



# Exposing the True Costs of War and Militarism Since 1985

# VETERANS FOR PEACE

Organized locally. Recognized internationally.

FALL 2015

## SHARING LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP IN VFP PEACE

As the interim editor of our quarterly newsletter, I have been asked to encourage you, dear readers, to please think of signing up for a Lifetime Membership.

That got me to thinking about our last convention in San Diego, and in particular about our Saturday night banquet. We were blessed to hear from the likes of Phyllis Bennis, Ray McGovern, Seymour Hersh, and Beau Bergdahl's dad, Bob, as the evening rolled on. But what sticks in my mind now is the brilliant gambit that the incomparable Doug Zachary conjured up.

As the staff person most responsible for developing a strong membership base within VFP, he popped up on the stage throughout the evening encouraging us to not just sign up for a Lifetime Membership for ourselves, but to think of GIVING a Lifetime Membership to another deserving person. Brilliant. Think of it -- giving a VFP Lifetime Membership to your mom or dad, to your beloved uncle or aunt, to your son or



VFP Lifetime Members (clockwise from top right): Ann Wright, Chuck Searcy, Seymour Hersh, and Kourtney Mitchell.

daughter, granddaughter or grandson. What a great way to weave your family legacy into the heart and soul of Veterans

### Doug Rawlings

For Peace. Or consider for a moment giving to a very special person, as Frank Corcoran did the night of our banquet. Frank, an American War in Vietnam veteran, presented a Lifetime Membership to an honored guest at the convention, Le Ly Haslip, author of *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places: A Vietnamese Woman's Journey from War to Peace*.

Listen to the words of four esteemed colleagues who were graced with a lifetime membership that fateful evening in San Diego and think of how your special loved one might acknowledge your gift:

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

Barry Ladendorf

I want to thank Doug Rawlings, a founding member of VFP and VFP's first ever poet laureate, for acting as the interim editor of our quarterly newsletter and putting together this very special edition.

Three of our primary goals this year have been to: (1) increase membership; (2) spread the message of VFP; and (3) financially strengthen our organization. The Board and VFP staff have been implementing plans which already have begun to meet these goals.

We anticipate that with the continued collaborative efforts of VFP members, realization of these goals will ultimately transform VFP into a leading peace organization in the world.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Through the leadership of Tarak Kauff, VFP has continued to aggressively bring more post-911 veterans into its fold. At this year's convention in San Diego, we nearly doubled the number of younger veterans in attendance. For the first time in several years, we even experienced a slight increase in our membership. In 2015, we also added two new foreign chapters: Ireland and Mexico. Okinawa may be added to this list perhaps by year's end.

**SPREADING THE WORD:** Now more than ever the voice of VFP is needed. The world's two largest nuclear powers (Russia and the U.S.) face off in the Ukraine and Syria; tensions between Israelis and Palestinians appear to be rising; the U.S., in what appears to be a violation of international humanitarian law, bombed the Doctors Without Borders Hospital in Afghanistan; and now President Obama, in spite of his pledge to end the war in Afghanistan, has ordered troops to remain in Afghanistan beyond the end of his second term.

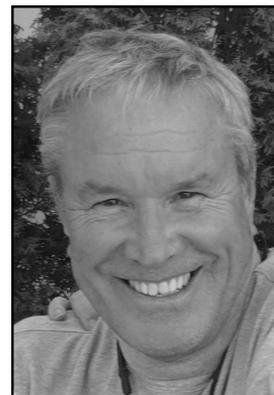
The voice of VFP has always been a voice of reason. We bring to

the discussion of war and peace our unique perspective as veterans who have served in every war from World War II to the present endless wars in the Middle East. Our collective judgment is that war and violence must end or the world as we know it surely will end. What place does the peace movement occupy and what path should it take to tackle these all too critical issues?

Last week VFP Vice-President, Gerry Condon, VFP Executive Director, Michael McPhearson, and I participated in a conference call with several peace organizations to begin the process of trying to determine how to most effectively revitalize the peace movement. The involved organizations look to VFP to lead in this effort. Hopefully, as this process evolves, we will find new and innovative ways to galvanize the peace movement and bring along a broad new coalition of peace activists.

For 30 years VFP has sought to dismantle the war economy, fought against the increasing hold the military-industrial complex has gained in our government and exposed the damage to our environment caused by our military adventurism. We are the voice of those here and abroad who cannot speak out against U.S. aggression, or who have found their voices ignored. To ensure that our voice rings louder and clearer we need your continued activism and financial support.

**FINANCIAL:** To expand VFP membership and increase our ability to spread our message, we need to substantially increase our financial resources. How might you increase your financial contribution to our efforts? One avenue is to become a LIFETIME member of VFP. (Donation of \$1000 in any 12 month span.) On page four,



Chuck Searcy, a new LIFETIME member, tells us what being a LIFETIME member means to him.

If you are not a LIFETIME member, please consider becoming one. Perhaps you have a deserving member in your chapter, a family member, or a veteran who is not yet a member whom you would like to honor with a LIFETIME membership. As LIFETIME members we are bound together with the 30 year history of VFP and to LIFETIME members who have gone before us and those yet to come.

Thanks to each of you for your continuing support of VFP. You continue to amaze me with your commitment to VFP and the cause of peace. Your energy and enthusiasm constantly motivate me in all my work as VFP President. It has been a great pleasure to have met so many of you. I hope to meet and work with more of you in the future.



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# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In late 2002, I began organizing with Veterans For Peace, shortly after hearing then VFP National President David Cline speak in a forum about civil liberties after 9-11. If one person is responsible for influencing me to join VFP, it was Cline, however it was something more fundamental to VFP than my admiration for him that convinced me to sign up. It was the radical name of Veterans For Peace with the capital "F" and meeting so many awesome members.

After I left active duty in 1992, I embarked on a journey, working with groups like the NAACP, the People's Organization for Progress, the Organization for Black Struggle, and the ACLU to find my place in the struggle for justice. But of all the groups I worked with before VFP, the National Conference for Community and Justice, formally known as the National Conference of Christians and Jews, did the most to help me better understand how interconnected we all are in this struggle.

NCCJ's mission is to fight all forms of bias, bigotry and racism. They confront these ills through dialogue and building respect and understanding. I was drawn to the organization because I was looking for effective ways to confront racism, and I was beginning to see connections to other struggles. I was quickly exposed to a plethora of stories and challenges faced by a host of communities. Through dialogue, education and deep self-reflection, I began to see a pattern of how oppression works and the role I personally play in oppressing others. I realized that we are the answer to change and that we all are confronting the same monsters of hate, self-doubt and pain but with different faces. This understanding brought me to work for peace, not by opposing war, rather by struggling for justice.

By this time I had begun to look at the traditional peace movement trying to fully see connections. My first

peace protest was an early summer 2001 Peace Action event near the White House against the re-start of "Star Wars" or the National Defense Missile systems proposed by George Bush Jr., but I still had not fully made the connection between domestic and international peace. Later that summer only weeks before September 11, while walking to a World of Difference Anti-Defamation League training at their NYC headquarters across from the United Nations, I was confronted by a protestor holding a sign declaring 500,000 children had died as a result of U.S. economic sanctions on Iraq. I had never seen this before. The information was like a knife in my heart. My war was the start of those sanctions. I felt partly responsible for those deaths and all the accompanying suffering. I had to take action. But how? I could not abandon working against police brutality, racism, sexism, general xenophobia and other issues that directly impact me and people I know and love. Yet I had a responsibility to myself and the people of Iraq.

Of course, planes were flown into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon sending me down a path of resisting U.S. global wars. But all the injustices faced at home by my community, the women in my life and my son remained. My eyes had been opened to the struggle of others and now I clearly saw how this global system divides us and pits us against each other. The 9-11 "attacks" and the aftermath is a tragic illustration. For 14 years the U.S. has been in a global racist war that pits predominately young and poor people of the U.S. against poor and dark-skinned people around the globe to control resources and acquire and maintain power, money and privilege.

All this was in my head when I heard Cline talk about Veterans For Peace. I remembering being impressed and thinking this guy is

## Michael McPhearson



a veteran for peace, and I'm a vet working for peace. Being for peace was where I had already decided to stand. Over the next 5 years working with Cline, he drove home, "CAPATALIZE the "F" in Veterans For Peace." At times I would forget and he would berate me so that now I cringe when I see it done wrong. And a lowercase f is wrong. Not only because "For" is in our official name, but because we emphasize that we are for peace.

