched with them to a rally in Washington Square Park. Along the way New Yorkers and tourists alike greeted us with cheers, peace signs, and clicking cameras. Since then chapter members, individually and in groups, have participated in Occupy Wall Street activities. Chapter members Geoff and Wendy Ithen have the honor of reporting their daughter



Chapter 25 at Occupy Washington.

was arrested marching peacefully across the Brooklyn Bridge. All charges have been dropped.

We have also marched with Occupy Jersey City. We maintain our 6½-year long peace vigil at the Teaneck Armory. Chapter 21's 5th Puffin Peace Jam was held in November. Featured poets included Post Traumatic Press publisher Dayl Wise, Chapter 21 member and VVAW founder Jan Barry and Combat Paper Project/Warrior Writer Eli Wright. Our 5th annual chapter fund raiser was held December 3rd and was a big success. Here's hoping that in 2012 our son Joe won't be deployed to Afghanistan again.

Walt and Nancy Nygard

Chapter 25, Madison, WI

Dave Soumis, Lars Prip, and I, represented Chapter 25 of at the opening of Occupy Washington in early October. The three of us were very visible, due to the large chapter banner we carried. From the start, media folks sought us out for interviews.

At the Air and Space Museum, an agent provocateur caused a guard to pepper-spray several people. This led to gas blowing into the museum, which made them close the museum and send the visiting tourists out... not a happy bunch of campers. The agent provocateur bragged about his exploits online, and thus blew his own cover, but the disappointed tourists didn't know that.

A couple of the men who came up to talk to me were active duty Army, one with two tours in Iraq and the other heading back to Afghanistan soon. Both agreed that the wars are counterproductive and wasteful. Neither was gung-ho, and neither was glad to be a part of these wars.

I won't forget the woman who sat on a wall across from us as we held our banner and the crowds passed by. She broke our hearts: the widow of a many-tour soldier who came home from his last tour and disappeared. She thinks he took his own life.

None of us wanted to leave. We feel that we made a good contribution to the "Occupy" movement, and that we learned a lot too. All three of us have been active with Occupy Madison since our return.

Larry Orr

Chapter 27, Minneapolis, MN

Many Chapter 27 members participated in an early December, intensive Non-violence Training, facilitated by Janet Chisholm, Creating a Culture for Peace, along with Elliott Adams. Elliott stayed on for a couple days for other meetings with the group, and ended up with us on the MSNBC Ed Schultz show, as we stood in support of Bobby Hull, former Marine, threatened with foreclosure on his home. The event was organized by Occupy Minnesota, where we've had a strong presence from the beginning, standing in strong support, but always making the connection that economic problems for the 99% back home are primarily due to enormous profits for much of the 1% by running illegal wars, sanitized by the lies of too much of the media.

On the evening of November 11, Armistice Day, after hundreds of churches and organizations joined us in our annual bell-ringing remembrance that World War I should have been the last war, 11 Chapter 27 members slept/stood watch at the Occupy site at the Minneapolis Government Center. This event, brilliantly facilitated by Bruce Berry and Michael Orange, included a late night rally featuring Jack Nelson Pallmeyer, long-time activist, University Peace and Justice Professor, and significant candidate for U.S. Senate.

On March 18, Wayne Wittman is leading us in sponsorship of an event at the State Capitol, NINE YEARS LATER, THE DAY BEFORE, where we will comprehensively and articulately look at the horrendous costs to everyone, because of the wars we tried to stop, but couldn't in 2003. In the wake of this, we continue to do our best to occupy the schools, providing students with information usually left out when recruiters tell their story. We have also called out and are watching a high level school district administrator, hired to improve student achievement after reaching the rank

of Lt. Col. in the military. His insistence that his presence has nothing to do with the military, comes at a time when the National Assn. of School Boards has issued an administrative publication, developing the theme that since the military is the biggest employer in the country, we need to look at their "best practices" in training, lining up with them so that graduating students are ready to go to work. This is horrifying, at best, and we continue to promote our best training as peacemakers.

Larry Johnson

Chapter 32, Miami, FL

Chapter 32 is excited to announce that we are hosting the 27th annual national Veterans for Peace Convention this August 8 to 12 at the Miami Marriott (Bayshore). We've booked Alice Walker and Father Roy Bourgeois to speak at our banquet that Saturday evening and are planning tours to Cuba and Haiti immediately following the convention. Our chapter will also march for the 7th consecutive year in the Martin Luther King, Jr. parade in the Liberty City area of Miami.

Chapter 34, New York, NY

Members participate in weekly Peace Vigils, Bradley Manning support, Labor, Immigrant Rights, Pride Parade, and counter-recruitment events. We join Occupy Wall Street and local Peace and Justice groups in events aimed at showing disgust for bailing out Wall St. banks, while the majority of Americans are losing jobs, homes, and enduring cuts in health care and education.

Forum "The Things We Leave Behind-the Long-Term Effects of War on Countries & their Populations" Agent Orange, depleted uranium, PTSD, and land mines; Tom Fasy, Susan Schnall, Geoff Millard, and Mike Felker discussed what countries and their populations have to deal with after war is over.

Eleven members attended the annual VFP Convention in Portland, Oregon; resolutions sponsored by the chapter all passed; regarding depleted uranium testing, Agent Orange legislation, and toxic chemicals in Korea. 55 participants joined our Peace Contingent in the Veterans Day Parade, receiving an

overwhelmingly positive public response. Eighty people attended our Holiday Party, including two elected officials.

Speakers at recent chapter meetings have been Cathy Breen of CW, who discussed trips to Syria and Jordan to assist in resettlement of the over 2 million Iraqi refugees, and Carmen Trotta of Witness Against Torture, who provided history of the illegal US detention and torture of "enemy combatants," and the upcoming Day of Action Against Guantanamo.

Bob Keilbach

Chapter 35, Spokane, WA

In Spokane, we wrapped up a good year just as the best college football teams do, by going bowling. Most of our active members turned out to Bowl for Water, encouraged by guttersnipe instigator Michael Poulin. We had a great time and raised a little money for a project to provide clean water for kindergartners and their families in Gaza. We also validated the statement of each participating veteran that he was either a lousy bowler or hadn't bowled in 25 years or more.

For Veterans Day, we managed to get invited to give our perspectives on appropriate recognition of veterans at Spokane Community College where the student body includes many new veterans. We were not intentionally provocative in our fourth public panel presentation of the year, but it seems there are still college students and staff who have never learned anything about alternatives to war. A few days earlier, we had a more receptive audience of progressive Democrats at the (Sen.) Warren G. Magnuson Club, taking advantage of our own Hollis Higgins being the program chair for the organization.

Rusty Nelson



The recently deceased Hugh Bruce (right) at a Chapter 34 event.

Chapter 38, Ithaca, NY

Ongoing projects are Friday morning coffee meetings where we solve the problems of the world. Our 3rd Friday film for January is *The Camden 28* with guest panelists Ed McGowan and Ellen Grady. In early January, we organized a benefit concert to raise money for the Food Donation Network (food for the poor and homeless) and Veterans' Fellowship Of Reconciliation. Through this organization we send books to Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans in prison (35,000+ locked down).

Luie DeBenedette is our representative with Occupy Ithaca and is involved daily. We make it part of our group's routine to stop at the site at DeWitt Park and explain to visitors about the corporate involvement in the pain felt by innocent civilians and our young troops.

It is a pleasure to report that Veterans' Sanctuary farm program in Trumansburg had a great finale to the growing season. We are active participants and supporters of their programs. We share 'Warrior Writing' sessions twice a month and are available to help when they hold 'Combat Paper' workshops. <http://veteranssanctuary.blogspot.com/>. Nate Lewis or Jenny Pacanowski are their contacts.

One upcoming project is to host fundraising events for Ricky Anywar, a former Ugandan child-soldier. Ricky wants to start a solar-powered radio network in Uganda to bring people and villages together. His orphanage for child-soldiers and young girls that were sex slaves is extremely effective and thriving. Contact us at ivets-for@gmail.com or 845-270-0439.

Jim Murphy

Chapter 41, Cape Cod, MA

Members of Cpl Jeffrey M. Lucey Chapter started the Fall by joining with the Smedley Butler Brigade (Boston Chapter) in their support for the young people of Occupy Boston. Several Cape Cod members made multiple visits to the occupation site and marched with those protesting Wall Street greed, corruption of the political process, and the human and financial costs of endless wars. We were inspired by the Occupiers and tried to help them sustain their voice for justice and peace.

On Veterans Day, with an increased number of members

and friends, we again chose to march with other Cape Cod veterans groups in the largest event on the Cape. We also joined with the local Nam Vets Association in initiating a food drive for vets who are homeless and in need of help which became a part of the event.

