



Exposing the True Costs of War
and Militarism Since 1985

VETERANS FOR PEACE

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VFP Newsletter

veteransforpeace.org

Winter 2021–22

Veterans For Peace releases Nuclear Posture Review ahead of Biden

THE UN TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (TPNW), APPROVED BY A VOTE OF 122-1 IN THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN JULY OF 2017, REFLECTS THE INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS AGAINST THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH WEAPONS.

In mid-January, Veterans For Peace released its own assessment of the current global threat of nuclear war, ahead of the anticipated release of the Biden Administration's Nuclear Posture Review. The Veterans For Peace Nuclear Posture Review warns that the danger of nuclear war is greater than ever and that nuclear disarmament must be vigorously pursued. Veterans For Peace will deliver their Nuclear Posture Review to

the President and Vice President, to every member of Congress, and to the Pentagon.

Noting the first anniversary of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on January 22, the Veterans For Peace Nuclear Posture Review calls on the U.S. government to sign the treaty and to work with other nuclear-armed states to eliminate all the world's nuclear weapons. The TPNW, approved by a vote of 122-1 in the UN General Assembly in July of 2017, reflects the international consensus against the existence of such weapons.

Veterans For Peace Nuclear Posture Review also calls for measures that would reduce the risk of nuclear war, such as implementing policies for No First Use and taking nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert.

As early as this month, President Biden is expected to issue a United States Nuclear Posture Review, prepared by

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SPECIAL REPORT

VFP-UK at COP26

by David Collins, VFP-UK

I joined 8 friends from Veterans For Peace UK and Movement for the Abolition of War (MAW) for 10 days of activism during COP26 [the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference]. We concentrated our efforts firstly by leafletting and lobbying international delegates outside the entrance to the COP, and secondly by organizing talks and events during "People's Summit for Climate Justice" from November 7–10, part of the COP26 Coalition.

The routes of approach to the conference entrance were identified in advance. Every morning a banner was displayed alongside a flag, and two or three people then handed out leaflets amongst the crowds of international delegates. The leaflets were accepted easily because delegates saw the banner message first ("War Causes Climate Change and Climate Change Causes War"), then saw the same picture in the leaflet. Many of those passing photographed the message; even more gave the thumbs up. There were no negative responses. As at Madrid (COP25), delegates from African countries showed the most enthusiasm for the message.

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VFP-UK's David Collins speaks at an outdoor event held in front of the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on November 4, 2021, organized by Stop the War Coalition.



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Chapter reports ≤ 200 words

Include chapter number,
name/location, and your
chapter reporter's name.

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1200+ pixels wide works well.
Please include a photo credit and
a caption, and try to identify
the people pictured. Thanks!

Send to:
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Ed Asner Presente!

Ed was a great guy as Jerry Genesio nicely detailed. An obit can't include all one's achievements. However, two important achievements left out were Ed's 2004 call for an independent 9/11 investigation. Plus the 2011 narration of the collapse of WTC7 on 9/11 by demolition, and not fire from the Trade Center attack by passenger jets.

What a man!

*Ed Crouch
VFP Chapter 92
Seattle, Washington*

THICH NHAT HANH, R.I.P.

Thich Nhat Hanh died the other day.
I saw an email message about it
Just as I finished a mindfulness
Session online, provided by the VA.
My first lesson in mindfulness
Was 50-some years ago,
when this tiny Vietnamese Buddhist monk
transfixed a regiment-sized cohort
Of Vietnam vets at an antiwar
Encampment on the Mall in Washington, D.C.
This poet of people we'd inflicted war on
Stunned us with his quiet eloquence—
His voice conveying anguish from the
Farming villages we'd destroyed.
This man of peace stood amidst
Towering combat-clad warriors
And shamed us to do more
With our war memories—
To tell the terrible truth
Mindfully.

—Jan Barry, VFP Poet Laureate

TOO MUCH PAPER?

Opt out of snail mail and receive your
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with your name and email address to:
gail@veteransforpeace.org



Susan Schnall was elected President of the National VFP Board at their January 2022 meeting.

Dear VFP Comrades and Friends,

Let me begin by introducing myself. I am a veteran of the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps who protested the American War in southeast Asia by dropping flyers from a small plane on U.S. military bases in the San Francisco Bay Area: Treasure Island, Oak Knoll Hospital, the Presidio, and the deck of an aircraft carrier docked at Alameda Naval Air Station. The flyers advertised the GI and Veterans March for Peace in San Francisco. I was tried by a General Court Martial Board, found guilty of conduct unbecoming and disobeying a General Navy Regulation, and sentenced to six months confinement at hard labor.

I have long been active in VFP's campaign seeking justice for Vietnamese and Americans harmed by Agent Orange, and have served as President of New York City VFP Chapter 34 for several years. I have served on the national VFP board in the past, but this is the first time addressing you as president of the board.

Many thanks to Adrienne Kinne for her work as my predecessor. In 2022, I will continue the difficult work of healing painful divisions in our community so we may work together more effectively. Our future success demands that all of us continue to focus on our goals of peace and justice—in our communities, with loved ones—and keep our eyes on the prize. We face many obstacles. In 1967 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., standing against racial and economic inequity, recognized that those problems were connected to the military industrial complex and capitalist system. We know war as an enemy of the poor and working class, as young people are sent

to “guarantee liberties and opportunities” overseas they can't find at home. Dr. King predicted forever wars with indiscriminate bombing and destruction if the U.S. continued on its path. And here we are.

Strategic Goals

VFP chapters, national projects, working groups and the national board are setting priorities for the year. Louis Raprager is working with a Strategic Planning Committee to develop and distribute a draft Strategic Plan. Your feedback will help us hone a cohesive plan that includes our various activities to help rebuild the antiwar movement: organizing on streets, in virtual game rooms, through social networks.

The Biden Administration has not shifted our nation's global strategy in a fundamentally new direction. Currently there are dangerous hot spots in many areas of the world, and the U.S. is all too ready for war, with about 173,000 troops deployed in 153 countries as of 2020. But war is disaster and makes no sense in times of growing, urgent need for global cooperation. An estimated 241,000 people have died as a direct result of the so-called War on Terror since 2001, according to the Costs of War project at Brown University. Hundreds of thousands more, mostly civilians, have died from hunger, disease, and injury.

There are currently numerous antiwar groupings, but no effective, mass antiwar movement. VFP alone does not have the capacity to reinvigorate the whole movement, but as a veterans group it has an important role in building it, in alliance and coalition with other organizations.

Nuclear weapons are effectively illegal under international law with the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) coming into force one year ago. In January, Veterans For Peace celebrated the anniversary by releasing its own Nuclear Posture Review (see *page 1*), and continues to call on the U.S. to sign on to the TPNW. Please join us in this effort by writing letters to the editor, informing your elected officials of your support, and educating your

communities.

VFP's Climate Crisis and Militarism Project is doing a great job exposing the destructive environmental impact and huge carbon footprint of the U.S. military. Our veterans' voices are being effectively joined with other climate activists in the growing worldwide movement to address the climate catastrophe. (See *page 11*.)

There is growing public concern about the traction the right wing has in the military. As a veterans' organization, VFP has a role to play in connecting with current service people to oppose the use of our military to further racist/sexist/fascist ideas and power. We need to determine how to have an impact in countering efforts to subvert democracy. VFP must expand and deepen our connection to the anti-racist movement. We know that racism plays a key role in justifying militarism abroad. It functions to justify the growing militarization of the U.S. society at home. Deepening our anti-racist understandings and commitments is also crucial in our internal growth and maturation.

Organizational Goals

The intergenerational makeup of VFP's membership definitely presents organizational challenges. We need to honor and make effective use of the contributions of all generations. Older members have long histories and established networks; younger members bring fresh ideas, technological know-how, and great energy. My goal is to help us recognize each other's unique contributions, find strength in diversity, and overcome the ego clashes that lead to misunderstandings, resentment, and anger—to grow our collective power.

Another goal is to continue to develop better communication between VFP's national board, chapters, projects, and working groups. Recognizing that pandemic-induced stress and isolation makes that work more difficult, I look forward to working with you all on this goal, in order to bolster morale.

Thank you all for your inspiring and courageous work! —Susan Schnall

The war industry makes a killing with little regard for people's suffering

ONCE AGAIN, Congress has passed a military budget for over three quarters of a trillion dollars. This despite abandoning the people of Afghanistan in a tragically hurried troop withdrawal. And despite the urgent need to impede a global epidemic, address multiple crises related to climate change, and attend to racial and global economic inequities. The fabric of our civil society is tearing, and our national institutions are fragile. Many people, feeling the tension in this moment, look to the United States government for answers. But judging by the budgeting priorities and posturing of our politicians, the only thing people can expect from the U.S. is more war and suffering.