Veterans For Peace is at its heart an anti-war organization. Our Statement of Purpose calls on us to abolish war. Confronting war and militarism in all its forms must remain our primary focus. Yet, we are more. We are not Veterans Against War. We advocate for justice for veterans and victims of war and our Statement calls on us to serve the cause of world peace. Because it is clear that the absence of war is not peace, we must work for world peace by taking part in the global struggle for justice both at home and abroad. To do this we must be leaders in opposing war and militarism and an co-conspirators in the struggle for justice. This is the formula for struggling for peace.

"No justice, no peace" is not a hollow slogan. It is an axiom to live and struggle by. So, don't forget to capitalize the "F" in Veterans For Peace. It's what sets us apart.



## ANN WRIGHT



Ann Wright: "I am proud to be a member, a Lifetime Member, of Veterans for Peace because it asks its members to use their experiences in the military to mobilize the community to pressure our government to resolve international security challenges with dialogue and diplomacy, not through violence and war."

## CHUCK SEARCY



Chuck Searcy: "I was very honored and I'm extremely grateful to Ann Wright for her generous gift to me of a Lifetime VFP Membership. I can't think of anyone whose consideration and support are more important to me than Ann's. She is a guiding light and an inspiration for all of us VFP members. The Lifetime Membership is something I view as a binding commitment to VFP and the ideals and the mission on which this organization has been built. I regard it as an investment not just in VFP and the principles which continue to sustain this organization, but as an investment also in my fellow members and our shared commitment to end America's wars and bring about true peace. I can think of no finer challenge or opportunity than to use my Lifetime membership as a platform to bring others to understand that peace is not an option just to be talked about idealistically -- it is something that can be achieved."

Please consider bestowing a lifetime membership on a loved one today -- a gift that keeps on giving.... Thank you!



## SEYMOUR HERSH



We journalists can be important, but we are not the real thing. We report on war...but we are not in it. The respect belongs to those Americans who jumped on trucks or helicopters and moved out to kill and be killed in the name of America. It takes a special courage and integrity to have been in the system, to have witnessed the good and the bad, and to decide that the right thing to do to insist that America's future wars, if any, be for the right reasons, and at the right time. I am honored to be a lifetime member of the VFP.

## KOURTNEY MITCHELL



Kourtney Mitchell: "For me being a lifetime member of VFP is a way I can commit to working for social justice in an organized manner, with the support of other activists and allies. VFP has cultivated a community of people who care about peace and have experience with working for peace. Lifetime membership is a commitment to continue working with this community and it is the faith that our work can influence change on a social level. VFP is a wonderful example of how to mobilize resources and ideas and amplify our voices."

**Lifetime Membership of \$1000 can be set up in Quarterly payments of \$250 or monthly payments of \$84. Please contact Doug Zachary at his email address ([doug@veteransforpeace.org](mailto:doug@veteransforpeace.org)) or by phone (512-549-3530) or cell (512-629-3812).**

# ACTIVISM & ARTISTRY

with Becky Luening

When I set out to find a VFP member who can tell us how to combine artistic vision and political activism, I immediately thought of Becky Luening, community organizer, peace activist and artist. If you have attended recent VFP conventions, you couldn't miss the vortex of energy that she generates. As a guide for those of us with similar interests, I asked Becky to tell us a little about what makes her continue on as one of VFP's stellar associate members. Here's what she has to say:

The bulk of my activist work has been organizing, convening and facilitating meetings, and special events including film screenings, talks, simple theatrical productions, and fundraisers. I helped organize Earth Day in Santa Cruz in 1990; I founded a WILPF branch in Arcata, California in 2004; and in 2005 on the thirtieth anniversary of the end of the Viet Nam War, and thirty-fifth anniversary of the Kent State and Jackson State massacres, I helped organize a four-day teach-in at Humboldt State. I was a lead organizer of the 2011 VFP convention in Portland, Oregon. Many other experiences have taught me that small actions and events are as worth doing as large ones.

My involvement with Veterans For Peace began with the Vietnam Friendship Village Project (VFVP) through my first husband, Jeff 'Paco' Huch. Not a veteran himself, he had volunteered with VFVP at the behest of Ruben Gomez, a member of the 'Wage Peace' VFW Post 5888 in Santa Cruz. After Paco died of cardiac arrest in his sleep

in Hanoi in March 1996 on the eve of VFVP's international meeting, I continued his work with the Friendship Village, and have traveled to Viet-nam on five separate occasions beginning in 2002.

In 1997, I became acquainted with S. Brian Willson who had fasted in 1986 with Friendship Village founder George Mizo to protest US policies in Central America. Later we moved together to Arcata, and then to Portland, Oregon. I deepened my involvement with VFP as I better understood US wars and imperialist ways, while meeting many interesting



Art work by Becky Luening.

activist people from around the world.

Along with other skills honed during 20-plus years as a self-employed typist, I am a strong writer. Sometimes I think of myself as a communications specialist. My resistance to acquiring a handheld device is now causing me trouble, though, as I still conduct most of my communications via email from my laptop, while other people, especially younger folks, are texting much more. Now in my late 50s, I am



reconsidering where I can most effectively apply my activist energy. I seem to be at a crossroads, and can see myself lightening up organizational commitments in order to concentrate on individual expression.

I struggle to affirm that I *am* an artist—a printmaker, bookmaker, collage artist, aspiring watercolor painter—and to find the time, the *raison d'être* for art-making. A sense of mission helps. One project completed in 2014 is a series of postcards I designed and printed to up-end that maddening, false slogan, 'Freedom isn't free.'

The pressure to produce is lessened when I consider creative expression as my life's project, whether I am making art objects, growing a garden, telling stories, or preparing food. I also believe the creative process is as important as the end result.

In 2011, I letterpressed hundreds of broadsides—three variations featuring Howard Zinn quotes with titles, "Resistance", "Resilience", and "Nonviolent

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# ACTIVISM & ELECTORAL POLITICS

with Mike Ferner



In case you haven't heard, Mike Ferner, longtime VFP member and former Executive Director, is running for mayor of Toledo, Ohio. And he has a good chance of winning. He came close back in 1993, running as a seasoned city councilman, and now he has returned with fire in his belly.

Let me tell you a story that will convince you that Mike has the political savvy to carry this off, mainly because he possesses that one quality a politician needs -- he knows how to work a room. So, after a long day of meeting as national board members in San Francisco a few years back, Mike and I hop into a cab and head out for a bar across from the iconic City Lights Bookstore. It's late but Mike insists on stopping at a pizza joint and buying a large, loaded pie. I tell him I'm not hungry; he shrugs me off, leads the way into this bar that neither one of us has ever been in before, and promptly yells out: "Anyone want a slice of pizza?" Instant friends are made. The night unfolds before us

So, for this issue of our newsletter, I thought I'd pick Mike's brain about how, exactly, can we

as VFP members become successful local politicians. I sent him a series of questions. Here's an edited version of his responses:

1). How did you get involved in politics in the first place?

When I was 12 and working in the fields I saw first hand the conditions that migrant farmworkers lived in. I did the traditional thing as recommended by my mother, and called my congressman. Surprisingly, a week later two dept. of labor reps were at my house wanting to see the camp. A small amount of improvement was ordered and I was hooked on activism. What got me to run for office was my frustration with the disconnected idiocy and monumental timidity I saw in so many politicians.

But I need to add that electoral politics is not the most important kind of political action. We need to change the culture from the bottom up and building relationships in grassroots organizations is still vitally important. There is a place for electoral politics, but it shouldn't be overrated. If you have an elected official that comes from a peoples' movement, remembers from whence they came and will work as an integrated part of the ongoing movement, that can be very useful. But we don't see much of that in U.S. politics.

2). How do you work international or national issues into a local campaign?

Toledo taxpayers will send \$190 MILLION to the Pentagon this year. The city budget to repave our crumbling streets is \$14 MILLION. That fact alone smacks people right in the face. Of course, the typical response from cynical reporters is

"what's that got to do with city government?" To which I respond, well, not much except for the fact that it's our money.