On the day after Veterans Day, we again went to Occupy Boston to take part in their program to honor veterans and advocate for them and for withdrawal of US troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. We joined and supported the Lucey family (Jeffery's parents and sister) as they once again spoke out about veteran PTSD and suicide - and the ongoing need for preventive and therapeutic help for affected troops and veterans.

In late November, we participated in an Occupy Cape Cod event at a local Bank of America (which resulted in the bank being shut down for a few hours). The effort, spearheaded by a member of our chapter, was focused on wrongful foreclosures and hopes to occupy a home due for foreclosure and block the 'wrongful occupiers.'

Finally, in December, the chapter began our preparation for our 17th Annual Poetry for Peace event, which has become a well-known and beloved event on the Cape and a way to reach the 'non-choir' with our message about the true cost of violence and warfare. The contest was once again honored to receive a grant from the Arts



Chapter 50 memorial display of pseudo-headstones.

Foundation of Cape Cod to assist with expenses.

Duke Ellis

Chapter 50, Northern Michigan

The Bruce and Char Sanderson Chapter meets once monthly. We always have an excellent turnout. The meeting is followed by a "peace walk" through the streets of downtown. We are joined by the Occupy Traverse City group for our march for peace.

Being that the media gives little print or time to the wars, we recently displayed a full-page add in our newspaper showing the human and economic cost of these wars. First and foremost we focused on the damage to the lives of millions of people who have been affected by our involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As is our custom on Veterans Day and Memorial Day, we honor Michigan veterans who have given their lives in these latest wars with a display of tasteful pseudo-headstones. We use headstones out of respect to the veterans and their families with diverse religious beliefs. Each headstone has a picture of the fallen one, his or her birth and death date and other pertinent info. This display, in a vast open space near the bay in Traverse City, is well received and emotionally moving to our community. At noon on Memorial Day, and 11 a.m. on Veterans Day, a young bugler blows the taps, and we take turns reading the names of those deceased until all have been recognized.

Through fundraising efforts, Chapter 50 grants a yearly \$1000



Members of Chapter 41 prepare to march in the annual Veterans Day Parade in Hyannis, MA. Hundreds of Cape Cod veterans were on hand during the parade to represent service during World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

scholarship to Northwestern Michigan College to someone who is in financial need, is a direct descendant of a veteran, or who plans a career in some type of peacekeeping activity.

Tim Keenan

Chapter 57, Vermont

For at least a decade, the Will Miller Green Mountain Chapter has been allocated an hour on Public Access Television VCAM out of Burlington Vermont, usually the first Sunday of each month at noon. President Bert Thompson and Treasurer Dave Ross are the stalwart mainstays of program, accompanied by a shifting cast of a few available members. Topics vary and are predetermined at the monthly meeting preceding the show. Special guests are usually part of the program. Recent shows have focused on such topics as: the Occupy movement locally and nationally; closing down the School of the Americas (guest was a person arrested previous year); sexual harassment and gender issues in the military; the Freedom Plaza Washington demonstration; what is "Patriotism"?; the militarization of Burlington, Vermont. The Chapter has duplicated the shows for distribution to other public access stations in Vermont.

Larry Hamilton

Chapter 69, San Francisco, CA

Scott Olsen catapulted IVAW and VFP onto the international stage when he was hit in the forehead by a police tear gas canister on October 25th at an Occupy protest in Oakland, California. The 24-year-old former Marine was wearing a VFP t-shirt when he nonviolently stood in front of a line of police who were forcing out the encampment. Active with both

the San Francisco-Bay Area IVAW and with VFP Chapter 69, he had just participated in early October in a 2-day counter-recruitment campaign at the annual Fleet Week military show that attracts tens of thousands to the San Francisco waterfront. The chapter supported the intensive media campaign after the attack on Scott, but IVAW did an exemplary job, appearing on national and international news programs. Scott Olsen is recovering his speech, but he still must wear a neck brace.

Members of Chapters 69 and 162 rallied and marched in San Francisco in early December along with a coalition of sixteen activist groups, in support of the Occupy Movement. Speakers demanded an expansion of Social Security, no cuts to Medicaid, universal medical care, and economic fairness. The march began at Federal Building Plaza at 7th and Mission and proceeded down Market Street to rallies at the doors of Wells Fargo and of Verizon, and in front of the Hyatt Hotel on Drumm Street in solidarity with Hotel Workers Local 2 who were striking. The march went on to Justin Herman Plaza to support Occupy San Francisco.

Our chapter continues on the long road to bring the Agent Orange legislation, HR 2634 to fruition in Congress. See www.vn-agentorange.org (Contact: info@vn-agentorange.org) for all details & how you can get your congress member to co-sponsor this landmark bill. We also spoke at and attended a conference on Agent Orange at the University of California at Berkeley October 28 and 29 (see the related story on the legislation in this issue).

The chapter is spearheading a veterans and activist Spring Tour to Viet Nam (April 17 – May 1) led by three veterans who live full-time in Viet Nam. Contact us today, don't delay, to get on board for this once-in-a-lifetime tour by VFP Hoa Binh (Peace)



Steve Morse, Francis Grinnon, and Denny Riley
Photos by Judith Sandoval, VFP associate member.

Chapter 160, our only overseas chapter!
E-mail nadyanomad@gmail.com

War Crimes Times, the national quarterly print and on-line newspaper of VFP, is now being printed and distributed on the West Coast by Chapter 69, in addition to its East Coast printing by Chapter 99, N. Carolina.

Nadya Williams

Chapter 71, Sonoma County, CA

The chapter plans to show the video, "Hidden Battles" at our local Unitarian Church. Our board has reviewed it and found it to be powerful and moving.

We are taking part in a community gathering called "A Season for Non Violence" We will also be attending several meetings celebrating Martin Luther King day.

We will be attending a VFP Northern California Regional gathering in Ukiah, March 23-25. Some of us were involved with an action in San Francisco in January called "Occupy the Courts," which is about the "Move to Amend" movement seeking to overturn the deceptively named "Citizens United." Lastly, we participated in a workshop in Santa Rosa in late January called "Alternatives to Violence." The purpose of these workshops is to try to deal with conflict in a nonviolent way. These 3-day workshops are done in jails and prisons all over the world. I am a new facilitator in this work, and have found it to be very rewarding, especially in prison.

Peter Tracy

Chapter 72, Portland, OR

The chapter held its own Armistice Day commemoration on 11/11 at 11:11 a.m. at Pioneer Courthouse Square in downtown Portland with President Grant Remington presiding. Testimony from veterans and allies regarding the original intent of Ar-



Scott Olsen, Fleet Week counter-recruitment action, San Francisco, October 9.



Chapter 72 Armistice Day Commemoration.

mistice Day was given. Veteran testimony ranged from those serving in WWII to those from the Iraq/Afghanistan wars.

The Portland Occupy movement got under way on October 6th with VFP72 fully supporting it. A veteran tent in the park was established, and VFP and IVAW members have been an integral part of the movement.

The support network for Bradley Manning has been ongoing with highway banner and rallies.

Marion Ward

Chapter 75, Phoenix, AZ

The chapter had a busy and interesting 2011. In February, Richard A. Smith succeeded Dennis Stout as chapter spokesperson after Dennis's long and productive tenure.

In March, we participated in a demonstration against George W. Bush, who appeared at the Civic Center in Phoenix at the behest of Arizona Christian College (ACC). Richard Smith read excerpts from a criminal indictment that had been filed against Bush just a month earlier by the Center for Constitutional Rights (to review the indictment see ccrrjustice.org). In May and September, chapter members conducted a counter-recruiting program at a Phoenix area high school. Our annual appearance in the VA-sponsored Phoenix Veterans Day parade on November 11 was well received. However, it was not without controversy. For the past several years, we have honored our comrades who have been killed and wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan by utilizing a U. S. flag-draped coffin to serve as the centerpiece for our parade float. We were told that our float "needed to be more patriotic" and that it "tarnished

the image of the parade." They also requested that we remove the coffin from our float. After a lengthy discussion with the parade's organizers, we rejected their request.

The chapter continues to support the Occupy Phoenix movement. Most recently, we marched with the Reverend Jesse Jackson on December 6 through downtown Phoenix promoting jobs and justice for all Americans, including, more particularly, veterans.

Richard Smith

Chapter 87, Sacramento, CA

The chapter was a visible and well-received part of Sacramento's first Veterans Day Parade in many years.

We sponsor a weekly anti-war vigil every Wednesday afternoon during commute time, a monthly anti-war vigil every second Saturday evening during our city's Second Saturday Art Walk, and serve food at a homeless help center once a month.

In addition to these regular activities, Sacramento VFP members supported Occupy Sacramento on marches and as legal advisor (a VFP/ACLU member). Members have been attending meetings of a "Safe Ground" self-help homeless activist group, offering support and assistance whenever possible. VFP members have participated in anti-drone protests and Boycott-Divestment-Sanction movement leafletting.