When President Biden declared a sudden departure of the U.S. military from Afghanistan, bringing an end to the "forever wars" that have been the backdrop of our lives these last 20 years, his intention was not actually ending war. In the same breath he highlighted a handful of military theaters where troops would be needed. He enumerated the growing threats that would have to be countered with deployments. He used intimidating phrases like "over the horizon" to warn the world we would be watching eagerly to violently strike without warning should anyone step out of line. The White House continues working hand in hand with the corporate media to hype up the dangers of traditional boogiemens like Russia and China, while reminding everyone we need to combat terrorism.

Their goal is to convince people that war is a necessary evil to keep us safe, ensure our "freedoms" and enforce human rights. While nothing could be further from the truth, some communities do benefit from war spending. Practically every congressional district brings home some bacon in the form of jobs, and military spending props up the U.S. economy while ensuring access to the resources that have come to fuel

our American way of life. However we know investment in any other economic sector would produce more jobs than the military industry. And that the biggest beneficiaries of the war industry by far are the wealthy elites who run this country. Weapons industrial complex execs and their investors get richer and richer, and their money flows into



A member of VFP New York City Chapter 34, Armistice Day, 2021. Photo: Hideko Otake

electoral campaigns, with the revolving door between government and industry kept spinning to ensure those profits keep flowing. Meanwhile, the people who are sent off to fight are often forced to survive a war hellscape only to return to communities completely neglected for lack of resources.

This phenomenon is not limited to our country. The powerful benefit from war, no matter if you are in Moscow or Washington, D.C.

But here's the thing: These powerful people put a lot of effort into persuading working-class people to support the war culture. And if we organize, the people can stop it. Corporations have globalized and world leaders create international pacts like NATO to work



*VFP Executive Director
Garrett Reppenhagen*

beyond borders. But there is a rise in global solidarity among people to resist capitalism and fascism. World liberation struggles are connecting in radical ways to stop unjust war. We have to do our part here in the United States.

As more military adventures ramp up, there will be calls to mobilize for protests and marches in major cities across the country. As veterans, we will answer the calls and join our allies in the streets. What will it accomplish? At the end of the day we can say, "We told you so." We were there in 2002. We carried clever banners and were arrested on marble steps. It feels good to stand with so many people with common values, to be counted and show that not everyone approves of needless bloodshed. But can we do more?

The U.S. military is as massive as the next 20 largest militaries combined. We produce much of the world's weaponry. We export pain and death all around the globe. But the tech and widgets that make those weapons are oftentimes produced in our own communities. What if the thousands of people across the country participating in one mobilization go home to organize against the military industry that is in their backyard? What if that local coalition joins a larger national coalition to amplify their efforts and help provide pathways and resources for more to join in?

That is exactly what is happening with the War Industry Resisters Network (WIRN). Working with national and local organizations, and individuals, we are building opposition to weapons corporations to make impacts in our local communities as part of a larger
continued on page 5...

CLIMATE CRISIS & THE WAR MACHINE

Music Video Contest Concert



Featuring Performers:

- Dilson Hernandez
- Ben Grosscup
- Ray Sol
- Phil Pflager
- Colleen Kattau
- and more!

February 12th
7pm ET | 6pm CT | 4pm PT



Tune in as we announce the contest winners, air the winning music videos and hear other songs from the winners and other performers!

Music video contest winners announced Music videos available on VFP YouTube channel

LAST YEAR Veterans For Peace asked artists to write songs and create music videos around the theme of *“Climate Crisis and The War Machine.”* Here are the winners! You can view all of the amazing videos on the Veterans For Peace YouTube channel.

FOLK AND SPOKEN WORD

1st: Ben Grosscup and Dilson Hernandez, “Sacrifice Zone”

2nd: David Allgood, “Shine a Light”

R&B/COUNTRY

1st: Ray Sol, “Boots Off the Ground”

2nd: Phil Pflager, “Fire On the Mountain”

ROCK/ALTERNATIVE

1st: Annie Minogue, “NOW”

2nd: James Toler, “It’s Your World”

Nuclear Posture Review ...continued from page 1

the Department of Defense in a tradition started in 1994 during the Clinton Administration and continued during the Bush, Obama and Trump administrations. Veterans For Peace anticipates that the Biden Administration’s Nuclear Posture Review will continue to reflect the unrealistic goals of full spectrum dominance and justify the continuing expenditure of billions of dollars on nuclear weapons.

“Veterans have learned the hard way to be skeptical of our government’s military adventures, which have led us from one disastrous war to another. Nuclear weapons are a threat to the very existence of human civilization, so the U.S. nuclear posture is too important to be left to the cold warriors at the Pentagon. [The VFP Nuclear Posture Review] is consistent with U.S. treaty obligations and reflects the research and work of many arms control experts.”

— KEN MAYERS, RETIRED MARINE CORPS MAJOR

The 10-page document prepared by Veterans For Peace reviews the nuclear posture of all the nuclear-armed states— the U.S., Russia, the UK, France, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel. It makes a number of recommendations for how the U.S. could provide leadership to begin a process of worldwide disarmament.

“This is not rocket science. The experts make nuclear disarmament seem impossibly difficult. However, there is a growing international consensus against the existence of such weapons. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was approved overwhelmingly by the UN General Assembly in July 2017 and went into effect on January 22, 2021. It is possible—and necessary—to eliminate all nuclear weapons, as 122 nations of the world have agreed.”

— GERRY CONDON, VIETNAM-ERA VETERAN, FORMER PRESIDENT OF VFP BOARD

VFP’s Nuclear Abolition Working Group meets the 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month at 6 pm ET | 5 pm CT | 4 pm MT | 3 pm PT

Contact: vfp.nonukes@gmail.com

Related reading: Marjorie Cohn, “Veterans For Peace Urges US to Rejoin Iran Deal and Negotiate With North Korea,” Truthout, January 25, 2022 [<https://truthout.org>].

DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

...continued

collective effort. We are planning coordinated actions across the nation in the weeks around Tax Day this April to help emphasize our objections to using our public funds for war and demand that tax dollars be redirected to escalating necessities here at home.

Militarism monopolizes all our tax resources and leaves working people on the brink of disaster. Each mass mobilization seems to pass without impact. It is time for deep organizing on a local level where a small number of people can make disproportionate differences. To resist the Pentagon

budget, we need to simultaneously disrupt the factories, corporate offices and financial buildings that are the interface between working people and the war industry.

Check <https://veteransforpeace.org> to find the allied organizations, resources, links and pathways to **#ResistWar**.

—Garett Reppenhagen

One chapter's urgent call for cooperation

The following letter was sent to all three members of the Vermont Congressional Delegation on October 25, 2021, by Richard Czaplinski, President of Will Miller Green Mountains VFP Chapter 57.

Dear Vermont Congressional Delegation:

The Will Miller Green Mountain Veterans For Peace, Chapter 57, urges you to introduce legislation in Congress to change the name of Veterans Day back to Armistice Day, and further, to create a Congressional effort to seek ways to bring about a World Armistice Day to halt hostilities, to halt the support

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC MAKES IT ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD ARE IN THIS TOGETHER AND MUST COOPERATE AND HELP EACH OTHER OUT FOR THE GOOD OF ALL.

for hostilities, and instead, to foster real cooperation amongst nations of the world.

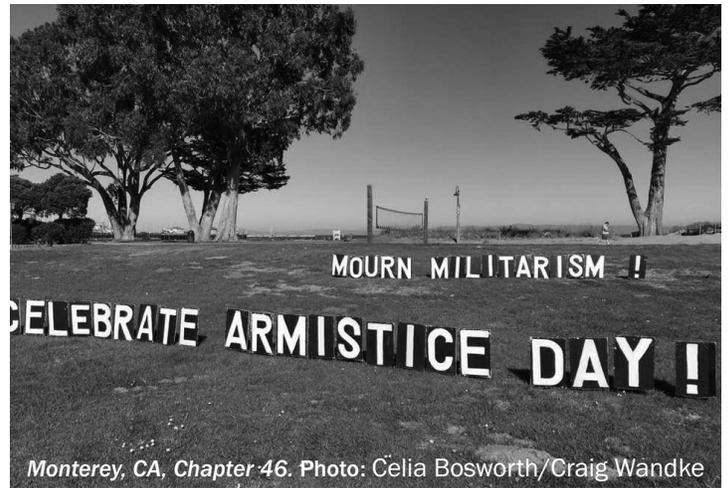
Two years ago I wrote commentary about Armistice Day (a.k.a. Veterans Day) which appeared in the November 7, 2019 *Vermont Digger*, in which I argued the point that nations of the world can no longer waste the resources used to prepare for and wage war. I argued that those resources are needed to meet and cope with the ravages manifesting as the climate crisis worsens. Since then, another crisis came upon the world, everywhere without exception—the COVID-19 pandemic. The latter crisis makes it abundantly clear that the nations of the world are in this together and must cooperate and help each other out for the good of all.