Another example on a statewide basis, at least for Ohio and likely other states, is the Local Government Fund that rebates tax money to cities, schools and libraries. Governor Kasich and the Republican legislature decided a few years ago to chop the hell out of it. Toledo gets \$13 MILLION less from the LGF this year than we did just five years ago. Federal "Block Grants" have also shrunk over the years as more money is shifted to the war machine. Where our money is really going is never talked about in local elections here. So just putting it on the table makes our campaign stand out.

A related question from reporters goes, "What qualifications do you have to be mayor?" as if one should be a businessperson, attorney, real estate agent etc. in order to run a city. I respond by using the example of the LGF and extrapolating it to national priorities by saying one of the things I will do as mayor will be to put an organizer on staff to work with every city government in the state and from there the neighborhood groups and others who should be incensed about the LGF disappearing, and raise holy hell in Columbus.

Knowing little if anything about what an organizer is, I got responses like, "You mean like an attorney or lobbyist?"

I respond, "No, as an organizer. Somebody who will educate and mobilize government officials and citizens to demand justice on this issue. And when letters and phone calls don't work, we'll take buses full of people to Columbus and sit in like they did in Wisconsin a few years ago."

One reporter who still has a hard time getting past the felony convictions I got for tagging an overpass with "Troops Out Now!" asked "And would you lead that protest?" Taking a cue from Donald Trump, I reply that it will be the biggest, best, most successful sit-in Ohio has ever seen.

3). How do you put together an effective public relations campaign?

Of course that varies by city as well, but never underestimate the value of "earned media," something activists know all about. I'm sure the other candidates are raising gobs more money than I am and they do get out to the large public events, but none of them have done what we routinely do, pick a good issue and once or twice a week hold a thoughtful, well-researched news conference, at an interesting place, with good visuals. How many times have we stood on our ear and spit nickels so reporters would cover a story about the war or militarism? We've got a lot of practice at being p.r. agents.

4). How do you get volunteers to help you? (Note: Mike inserts tongue in cheek)

Usually large bribes but this year the budget won't allow it. We find that mass quantities of mind altering substances work nearly as well.

Once they volunteer they see what a great bunch of people they're working with and they're hooked. Again, VFP members have seen this happen all the time, but many otherwise good-hearted people don't know about the social benefits of activism until they're experienced it. I still remember from '93 when two good friends of mine met at the

campaign HQ to take out yard signs. We didn't see them for the next three days and they wound up getting married after the election.



5). How do you handle negative attacks on your positions?

Immediately, factually and with a bit of humor when possible.

6). How does being a veteran influence your political campaigns?

Externally, it provides a limited amount of additional credibility in some settings. Personally, it provides me with unlimited motivation and purpose. All I have to do is recall for a moment what I saw as a hospital corpsman from '69 to '73 and I can put aside the trivial discouragements and get to work.

7). Is there anything unique about doing your work in a Midwest city?

Perhaps. Except for my time in the Navy and a year afterwards when I lived in the Bay Area, I've always been in this part of the country, so keep that in mind. But I know that this is a working class town that has been hit terribly hard by deindustrialization like just every older, industrial city on

the Great Lakes. Our people are the first to get laid off in a recession and the last to be re-hired. The city's budgets reflect that. Hard times are all too familiar. So that gives a candidate, if he or she has the gumption which almost none have, to cut loose and tell it like it is, maybe more so than elsewhere.

Again, as VFP members all understand since we're aware of the big picture -- when trillions of our tax dollars are used to rain death on innocent people, we know we're forfeiting the ability to build the kind of life we deserve; we know how empire and militarism pollute our culture and prevent peoples' better natures from shining forth. So I think we just plain know what's chicken shit and what's not.

8). So, okay, how do you run a door-to-door campaign?

This is a whole story in itself and if anybody is serious about trying it, let me know...after November 3.

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Editor's Note: There you have it. The master has spoken. In five years I expect to have ten of us follow Mike's lead, to have ten cities run by VFP members preparing to mount gubernatorial campaigns, and in a decade to have taken over this country. Our first actions will be to enforce the Kellogg- Briand Act, to convert war munitions factories into solar panel shops, and to buy everyone in our states a pizza.



Revolution”—and everyone who came to the VFP convention in Portland that year got one as a souvenir. I envisioned the prints serving as points of connection between all the people who would eventually take them home and hang them on their walls. This project continues to ripple out; I was happy to learn that a 'Resilience' print I donated to a silent auction at last year's SOAW vigil brought in \$400, and now the US Library of Congress may acquire a set of these prints as part of a Combat Paper exhibit collection.

What keeps me going? Certain themes I circle around to in my mind help keep me centered. Rhythm is one — movement in relation to time and space. Visualizing myself as being connected to the space outside my body and to others through that space has been a powerful exercise for me. I find the mysteries of connection and the challenges of community equally engaging, and activism grounded in affinity makes great sense to me. Meanwhile, I continue to work on expanding my capacity for love and compassion, gratitude and forgiveness—for myself, for others, for the whole world.

As for the future, an IVAW tenth-anniversary portfolio print hanging on my art-room door lists ten war resisters along with this Stéphane Hessel quote: *'To you who will create the twenty-first century, we say, with affection: To create is to resist. To resist is to create.'* Resistance to one thing naturally creates space for the existence of something else. Acting to create the new paradigm is a form of resistance to the old ways. As Bob Dylan sang, *'He who is not busy being born is busy dying.'* If we are not willing to simultaneously work on creating the future we

# MARCH ACROSS AMERICA

Michael Cliff



The bike Michael is riding across the U.S.

MARCH ACROSS AMERICA (MAA) is U.S. Army veteran and VFP "Nomad" Michael Cliff's ongoing public awareness campaign to promote the Veterans For Peace message as well as reach those veterans who "have fallen through the cracks." One focus of the MAA is to honor veterans who have dedicated their post deployment lives to activism within the peace and justice movement. The first honoree of Michael's project was the venerable and controversial Scott Camil, and this year Michael will present a VFP flag to the family of Jacob George, the brother we lost in September 2014, and whose memory and dedication to peace we hope to preserve.

Michael's journey will take him from the teargas stained streets of Oakland, CA through the deserts of the Southwest where our indigenous brothers and sisters are fighting against mining corporations and struggling to preserve and protect their sacred lands and rivers and on through Texas and Oklahoma where he will act as a "force multiplier" in the struggle against tarsands and environmental degradation before arriving in Fayetteville to honor Jacob by presenting the VFP flag to his family on the eve of the new year, a year in which we foresee yet more struggle as we continue to "Wage Peace" against US Imperialism and corporate hegemony within the government and our communities.

You can support the March Across America when it comes to your town, sign the flag and donate, provide lodging, or get on your bike and ride! Please contact Michael Cliff at [occupirate@gmail.com](mailto:occupirate@gmail.com).



want, then what is the point of our resistance?"

Editor's Note: I might add, by the way, that Becky is an inspi-

rational fellow editor of *Peace In Our Times*. May we all be blessed by having someone like Becky Luening working with us in our local chapters.



# DIVERSE VOICES: VFP, PROJECT RENEW & US AID

*Many times over the years of our existence, VFP members have gone toe-to-toe over issues of great concern to all of us.. And now we are somewhat consumed by the USAID question -- should VFP act as the fiscal sponsor of grant monies, through Project Renew, that comes from USAID? At our last convention in San Diego, this issue was the most contentious under consideration at our business meeting and both sides presented impassioned and oftentimes eloquent statements in support of their viewpoints.*

*To some members this debate is disconcerting. It indicates to them that we are an organization that is fracturing apart. Au contraire. I think it represents further evidence that we are capable of operating under a large tent. We are a "tribe" of malcontents, for sure -- many of us dyed-in-the-wool "non-joiners", so of course we fight like cats and dogs. We care. We are activists. We refuse to stand aside when we perceive injustice taking hold, especially when it is the U.S. military doing the dirty work.*

*Early on in the debate, I foolishly represented my stance as "taking the moral high ground," implying that those who disagreed with me were somehow morally inferior. I apologize for such foolishness. Really, what we are talking about here is a strategic dilemma -- should we or should we not step into this arena? I think the best way to decide for ourselves is to listen to two of our most esteemed members, Brian and Chuck, both of whom are American War in Vietnam veterans. They disagree. Here is what they have written.*

*Doug Rawlings*

## **BRIAN WILLSON:**

**Background:** The Board of Veterans For Peace, by a majority vote, has agreed to serve as fiscal sponsor for Project RENEW in Viet Nam in order to receive government grant monies to be funneled through the US Agency for International Development (USAID). This new role for VFP has been very contentious among members, including members of the Board.