John Reiger

Chapter 91, San Diego, CA

The Hugh Thompson Memorial Chapter was engaged in the community in a variety of peace and social justice activities in fall 2011. The chapter began its second year providing sleeping bag sets to the many homeless veterans and non-vets in downtown San Diego and recently passed out its 1000th bag set paid for by public donations that now exceed \$25,000. Many nights, chapter members wait with homeless veterans who are trying to get the last few beds at the city's 150-bed veterans' tent and provide sleeping bags, clothes, shoes, and water to those who aren't fortunate enough in the last-bed lottery. Chapter members have been active and supportive of Occupy San



Chapter 75's float in the Phoenix Veteran's Day parade.

Diego and its activities, and have also visited all five San Diego congressmen/women to remind them of the overall cost of war as well as identified local issues. Veterans Day found the chapter marching in the annual San Diego Veterans Day Parade, as well as erecting a new Arlington West Memorial to the fallen in Iraq/Afghanistan who called southern California their home. The chapter placed 250 tombstone-shaped markers honoring fallen servicemen and women from San Diego, Imperial, Orange, and Los Angeles counties and plans on expanding our markers to include all of California's fallen (about 800). Each month, chapter members participated with others in the peace community by placing peace banners over a busy stretch of Interstate 5 in downtown San Diego and were featured on local TV stations for their efforts. Chapter 91 goes into 2012 energized by our 2011



New Arlington West Memorial, Chapter 91 San Diego.

activities, some new active young members with IT skills, while recognizing that there is so much to be done in San Diego and our country to fulfill our statement of purpose.

Gil Field

Chapter 101, South Bay/Peninsula, CA

In solidarity with VFP Chapter 27 Chapter 101 asked churches in the San Jose California area to ring their bells on Armistice Day November 11, 2011 in remembrance of the terrible slaughter of World War I to remind Americans that war as an instrument of national policy must end. On the morning of November 11 members of chapter 101 joined with a coalition of local activists in front of City Hall in San Jose California and at 11:11 rang a large bell eleven times. A YouTube video of the event is available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7w2u36IYKDY>

Phil Pflager

Chapter 102, Milwaukee, WI

The third annual Armistice Day observance at Milwaukee City Hall, sponsored by Chapter 102, featured talks by an Iraq war veteran, Zach LaPorte, and Ruth Conniff, political editor of The Progressive magazine, music, and a commemoration of Wisconsin service members killed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The chapter began the event in 2009 “in an effort to reclaim the day that was intended to promote world peace, but has become Veterans Day, which too often seems to celebrate war and militarism,” Chapter President Paul Moriarity said. More than 80 people gathered in the City Hall rotunda for the hour-long event.

LaPorte, a former Army Ranger, de-



Iraq veteran Zach LaPorte speaks at Armistice Day event in Milwaukee City Hall.

scribed his Iraq experience: “We streamed into villages from Blackhawk helicopters (and) woke families up in the middle of the night, looking for insurgents, evidence or weapons. Most of the time we found nothing except crying women and children.”

The program began with a 21-flower salute, with 21 people stepping forward one by one, each adding a flower to a vase to create a flower arrangement fit for a solemn occasion.

The chapter continues to sponsor a Homeless Veterans Initiative to help Milwaukee veterans in need, which includes a food pantry, weekly breakfast, home support program to provide furniture and household items, and an outreach, transportation and benefits program to help veterans get services to which they are entitled.

The chapter also is working with the Wisconsin Anti-Violence Effort to promote posting of “No weapons” signs in businesses in response to the state’s new concealed carry law.

Bill Christofferson

Chapter 109, Olympia, WA

The Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers inspired a group of people halfway around the world – in Olympia, Washington – to found the Global Days of Listening in 2010 (<http://globaldaysoflistening.org/>). Based out of the home of VFP109 member Dennis Mills, every 21st of the month, people committed to peace and nonviolence all over the world – from Rwanda to Sweden, Israel to Australia, Palestine to Iraq – engage in conversation with each other for 24 hours, rededicating themselves globally to the end of war, violence, and oppression.

Out of these conversations, three individuals from Western Washington – Doug and Jody Mackey of Olympia, and Larry Kerschner of Centralia (VFP109 members) – made a commitment to go to Afghanistan to meet and work with their new friends. It was at that point that they heard that clean water was a key issue for them, and indeed for Afghans everywhere.

The team arrived in September to see the two filters made during training and to witness the first cleansing use that easily removed suspended solids. They met two more times with village leaders to talk about how to best use the molds and tools, and together came up with a plan that they would be managed as community property. An agreement was crafted assigning ownership of molds and tools to the people



Clean water for the Afghan village of Bamiyan.

of Bamiyan in the care of village leader Ali Jumah. The community was encouraged to envision the equipment being used by a group to create a small business, as well as hope being shared that it would be used frequently and to the betterment of those less fortunate in the village.

Dennis Mills

Chapter 111, Bellingham, WA

Fall 2011 got off to a great start for the chapter with the Occupy Movement both nationally and locally, jump-starting each planned activity. Two members, Gene Marx and John Chadwick, attended larger Occupy efforts in DC and Atlanta, segueing into a continuing presence for VFP-111 members in Occupy Bellingham as planners and participants.

Chapter guests included botanist/anti-war activist Dana Visalli on October 13 and folksinger Jim Page at the Firehouse Performing Arts Center on Armistice Day, both events drawing capacity crowds and guarantees of return appearances. On Thanksgiving weekend a benefit concert, organized by member George Jartos and Janet Marino, VFP Associate Member and Executive Director of Whatcom Peace and Justice, was held at Bellingham’s popular Wild Buffalo, with local musicians donating their sets for peace. Each organization netted over \$900

Educational efforts included the first of a three-part VFP-hosted Afghanistan seminar at the Bellingham Senior Activity Center, conducted by Richard Wilson and Bill Distler, and regular How is the War



Victoria and Gene Marx bannering.

Economy Working for You? bannering at high profile intersections each Wednesday. Recurring guest spots on KBAI-AM with host Joe Teehan, commentaries and op-eds by VFP-111 members in three local papers, as well as Common Dreams and OpEd News, rounded out a busy media effort. More opinion pieces and articles will be continuing efforts of a newly formed communications team to better focus on the true costs of war for local readers.

Gene Marx

Chapter 114, Sheboygan, WI

We missed a deadline or two, so this report begins about one year back. If you haven't heard, our state elected an ultra right-wing "Governator" named Scott Walker last year. His efforts to balance our budget and reduce the deficit turned into a brutal assault on the middle class. Cuts in health care, corporate sweetheart contracts and an all out attack on collective bargaining rights of state workers had tens of thousands of 'cheese heads' outraged. In February we took a cue from Cairo and occupied the capitol building. Members of our chapter such as Chris Kuehnel equated this issue with our general concern for peace and justice and represented VFP carrying a sign saying: "Cut Pentagon... Cut Walker ... Keep Bargaining Rights". It was awesome to eventually see so many irate Badger citizens chanting "THIS IS WHAT DEMOCRACY LOOKS LIKE!"

In March we hosted our 7th annual Anti-War Concert. Iraq veteran Jason Moon joined eight other local and regional talents as we all opposed the two wars and supported labor rights in song, poetry

and humor. In May we showed our VFP colors again in the Memorial Day parade, this time no 'boos' were heard, only cheers!

We passed two resolutions that we'd like to share with the other chapters. As the national renewal dues have gone up and our local membership declines, we agreed to reimburse any renewals in our group \$20/year. Secondly, we lost another WWII vet, founding member Larry

Mac Donald in June. His family asked us to be a part of the memorial service. We quickly came up with a four-point protocol offered for such events which ranged from a simple quiet presence wearing VFP colors, to more involvement such as honor guard, pallbearers and eulogy. You may read our ideas on our website: www.vetsforpeacesheboygan.org

As autumn set in, three of us drove out East to join Occupy Washington D.C. We displayed VFP colors and carried "We Are The 99%" signs, we got to hear Ralph Nader speak, and say hello to friends like Ellen Barfield from Maryland. November saw our chapter break away from the traditional Veterans Day ceremony at the high school with its "peace through strength" rhetoric. We hosted our first Armistice Day gathering in the park focusing on themes like the futility of war and the human cost of war. "Today as we gather to honor them, let us keep in mind that one U.S. veteran commits suicide every 90 minutes." Also in November this writer again traveled to



Chapter 114 members at Occupy Washington.

Ft. Benning to attend the SOA-Watch. It was an honor to meet Brian 'more powerful than a locomotive' Wilson. As this goes to press, we have gathered over 500,000 signatures for the Walker recall, and US ground troops exit Iraq!! As the war in Afghanistan escalates, we prepare for our 8th annual Anti-War concert for March. Take it easy, but take it.