Just as we have needed cooperation to meet the pandemic, so too do we need cooperation to foster peace in the world, to stop the continuing militarization by nations. The resources saved by reducing the arms race are sorely needed to meet the climate crisis now manifesting much faster than anticipated. Every reduction in militarization also means far less Greenhouse Gases released to the atmosphere.

[...] In these days of growing division in this country, it is paramount that you urge cooperation among nations of the world as well as cooperation among people and their representatives in Congress. Let us stop the hot wars and the myriad smaller and little hidden wars. Let us seek and declare a truce to the present wars as was done on November 11, 1918, to bring World War One to an end. ...

Thank you very much for your efforts in this regard.

Richard Czaplinski



Monterey, CA, Chapter 46. Photo: Celia Bosworth/Craig Wandke

For the 103rd anniversary of Armistice Day, Veterans For Peace chapters and members across the U.S. and abroad once again took the lead to #ReclaimArmisticeDay as a “day dedicated to the cause of world peace,” as it was celebrated at the end of World War I when the world came together to recognize the need for lasting peace.

Veterans For Peace started this campaign over 8 years ago to challenge the overt celebration of militarism and redirect our cultural celebrations to highlight moments when the world came together to work towards peace and the common good. And it is clear that it is working! More and more people are hearing our message!

Our chapters have continued to find ways to spread the message of peace, hosting many virtual actions and adapting in-person events for safe gathering.

This year also marked our first all-day, streaming event, *Armistice Day TV*, on our Twitch channel (twitch.tv/veteransforpeace). It was a huge success and we are excited to replicate next year! The VFP initiative Gamers For Peace hosted eleven hours of programming that

included conversation, education, mental health check-ins, bell ringings, and of course, games! We had record numbers of folks joining all of our social media channels and spreading the word to #ReclaimArmisticeDay.

Check out the chapter reports to read more about how chapters took action and visit the VFP website (<https://bit.ly/AD2021Recap>) to watch recordings of the many wonderful virtual events, and find additional photos and reports from local chapter actions, links to articles, podcasts, radio shows, videos and more!

Are you interested in working with us to further build the Armistice Day campaign? Join one of our organizing calls the first Thursday of each month at 11am Central Time! Email samantha@veteransforpeace.org for Zoom details.



Reclaiming Armistice Day in Western Massachusetts

Text and photos by Ellen Davidson

November 11, 2021, was a beautiful day for a drive to Greenfield, Massachusetts, to join peace activists for a commemoration of Armistice Day. Paki Wieland (to whom one cannot say “No”) invited Tarak Kauff to come and speak as a veteran, and we met up with three other Veterans For Peace members from either end of the state: Nate Goldshlag from Boston, Mike Tork from Falmouth on Cape Cod, and Eric Wasileski, who grew up in Greenfield and lives in Pittsfield, Mass.

The event was followed by a delicious lunch at Pete’s Seafood Restaurant, after which Eric would



Eric Wasileski

not let us leave town without visiting his favorite landmark, The Poet’s Seat Tower, where he organizes poetry readings every Memorial Day. The view was well worth the detour. Thanks, Eric!

Let’s hope for more such gatherings in the months to come.



Mike Tork

“Strong winds and cold temperatures didn’t slow our steps, and the applause from bystanders warmed our spirits.”



Some of the members of VFP’s Eisenhower Chapter 157 who marched in the Armistice/Veterans Day Parade in Raleigh, North Carolina, on November 6, 2021.



VETERANS DAY (WASH THE FLAG)

Written for Veterans/Armistice Day 2014
Veterans For Peace Rally
Boston, Massachusetts

We Veterans For Peace
having dutifully served
due hereby affirm
our greater responsibility to serve world peace.
Because our government is the single greatest
purveyor of violence in the world
we wash this flag.
Because we make war unnecessarily
and unjustly
for profiting
for power
for oil
we wash the flag

We wash our flag
to increase the awareness
of the human costs of war

We wash our flag
to say it is wrong
for our government to intervene
either overtly or covertly
in the affairs of other nations

We wash this flag
to abolish war
as an instrument of national policy

We wash this flag
because we are here on veterans day
and not armistice day
when the war to end all wars ended

We all long for the day
when we make veterans no more
until then
we wash the flag

— Eric Wasileski

Korea Peace Campaign

Contact: kpc@veteransforpeace.org

THE KOREA PEACE CAMPAIGN (KPC) thanks all VFP members and local chapters that supported our campaign in 2021. It was a quite busy year for the KPC project, holding two educational webinars and engaging in the two advocacy events with Congress, among other activities.

The first webinar, “For Peace in Korea, No More War Drills,” was held on February 19, 2021 [https://youtu.be/Mh-ScX0gF_s]. Cosponsored by other peace groups in the U.S. and South Korea, this webinar drew an audience of more than 200 people. It featured three panelists, including Jovannie Reyes, a U.S. Army veteran who served in South Korea. Special thanks to Will Griffin for making the four-minute video on U.S.–ROK joint war drills shown in this webinar!

The second webinar, “Dangerous U.S. Military Activities in Asia-Pacific,” was presented at the 2021 national convention of Veterans For Peace in August [https://youtu.be/HC6VqAG_itY]. Attended by about 470 people, the panel discussion featured several experts who covered U.S. activities in Hawai‘i, Guam, South Korea, South China Sea, and Australia.

KPC Coordinator Ann Wright served as moderator of both webinars. Links to these and other informative programs can be found under “Resources” on our Korea Peace Campaign page [on the VFP website under *Our Work > National Projects*].

The KPC also cosponsored and participated in two online Korea Peace Advocacy Week events, reaching out to the U.S. Congress July 12–16 and November 1–4. About ten VFP members joined in each of these events by calling on their Congress members. A particular focus of our advocacy was to urge members of the House to cosponsor H.R. 3446, introduced by Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA) in May 2021. Called “Peace on the Korean Peninsula Act,” the bill has 33 cosponsors at this time. It asks the Secretary of State to submit a written report on “a clear roadmap for achieving a permanent peace agreement on the Korean Peninsula,” to establish a mutual liaison office in Pyongyang and Washington, D.C., and to conduct a full review of the current U.S. restrictions on the travel of U.S. nationals who want to visit the DPRK (North Korea). **We urge all VFP members to ask your Representative in the House to cosponsor this bill, and ask your Senator to sponsor this bill in the Senate. In connection with this outreach, we ask that VFP members also share a copy of the adopted 2021 VFP resolution, “End U.S. Military Control over South Korean Armed Forces,” with their representatives.**

Four years ago, the KPC collaborated with several U.S. peace groups to draft the *People’s Peace Treaty with North Korea*. VFP and other peace groups have promoted this peace treaty online since then, and about 30,000 Americans have signed it so far. **As we approach 2023 and the 70th anniversary of the signing the military ceasefire agreement that stopped the bloody U.S.**



KPC Coordinator Ann Wright (right) took part in a panel discussion at the Hawai‘i International Film Festival’s premiere screening of CROSSINGS, along with Korean American activist Christine Ahn (left) and filmmaker Deann Borshay Liem (center). The film tells the story of the 2015 crossing of the DMZ by a determined group of women peace activists. For film info, visit <https://hiff.org/films/crossings/>

war against North Korea, we urge all VFP members to sign this important document. [Find the link to the *People’s Peace Treaty* on the KPC page of the VFP website.]

Finally, please make a donation to the KPC project so we can spread our peace message to more American people throughout the nation. Just look for the big DONATE button on the KPC page. You may also send a check to the VFP National office, made payable to Veterans For Peace with a memo entry on the check “for Korea Peace Campaign.”