**VFP Ballot:** VFP members will receive a mailed ballot in late October/early November that includes Resolution 2015-08, Veterans For Peace Should Have No Relationship with USAID. I urge a vote FOR this Resolution which would prohibit VFP from having a relationship with USAID for any purpose.

### **Facts:**

1. Despite USAID (1961-present) representing itself as "the lead US Government agency that works to end extreme global poverty and enable resilient, democratic societies", its dark history discloses in fact its role as an intrinsic component of US policy of "full spectrum dominance" overseeing "humanitarian" projects, often in shadowy affiliations with agencies such as the

CIA. During the U.S. War against Viet Nam, AID's "humanitarian" efforts included being CIA cover in such functions as operating prisons, including secret, brutal "tiger cages", and training police and jailers leading to torture and murder of countless Vietnamese.

2. The US owes billions of reparations dollars to the Vietnamese for unspeakable damage criminally inflicted during the war. Reparations should be appropriated directly by the US to the Vietnamese government.

3. Project RENEW is an exemplary 15-year old project in Quang Tri Province run by highly competent Vietnamese leading to dramatic reduction in annual deaths from Unexploded Ordnance (UXO). It currently enjoys substantial financial partner/donor relationships with the Vietnamese government, US State Department, Norwegian People's Aid, and a variety of international corporate and private contributors.

4. Viet Nam and the United States are two of twelve members of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), ironically are now allies in US policy to contain China. The US is

providing funds for various Vietnamese projects, while enjoying joint military exchanges at the port of Da nang. Viet Nam is now seeking fighter jets and drones from US contractors as part of the US "Pivot" to Asia. US companies such as Monsanto (remember Agent Orange?) are now promoting GMO and herbicide-based agribusiness in Viet Nam.

5. The VFP board decision to serve as a fiscal sponsor for USAID funds is understandably a contentious and divisive issue within the VFP membership.

**The ISSUE:** Is Veterans For Peace an appropriate organization to seek, accept or sponsor US government funds, including from AID? I argue that such decision threatens VFP's impeccable credibility while seriously weakening its position as one of the fiercest, independent activist critics of US domestic and foreign policies.

### **Discussion:**

1. It is noteworthy that some organizations, such as Doctors Without Borders, absolutely prohibit seeking or accepting funds from governments or their granting agencies.

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This is to assure that there is no appearance of being beholden or subject to any political pressure to unfairly serve some recipients while ignoring others. Grantors historically tend to use their power to manipulate original intentions due to "political" agendas.

2. Since the national VFP board does not operate by consensus, there appears to be no process by which to resolve contentious issues except to choose a policy that pleases some members, perhaps a majority, while leaving a substantial minority, displeased and alienated. In so doing, the solidarity of the group is weakened, while preventing the likelihood finding more creative solutions that almost always emerge when a consensus process is diligently followed to a resolution satisfactory to all.

3. The rhetorical communications between and among participants in the discussion of whether VFP should pursue, or refuse, fiscal sponsorship of USAID funds, has revealed numerous examples of a culture of war, not one of peace, severely breaching a spirit of non-violence. This acrimony suggests that VFP ignores fundamental principles necessary for a peace culture to thrive. Conflicts inevitably arise and they require practicing mutual respect, careful listening, while patiently clarifying summaries of respective positions.

4. It is not apparent that proponents of VFP who seek fiscal sponsorship for AID funds have displayed good faith efforts to search for other appropriate fiscal sponsors whose constituent membership would steadfastly support sponsoring AID funds to Project RENEW. A number of sponsors already fund Project RENEW. In the unlikely prospect that other fiscal sponsors cannot be found, it would nonetheless not justify VFP seeking sponsorship if an earnest minority of its membership articulate reasons for opposition.

5. VFP possesses a reputation for being brutally honest in its critique of US patterns of unjust and diabolical domestic and foreign policies, while presenting alternative perspectives. Having any funding connection whatsoever with the US government or its agencies such as USAID, places VFP below reproach, severely limiting its fierce independence as a voice for candor from inside the most violent empire.



Project RENEW staff in the field.

6. VFP UK unanimously voted 170-0 to oppose any VFP USA association with AID, concluding that USAID's involvement with VFP USA is politically part of the dangerous US military "Pivot to Asia". This relationship compromises VFP's independent position seriously undermining its credibility for reaching out to other global communities who clearly possess a critical perspective of the US government. VFP UK Chair, Ben Griffin, argues that a relationship with USAID contravenes one key principle of the Statement of Purpose, "To restrain our government from intervening, overtly and covertly, in the internal affairs of other nations". The embryonic Veterans For Peace Australia have indicated that such VFP USA position is also likely to be unacceptable to their becoming affiliated with the latter.

Conclusion: I remain stunned that the VFP board ever seriously considered serving as a fiscal sponsor for funds to be administered

through USAID. The controversial decision is understandably divisive and contentious within national VFP membership, and a majority vote does not resolve this divisiveness. The lack of any earnest search for alternative fiscal sponsors is most troubling to me since that avenue, it seems, would enable a most reasonable and realistic resolution. The fact that the money may in fact be used for good purposes is *not* the issue. To repeat: The issue is whether VFP is an appropriate fiscal sponsor for USAID funds. By proceeding without a consensus, the solidarity of VFP is weakened, not strengthened. It will significantly disable VFP USA's capacity to promote anti-war/pro-peace veterans groups in other countries who may see more clearly the compromised integrity that choosing to operate in concert with monies from the US government or its agencies like USAID implies.

#### CHUCK SEARCY:

Since there will be a vote by the membership on the USAID grant application, it is clear that as much accurate and factual information as possible should be available to everyone.

The Project RENEW staff -- our Vietnamese colleagues with whom I have worked for 14 years -- and Chuck Palazzo and I, mainly, as VFP reps on the ground here, have kept the VFP Board of Directors informed of this USAID application process in some detail.

We have maintained regular contact with the VFP Board of Directors' implementation sub-group set up by President Barry Ladendorf to monitor this situation on behalf of the Board and raise any questions that ought to be asked. The members of that group are Mark Foreman, chair; Gerry Condon; Paul Cox; Ken Mayers; VFP Exec. Dir. Michael T. McPhearson; and Barry.

The Implementation Group has received copies of all relevant correspondence, consisting primarily

(Continued on page 11)

of several draft versions and a final Concept Paper required by USAID as the first step in applying for funds; and an itemized 5-year budget plan with accompanying detailed budget narrative and explanations keyed to each line item expenditure. Those are still *draft* versions, which will be reviewed, tweaked, and finalized if we get the go-ahead to submit them formally.

At the Board meeting at the San Diego convention on the morning of August 5th, I was asked to provide an update, which I did. In essence, I reported that the "Concept Paper" we submitted was rejected by USAID because Quang Tri Province was not listed as "eligible" for funding under this grant. We expected that hurdle and planned to initiate a thorough discussion, as promised by USAID, about the reasons why Quang Tri *should have been eligible*, which the Vietnamese were prepared to argue quite persuasively. USAID demurred at that point and suggested that to reverse their restriction on Quang Tri would require considerably more discussion and review. It is not a simple matter to change parameters in a document that has been months in preparation, they hinted. However, the mission director and staff pointedly *encouraged* us to make the case to do that.

At that juncture I suggested that RENEW and VFP could use this rejection as a valid reason to simply walk away, turn our backs on the bureaucracy and the time spent and the additional headaches that would likely ensue. The Vietnamese, however, RENEW staff and provincial officials -- after discussing the question at length -- made the decision to go forward with the application at least until there is a clear, firm refusal from USAID. The Board endorsed that approach, and the members who attended a plenary session and voted on the question supported the Board's decision by a small but clear majority.