Tom Contrestan

Chapter 118, Salt Lake City, UT

Chapter members spent time at the Occupy Wall Street in Salt Lake City's Pioneer Park. The occupation began with a march through the financial district on Main Street including Zions Bank, Chase, Wells Fargo and the new Goldman Sachs building employing 700 people. Today we shared the park with a local church providing chilidogs to the homeless, who jointly share the park. I was greeted by Martin Gassner (son of Vietnam vet and fellow bus driver Bill Gassner) who I have known since he was a toddler. He introduced me to his friends and always said, "this is my uncle Aaron."

We observed a committee meeting to resolve problems with the emerging Occupy community, which is now more than 200 people. Many are students from the University of Utah, Salt Lake Community College and as far south as Utah Valley University in Orem. All committees are headed by young people: kitchen, security, media, outreach, actions, and workshops. Problems are solved in a collaborative manner. Marches are scheduled everyday at noon and 6:00 p.m. Classes are held on yoga, meditation, and wiccan.

The diversity of young people is amazing from straight edgers, peta, punk rockers, and revolutionary student union members from colleges. There is no political agenda driving these young people, and they are absolutely not being funded or driven by any ideology other than their disgust of the social inequities the financial bubbles have created.

There are us older activists who mentor and suggest ideas to help the community grow. Many people wander in and wonder what it is we are doing. We are able to engage them in conversation and show them the encampment. I spent an hour talking to a young Hispanic man from Tijuana, Baja California (Mexico) who was born in poverty,



Occupy Wall Street in Salt Lake City.

and now is a successful citizen and car salesman.

One of the emerging leaders of the movement, is Iraq war vet and former army warrant officer pilot William Rutledge, who acts as the camp's outreach and media relations committee chairperson. All interactions with the police have been friendly and supportive.

Aaron Davis

Chapter 126, San Antonio, TX

On Veterans Day in November, the chapter rang a bell in remembrance of the dead and to signal the end of the Great War, and together with members of Occupy San Antonio walked to the Veterans Memorial at which a brief confrontation with members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars ensued. The media reported only on the VFW ceremony. The chapter has supported the Occupy San Antonio participants by helping with meals, which are provided by a retired Army nurse. We have been holding peace vigils weekly and have marched in support of women's and labor events. In a demonstration on behalf of Bradley Manning, we stood in front of The Alamo and provided information.

Larry Skwarcynski

Chapter 129, Pueblo, CO

The Howard Zinn Chapter sponsored Professor Seamus O'Sullivan's presentation in Pueblo. He recently returned from two years in Kabul, Afghanistan. O'Sullivan discussed the socio-cultural realities of Afghan life, the prospects for peace and the educational hopes for women and girls in Afghanistan. After O'Sullivan reflected on his experience and showing his slides, with photos of his students at the American University of Afghanistan, he opened a question and answer session. More than 30 people participated in the event at the

InfoZone of Pueblo's Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library.

For 2012, the chapter has scheduled monthly community programs to reach-out to the community to create awareness and conversation on matters of war, social and economic justice, and the need for peace among nations.

Rod House, a veter-

eran living in Le Veta,

Colorado, a sparsely populated mountain town, about 70 miles NE of Pueblo-- too far from Pueblo for Rod House to join VFP members in Pueblo VFPs weekly participation in "Occupy Pueblo" events, pitched his Army tent and staked his VFP flag in LeVeta town property where no one could miss seeing him for seven days 24 / 7. Rod "Occupied LeVeta "; in the cold nights and in the mostly sunny days Rod met and greeted with a smile and offered coffee and whatever goodies that he received to everyone who came by. He said he drank too much coffee, but did get to talk about war, peace, politics, the economy with most townspeople. The Pueblo Chieftain Newspaper 70 miles NE away sent a reporter to get a half page story with picture.

Don Bruestle

Chuck Butler

Chapter 132, Corvallis, OR

The chapter is conducting its first Peace Poetry Contest for all youth age groups and will hold a reading and awards event in February. We recently completed our week of staffing the men's winter homeless shelter. The chapter now has its own Facebook page (VFP Corvallis Oregon) and has been active in local groups affiliated with the Occupy Movement and "Move to Amend." We are also coordinating with the group, Oregonians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, to build support for repeal of Oregon's capital punishment laws. We continue to visit local high schools for truth-in-recruiting

tabling, which is one of our highest priority programs. Several members have been active with the US-Gaza Cultural Exchange, participating in video teleconference events and fundraisers to build understanding and cooperation between our cultures, especially among young people. Finally, for the first time, we employed a "float" during the Veterans Day Parade in Albany, Oregon to help convey the message that we are reclaiming the holiday as "Armistice Day."

Bart Bolger

Chapter 138, Long Island, NY

The chapter has been supporting the Occupy Wall Street movement at Zuccotti (Liberty Plaza) Park virtually since its inception. Chapter Coordinator Camillo "Mac" Bica marched with veterans from other VFP chapters and IVAW to demonstrate support for the movement and outrage at the assault of Scott Olsen, Kayvan Sabehgi, and Occupy Wall Street demonstrators all over the Country. Chapter members Walter Gafforio and Rose Zacchi, have spent numerous days (and nights) at Liberty Plaza enduring harsh weather conditions and numerous assaults by the New York Police Department. In addition to many trips to Liberty Plaza, members Ray Zbikowski and Rick and Karen Sackett have been instrumental in establishing a local Occupy Patchogue on Long Island.

The chapter continues its work with the Suffolk County United Veterans homeless shelter and food pantry, holding a successful fundraiser to support its important work and a "Veteran Get Together" at the shelter complete with a sumptuous meal and live music. In addition, we continue our work with the local chapter of Food Not Bombs with a number of our members spending



Chapter 132 reclaiming Armistice Day.



Chapter 138 at Zuccotti Park in support of Occupy Wall Street.

Thanksgiving Day preparing and distributing food to the hungry on Long Island.

We take the educational aspect of our mission very seriously. We recently released our new five-part video series on PTSD and moral injuries entitled *The Invisible Wounds of War* which can be found at our new Veteran Readjustment Resource Page (<http://www.vfpli.com/PTSD.html>). Other videos in our educational series including videos of our members speaking to classes at various schools in the area can be found at <http://www.vfpli.com/VFPLI-Educational-Videos.html>.

Camillo "Mac" Bica

Chapter 149, Memphis, TN

The Chapter produced the controversial play *Seven Jewish Children: A Play for Gaza*, which was recently performed at Rhodes College in Memphis. The play was written by acclaimed English playwright Caryl Churchill in the weeks following Israel's 2009 attack on Gaza. Its controversial nature (many accuse it of being anti-Semitic) has restricted the number of performances, especially in the South.

The brief play (10 minutes) consists entirely of a dialogue spoken among Israeli adults. They argue with a steady crescendo over what to tell their children (not present) about Jewish history--from the pogroms through the migration to the present day attack on Gaza. The parents want to be truthful, but at the same time they must protect their children against war's dangers and emotional turmoil. The result is an intense dialogue revealing every parent's dilemma--what should we tell our children. Various productions of the play can be viewed on YouTube.

The idea originated and blossomed during our weekly antiwar vigils. We spent over 18 months seeking a director. In 2010

we discovered Pamela Poletti, a drama professor at Rhodes College. It wasn't the politics that drew her, but the aching question on how to best raise a child. We hoped to get a dozen or two audience members. That night, December 1, the crowd was standing room only. A rousing discussion followed the performance.

The event's success demonstrates the power of flexibility and patience, a power our organization is built on. A personal thanks to Woody Powell for his steadfast encouragement.

George Grider

Chapter 161, Iowa City, IA

Since Labor Day, the chapter has been busy waging peace. Highlights include: our biggest event of the year, an Armistice Day remembrance and luncheon on Nov. 11 in Iowa City. The event was well attended by members and friends across Eastern Iowa, including Chapter 163 President Gil Landolt. At the luncheon we passed the hat to raise enough money to send \$100 each to two veterans injured in the Occupy Oakland conflict, Scott Olsen and Kayvan Sabehgi.

Other significant activities have been formation of a finance committee to write a budget for 2012; visits to area schools by members of our outreach committee; participation in a candlelight vigil to mark the tenth anniversary of the invasion of Afghanistan in Clinton, Iowa; participation in a public prayer and peace action at Offutt Air Force Base in Bellevue, Nebraska; and conducting a number of teach-ins at Occupy Wall Street locations in Eastern Iowa on topics that included waging peace and nuclear non-proliferation.

Under the leadership of chapter member Jeff Strottmann, the chapter requested a congressional investigation of the U.S.S. Liberty incident on June 8, 1967, through Congressman Dave Loebsack (IA-2), a member of the House Armed Services Committee.

Paul Deatn



Gil Landolt, president of Veterans for Peace Chapter 163 and Ed Flaherty, president of Veterans for Peace Chapter 161. Armistice Day Commemoration November 11, 2011. Iowa City, Iowa.