Save Our VA (SOVA)

Contact: SOVAmail@yahoo.com

COVID HAD BOTH GOOD AND BAD IMPACTS on SOVA efforts in 2021. COVID prevented us from even considering an in-person Advocacy Conference in Washington, D.C., in 2021 and recently forced us to cancel plans for one in February 2022. Instead, we will be using Zoom virtual technology to hold our February 19, 2022, SOVA Advocacy Conference online. It’s an opportunity to get to know each other, strengthen advocacy skills and participate in virtual conversations with members of Congress. Join our effort and add your name to our activist list by visiting <https://veteransforpeace.salsalabs.org/sovavirtualconference21/index.html>.

For 2021, as COVID expanded our Zoom use, we made virtual presentations to three VFP Chapters and held six town halls informing people about SOVA and VA issues. We met with the staff of three Congressional Representatives and of Senator Tester, Chair of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee. We have ongoing relationships with these staff and were asked by Representative Takano’s (Chair of the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee) staff to testify at a House hearing.

SOVA report continued on page 25...

Agent Orange Campaign

Website: <http://www.vn-agentorange.org/>

FROM 1961–1971, the U.S. government undertook massive defoliation programs as an instrument of war. It systematically set out to destroy millions of acres of foliage from the air, over the years poisoning an estimated 4.8 million Vietnamese and its own American troops on the ground. Some spraying was conducted by backpacks around the perimeters of American military bases. The last American troops left Viet Nam April 30, 1975. For many years there were complaints from returning veterans about their health and that of their children.

Viet Nam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign (VAORRC), a National Project of Veterans For Peace, has been working with the Vietnam Association for the Victims of Agent Orange/dioxin (VAVA) for years to heal the wounds of war, facilitate reconciliation between the people of Viet Nam and the United States, and provide needed services to those harmed from the toxic herbicides heavily sprayed in south Viet Nam during wartime.

Scientists from the U.S. traveled to Hanoi, Viet Nam, five years ago to present papers on Agent Orange at VAVA's international scientific seminar. Last year's conference—

Take Action: <https://veteransforpeace.salsalabs.org/vaorrc-3518/index.html>

Please ask your Congressional Representative to co-sponsor HR 3518, the “Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act,” introduced by Congresswoman Barbara Lee in May 2021 to urge the U.S. Government to address the ongoing legacy of the American War in Viet Nam and provide assistance for victims exposed to Agent Orange, both in Viet Nam and in the United States. Details can be found in the Fall 2021 on the VAORRC website, <https://vn-agentorange.org/>.

“Illnesses Associated with Exposure to Agent Orange/Dioxin: Current status and solutions to improve the effectiveness of treatment”—held virtually, included presentations by two members of VAORRC's science committee. Dr. Jean Grassman, City University of New York, presented on “One Health Approach to Understand the Extent of TCDD Contamination in Viet Nam.” Susan Schnall of VAORRC presented on “The Results of U.S. Studies on the Relationship between Exposure to Agent Orange and Diseases in U.S. Veterans.” Both papers are a reminder that the impacts of war last long after the shooting stops and the bombs stop dropping.

Deported Veterans Advocacy Project

Contact: Willie Hager, VFPJax@mail.com

We want to welcome DVAP project co-founder Robert Vivar and congratulate him on repatriation. It is great to see him back in San Diego, California, and to have him back in the States.

Also in the news, Unified U.S. Deported Veterans Resource Center/VFP Sgt. Barrios Memorial Chapter 182 started the New Year running by welcoming Los Angeles City Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez (District 7) to Tijuana. She came to meet and offer her support in furthering the awareness and support for repatriation of our Deported Veterans. This issue is very dear to Councilwoman Rodriguez, as her father, a green card USMC, Viet Nam combat veteran, could have very well been one of the men she met on her visit. The councilwoman pledged her full support of the *Leave No One Behind* project.

Recently, the Veteran Service Officer (VSO) for San Diego County agreed to assist with any benefit claims and will be providing pro bono assistance to deported vets on discharge upgrades. San Diego County has an approved budget to install a secure computer terminal for accessing the San Diego County VA office, and this terminal was originally to be installed at the Support House, but was not. Now we are looking to install it at our Unified office in Tijuana. VFW Post 7420 leadership want to actively support our work in Tijuana, as Livi, the Commander, is

part of Unified. We will continue this conversation with them to address strategies.

We are in talks about re-installing the *Leave No One Behind* mural in Barrio Logan at the VFW Post on President's Day 2022 to commemorate the first anniversary of the mural project and show support for H.R. 536, The New Way Forward Act.

To close on a sad note, we lost one of our brothers, USAF Honorable Discharged Raul Herrera, reportedly due to blood clots and lack of medical attention at the Tijuana hospital. May he now be in God's everlasting peace.



Welcome home! Robert Vivar waves a tiny flag as he enters the U.S. at the San Ysidro Port of Entry in San Diego on Armistice Day.
Photo: Eduardo Contreras, *Union-Tribune*

VFP PROJECTS & WORKING GROUPS



Gamers For Peace members from around the country traveled to Philadelphia, Pa., to represent GFP and build community at PAX Unplugged, directly outreaching to those most sensitive to the military's predatory recruitment practices in gaming spaces while building relationships with like-minded game developers and content creators.

Gamers For Peace

Sign the petition to Twitch:

bit.ly/TwitchMilitaryAdOptOut

Streams: www.twitch.tv/VeteransForPeace

Join the Discord: www.discord.gg/GamersForPeace

GAMERS FOR PEACE IS one year old as an initiative of VFP's Truth-In-Recruitment working group. Having started as a Discord chat server, 2021 saw GFP organized into a content-creating collective of gamers, veterans, and accomplices who have identified and focused on four core channels of change: political and organizational education centered on gaming technology and militarism; direct action campaigns; mentorship and leadership development programs offering alternatives to the economic draft and assistance to those already in uniform; and an Esports program influencing the future of gaming culture and the industry. A review of 2021 for Gamers For Peace shows a community dedicated to creating revolutionary change with a list of successes that both GFP and VFP can be proud of.

The Gamers For Peace Twitch channel streams scheduled content five days a week, with a current lineup including shows such as **#NotAnotherGeneration: Mentorship Monday, Right Seat Ride: Tales of Intergenerational Resistance, and Military Ad Slam w/ Plantifa and Friends**. Over the course of 2021, GFP streamed over 335 hours of content to 2,350+ unique viewers. They produced a Memorial Day special, an Armistice Day marathon (**#ArmisticeDayTV**), and a special titled **#NeverForget: 20 Years After 9/11**.

The Gamers For Peace community Discord server—the primary meeting and communication location for members and newcomers—has 300+ members, active across a range of topic channels, organizing on GFP's core issues and projects.

GFP community members have had multiple opportunities to present to diverse audiences on a variety of topics. At the VFP National Convention, Li_Pistons, PacifistWarVet, and Plantifa

(GFP members' screen names) presented an Allyship training; SinSeerly_V presented with VFP members Jim Wholgunmuth and Natasha Erskine on "Leveraging Media For Peace"; and four members teamed up to present the full scope of the GFP initiative in the workshop, "Gamers For Peace: Carrying on the Legacy of Counter-Recruitment." Additionally, Sinseerly_V spoke at Peacestock, PacifistWarVet and Lil_Pistons presented to the Green Party Peace Action Committee on "Non-Violent Direct Action," and SinSeerly_V conducted a "Gaming Technology and Militarism" presentation at the Ethics In Tech webinar on Human Rights Day.

GFP spent 2021 developing a strong foundation of Direct Action, with community representatives participating in the fall #ShutDownCrech direct action—live streaming efforts at the drone warfare base and then taking to the streets in Las Vegas.

Not to be outdone in the virtual world, GFP has been conducting digital direct actions through prolonged campaigns. Plantifa has lead the launching of the Twitch Military Ad Opt Out campaign, calling on and organizing content creators to demand control over the ability for the military to advertise to children on their platforms. SinSeerly_V worked in coalition with the Council on American-Islamic Relations on the #DeplatformSixDays campaign, successfully delaying the release of the "Arab Murder Simulator" Six Days in Fallujah till Q4 '22, with continuing efforts to make sure this "game" is never released on major platforms.

2022, sees GFP continuing forward as an initiative rooted in actionable ideas focused on disrupting the ability of the military to groom, influence, and recruit children and young adults through unregulated and often-ignored hobby and activity spaces. Be on the lookout and get involved as GFP develops new streaming content released daily, creates movements with its direct action campaigns, provides a source for services to those successfully saved from the war machine, and debuts a collection of competitive esports teams directly confronting keyboard recruiters.