Here, let me note that amid all the talk about policy, politics, bureaucratic ineptitude, and sinister motives, the Vietnamese continue

to come back to a fundamental point: the 15,000 victims of Agent Orange in Quang Tri and their families who would be targeted for help and support in their homes, primarily, where their needs are greatest, simply have nowhere else to turn



Project RENEW staff in the field.

beyond existing services, which are inadequate. The Vietnamese staff at RENEW have long felt a responsibility to use the skills and expertise they have developed over 14 years in helping UXO victims, and to expand these efforts to serve this population of Agent Orange victims. The AO victims have suffered for too long, with little or no help. USAID happens to be the only conduit through which U.S. government assistance will come, a decision that is out of our hands. There is no other way, or in sight down the road. Some of us continue to feel strongly that the U.S. government has an ethical and moral obligation to provide funds for this purpose. Call it reparations or not -- it's 40 years late and four generations overdue.

Following that decision by the Vietnamese to go forward, the Chairman of the Provincial government sent a letter dated July 31, 2015 to USAID and one to the Vietnamese Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs which is USAID's primary governmental link here. The letters formally requested reconsideration of the denial of Quang Tri's eligibility for these funds, and suggested that a meeting of all the parties be arranged to discuss the matter. The Chairman is still awaiting a response from MOLISA and USAID.

Nothing more has happened since then. I have suggested to the Chairman's staff that they've waited politely long enough, they should follow up and ask for a timely response.

RENEW staff have not spent any more time tweaking the budget plan and budget narrative. There's no reason to. We won't do so until there is a clear signal to go forward with an official submission.

I believe we have provided all the documentation requested by the Implementation Group on behalf of the Board. We've tried to keep the Board informed of any developments that are noteworthy, although there have not been many, and certainly none of late.

Final point, regarding so many valid examples and arguments about the U.S. role around the world and our improprieties and crimes and disasters that have been thrown into this discussion. Hardly a charge has been made that I don't agree with. In Vietnam we spend an inordinate amount of time arguing with our Vietnamese friends about the TPP and why they should be cautious about this deceptive deal; about the "Asia pivot" and the grave diplomatic and security imbalances that may result for Vietnam; the effort to open U.S. arms sales to Vietnam and the critical dangers that new policy may portend. Our Vietnamese friends view those issues seriously as well. But on the "threat" from USAID, as one official told me some months ago, "We know all about USAID. We have watched them carefully for years. Don't worry about us. Go ahead and take the money. Our people need your help."

Editor's note: I would recommend sharing these two points of view at the chapter level. Let each chapter discuss this issue. And let us all prepare to remain Veterans For Peace, no matter the outcome of the upcoming vote. We owe that to each other and to our loved ones.



# CHAPTER REPORTS

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## CHAPTER 1 - PORTLAND, ME

**Richard Clement**

In July we joined with Women in Black in the Old Halloween Day Parade and picked up first prize in the "Spirit of Halloween" category for our message of Peace! In August we tabled at the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Brunswick Peace Fair. I presented the yearly PeaceMaker award to this year's recipient as our chapter was presented the award last year.

In September the Blue Angels returned to Brunswick. As in the past, the public entering the "show" were met by Veterans For Peace and other peaceful folk to protest these war machines. At the end of September, the yearly Common Ground County Fair was held. Chapter 1 proudly staffed our table in the Social/Political Action tent. The fair draws over 60,000 people for its three day run. We operate a button making machine for all ages to make buttons of their own design, prompting more discussions of peace.

In October, as this is being written, a Peace Walk is being undertaken from Ellsworth, Maine to Portsmouth, N.H. The focus is on the Militarization of the Seas.

## CHAPTER 21 - NORTHERN NJ

**Wendy Fisher**

On the Fourth of July, the chapter participated in the Teaneck Independence Day parade, along with members of VVAW and MFSO. On July 25th, members attended the Million People's March against police brutality held in Newark, NJ, an event sponsored by the People's Organization for Progress. On August 4th, members of the chapter who are also active with Combat Pa-

per and Warrior-Writers participated in a reading in Military Park in Newark. The event was sponsored by the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival. In September, member Jim Fallon, a Combat Paper artist, won first place in the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival for his work entitled "Orphans' Opus 68."

On September 26th, members Ken and Joann Dalton attended a reception for Vietnam President Truong Tan Sang in New York City. Also on that day, Chapter 021 provided logistical assistance to the International Migrants Alliance which rallied and marched in NYC while the United Nations General Assembly was in session. On October 11th, members attended an organizing meeting for a New Jersey chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace.

Over thirty members attended our annual barbecue on August 1st, where we were joined by guests from VVAW, MFSO, and Chapter 34, New York City.

## CHAPTER 27 - MINNEAPOLIS, MN

**Mary McNellis**

Ex-president Larry Johnson worked hard making the Lake Harriet Peace Garden Hiroshima/Nagasaki remembrance a success. With his wife, Elaine, and grandchildren they led the heart-filled ceremony with the story of Sadako Peace Cranes. And bell-ringing! To commemorate 70 years after US atomic bombing of Japan, Larry facilitated bringing "From War to Reconciliation" exhibit to the Landmark Center in St. Paul (sister city to Nagasaki) and also the film and exhibit "Pictures from a Hiroshima Schoolyard". In August Steve McKeown and president Logsdon attended an award

luncheon in Lombard IL for an international essay contest about US obeying Law against War. David Swanson was keynote speaker; McKeown presented them a Kellogg-Briand banner. In September we joined an anti-drone demonstration at Fort Ripley, also sponsored a benefit concert for the Tijuana Deported Veterans house. First weekend in October we enjoyed R&R on the shores of Lake Superior at our annual retreat, sharing dinner and ideas with Duluth VFP Chapter 80.



Members of Ch. 27 enjoy their annual retreat.

## CHAPTER 34 - NEW YORK, NY

**Bob Keilbach**

Recent monthly speakers: Cathy Breen discussed her recent one-month long trip to Iraq and Turkey where she visited some of the overwhelming number of Iraqi refugees. Bassem Tamimi, an internationally recognized Palestinian human rights activist who organizes weekly nonviolent demonstrations in opposition to illegal Israeli settlement construction and military occupation, spoke about his work. Recent events: Hiroshima/Nagasaki Commemoration at the Japanese Consulate, on the 70th Anniversary of the atomic bombing, with a peaceful observance apologizing to the people of Japan, received considerable media coverage. Rallies were held in support of the Iran Nuclear Pact at Congressional representa-

tives' offices. We formed the Veterans Peace Walk at the Isaiah Wall, across from the UN, on International Peace Day. We held an Afghan War 14<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Demo at Times Square Recruiting Station. Chapter members participate in a monthly Peace Vigil in Queens, and the No-Separate Justice Vigil at Metropolitan Correctional Center. We will be marching in the annual Armistice/Veterans Day Parade up Fifth Ave.

## CHAPTER 41 - CAPE COD, MA

**Duke Ellis**

This Fall Chapter 041 once again gears-up for our "Voices of Peace" Poetry Contest and Awards Event. This is year 21 for the contest which has become a focal point of peace and nonviolence for teachers and young people in schools across Cape Cod. We are grateful to the large group of educators who year after year have made this contest a part of their curriculum and to those who help us to fund this event.



**Duke Ellis, Ch. 41, marching in Suicide Prevention Parade.**

Also in September, we participated in a regional "Out of the Darkness" Suicide Prevention Walk organized by local affiliates of the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention on Cape Cod. We staffed an information table about the 'Hidden Wounds' of war, and the experience the Lucey family and the loss of their son Cpl. Jeffrey M. Lucey USMC to suicide as the result of PTSD. We have decided that closer ties and more cooperative action with that community was something we should explore.

We will again be taking our "22 Veteran Suicides a Day" message with us as we join the Cape Cod

community in remembering the true costs of war while honoring veterans' service and sacrifice on November 11.

## CHAPTER 50 - NORTHERN MI

**Tim Keenan**

Chapter 50 has been working diligently on barring the Blue Angels and Thunderbirds from performing their military demonstrations here in Traverse City, MI. We have created door hangers (which we are distributing throughout the city) as a form of education to the citizens of our community that view the war machines as entertainment. Our long term goal is getting this issue on the ballot for a vote.