Chapter 160, Republic of Vietnam

The Hoa Binh Vietnam Chapter was awarded the Golden Heart Award from the Da Nang Association Of Victims Of Agent Orange/Dioxin. VFP recently presented a donation to DAVA, which will be used to assist families of Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange in and around Da Nang. This is part of a larger donation that is being distributed to victims of Agent Orange in several locales of Vietnam.

This was made possible through the very generous efforts and donations by Chapter President Suel Jones.

Chuck Palazzo



Chuck Palazzo, a full time resident of Da Nang, and member of VFP Chapter 160 receives the award from DAVA President, Nguyen Thi Hien on November 29th, 2011.

Protesting the Afghanistan Occupation with Malalai Joya

December 5, Bonn Germany – We are on the protest boat “Beethoven” on the Rhine River near where Hillary Clinton and Harmid Karzai are meeting with 1,000 people from several countries who share an “interest” in the future of the US/NATO occupation of Afghanistan. They are purportedly discussing what Afghanistan will look like after the U.S. troop withdrawal that Obama has promised for 2014.

But many peace activists have gathered here too, mostly from Germany, but also from Belgium, Ireland, the United Kingdom and the United States. We are here to state clearly that all foreign troops should leave NOW, and that only the people of Afghanistan can determine Afghanistan’s future.

Thousands of us had marched through the streets of Bonn two days earlier, and then participated in a well-organized weekend counter-conference. Now it is Monday morning and the politicians are arriving in limousines escorted by police cars with lights flashing. On the beach opposite the conference site, large letters spell out rotating slogans, including Bring the Troops Home Now! We have been invited to join activists who are cruising up and down the Rhine, past the site of the imperialist conference.

Talking with us in a panel discussion is Malalai Joya, internationally known as “the bravest woman in Afghanistan.” In 2005 Joya was elected to serve in the parliament of Afghanistan, its youngest member, in her mid-twenties. Due to her outspoken advocacy on behalf of Afghani women and her bold criticism of warlords as well as Taliban, Joya was banned by the parliament in 2007. She has survived several assassination plots since then and her life is constantly under threat.

Malalai Joya now serves as the director of the OPAWC, the “Organization Promoting Afghan Women’s Capabilities” in the western Afghan provinces of Herat and Farah. She often travels to other countries to tell the story of her country and her people. Here is what she has to say:

Many thanks to the organizers and to all the activists who came to protest the conference of Karzai and Clinton, and to speak against the war. In Germany there are so many people who love freedom and democracy.

In Afghanistan, we are like a tree – our leaves are occupation, war, human rights problems, and women’s rights problems. Our roots are in Islamist fundamentalism, which we must fight against. As long as we have occupation and fundamentalism we will not have human or women’s rights.

Lies – propaganda of war – that we must resist. One big lie is that if the U.S. leaves Afghanistan, then civil war will happen. Another lie is that the U.S. intends to take its troops out of Afghanistan soon. Another is that because a few soldiers are tried for war crimes, it solves the problem of war crimes. The U.S. government teaches the soldiers to “hate” an enemy, in order to occupy them.

The U.S./NATO bombing of Libya was a funny game to remove Khadafi. There is no such thing as “humanitarian intervention.”

The United States will not leave Afghanistan soon because they want to control Asia. Today in this meeting with Karzai, their purpose is to legitimize the occupation of Afghanistan.

But military machines and propaganda machines are nothing compared to the power of the people who are justice loving and democratically minded.

Q: Where do you get your strength, Malalai?

MJ: The power of each of us is the truth – from it come strength, hope, love, and courage. Our people hate these occupiers, warlords, and Taliban. The resistance of the Afghan people gives me hope, love, and determination. Seeing you here makes me more determined. Silence at this moment would be political death for us.



Q: I’m Gerry Condon with Veterans For Peace and I know many U.S. veterans who have fought in Afghanistan and Iraq. They have participated in or witnessed the killing of innocent civilians and they are angry that they were lied to about the real purpose of these wars and occupations. When they come home our government does not properly care for their health needs. Women in the military have faced an epidemic of sexual assaults by their fellow soldiers. Veterans are now on the front lines of the peace movement. Is there anything you would like to say to them?

MJ: Last year I was at a “No to NATO” event and I met Matthis Chiroux from Iraq Veterans Against the War. He said, “I apologize.” Veterans apologize. I say to them that this is your government and it is they who should apologize to you. The troops are victims too – the government uses them as a tool for a bad cause. The government is going to schools to tell them lies under the name of bringing peace. This is treason and they fear the truth.

I heard of one young veteran who is living in a church (Rodney Watson in Vancouver, British Columbia, contact him on Facebook at “War Resister in Sanctuary.”)

In Japan I met a U.S. veteran of the Afghanistan occupation. He was crying – would Malalai be angry with him? I hugged him and said, “You are like my family. You have your family, and now that your conscience is awake, it is not too late.”

If there are war mongers you should be proud to have veterans that speak out against the war. They are victims and unfortunately their government used them for their evil plans.

Q: Are there groups that we can support in Afghanistan?

MJ: We have terrorist groups, but we also have democratic leaders who go person-to-person to organize demonstrations. There are some really good NGOs that you can support, one of which is “Organization of Promoting Afghan Women’s Capabili-

Protesting continued on page 23

Report on Associate Members

There has been confusion and concern about what role associate members should fill in VFP. The Board formed a committee that approached the issue with the belief that there was not a dichotomy of motives, because all members want the same thing, a strong VFP that can be effective in moving the peace movement ahead. After months of discussing and researching the committee issued the report. While the Board has not had time to consider all the recommendations, it is worthy of being read by all of our members. It brings up important issues that fundamentally affect the daily workings of the organization and challenges us, as individual members, to work at living up to the high ideals behind VFP.

I personally urge members to read the report and discuss it with others.

Elliott Adams

President, Veterans For Peace

The report is available at the Web site: http://veteransforpeace.org/news_detail.php?idx=162

Why I Became An Associate Member

A Portland writer and Bradley Manning supporter, I covered the August 2011 VFP convention for Street Roots, where I serve on the editorial advisory board.

The program offered great options: among others, I attended the session with Jeff Paterson (Courage to Resist) and others working to support war resisters; and the session on counter-recruiting presented by Jim Murphy and Mike Dedrick. I saw the deeply affecting film *The Welcome* and I strolled the corridors coveting books and eavesdropping on reunions of friends.

Except through my activism for low-income housing, vets are not much in my life. My father, Lt. Carl Parker Gies (1915-64), was a WW II fighter pilot who received the Distinguished Flying Cross for a dogfight over Manila. Details came from books; my father would never mention the war. But since he refused an offer to serve again in Korea (this from my mother), I have to imagine he would share my admiration for the courage and conviction I saw at the convention, and for these veterans' exposure of terrible truths learned in war.

I turned in my story and joined VFP as an associate member.

Follow-up: Report on Hebron

The report from Hebron in the occupied West Bank that appeared in the Fall 2011 issue of the newsletter was criticized by some readers as too critical of the Israeli occupation force and not sufficiently understanding of the security concerns of the State of Israel. We welcome such comments and try to respond to them. I include below an end-of-year fundraising e-mail from the organization Breaking the Silence (שִׁבְתָּה מִרְבוֹשׁ in Hebrew), which consists of current members and veterans of the Israel Defense Forces, that speaks briefly to the conditions in Hebron (emphasis in the original; specific request for funds omitted). For more information on these veterans' views of the situation with respect to the occupation, see their English language Web site <http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/>. Also see the discussion by a member of Breaking the Silence on Bloggingheads TV at <http://bloggingheads.tv/videos/8768>. The Editor.

Breaking the Silence: Israeli Soldiers Talk About the Occupied Territories

December 22, 2011

To our friends and supporters:

Since the founding of our organization in 2004, we have conducted hundreds of tours to Hebron led by former soldiers for thousands of participants. We believe that Israelis should be aware of the daily reality of discrimination, limitations on movement, and settler violence in the city. We believe that an encounter with the harsh reality—the ugly face of occupation—motivates people to action.

Follow-Up continued on page 23

Given the obscene sprawl of empire, including military bases, black operations, and half a dozen acknowledged hostilities, all people of conscience urgently need to affiliate with the peace movement now. VFP was, for me, the most credible and creative of many attractive choices.

Martha Gies teaches creative writing at the Attic Institute, as well as an annual workshop abroad for Traveler's Mind. Her VFP convention story is at:

<http://www.streetnewsservice.org/news/2011/august/feed-294/but-then-the-vets-came-to-town.aspx>



Message from Friends at SWAN

Greetings from the Service Women's Action Network (SWAN) to Veterans for Peace. SWAN is a human rights organization founded and led by women veterans. SWAN's vision is to transform military culture by securing equal opportunity and the freedom to serve in uniform without threat of harassment, discrimination, intimidation, or assault.