Climate Crisis & Militarism Project

Contact: climate@veteransforpeace.org

VFP Climate Crisis and Militarism Project efforts to change policy to address the military catalysts of the climate crisis have taken major strides in 2021.

In April, during a virtual meeting with two of Climate Envoy John Kerry's senior staffers, VFP Executive Director Garrett Reppenhagen; VFP Board President Adrienne Kinne, and CCMP working group members, Vince Dijanich, Steve Morse, and Jim Rine, presented six demands to uproot the militarism drivers of climate change. We continued sharing those demands and tracking Kerry's statements and actions through COP26 [the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference that was held at the SEC Centre in Glasgow, Scotland, UK, from Oct. 31 to Nov. 13, 2021].

Our work continues with a resolution endorsed by 109 climate, peace, and civic organizations, and introduced by California Rep. Barbara Lee as House Resolution 767, "Department of Defense to reduce the overall environmental impact of all military activities and missions."

Internal and public education is a vital part of our project.

CCMP's slideshow presentation has reached dozens of communities across the country—VFP chapters, peace allies, and climate action groups—via eco-friendly Zoom. The result: successful petitioning, adding to VFP membership, and inspiring

people. Our frequently updated website includes actions people can take and motivational messages. Numerous articles by members, interviews with CCMP spokespersons, videos from VFP convention workshops, information on the climate crisis, and more can be found on the website's Resources page.

Our involvement within the COP26 Coalition People's Summit webinars and David Collins' speech in Glasgow [see *David's report on page 1*] also contributed to raising international awareness. Veterans For Peace joined with many others to demand world leaders change their policies for a livable climate and planet.

We ask for your continued support of our powerful fight for our climate and against military expansionism and greenwashing. Join us!



A yard sign urging grassroots climate action sports two bumperstickers to drive home the point: U.S. MILITARISM FUELS CLIMATE CRISIS.

VFP-UK at COP26 ...continued from page 1

On the morning of November 5, we rigged up the new MAW flag and set up in George Square in the center of Glasgow. For a few hours the square was relatively calm. Then came an immense youth activist march and after that the arrival of Greta Thunberg. Before she arrived we heard many speeches by others, most notably by delegates from the Amazon region of Brazil. We distributed many leaflets and held many conversations with the public. Later we attended a one-hour peace vigil at the Buchanan Steps in central Glasgow.

There was a massive march on November 6, the "Global Day of Action for Climate Justice" to Glasgow Green. The banner "War Causes Climate Change and Climate Change Causes War" aroused considerable interest and, as before, was much photographed. Reliable reports say that about 120,000 people attended to demand more action on the climate crisis.

I have never before felt such passion and power generated by a protest march. Wave after wave of young and older people surged through the streets, in good humour and without any violent incidents... The press described the march as the biggest in the history of Glasgow. They just kept on coming. Perhaps this is one of the early signs of a people's "tipping point."

On November 7, Veterans For Peace, with our ally, Global

Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, presented the webinar, "U.S. Militarism, Space Tech and the Climate Crisis." One of several speakers, I identified myself as a member of both Veterans For Peace-UK and Movement for the Abolition of War.

Arctic Base Camp took place on November 8, featuring a huge block of ice apparently transported from Greenland but showing little sign of melting in Glasgow! Arctic Base Camp is a team of Arctic experts and scientists who bring a message of Arctic imperilment and encourage bold climate action. The event was primarily for the launch a new website: <http://www.militaryemissions.org>. A panel discussion held on Zoom included Costs of War Project Co-Director Neta Crawford speaking on military emissions.

All told, around 4,000 of the leaflets we prepared were accepted by COP26 delegates and members of the public. Our message, "War Causes Climate Change and Climate Change Causes War," still comes as a surprise, even to committed environmentalists—so many people just haven't heard of it or given it any thought. But they are extremely interested when it's pointed out. Many more people, organizations and delegates, are talking about it than during COP25.

VFP CHAPTER REPORTS

#013 – TUCSON, AZ

As a chapter, ongoing weekly and monthly activities include Counter-recruiting and *Stop All Wars* demonstrations at Davis Monthan Air Force Base, Raytheon, and other strategic locations; Tucson Clean & Beautiful trash pick-up (monthly); and ongoing monthly chapter meetings held on Zoom. Tucson chapter members also engage in peace-keeping service with sister organizations.

Chapter 13 supports the Veterans For Peace *Golden Rule* project. Locally, Chapter 13 supports the Culture of Peace Alliance & Youth Violence Prevention Coalition.

Cara Bissell and Alice Ritter



ABOVE LEFT: Gretchen Nielson's granddaughter and family vigiled with Tucson Veterans For Peace in memory of the activist, who died a year ago Dec. 28. All four corners were occupied—one by Chapter 13's William "Pete" Peterson (CENTER). ABOVE RIGHT: Jack Cohen-Joppa participated in an anti-drone demonstration at Davis Monthan AFB. Similar demos have been held at Raytheon, another Tucson area drone manufacturer.



#023 – ROCHESTER, NY

Chapter 23 is honored to have been nominated and received the Chapter of the Year award during the 2021 VFP National convention, as well as having one of our members, Jeremiah Knowles, elected to the VFP National Board.

In September, Chapter 23 was able to display their "Leave No One Behind" mural at the Rochester Public Market, as well as the Brighton Farmers Market the next day. The mural is currently on display at Nazareth College until a new location is determined.

In October, Chapter 23 was joined by Jim Anderson, President of Peace Action New York, who shared his thoughts on coalition building and ways to partner with Peace Action and other local organizations.

We held our annual Armistice Day vigil at Rochester's Veterans Memorial Bridge, and were fortunate to have many members, associate members, and community partners in attendance. Two of our members, Marybeth Knowles and James Swarts, appeared on local radio station WXXI, at the invitation of radio host Evan Dawson, to discuss issues faced by deported American veterans.

In December, Chapter 23 participated in a "Buy Peaceful Toys" event in Geneseo, New York, with one of our partner

organizations, Genesee Valley Citizens for Peace. The chapter also participated in a *Drones Fly, Children Die* anti-drone protest held by Upstate Drone Action outside the offices of Senators Charles "Chuck" Schumer (D) and Kirsten E. Gillibrand (D), along with Congressman Joseph Morelle (D-NY 25th).

Jeremiah Knowles



VFP Chapter 23 members gathered for their annual Armistice Day vigil at Rochester's Veterans Memorial Bridge, November 11, 2021.



NYC Chapter 34 members joined this Afghanistan War Anniversary demo at the Times Square Recruiting Station. Photo: Ed Hedemann

#034 – NEW YORK CITY

NYC Chapter 34 continues online monthly meetings and in-person events.

Chapter projects: Move the Money; Stop Sanctions/Save Yemen; Agent Orange; Peace & Planet News.

Meeting topics/speakers: VFP National Board candidate forum; Louie Sawi re Philippine Human Rights Act (PHRA) [see <https://www.codepink.org/phra>]; Mike Ferner re Lake Erie Bill of Rights Campaign; Gary Butterfield re VFP Climate Crisis and Militarism Project.

Events: Say Their Names Vigil for Black Lives; Vigil for Yemen at Union Square;

September 19 – Rising Together Celebration in Struggle for Justice, People and Planet! at Thomas Paine Park. Photos by member Ellen Davidson at <https://photos.app.goo.gl/tFgrNLLMD4kCix1B8>.

October 2 – Manhattan Project Protect Our Oceans March & Rally at Bryant Park–Dag Hammarskjold Plaza.

October 7 – NYC War Resisters League Afghanistan War Anniversary, NY Public Library walk to Times Square military recruiting station demonstration.

November 11 – Granny Peace Brigade Penny Poll: “How should your tax dollars be spent?”

December 4 – 2021 VFP Peace Speaking Tour with activist speakers from Japan along with U.S. veteran speakers Matt Hoh, Sam Coleman, Susan Schnall, Basir Bitra, Kevin & Joyce Lucey, Kenichi Narakawa. Zoom recording is available at <https://youtu.be/y8uPoKE800s>.

December 9 – NY Campaign for PHRA action at Philippine Consulate to commemorate lives lost under the deadly regime of President Duterte and call on passing the Philippine Human Rights Act. <https://humanrightsp.org/take-action>

Bob Keilbach

Chapter Reports continued on page 14...



Women Against Military Madness (WAMM) and Twin Cities Veterans For Peace Chapter 27 sponsored regular Monday afternoon “Stop Line 3!” vigils, in solidarity with Water Protectors, outside the Minnesota Governor’s Mansion in St. Paul.