We have met with officials from our schools on the possibility of having a presence in our schools along with the military recruiters. Again, we feel a need to educate the student as well as his/her parents regarding the military.

VFP celebrated International Day of Peace for the 4th year. We hosted a sunrise ceremony with music at one of our beaches. That was followed by the Mayor proclaiming Traverse City a peace city (at least for a day) at the Government Center. And that was followed by a 6 member panel speaking to peace followed by q&a. The event, as always, was well received by the community.

The president of our Chapter attended the national conference and screened the award winning short documentary film "Nanek" to members and others. The film followed a combat vets return to Dakto and Hill 1338, as well as meeting one-on-one with the enemy.

## CHAPTER 51 - SYRACUSE, NY

**Sharon Dellinger**

The chapter elected officers; chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer. A tax id has been applied for and plans are underway

for several fund-raising events. Additionally, the group had applied to march in the Armistice Day Parade. This request was denied by the defense contractor heavy committee, CNY Veterans Parade and Expo, which is largely comprised of organizations involved in drone research and production. At their meeting in October, the group will decide on their best course of action in the face of this denial.

## CHAPTER 63 - ALBUQUERQUE, NM

**Sally Alice Thompson**

We had the drones quilt in September. It was displayed at the Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice. We also had representatives and a table at the Labor Day picnic and the World Peace Day at the Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice. Some of our members traveled to Santa Fe to attend a Separation of Church and State presentation where Mikey Weinstein talked about right wing religious pressures in the military. A number of us attended a showing of *Same Same*, about Vets for Peace in Viet Nam, and heard Suel Jones read from his book. We canceled our October meeting to participate in Red Nation's demonstration to change Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day. We wore VFP shirts and carried our flag, in a march of over 500 people. We had an awards luncheon for Willard Hunter for the many hours he's spent for our chapter and for Bill Prinkey, who successfully lobbied the City Council to name a PTSD Awareness Day.



## CHAPTER 71 - SONOMAVALLEY, CA

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### Bill Simon

We debuted our 22 *Suicides Every Day* display: 22 X's painted bright white, some with red paint-splatter to represent the more violent suicides, at the annual Progressive Festival. The display includes a large banner stating: **22 Veteran Suicides Every Day**. Although this was a progressive left-leaning festival of approximately 30 organizations, almost no one knew that 22 veterans kill themselves on average every day. We had a robust VFP presence at the Inaugural Dedication Ceremony of the Sebastopol Living Peace Wall that honors those who have worked nonviolently for peace and justice. Two-to-four names suggested by local residents will be added to the Peace Wall each year. It is a beautiful monument constructed of solid granite topped with a large bronze peace symbol? We attended the first planning session for the 2016 National Convention to be held in Berkeley, CA. We are excited to work with Chapter 69 and others to make the convention a wonderful experience for all involved.

## CHAPTER 72 - PORTLAND, OR

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### Marian Ward

The VFP Convention in San Diego was attended by 10 chapter members in August, and in September members of the Chapter staffed a table at the Vancouver (WA) Peace and Justice Fair. WWII veteran, Will Pool, spoke at the lecture on northwest conscientious objectors during WWII at the Oregon Historical Society in September. The Chapter participated in the October rally and march through the City of Portland in remembrance of the 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the bombing in Afghanistan. The Chapter held its annual Armistice Day ceremony on November 11<sup>th</sup> downtown at Pioneer Courthouse Square at 11:11 a.m.

Chapter members are a part of the coalition working to bring a resolution to the City Council that would welcome cleared-for-release Guantanamo prisoners to Portland. Maintenance at the Peace Park is ongoing. Angie Hines co-hosts a monthly veterans radio program and Dan Shea hosts a monthly veterans TV program.



Ed Pool, Ch. 72 member and World War II veteran.

## CHAPTER 75 - PHOENIX, AZ

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### Aaron Davis

In August, Rick Smith, Charlie Osburn and James Lucas mobilized at John McCain's office to support Apache Stronghold. (Save Oak Flat) Four members attended the National Convention in San Diego. We also tabled at the Jackson Browne Concert.

In September we supported VFP member Michael Clift on his bike ride from San Diego to Fayetteville, Arkansas for IAWA activist Jacob George, and Charlie and Katherine Osburn hosted a pool party. We also tabled at Gratitude Corner (Veterans Memorial) sponsored by Up By Their Bootstraps.



Ch.75 members Dennis Stout & Charlie Osburn at convention chat with Executive Director Mcphearson.

## CHAPTER 87-SACRAMENTO, CA

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### John Regier

During this last quarter we have tabled for VFP at a Sacramento appearance of the San Francisco Mime Troupe (a group of performers who have staged anti-corporate and anti-imperialist plays for over 40 years). We are now planning for the upcoming Veterans Day Parade. Our regularly scheduled Anti-War Vigils continue every Wednesday and every Second Saturday, and we stand with dozens of demonstrators at monthly anti-drone protests at Beale A.F.B near Sacramento. The anti-drone ad co-produced by members of our chapter has been shown in many other places around the nation. We also serve food monthly at a local homeless support organization. Some of our members also work with a local Palestinian support group are getting involved with a new anti-recruiting effort

## CHAPTER 89 - NASHVILLE, TN

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### Harvey Bennett

The epidemic of 22 veteran suicides every day has been on our agenda with monthly vigils in front of the State Capitol on the 22nd of each month as well as participating in a public panel on veteran suicide hosted by Nashville Friends Meeting.

Following the tragic shooting deaths of four marines and one seaman at the Chattanooga Armed Forces Training Center in July, a group of our members traveled to the impromptu memorial in front of the Center to be a voice for peace to counter those issuing calls to arms and stoking anti-Muslim feelings.

We were in Oak Ridge, TN to mark the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We attended the Nonviolence Workshop and a powerful presentation Friday evening by Transform Now Plowshares: Sister Megan Rice, Greg Boertje-Obed and Michael Walli. The rally and

march to Y-12 included people from around the USA and ages from 85 (Sister Megan) to babies in strollers. We lined up across from the fence enclosing the plant, sang songs and advanced in unison to tie peace cranes to the fence.



Ch. 89 members attended Oak Ridge Hiroshima commemoration.

## CHAPTER 91 - SAN DIEGO, CA

**Gil Field**

We enjoyed hosting the 30<sup>th</sup> annual convention here in August and thanks all 400+ workers and attendees who made this convention a success. Since the convention, and perhaps because of it, chapter members have been called upon to participate in a variety of local workshops and seminars, where the veteran's perspective has been sought.

We look forward to marching in the San Diego Veterans Day Parade on November 11<sup>th</sup>, and setting up our Hometown Arlington West Memorial all day in front of the USS Midway Museum downtown. This memorial features headstones of the 300 local southern Californians who have died in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and is a very memorable experience for the locals and tourists here. We hope to close out the year with more "bannerings" for peace" above the many free-ways here as well as participating with all the other 35 peace groups here in the annual Peace-On-Earth bazaar on December 5<sup>th</sup>. Our chapter continues to gain members regularly, both veteran and associate,

and we have been both rejuvenated and inspired often by our younger post-9/11 veteran members.



Ch. 91's Hometown Arlington display, November 2014

## CHAPTER 99 - ASHEVILLE, NC

**Chris Berg**

Chapter 099 continues its two weekly local low-power radio shows, "Political Alchemy" with Russell Johnson (ashevillefm.org), and "Veterans Voices" with Rusty Sivils and a rotating team (wpvmfm.org). The Chapter helped enable Drone Quilt exhibits in two Asheville locations. Members joined a Buddhist peace walk toward a rally at the Y-12 Oak Ridge nuclear weapons plant, participated in a Stand Down for homeless vets, made contributions to the local shelter for homeless veterans and participated in an action in support of the Iran agreement.

Members supported an enlarged effort to honor the International Day of Peace: a gathering at the Food Co-op with stage, tabling booths and speakers, and an observance in front of City Hall, with a dove release, musical offerings, a dance and reflections from four faith perspectives. The IDOP group issued a directory of supportive organizations, and obtained Day of Peace proclamations from our city and county elected bodies. Looking ahead, the chapter and its partners hope to forward Asheville's commitment to becoming a City of Peace.