SWAN takes a multi-pronged approach to helping survivors. Compassionate peer support and guidance are available from an experienced woman veteran caseworker (along with social service and legal referrals) through our Legal and Peer Support Helpline which is available for service members, veterans, and their families. SWAN approaches systemic change to a male-dominated military and veterans service network with gender-specific policy and advocacy work paired with media and public outreach. SWAN seeks to hold perpetrators and the systems that perpetuate sexual violence accountable for their actions, thereby addressing the root causes of sexual violence and advancing the rights of sexual violence survivors in accessing judicial redress and veterans' benefits.

Here are a few of our major achievements for 2011:

- Groundbreaking protections for military sexual assault survivors were signed into law.
- President Obama signed an executive order establishing privileged communications between sexual assault victims and victims' advocates.
- DOD adopted two new sexual assault policies providing base transfers to survivors of sexual assaults and 50-year retention of sexual assault records.
- VA changed its Military Sexual Trauma disability claims policy.
- SWAN is the only organization to hold the Military Service Academies accountable for its failure to follow DOD sexual violence prevention policy.
- We wrote an open letter to the Secretary of Defense calling for an overhaul of how current sexual assault cases are handled by the military.

Visit www.servicewomen.org to learn more and get involved! Also follow us on Twitter @servicewomen.





P O E T R Y

May 31

A bus arrives at the Guard Base
and two dozen soldiers emerge into
a cloud of cheers and hysterical flags.
These are the weekend warriors
returned from six months in Afghanistan.
Though dusty and weary, they smile
as wives and mothers weep, as children
leap into striped arms heavy with experience.
Even the parents of the dead stand straight,
waving their small flags for the larger family.
The high school band is all Stars and Stripes.
The old American Legion boys are here,
at attention, saluting. The mayor is grin
and handshake for the local TV camera.
It is a good day. And the war goes on.

Gary Metras

I Will Salute No More Forever

As a child I learned to Worship that piece of colored cloth.
My family, my school, the movies, TV taught me to believe that fragment of fabric stood for good things.
I watched my father, a World War II Army veteran, give homage to that wad of material.
As an airman I saluted that banner for the four years I served in the Air Force where I stood ready to help launch Titan Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles on command.

Then I became aware that the wonderful things for which that clump of colors is suppose to represent, have not been achieved.
I came to know that awful, unlawful, unwise and immoral acts have occurred under the stars and stripes.
But I still clung onto the belief and hope that someday, somehow conditions would change and the good things for which that rag is still suppose to stand would yet be realized.

However, I've been forced to come to my senses. Now we have: preemptive war, multiple occupations, the Patriot Act, the Military Commissions Act, stop loss, neglect of returning veterans, ignored infrastructure, indefinite detention, extraordinary rendition, secret imprisonment, warrantless domestic spying, disenfranchisement of voters, stolen elections, torture, suspension of habeas corpus and denial of due process.

So, even though hearing "America The Beautiful" still increases my heartbeat.
Although seeing those stripes still brings a lump to my throat.
Even though the sight of those stars continues to bring tears to my eyes.
I won't pledge to it anymore.

I won't wave it.
I won't remove my cap.
I won't stand in respect.
I will salute no more forever.

Charles Powell

The Beginning

January, Boston. She held the first letter back
from the new front in her hands. Outside, light

and snow clung to the train windows like the paper
edges of a hive crushed in. Later she would remember

otherwise; not the long rows of parking spots
tunneled from snowbanks and marked

with plastic lawn chairs like tombstones
for the unprepared or the pigeons on Comm Ave

mistaking salt for crumbs. Not the neon swarm
of flakes or the first few notes of grief

waiting to unfold. Only that she looked up
from the page—*Only now am I afraid to die*—

to feel the desparate clamor of the train
jerking roughshod through its gears,

the car's slow-rocking-in-its tracks
like the heart's smallest engine

just beginning to seize—

Elyse Fenton

*(From the collection Clamor by Elyse Fenton by
permission of the author and Cleveland State
University Poetry Center)*



Support the Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2011: H.R. 2634

Taps Played In Heaven

We seek the island inside us
—Lawrence Ferlinghetti

A black and white cat
in my tall grass
protects me from mice
and all that is wrong

with the world at 7 pm
Or so it seems
this Memorial Day evening
now that thunder roared past

now that those new little flags
wave among the stones
in cemeteries
saluting my father

and his brother in the next row back
and also my mother's
brother's heart-shaped stone
on the other side

where the sun's first lick
of granite can be so sour
can be so much
the tone for this or any day

like that sad bugle at sunset
my father once waved
to a deaf sky
after the last cried note

echoed down the street
to silence
so he could lower the old flag
and go sleep it off

Right now
only a piece of moon
and a few dull clouds
decorate the night

but then three deer step
into the meadow
feed on rain-sweet grasses
and bless the day

Gary Metras

FIFTY YEARS AGO: the United States used approximately 19 million gallons of 15 herbicides, including 13 million gallons of Agent Orange over South Vietnam. Between 2.1 and 4.8 million Vietnamese were exposed during the spraying and many more continue to be exposed through the environment. Agent Orange exposure continues to affect the lives of men, women, and children in the United States and in Vietnam. Agent Orange exposure is associated with various cancers, immune deficiencies, reproductive illnesses, and severe birth defects in Vietnamese, American, and Vietnamese-Americans directly exposed as well as their children and grandchildren.

FOUR YEARS AGO: Veterans for Peace passed a resolution calling for justice for Vietnam's Agent Orange victims by calling on the U.S. Congress to appropriate and deliver to Vietnam sufficient funds to provide health care, education, vocational education, chronic care, home care, and medical equipment, including support for family caregivers for Agent Orange victims; to clean up "hot spots" where dioxin (a highly toxic constituent of Agent Orange) remains in the environment; and to provide other services needed. Additionally, the resolution demanded that Congress provide for health care and related services for the children and grandchildren of American veterans exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam and to Vietnamese-Americans affected by Agent Orange.

SIX MONTHS AGO: Congressman Bob Filner introduced the "Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2011": H.R. 2634 in the House of Representatives.

This legislation will provide:

Medical assistance for the children and grandchildren of American veterans who served in Vietnam,

Health care for Vietnamese-Americans and their children

affected by Agent Orange,

Extension of the National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study to include the study of long-term health problems of veterans,

Health care and social services for exposed Vietnamese people, and

Remediation of those areas in South and Central Vietnam that remain contaminated by dioxin.

This legislation addresses the ongoing health problems of United States veterans, their progeny, and the Vietnamese-Americans harmed by the use of Agent Orange/dioxin. H.R. 2634 offers us the opportunity to heal the terrible suffering and wounds from the Vietnam conflict, 50 years after the beginning of the spraying of Agent Orange/dioxin in central and south Vietnam.

Help pass this critical legislation. Ask your Congress member to co-sponsor H.R. 2634. Call or visit their office and let them know that, as a constituent, you want their support for this bill

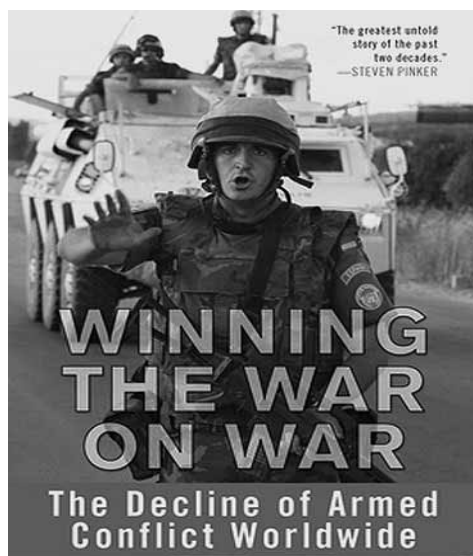
E-mail us at info@vn-agentorange.org and let us know whom you've contacted and their response. The full bill is available at our website: www.vn-agentorange.org.

Paul Cox, Chapter 69 and Susan Schnall, Chapter 34



Heather Bowser (left) is the daughter of an American veteran who fought in Vietnam. She was born with multiple deformities and walks using an artificial leg. **Tran Thi Hoan** was born in central Vietnam to a mother who was exposed to Agent Orange/dioxin from a canister left behind by the U.S. Hoan was born without two legs and a hand.

BOOK REVIEWS



**Winning The War on War:
The Decline of Armed Conflict Worldwide**
by Joshua S. Goldstein.
Dutton, 385 pages
www.penguinroup.com

"All we are saying/Is give peace a chance."

John Lennon, despite the dreary, disheartening daily headlines to the contrary, your dream may be coming true; it appears as though peace actually is being given a chance.

At least, that's the compelling contention of Prof. Joshua Goldstein of American University in this startling, remarkable book. (Long before I finished it, I was on the phone with my broker, dumping my myriad war stocks. Thank god for insider trading!)