VFP CHAPTER REPORTS continued

#035 – SPOKANE, WA

Dear Comrades! Spokane maintains connections with VFP fellow peaceniks.

Our monthly newsletter goes out to VFP staff, chapters in the Pacific NW, legislators, affinity groups and like-minded organizations. Communication is The Key.

BNSF railroad execs pulled their case against VFP Spokane chapter member George Taylor when the Washington State Supreme Court ruled unanimously, July 15, 2021, that he could use the Necessity Defense for blocking an oil train and trespassing back in 2016, to prevent greater harm. Juries can now hear “why” defendants acted illegally for the greater good, setting a precedent for environmental activists who have attempted all means to stop environmental destruction. [See Frances Madeson, “Activists Are Using the “Climate Necessity Defense” in Court – and Winning,” *Truthout*, 12/24/21.]

A November 11th bell-ringing ceremony with commentary remembering Armistice Day was held in person at the Community Building in Spokane.

Our present project is getting an ordinance passed making Spokane a Nuclear Free Zone. Converting Fairchild AFB into a Peace Park, International University Campus, Green Nonprofit Enterprise Zone, and Universal Aide Distribution Center is our goal.

Looking forward working with new VFP Board Members!

Hollis Higgins

#041 – CAPE COD, MA

Well, it finally came to pass after two and a half years of prolonged effort by members of our Corporal Jeffrey M. Lucey Chapter! On Veterans Day, 2021, our own Hidden Wounds Memorial was dedicated on the Town Green in Hyannis, Massachusetts. The annual event, usually the Cape’s largest, was slightly smaller this year due to COVID concerns.

In fact, the entire event was focused on the VFP message about PTSD and suicide being its own “epidemic” cost of war among veterans, both young and old.

Organized by our chapter working with the Barnstable County Veterans Agent, the two-hour ceremony was all about our Hidden Wounds project. A local pastor and Iraq war veteran provided the Invocation and the Benediction. Then Town Councilor Paul Hebert, a VFP member, gave

a welcome and an eloquent plea for future Veterans Days to celebrate peace and nonviolence. After that I reviewed some of the long history of psychological wounds and fatal outcomes among veterans and their families through the years of human warfare.

Chapter member Jim Canavan spoke next about our long and winding path to this day of dedication. From two years of applying to the VA’s National Cemetery here on the Cape, being rejected due to not being an organization that “honors and recognizes military service of a distinctive and patriotic character and purpose” (there’s that ‘p-word’ again) and that states so in our bylaws. We had carried our appeal all the way to the Executive Director of the VA’s National Cemetery Administration in D.C. Jim then described the shift to a local town memorial from finding the right stone on a dirt road in Cotuit, Massachusetts, to receiving support and assistance above and beyond the call of duty from the Department of Public Works and the Town Council in preparing and placing the memorial in a perfect place on the green among the other veterans monuments.

The keynote speakers for the event were Joyce and Kevin Lucey for whose son Jeffrey our chapter is named. Since Jeff succumbed to hidden wounds, taking his own life in 2004 after



Members of Cape Cod VFP Corporal Jeffrey M. Lucey Chapter 41 gathered at the November 11th dedication ceremony for the Hidden Wounds Memorial Monument on the Town Green in Hyannis, Massachusetts. Joining VFP members are Derek White, local pastor and Iraq War veteran, Jeffrey’s parents Kevin and Joyce Lucey, and Barnstable Town Councilor and VFP member Paul Hebert. Photo: Anne Canavan

an Iraq deployment, his parents have dedicated their lives to assisting veterans and their families through the TAPS program and hundreds of other service and educational activities. In their presentation they spoke in depth about the impact of these wounds on family members and of the kind of help they need to live with their losses. We hope that the memorial will become a tangible place of healing for some of these families. We were honored to have the Luceys with us on this special day and to have our two main newspapers do extensive stories about the issue and the event.

We hope to work with the

Cape Cod Suicide Prevention Coalition in the future on an annual event at the memorial during Suicide Prevention Month in September. The event concluded with a solemn placing of wreaths at all of the nearby veterans' monuments on the green including the just-dedicated Hidden Wounds memorial and the playing of taps.

In other news, we have just begun our 27th Annual "Voices for Peace" Poetry Contest, which will run into the spring. This wonderful contest and the teachers who assist their students in voicing their thoughts and feelings about peace and nonviolence has survived the pandemic and continues to thrive, thanks to the efforts of Contest Coordinator Nina Tepper and Graphic Designer Jim Canavan.

Duke Ellis

#042 – CONNECTICUT

Member Bill Potvin appeared on John Murphy's show on radio station WESU to discuss Greg Laxer's new book, *Take This War and Shove It!: A Most Unwilling Soldier 1967-1971*. The memoir describes Greg's experience as a consciousness objector from his first day of active duty. On the show, Bill also discussed his own experience in Viet Nam and his role in VFP.

Dave Ionno and Steve Fournier continue their Hartford Public Access TV show, *Voices of Veterans*, most recently highlighting the book written by Steve entitled, *Current Invective: A Crank's Chronology*.

The book, *Un-American: A Soldiers Reckoning of Our Longest War*, by Erik Endstrom, will be donated to the New Britain Public Library thanks to member Fred Lewis. The



Millie Grenough leads Connecticut VFP Chapter 42 members Jim Brasile, Jim Pandaru, and Henry Lowendorph, along with a number of young and young-at-heart singers in a rendition of her song, "Where Do We Want Our Green to Go?" Photo: Paul Bloom

donation will be part of a Saturday morning presentation by VFP Connecticut chapter members pointing out the enormous, continuing costs of war for our country—physical, mental and moral.

Member Millie Grenough composed the song, "Where Do We Want Our Green to Go?" and it has been sung by VFP members and various young and old peace-loving musicians. Millie entered the song into VFP's International Song Video Contest, and we are hoping that we will be among the winners!

Jim Brasile

#046 – MONTEREY, CA

Chapter 46 hosted and participated in the following events with the Monterey Peace Coalition:

On Armistice Day, November 11, 2021, members of the chapter and the Monterey Peace Community gathered at Window on the Bay and rang bells at 11:00 am, read poetry, and interacted with passing motorists and walkers.

Chapter 46 members marched with the Peace Coalition in First Night Monterey.

"A conversation with Rep. Jimmy Panetta" hosted by Chapter 46 at the Monterey Peace and Justice Center was broadcast live on YouTube [see <https://youtu.be/T7bT8Unukks>].

Starting in January, monthly chapter meetings will be held both in person and via Zoom.

WAGE PEACE!!!!

Michael Dempsey

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VFP CHAPTER REPORTS continued

#050 – NORTHERN MICHIGAN

On the USA's departure from Afghanistan: "Shouldn't we as a country be more upset and concerned about continually entering into conflicts and war, than getting out of them?"

Chapter 50 is in the early stages of fulfilling a lifelong dream of the erection of a "peace wall" in a park in Traverse City. We have so many monuments and plaques around our city honoring veterans of various wars, and rightly so, but erecting a wall that would honor both local and international peacemakers with a yearly ceremony would bring peace to the forefront for a change. Our city is an official member of the International Cities of Peace association.

Our chapter, like many throughout the USA and the world, has a rapidly aging membership. Some of our staunchest, most peace-loving members have either passed on or are sick. We are exploring ideas on how to recruit new, younger members. One idea is to have young veterans form their own VFP group. Many of us know that when we left the military years ago, the last thing we wanted to do was hang out with a bunch of old veterans. In any case, one of our goals in the new year is to reach out to young veterans.

Tim Keenan



VFP Chapter 62 members Richard Murphy and Bill McCarthy helped distribute Universal Declaration of Human Rights literature to schools.

#062 – NEW HAMPSHIRE

A.J. Muste VFP Chapter 62 has donated 12 copies of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* to New Hampshire high schools to date, including the three public high schools in the state's largest city, Manchester. We are eventually hoping to

distribute more of these valuable and informative documents.

New Hampshire VFP has also offered to make either in-person or remote presentations on the history and the importance of the 1948 UN document, which, next to the Bible, is the most translated text in the world.

As chapter member Leo Sandy writes: "Approval of the public display and discussion of the UDHR is a big step toward international cooperation, respect for human rights, social justice, and world peace. It has an important and unique place in helping to liberate people from oppression, poverty, and ignorance. It also helps to advance human development by bringing attention to the dignity of human beings."