In late August, VFP Chapter 100 in Juneau, Alaska dedicated a statue to complete the Bishop

## CHAPTER 100 - JUNEAU, AK

**Phil Smith**

Kenny Memorial Peace Park (the park itself was dedicated in September 2012). The colorful, whimsical, even "cartoonish" sculpture portrays an adult with a hoe and a child holding a piece of bread; it is named GROWING PEACE. The statue was designed by long-time Juneau artist Jim Fowler and was funded by VFP, with assistance from other members of the Juneau Peace Community and the Alaska-based Rasmuson Foundation. The dedication was attended by over 100 Juneau citizens, including the Mayor of Juneau, who accepted the sculpture on behalf of the city.



Members of Ch. 100 with sculpture, GROWING PEACE

## CHAPTER 104 - EVANSVILLE, IN

**Caroline Nellis**

In July, John Michael O'Leary prepared an application, brochure and donor materials for the new \$1000 Gary E. May Peace Scholarship. By August, scholarship donations totaled \$350. We obtained a website, vfp-evansville.org, linked to PayPal, to permit online donations.

September was a whirlwind. On the 5th, members hosted a table at a street bazaar. On the 7th, we marched in the local annual Labor Day Parade, with Gary May, on his hand cycle, leading our contingent.

International Peace Day had us showing peace signage at the riverfront. VFP staffed an art fair table

on the 26th, selling merchandise, with proceeds going to our scholarship. Since our fund already surpassed this year's needs. Lynn Kincade contacted Vanderburgh Community Foundation about requirements for starting an endowed scholarship.

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## **CHAPTER 106 - DALLAS, TX**

**Leslie Harris**

Members continue to hold regular vigils at Bush's home or Library; visit Sen. Cornyn's office re the Iran Deal; held a "Seal the Iran Deal" demonstration at Rep. Sessions' town hall; and held two "Diplomacy Not War" demonstrations – one at Bush's and one at the Grassy Knoll in Dallas. We co-sponsored and tabled at the "World Peace Day 2015 Celebration" in downtown Dallas, and tabled at the "Peacemakers Luncheon." Two members testified about the "war on the planet" at the recent EPA Methane Rules Hearing in Dallas - one of three in the country.

We've partnered with the North Texas Light Brigade for messaging including: #Unlearn Racism; Peace With Iran; Iran Deal - Yes! I Stand With Ahmed; Welcome Refugees; and Peace Is Possible. Three members traveled with the light brigade to display "Sandra Bland" and "Say Her Name" on a freeway overpass in Houston and "Justice for Sandy" in front of the Waller County Jail, where she died. We've continued to support Mothers Against Police Brutality, - attending vigils and displaying messages, "#Christian Taylor" and "Remembering Clinton Allen."

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## **CHAPTER 114 - SHEBOYGAN, WI**

**Craig Wayh**

Work has begun on our first peace park with the erection of an 8 foot peace pole with plaques declaring "may peace prevail on earth" in 16 languages, by late member and WWII veteran Larry McDonald. The city put a walkway to the pole and our chapter helped coordinate

plantings along the walk. We plan to erect a statue, benches and plaques or a walkway to commemorate peace activists. The city parks commissioner offered suggestions on how to approach the city council for approval. Our chapter was again welcomed to the Memorial Day parade, with the condition that we didn't carry a flag draped coffin as we did in the past. 12 members including WWII veteran Marge Behlen attended to hold signs such as, "Honor Vets, Work for Peace."

Our annual "Concert for Peace and Justice" at our local coffee shop / music venue went off very well. Local artists joined us for entertainment and some poignant songs while we offered short informational bits between acts.

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## **CHAPTER 157 - NC TRIANGLE**

**Doug Ryder**

This summer, North Carolina's regressive politics provided Eisenhower Chapter 157 with many reasons to protest. In July, we gathered in Winston-Salem for the Moral Mass March for Voting Rights. There, our VFP flags could be seen flying high above a crowd estimated at 5,000.

In August, chapter members John Heuer, Sam Winstead, and Machai St. Rain represented us at VFP's annual convention. After accompanying Sam on his 4<sup>th</sup> annual bicycle "Ride for Peace" from Raleigh to DC, Machai continued on to Eureka, California, where she helped prepare the Golden Rule for its voyage to San Diego. WWII veteran Sam, now 90, joined Machai in Los Angeles, and together they pedaled to the San Diego convention site

In September, we participated in the first Raleigh Peace Festival, where chapter president Doug Ryder invited attendees to complete the phrase "Peace is..." on a hand-held sign. Their photos then were submitted to VFP national for inclusion on the web site. We're now moving ahead with fall planning for

participation in the NC State Fair's Peace Booth and the Raleigh Veterans Day Parade.

We extend best wishes to chapter past-president and VFP Board member John Heuer for a speedy recovery from recent surgery.

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## **CHAPTERS 161, 163 & 169 - IOWA**

**John Jadryev**

The Iowa three chapters of VFP, 161, 163 and 169 combined resources and melded partnerships with over 25 other peace activist groups to put on a "Barnstorming Tour of Iowa" with Ray McGovern and Coleen Rowley with the intention of improving the dialogue prior to the Iowa Caucus to include issues of peace, justice and national security. During the presentations audiences were urged to ask tough questions of those who aspire to the presidency and not be satisfied with pat answers. The 6 day tour went to 9 venues in 7 cities attracting a combined audience of over 1500. Public events were held on or near 7 Iowa campuses: University of Dubuque, Loras College, University of Northern Iowa, University of Iowa, Iowa State University and Drake University. Several non-public meetings were with student groups. Edward Snowden "Skyped" in at the event in Iowa City to an overflow crowd for an exchange with Ray McGovern and Coleen Rowley. He then took questions from the audience.

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## **CHAPTER 160 - VIETNAM**

**Chuck Searcy**

Chapter 160 is planning the 2016 VFP Peace Tour of Vietnam from 14 to 31 March 2016. Reserve your seat now for our 5th annual tour, from Hanoi to Hue, Quang Tri and the DMZ, Danang, Nha Trang, and Ho Chi Minh City. Meet veterans from all sides, officials, students, farmers, entrepreneurs, beneficiaries of humanitarian projects supported by VFP to help people deal

with the legacies of the war – unexploded ordnance (UXO) and Agent Orange. The cost is just \$2,750 for 16 nights and 17 days in Viet-nam, plus about \$1,000 round-trip airfare from San Francisco, and a donation of \$1,000 to be pooled and distributed at the end of the tour by vote of participants. Over the years, these trip funds and other donations through Chapter 160 have totaled nearly \$200,000. Details at VFP website.

VFP 160 has supported Project RENEW in Quang Tri Province since 2012. VFP's national Board of Directors voted to partner with Project RENEW and seek available USAID funds to assist families dealing with Agent Orange. The Board decision is being challenged by a resolution to be voted on this month by the general membership. We urge all VFP members to participate in this important decision.

## CHAPTER 162 - EAST BAY, CA

### Cathe Norman

Chapter 162 continues with an outreach table at the big monthly "First Friday" street carnival in Downtown Oakland. We pass out newsletters and other materials for peace and non-violence. We also have lively conversations with many of the thousands of passers-by.

A letter was sent to Representative Barbara Lee regarding the recent shipment of anthrax to South Korea; we felt this was a violation to the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention of 1972 and the 1925 Geneva Protocol prohibiting the use of biological weapons. We participated in the Anti-Nuclear protest on August 6 at the Lawrence Lab in Livermore. A small table was set up to distribute our newsletter and other materials. One of our members spoke at the Pleasanton City Council Meeting in opposition to the participation of the City with Urban Shield that has recently moved from Oakland to Pleasanton.

One of our members gave a

workshop at the National VFP Convention and is co-chair of our National VFP Working group for homeless veterans. This group has grown from 3 members to 18. We are supporting the Golden Rule and some of our members have visited and ridden on the ship in San Francisco Bay.

We continue to grow from 8

## CHAPTER 168 - LOUISVILLE, KY

### Carol Rawert Trainer

members in 2011 to 21 current members. On a sad note we regret to announce that long time member Jim Butler (USMC, Korea) died on July 29.