Well, un-American as that may be, who wouldn't after learning that "nuclear weapons are down by 75% from Cold War levels; in the past decade, wars have killed half the annual total of the 1990s, a third of the Cold War and a hundredth of WWII, and that no national armies are still fighting each other while current wars are relatively local and less deadly civil wars."

This, says Prof Goldstein, augurs well for the future because it allows us to analyze which strategies have worked to reduce conflict and which to employ and support in the future, and that the oft-discussed but seldom realized "peace dividend" may actually be coming true. Holy Honeywell!!!

Even more disturbing is that Prof. Goldstein's take on any and all of your favorite conflicts and mine gives professional war *kvetchers* such as me significantly less to

kvetch about. (Don't worry, I'll find something else—promise. Any one for climate change?)

And this book is very bad news, indeed, for those who feel the UN is too costly and useless and should be abandoned once and for all time in that the UN is seen as the cornerstone of global peace efforts.

As Prof. Goldstein sums up in the book's prologue: "I hope that this story, one that tours some of the most awful war-torn places on earth but that is ultimately about peace, will inspire readers to see---through the continuing fog of war---our best qualities as human beings: our ability to communicate, to empathize, to cooperate, and to create a safer, freer, more prosperous world for our children."

Well, all right, if you say so, Prof. Goldstein, but no one is going to stop me from reciting my favorite Cold War mantra at precisely 1 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month, when the Civil Defense sirens moan and everyone in my cynic-filled neighborhood would chant almost religiously: "Tuck your head between your legs/And kiss your ass goodbye."

Maybe the time finally has come to rewrite that celebrated folk lyric to something like "Lift your head proudly/And kiss peace hello."

Will Shapira

VFP Chapter 27, Twin Cities, MN



Clamor (Poems)

Elyse Fenton
Cleveland State University
Poetry Center
www.csuohio.edu/poetrycenter

Elyse Fenton is by personal history and inclination an unlikely war poet. She was drawn into the war in Iraq by love; her husband Paneesh Shah was in the military when they fell in love and married and was sent to Iraq as a combat medic soon afterward. The intensity of that love and the possibility of its loss produced in this unlikely and reluctant war poet *Clamor*.

Clamor consists of 50 poems; they are short with only a few longer than 20 lines, written in free verse, and the most common form is unrhymed couplets. There are eight short prose poems in the middle section of the three main sections of the book. These three sections are preceded by an extraordi-

nary poem that functions as prelude and are followed by a touching coda. Elyse Fenton described deployment as "waiting interrupted by chaos and permeated by flights of despair and an overwhelming lack of control." This is a description of anxiety, and these poems quiver with anxiety.

The notion of clamor itself is fitting for such a conflicted time and circumstance. The term *clamor* is defined at the beginning of the book as: 1. a noisy shouting; a loud continuous noise; 2. Insistent public expression (as of support or protest); 3 SILENCE. (capitalized in the original.) Alas, definitions 1 and 2 are from the Latin root *clamare* and definition 3 is from an Anglo Saxon expression meaning to silence a ringing bell. This auto-oxymoron must have appealed to such a word-motivated poet as Elyse Fenton. Various poems in the book are animated by the combination of a situation and a single word, such as "After the Blast" in which the word *concertina* (as in concertina wire) spoken by the poet's husband by phone, a word "snagging like fabric on a barbed fence" unites a bomb blast, a dead body enmeshed in wire, a search for survivors, a search for the right words to respond, and the rush of orgasm in 18 lovely lines.

Clamor appears not only in the title of the book and as the title poem but throughout the book. In "In the Beginning," the poet while on a train reads the first letter from her deployed husband and is struck to read "Only now am I afraid to die" and looks up from the page "to feel the desperate clamor of a train/jerking roughshod through its gears/the car's slow-rocking-in-its-tracks/like the heart's smallest engine/just beginning to seize—". In "Love in Wartime II," there is "the clamor of branches." "Friendly Fire" begins "Caught between gunner and gunner/slough and sand bank, clamor and clamor." In the final poem, "Roll Call," a lovely memorial to the "unanswered name" there is the "Last clamor of the swan-beaked rifle."

One of the achievements of *Clamor* is its narrative structure that sustains a consistent storyline. Part one addresses with a deep intensity the descent into the inferno, the time in Iraq, the husband caring for the wounded, the poet mostly waiting but also planting peppers, some of which she knows will not live through the season. Part two

Book Reviews continued on page 23

Update on A Ride to the End: The Bikes Not Bombs Tour

After recently returning to Afghanistan as a civilian, Afghanistan War veteran Jacob George developed the "Bikes Not Bombs" campaign. Initially meant to raise bicycles to send to Afghans as a peace offering, the campaign began also getting donated bicycles for US military veterans.

From New York City to Washington D.C., the "Bikes Not Bombs" tour stopped in various communities, including spiritual, peace, and activist communities. They shared songs and a presentation on the non-violent peace movement that is developing in Afghanistan by Afghans.

With hundreds of supporters and members of the ARTTE collective, A Ride Till The End took off to New York City to ride for the first time in the Northeastern United States to share our story, our message, and our ongoing work. Jacob George, Russ Ritter, and Jerrad Hardin were the featured riders for this leg of the ongoing bicycle tour. Along 300 miles of cities and towns the riders performed music and shared discussions about the current struggle for peace abroad and also within ourselves. Each presentation began with an Army Cadence often sung in the early hours of the morning by service members of the US military. The words were changed to reflect the transition many veterans and service members go through

"I don't know why I left,
but I know that I was wrong.
It won't be long
till I get on back home"

Another song, to tell a story of what happens when truth is revealed in a war society, was sung in honor of Cpl Bradley Manning who is facing charges of releasing



The Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers

classified information revealing war crimes by the U.S. military;

"Mama, mama Can't you see?
What my Uncle (Sam) has done to me?"

A final verse was sung to honor our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan who are peacefully working to end the occupation of their towns and countrysides;

"It's bad news from Bamiyan,

a couple of friends are dyin'.
It's bad news from Bamiyan,
half of my friends are still tryin'."

The music was followed by a slide show of a recent visit to Afghanistan by Jacob George and Brock Macintosh. A harsh reality is in effect in Afghanistan and the destruction wrought on Afghan people would be plenty of reason to pick up weapons and fight back; however, the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers are engaged in a non-violent anti-occupation movement. They are sharing with the world a notion that is being aggressively and fatally left out of the popular world view of Afghanistan: that peace is indigenous to their country. We ended our presentations by sharing a piece of the fabric worn as scarves by the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers. We tied the fabric around the wrists of everyone attending and took pictures to share and send back to our Afghan friends. The color, they say, represents the one blue sky above us all.

From the first ARTTE newsletter, which is available at www.operationawareness.org. Thanks to Jacob George

If you're interested in organizing or riding in A Ride to The End, contact them at the Web site or by e-mail at a.ride.till.the.end@gmail.com.



Armistice Day Bell-ringing Outreach

From the four corners of Minnesota and places in between, bells rang on or near Nov. 11th, celebrating that day in 1918 when bells rang around the world joyously at the end of World War I, the war to end all wars.

At the request of members of VFP Chapter 27 in Minneapolis, 177 churches and/or classes (that we know of) rang bells and asked their members/students to work and pray for peace. Many other organizations without bells said they would have a moment of silence. Also, 19 VFP chapters (that we know of), from virtually the four

corners of our nation, rang bells in various settings. Some churches and chapters made additional contacts with the media to explain why and what they were doing.

Many thousands of people heard and participated in remembering the Armistice and the hope it inspired. I suspect many heard the name "Veterans For Peace" for the first time, and many of these churches were in rural areas.

Since much of our task is to work towards the abolition of war, we can rightly be proud in connecting Armistice Day in the way we did. Bob Heberle, Dave Lodgson, Coleen Rowley, and Michael Orange had some success in communicating our efforts to reach the larger public, as did a

number of church staffs, ministers, priests and sisters.

One newspaper editor in a small town told me that he had just attended a friend's funeral where the words "May he rest in Peace" were immediately followed by the 21-gun salute, which the editor found quite unsettling. He said our ringing of the bell was much more appropriate.

Thanks to Bob Heberle and Dave Lodgson for getting proclamations for Armistice Day from the mayors of St. Paul and Minneapolis. We plan to post the proclamations on our website in the future.

Steve McKeown



The Costs of War Project: Linda Bilmes and Andrew Bacevich

The following reports are transcriptions of video talks by Professor Linda Bilmes and Professor Andrew Bacevich as part of the Eisenhower Research Group's Costs of War Project based at Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies (www.costsofwar.org). The videos are available at <http://vimeo.com/27254292> (Professor Bilmes) and <http://vimeo.com/27457922> (Professor Bacevich; the transcriptions are reproduced here with the permission of Professor Bilmes and Professor Bacevich. Professor Bilmes's full research paper is available at www.costsofwar.org/article/caring-us-veterans The Editor.