Will Thomas

#063 – ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Our chapter will be holding elections at our February 2022 meeting. We strongly oppose:

- deportation of veterans
- storage of nuclear waste in New Mexico and west Texas
- privatization of the VA
- production of more nuclear weapons
- military contamination of the eco-system
- development of weapons in space
- U.S. refusal to ratify the Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons
- illegal sanctions on sovereign nations
- guns in Martin Luther King Jr. marches
- neglect of New Mexico's downwinders

Sally-Alice Thompson

#069 – SAN FRANCISCO, CA

A revered and invaluable officer in the San Francisco chapter is moving back to the East Coast with his equally hard-working associate-member wife. Treasurer Denny Riley (Air Force, American war in Viet Nam) is leaving very large shoes to fill! Since 2012, he has helmed not only the finances of Chapter 69, but the stateside funds of the *Hoa Binh* (Peace) Chapter 160 in Viet Nam. This is no small task. Chapters 69 and 160 not only receive large donations for humanitarian projects in Viet Nam that address Agent Orange victims, aid for UXO victims and explosives' removal, poverty, orphanages, children's education, etc., but have also collaborated seamlessly on annual VFP-led tours to Viet Nam since 2012. The 2018 tour alone, centered on the 50th anniversary commemoration of the My Lai Massacre, comprised 40 full and partial participants. Tour members are asked to donate at least \$1,000 each, with collected funds distributed to a handful of Viet Nam charity projects. Luckily, another veteran Chapter 69 member, Jim Aldrich, has stepped up to take over the formidable role of treasurer. A prodigious writer, look for Denny Riley's byline in *Peace & Planet News* and other outlets. Denny's jokes alone will be sorely missed at our Chapter 69 gatherings.

Nadya Williams

#074 – METRO DETROIT AREA, MI

Chapter 74 was renamed “The Michael Gramlich–Steve Saelzler Chapter” in honor of longtime chapter chair Steve Saelzler, who passed on December 5, 2021. Steve, our chair since March 2010, had long battled the effects of Agent Orange exposure from his time as an infantryman in Viet Nam. Steve was also active in other peace and social justice activities and will be sorely missed by the SE Michigan peace community.



Steve Saelzler Presente!
Steve gives a talk to Wayne State University students enrolled in a 2017 peace studies class.

On a positive note, chapter member Jim Rine was interviewed on Pacifica Radio’s January 3rd broadcast of *Law and Disorder Radio*, cohosted by VFP Advisory Board member Marjorie Cohn. As a representative of VFP’s Climate Crisis & Militarism Project, Jim discussed the links between the U.S. military and climate change. A podcast of the show can be found at <https://lawanddisorder.org/>.

Bob Krzewinski

#075 – PHOENIX, AZ

In March 2021, and continuing as of this writing, Phoenix Veterans For Peace, the Mark Von Hagen Chapter, urged Arizona Senator Mark Kelly to introduce legislation to provide funding to remediate the damage inflicted on Viet Nam, Laos, and Cambodia by the use of Agent Orange during the Viet Nam War. In August we further urged him to introduce a Senate version of H.R. 3518. And while Senator Kelly has yet to respond to any of our correspondence, we remain undeterred in seeking a response. We will continue our attempt to hold him accountable until he addresses this war crime.

On September 17 and 18, we distributed literature at Jackson Browne’s Phoenix concerts. We engaged in numerous discussions with concertgoers in which they expressed support for us and our cause. We thank Jackson for inviting us to his concerts irrespective of the venue at which he performs.

We distributed poppies to attendees at the 2021 Phoenix Veterans Day parade. In so doing, we sought to raise awareness of Armistice Day with the ultimate goal of returning the name to its rightful place among our national holidays.

Richard A. Smith, JD

#089 – NASHVILLE, TN

The Hector Black Chapter participated in the local Armistice Day (locally called Veterans Day) parade that took place down Broadway in Nashville. Seven members and allies, led by

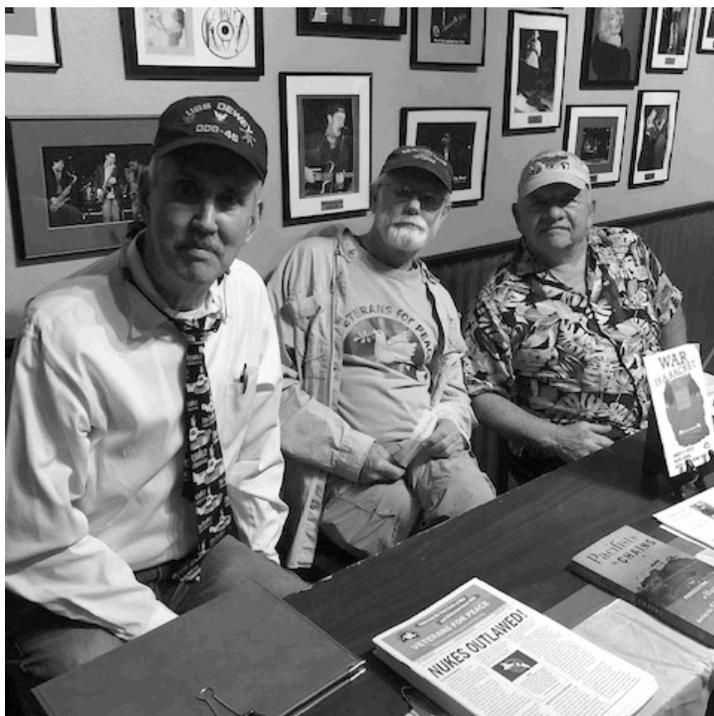
Chapter 89 President Tina Meli, marched with banners and posters calling for the end of nuclear weapons, saving our VA, and of course reclaiming Armistice Day and its message to celebrate peace versus the militarism we were surrounded by. Whether it was accidental or purposeful, when our turn came to pause at the reviewing stand, we were ignored. After we had passed the microphone, the MC quickly got back into action.

We also participated in the day-long VFP Twitch channel marathon to #ReclaimArmisticeDay. We sent clips of the parade and Harvey Bennett and Jim Wohlgenuth participated in some storytelling for the day-long show, which by the way was wonderful and we want to commend the organizers and all the participants.

Members of the chapter rallied with people from the local Peace and Justice Center to protest killer drones right outside the Air National Guard site here in Nashville. We distributed fliers, talked to drivers willing to engage, and waved the flag. Ronda Shelton held vigil outside the main gate to share information with base employees.

On the radio show, Harvey and Jim also interviewed Garrett Reppenhagen and Keslie Carrión about reclaiming Armistice Day and their individual journeys to VFP. Other shows featured members and allies of VFP discussing COP26, the climate crisis, and the massive contributions to that crisis made by the U.S. Military. We also produced a great show commemorating the Christmas Truce. All shows are on Spotify—just search “Veterans For Peace” and look for our logo.

Chapter Reports continued on page 18...



Mark Von Hagen VFP Chapter 75 members were invited to table at a Jackson Browne concert in Phoenix, Arizona, September 18, 2021.
L to R: Richard A. Smith, Charlie Osburn, and Dennis Stout.



Members of Chapter 91 gather for a group shot on Armistice Day 2021.

#092 – SEATTLE, WA

A 15th Anniversary milestone (!) was achieved with chapter participation in the Auburn “Armistice” Day Parade, after which 21 people gathered with VFP92 for the Ringing of the Bells of St. James Cathedral, where member Kelly Wadsworth gave the keynote speech. VP Mike Dedrick organized both events.

On New Year’s Day, Chapter 92 joined townfolk in Index, Washington, for their annual tradition. As Kem Hunter aptly describes: “It was once again a beautiful experience...coming together to walk and talk, and joining hands in a gesture of Peace and Friendship. Folks from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community joined us this year, and were graciously received by the people of our community. It was the twelfth year of this event, and the tradition will certainly continue.”

Seattle VFP members also showed up for a “Hands Off Ethiopia” rally in solidarity with Seattle’s large Ethiopian Community, for which Dan Gilman provides this summary: “VFP92 members attended a rally in November to call on warring parties in the civil war in Ethiopia to begin a cease fire so that negotiations and diplomacy can take place and find a peaceful, non-violent resolution to the civil war. It also called on the United States and other outside parties to refrain from intervening in the conflict.”

As for future goals, Chapter 92 is cautiously optimistic about staging a Veterans Waging Peace Exhibit in 2022.

Kim Loftness

#099 – WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

Members of VFP Chapter 99, Western North Carolina, held a collaborative Armistice Day celebration amid rain showers in the downtown Asheville Elder and Sage Garden, with songs led by local movement musician Billy Jonas.