Member Russell Vandenbroucke had an op-ed, "Flags and Flags and Flags" published in the *Courier Journal* and Harold Trainer had several letters to the editor published on militarism and pay cuts for troops. The Vietnam Traveling Wall came to Lexington, KY but the KY Department of Veterans Affairs shunned allowing our chapter to volunteer until the Chapter President demanded to be heard and participate. We were given a graveyard shift the night before the event opened to keep us quiet. Members Carol Rawert Trainer and Steven Gardiner (also presented a workshop) attended the National Convention in San Diego. In September we tabled at 2 events at the University of Louisville: the annual Peace and Justice Community Engagement Fair and Community Day event and a special Veterans Health Issues event. On September 26 we celebrated World Peace Day by sponsoring and tabling at the 2nd annual World Peace Festival at the World Peace Bell in Newport, Kentucky.



Members of Ch. 168 staffing their information table.

## CHAPTER 175 - JANESVILLE, WI

### Norman Aulabaugh

Chapter 175 received its charter in July. The ink was not dry on this charter when we lost two charter members; George Adams, a Korean Veteran, in July and L.D. "Red" Rockwell, a Vietnam Veteran in August. Both were tireless peace activists.

Drones were our recent focus. Chapter 175 was a sponsor of the Madison, Wisconsin to Volk Field, Wisconsin walk to ground the use of drones as weapons of war. The 90 mile walk consisting of 15-20 walkers daily was organized by The Wisconsin Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars and Voices for Creative Nonviolence. The walk ended with a vigil at Volk Field, a Wisconsin National Guard base that trains drone pilots. Nine peace activists were arrested as they walked onto the base. YouTube video: [youtu.be/5TupqWWfmXY](https://youtu.be/5TupqWWfmXY). Kathy Kelly commented on the walk: [popularresistance.org/let-it-shine/](http://popularresistance.org/let-it-shine/).

We displayed a VFP drone quilt at the Public Library in Janesville where Kathy Kelly of the Voices for Creative Nonviolence spoke for an International Day of Peace event. We are planning an event for next year to address the positive effects Casey Sheehan and Tomas Young have given to the peace movement.



Lars Prip with VFP Drone Quilt at Janesville Public Library.



# REVIEW: MORAL INJURY

Doug Rawlings

## MORAL INJURY AND CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION: SAYING NO TO MILITARY SERVICE

by Alice Lynd with the assistance of Staughton Lynd

Alice Lynd's timely monograph *Moral Injury And Conscientious Objection: Saying No To Military Service* (Summer 2015, Quaker House Publications) is exactly what we in Veterans For Peace need as we go about our work in our local communities. Alice has put together a sort of hands-on "manual" that combines compassionate narrative with all the references and back-up information an activist could ever need as she or he attempts to weave the concept of "moral injury" into dialogues with veterans, with active-duty military men and women and their families, and with young people considering military service. I use the word "manual" with hesitation because this little gem is not only factual, but it's a darn good read. She masterfully gives us a personal, close-up look at the courage it takes to really follow one's conscience in the face of entrenched bureaucratic and cultural resistance. And then she directs us toward references that can actually help us guide our communities into action. If you're heading into a school or staffing a table at a peace fair or holding a party at your house, you would be well served to have copies of *Moral Injury* at hand.

Even before the reader gets into the heart of her case for bringing our moral compasses pointing to true north, she gives us a working definition of "moral injury":

"When men and women in the military believe they did or saw something that betrays their deeply held sense of right and wrong, it can create inner conflict and self-blame, and shake up

their moral foundation. They may feel what they did or saw is unforgivable. They experience 'moral injury.'"

And now the narratives begin as we hear from such VFP luminaries as Brian Willson, Camilo Mejia, the late Jacob George, Brock McIntosh, Vince Emanuele, and Geoffrey Millard. Each veteran lets the reader into his moment of deepest anguish, into a moral epiphany. Imagine a high school senior contemplating the Marines reading this from Brian: "My first thought was that I was witnessing an egregious, horrendous mistake.... I didn't see one person standing. Most were ripped apart from bomb shrapnel and machine gun wounds, many blackened by napalm beyond recognition; the majority were children.... From that moment on, nothing would ever be the same for me." Or Camilo: "When I opened fire that day, I violated that law [of morality] and desecrated the most sacred sanctuary of my being. As I observed that young man through the sight of my rifle, I was staring at a point of no return.... My moral injury is the pain I inflicted upon the very core of my being when I took something I could never give back."

Those of us who knew and remember Jacob George, a veteran of three tours in Afghanistan who succumbed to his moral injury by taking his own life last year, can sense his anguish as he recounts carrying "... two bags of body parts out of the building to figure out who it was. We had no idea if they were civilians or insurgents.... We had no idea who was in there, more than likely women and children." And Vince Emanuele, a Marine in the Iraq War, tells it like it is as a veteran trying to cope with life after war:

"Each day is a struggle. The more I try and put the war behind me, the more the dog of war bites at my heels as I run away from the grief."

And did I mention what a wonderful resource this little pamphlet is? Each page is loaded with footnotes to guide the reader into deeper and richer contexts. Alice even leads us directly to assistance on her last page, listing telephone and e-mail contact information for the G.I. Rights Hotline, the Quaker House, the Center on Conscience & War, and the Brite Divinity School, Soul Repair Center. Yeah, you heard me right -- "soul repair" -- such an exquisite concept, which reminds me of Jacob's lament about the V. A. He shares with us an encounter with a therapist there who tells him that after Jacob felt a much needed sense of relief from having thrown his medals away at a demonstration, the V.A. can't encourage him to do that. Jacob's reply:

"You're telling me that you can't offer me the actual healing rituals and ceremonies that I need, that an entire generation of people needs in order to heal their souls?"

Please put this booklet into the hands of as many people as you can. And here's the best news -- Alice is offering multiple copies of *Moral Injury And Conscientious Objection: Saying No to Military Service* free of charge. Copies of the pamphlet may be obtained at no charge except for shipping from Quaker House in Fayetteville, NC, [gpr@quakerhouse.org](mailto:gpr@quakerhouse.org) or 910-323-3912. And, by the way, the Quaker House also offers educational presentations on moral injury for no charge other than transportation costs. Let's take them up on their generous offer.





Mason Kuldinow

## LONG TIME GONE

The boy on the bench on the boardwalk just got back from the war. He watches the waves washing the shore, the shore birds pecking at tiny crabs in the sand or diving for fish in the shallow surf. There was sand where he was, but a long walk to the beach, and the pecking birds were snipers, the diving birds IEDs. Now that he's home, and home isn't home, what will he do with himself? Maybe he'll go to college. Or trade school. Maybe he'll re-enlist. He lifts his gaze to the distant horizon where sea meets sky at the edge of the world. He wonders how far he could swim.

— W. D. Ehrhart

## HOW NEAR VIET NAM CAME TO US

The I.D. bracelet I never did give my first girlfriend cost me more than I'd ever spent before on love of anything but beer. We sipped cherry cokes to nickel-a-hit Rolling Stones' "Let's Spend the Night the Together," "Paint it Black," "Time Is on My Side," and "I Can't Get No Satisfaction." I wanted her eyes gleaming my gold surprise—one small touch from diamond—something to sanctify going all the way, something I hoped would stave off the ultimate pain all love comes to without warning. We both went cold against the mix of malt shop rollick, the carhop motioning her to the telephone news from a TV war forced home too real—everything in our teenage, red-Chev niche eclipsed by this foreign dark: an eight-day fire fight, some napalmed hill of jungle dubbed in numbers, her cousin tallied to the M.I.A. His name stamped in cheap metal meant more than all the Earth's romantic verse of rock-and-roll inscribed in gold, more than any purple-hearted Requiem a red, white, and blue united world or I could ever give.

In Memory of Sgt. Philip Clarence Stein  
- Paul Zarzyski (From, *51: 30 Poems, 20 Lyrics, 1 Self-Interview*--Bangtail Press, 2011)

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*Thank you, Chuck!*

Chuck Rossi has stepped down as editor of this newsletter. We are grateful for his five years of skillful and generous service.

## Are you an editor?

Doug Rawlings is serving as interim editor for this issue, but has not yet agreed to stay on.

If you are interested in volunteering for this important & interesting task, call or email Michael McPhearson for more information.

314-725-6005 [mcphearson@veteransforpeace.org](mailto:mcphearson@veteransforpeace.org)