When you look at the costs of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, the numbers published by the government are about \$1.3 trillion, but this is just the tip of the iceberg because this is just money that has already been spent. There are other costs yet to come, one of the most significant of which is for providing medical care for the young Americans who have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. There have been 2.2 million Americans who have fought in these wars, 1.2 million have come home and are now veterans. Of these returned veterans more than 600,000 have been treated in veteran hospitals and facilities for a wide variety of ailments, ranging from mental health disorders, musculoskeletal disorders, skin disorders, hearing loss, and other injuries that were either sustained or exacerbated during their service. These are costs that we are just beginning to pay right now, but they are costs that will be growing over the next 20, 30, 40 years, and they will add another \$600 billion to \$1 trillion in cost just for caring for our veterans over and above what we've already spent.

It is important to look at the full cost of war because if you use poor accounting, which is what the government uses, you don't get a real sense of what things cost. For example, if I sell you a car for \$20,000 and when you look at the fine print it costs \$40,000, you might have second thoughts about buying that car. That's essentially what we've done with the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. Congress has voted on one quotation of how much it would cost, but the real cost is much larger. Particularly in the case of the care for our veterans we haven't set aside money to care for them so

we have incurred a long-term obligation to provide medical care and disability benefits for our wounded veterans without setting any provision for how we're going to pay for it. What we need is an accounting system that is based on accrual accounting that makes transparent the true costs of war. It's only with a fully transparent accounting system and budgetary systems that those in power can really make decisions because as of now they don't actually have the data to understand how much we're actually paying on any military activity. There are two decisions that have to be made in regard to every conflict: one is whether to get involved in it; the second is how to pay for it if you do. In the case of Iraq and Afghanistan, we have for the first time in United States history since the revolutionary war borrowed virtually all of the money that had been used to pay for these conflicts. This has added at least \$1.5 trillion to our national debt.

At this point, I think the questions that we should be asking are whether if not for the decision to invade Iraq, would we still be mired in Afghanistan?, would oil prices be what they are?, would the national debt be as high as it is?, and would the financial crisis be as severe as it was? I think arguably the answers to all four of these questions is no. The Iraq war has been tragic in many respects but from a purely economic sense it has been tragic in that we have spent money that we could have invested in education, in our infrastructure, paying off our debt, and other activities rather than on activities that have very low benefit economically speaking and which have added a great deal to our national debt.

Linda J. Bilmes is the Daniel Patrick Moynihan Senior Lecturer in Public Policy at Harvard University's Kennedy School. She is the author with Professor Joseph Stiglitz of the book *The Three Trillion Dollar War: The True Cost of the Iraq Conflict*.

There is an immense and urgent requirement to learn from the experience of the past decade, to learn why the global war on terror has been such a costly disappointment, to learn why the Iraq war produced results so radically different from what was expected, to learn why the Afghanistan war is now the longest war in our history. It

is crucially important to tally up the costs of war to properly assess the wisdom or unwisdom of the policies that landed us in war in the first place. At a bare minimum we've already spent \$1 trillion, and there are reasonable projections that we will end up spending \$2 trillion, \$3 trillion, perhaps as much as \$6 trillion. This at a time when the American economy is not performing well and when the debt is going through the roof.

Not to be lost of course is the question of the human costs paid by non-Americans, not simply by our allies but the people of Iraq, the people of Afghanistan, and the people of Pakistan, of Yemen, and many other places across the Islamic world. We know that there have been something on the order of two to two-and-a-half million Iraqis who are living in exile; a large number of other Iraqis who have been displaced from their homes. Were something like this to happen in the United States, we would view it as an catastrophe of historic magnitude. The population displaced by the global war on terror is, for example, far larger than the population displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

Wars create distortions, in our politics, in our economy. War concentrates power; war delivers profit to certain people and imposes sacrifices on others. I think those distortions have happened in the global war on terror launched after 9/11. To some degree, they have been hidden or concealed; they've been hidden in part by our unwillingness to actually pay for many of the costs, at least the economic costs of the war. The willingness to simply go ever deeper in debt, to shove off the economic costs onto future generations, that's one of the things that actually blind us to the actual impact of the wars we've been conducting.

I would like to see the equivalent of the 9/11 Commission be undertaken and focus on what we might call the long war: The Commission to Study the Long War. Public hearings; testimony by officials, participants both soldiers and civilians, by people who lost loved ones on 9/11, by historians and journalists. There should be a comprehensive effort to understand what's

Costs of War continued on page 23



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Book Reviews

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consists almost completely of short prose poems describing the husband's return, the barbed wire backyard fence that supports no bodies and has known no blast, the lovers relearning to see each other outside the excitement and anxiety of war. Part three consisting again strictly of poems is a meditative exploration of the experience of love in a time of war and of a coupled life reimagined and altered through the intensity of their separate but shared war-life.

The prelude poem "Gratitude" is a tribute to the poet's medic husband's response to the shattered body of another in battle; the poem ends "And I love you more for holding the last good flesh/of that soldier's cock in your hands, for startling his warm blood/back to life. Listen, I know the way the struck cord begins/to shudder, fierce heat rising into the skin of my own/sensate palms. That moment just before we think/the end will never come and then/the moment when it does."

The short coda is called "Roll Call" and reads in full: "No matter the details. It always ends/at the sweat-salt metal of your un-/answered name. Twenty-one triggers/and twelve-hundred bit-down tongues./Last *clamor* of the swan-beaked rifle./Last unmuzzled throatful of air." The ambiguity of clamor in this poem is perfect.

The poems, sometimes in their form, sometime their syntax, remind me of the poems of Emily Dickinson. In 1862 during the Civil War, Emily Dickinson began a correspondence with Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, commander of the First South Carolina Regiment. In the course of their correspondence, she wrote "War feels to me an oblique place." Almost 150 years later, Elyse Fenton echoes this thought in "North Coast" "This close to North the sun/protracts an angle heretofore unknown/as all things I didn't know before/you returned from war."

That Elyse Fenton, who seems a thoroughly gentle person, came to know war we can only regret; that having known war she produced this book, we should celebrate.

Poetry lives in speech. Elyse Fenton speaks the poems from *Clamor* at the Prairie Lights Bookstore, Iowa City, Iowa at: http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/vwu&CISOPTR=2260&CISOBX=1&REC=1

Chuck Rossi



Follow-Up

Continued from page 15

Earlier this year, the Israeli Minister of Education announced his intention to make historical tours to Hebron mandatory for all Israeli students. "The State of Israel must make sure that every student, soldier, and ambassador visit the Cave of the Patriarchs to get to know the roots of where it began," he said.

We agree that all Israelis should visit Hebron and learn about the historic significance of the city. But a visit to this ancient city cannot ignore the untenable daily reality just meters away. Such a visit to Hebron must include exposure to the discriminatory reality for the Palestinian residents.

As we prepare to enter a new year, we now turn to you, our supporters and friends, and invite you to support us in bringing as many Israeli youth, university students, and members of the public to witness the reality of Hebron.

With gratitude, and wishes for a year of peace and justice in our region,

Dana Golan
Executive Director
Breaking the Silence



Costs of War

Continued from page 20

happened since the United States went to war against so-called terrorism. I think The Costs of War Project could make an important contribution to the larger effort to divine the truth.

Andrew Bacevich is a graduate of West Point, a retired US Army Colonel, a Professor of History and International Relations at Boston University, and author most recently of *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War*.



Protesting

Continued from page 14

ties". These are the future of Afghanistan.

The war mongers say that we have only two choices - the Taliban and civil war, or foreign occupation, and that the lesser of two evils are put to the Afghans by the U.S. and NATO.

Regarding Obama – do not be deceived by him.

Question: Can you tell us about your daily life?

I don't like to talk about myself – I am here for my people. My life is under threat with six assassination attempts. In Afghanistan I must change houses constantly with people that I have known for years and trust with my life. It is like being in prison.

Question: What about the role of the United Nations?

Malalai: Now the United Nations has no good name with my people. The U.N. attacked Libya. There is massive corruption in my country – some officials say that during the winter there is no way to reach people with aid money, which is true, so they pocket the money.

Question: What is the attitude of Afghans toward Islam?

Malalai: Most of us are Muslim but you must be aware that most of us are not political fundamentalists. People confuse Islam with political fundamentalism. I strongly believe in secularism and a democratic, independent government.

We have a beautiful constitution that gives freedoms of press, religion, and speech. Our constitution is not perfect, especially with respect to women's rights, but it is beautiful. We condemn those who say that you should or should not pray. Education is the key.

Helen Jaccard and Gerry Condon;
Helen and Gerry are traveling throughout Europe, networking with peace and justice activists as they go. You can follow their adventures at www.mobileactivist.blogspot.com.



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