We also supported efforts of Reject Raytheon WNC by participating in “freeway blogging” over Interstate 240 [see photo on back cover] and leafletting at the entry to a Pratt & Whitney aircraft engine construction site. Our lead vigil

organizer, Bob Feldman, underwent heart surgery. Chapter members vigiled weekly for veterans and for peace while Bob recovered.

Chris Berg

#102 – MILWAUKEE, WI

Milwaukee chapter members continued to be engaged in labor support (AFGE, nurses union, and County Labor Council) and political and organizational cooperation with Peace Action Wisconsin. Members joined a Julian Assange rally and Caravans for Cuba/Pastors for Peace demonstration in October. They also worked with the Save Our VA campaign, Veterans Health Coalition, a Feast of Crispian theater production, and Warrior Writers.

Chapter 102 hosted a successful Armistice Day event at Milwaukee City Hall attended by about 75 people in person and more than 40 via Zoom. Associated fundraising and information efforts also went well. Kathy Kelly spoke via Zoom while local speaker Clayborn Benson, from the Wisconsin Black Historical Society, appeared in person, and the program also featured performances by local musicians.

A recruitment campaign to bring youth, diversity, and greater numbers to our chapter membership was commenced around veterans’ centers and housing communities as well as on the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee campus. We made several contacts and have plans to follow up with further liaison work at the university. Next semester will be key, though we anticipate in-person recruitment and tabling efforts may be hampered by continuing COVID concerns.

Larry Meisgeier

Chapter Reports continued on page 20...



VFP92 Seattle members attended a “Hands Off Ethiopia” rally and march in November 2021.

VFP CHAPTER REPORTS continued

#104 – EVANSVILLE, IN

Chapter 104 members presented a program about VFP and our chapter for the Timbercrest Seniors for Peace in North Manchester, Indiana, via Zoom. The group had been wanting more information about Veterans For Peace and was happy to find an Indiana chapter to present the program. They recorded the session and provided it to all members of their assisted living facility.

Member John Michael O’Leary presented the keynote speech at our Reclaim Armistice Day commemoration, declaring, “It is time to get out of the war-losing business and rededicate ourselves as a nation to the ardent pursuit of peace by returning to the roots of Armistice Day and joining our voices in aspiring to make war obsolete.” He called on us all to take the words of the late John Lennon to heart: “I hope someday you will join us...”

On December 8, our chapter sponsored the 21st annual Lennon Night, inviting musicians and poets to lift their voices in celebration of the ideals of John Lennon as expressed in his iconic song, “Imagine.” This marked the first year that chapter co-founder and Lennon Night creator Larry Miller did not organize the show, but was on hand to lend support to the other chapter members who continued the tradition. All donations from the night were contributed to Team Rubicon to support their efforts in the resettlement of Afghan refugees.

Lynn Kinkade

#112 – VENTURA COUNTY, CA

Though constrained by pandemic woes, VFP Chapter 112 remains on course. November 2021 was most productive. At a climate change rally in Ventura, chapter member and VFP Climate Crisis & Militarism Project cohort Cindy Piester was among many grassroots leaders signed up to speak. Chapter 112 VP Shane Meserve was the guest speaker at a regular Democratic Party Zoom meeting scheduled on Veterans Day. Shane was astute and thorough in portraying our chapter history to the Oxnard Democratic Club. We provided VFP chapter participation to a county fairgrounds general (virtual) board meeting in which the topic of gun shows was on the agenda. Showing our VFP title in the meeting Zoom box signaled to board members who support gun shows at the fairgrounds that we veterans who are opposed to gun shows are still around.

National and Ventura County VFP endorsed a local petition calling for severance of UCSB ties to the military industrial complex. And finally, we scheduled an irregular chapter meeting on Zoom to discuss our current state of affairs. We are grateful for a propitious November.

Michael Cervantes



Left: Drummer Dave Boykin accompanies poet Bill Sovern at Chapter 104’s twenty-first annual Lennon Night concert. Right: Evansville, Indiana, VFP Chapter co-founders Larry Miller (in John Lennon wig, playing the accordion) and Gary May address the crowd.

Photos: Bob Gwaltney

#114 – SHEBOYGAN, WI

Greetings from Packerland.

Well, it’s been a long pandemic. Just when we thought we were almost out of the woods, it appears we’ve got miles and miles of more woods.

We decided to 86 yet another March peace concert. In November, we received a generous gift of CDs from long-time friend and fellow VFP Jason Moon, who was recently awarded Wisconsin Singer-Songwriter of the Year. Jason has performed in several VFP concerts. We will use funds raised by sales of his music to support noble causes such as those mentioned below.

We spent our December meeting deciding which groups to support with chapter donations. Included in the eight selections are: Peace Action Wisconsin; Fisher House, which provides free lodging for families of vets undergoing surgery at VA hospitals; Southern Poverty Law Center; and the VFP *Golden Rule* project. In past years we’ve also supported SOA Watch, the VFP Agent Orange campaign, Adopt a Mine Field, and Kathy Kelly’s work in Afghanistan. It’s been an honor to raise funds for such efforts. In addition, we have funded local activists to attend the 2005 March on Washington, SOA Watch convergences, several Occupy gatherings around the country, and VFP National conventions.

It’s been a year since we witnessed the shameful assault on our nation’s capitol. (For this writer, it’s hard to hear from Trump Republicans like my cousin in NYC soft-soaping the event and blaming “left-wing provocateurs” for infiltrating the ranks of the insurrectionists and urging them to storm the building. Sounds like more of the “Big Lie.”) This writer has participated in many anti-war protests in Washington, D.C., and Fort Benning, Georgia, where, even if angry, we were never violent.

...continued on p. 21

VFP Chapter 114 members formed a virtual book club last year and read and discussed the book *Understanding Socialism* by Richard Wolfe. Our next book will be *War is a Racket* by Smedley Butler. The author has been nominated for a memorial paver stone in our Heroes of Peace & Justice path at Sheboygan Peace Park near Lake Michigan.

Hang in there, fellow COVID dodgers. This too shall pass. Keep wearing your masks and take it easy, but take it.

Tom Contrestan

#132 – CORVALLIS, OR

[We regret the inadvertent omission of the following report in the Fall 2021 VFP Newsletter—Ed.]

The Mid-Valley, Oregon, branch of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and Linus Pauling VFP Chapter 132 co-hosted a ceremony in honor of the victims of the United States attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, August 6 and 9, 1945, respectively, at the Riverfront Park in



VFP member Dr. Linda Richards (L) and musician Masumi Timson (R) at the Corvallis, Oregon, 2021 Hiroshima-Nagasaki commemoration.

Corvallis, Oregon, on August 5, 2021. The program featured traditional Japanese koto music performed by Masumi Timson; a proclamation and comments by Corvallis Mayor Biff Traber; reading of a statement by local *Hibakusha* (survivor) June Ikuko Terasaka Moore; a statement regarding The International Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW); and a community affirmation declaring opposition to nuclear weapons led by Reverend Matt Gordon.

Following the ceremony, the attendees carried candles to the nearby bridge crossing the Willamette River to witness the passage of a small peace flotilla bearing lanterns honoring the atomic bombing victims. More details and a photo gallery are available at <http://tinyurl.com/2021NeverAgain>.

Bart Bolger

#161 – IOWA CITY, IA

Members of the Iowa City chapter continue our efforts, physical and virtual, to reverse the inertia toward war. We continue to lead a peace vigil every Friday. On International Peace Day in September, we led a program at the Iowa City Ped Mall as we donated a stainless-steel Peace Pole to the city. A hundred folks attended, including Iowa United Nations Association members, Oakdale Choir members, and University of Iowa music class led by Mary Cohen. In October, we participated in the Pride Parade in Iowa City, led by Louis DeGrazia (at 89, 3rd oldest chapter member) along with his son and daughter-in-law and granddaughter and her friend.

We hosted an Armistice Day observance in bitter weather, attended by 50 folks, featuring wonderful presentations by member John Christenson and Michael Zmolek, University of Iowa History department. We lobbied the county to rid itself of the MRAP (mine-resistant, ambush protected) vehicle it had obtained through the DOD's 1033 program seven years ago. We

co-sponsored a presentation on Palestine by a visiting professor from Palestine.

We intended to have a January 1st Peace Rally, but snow, wind, and bitter temperatures forced us to cancel. However, we did co-sponsor a January 6th Rally for Democracy in even colder weather (20+) and some brave people attended. We Will Not Be Left Out in the Cold.

Ed Flaherty

#162 – EAST BAY, CA

Our chapter mourns the loss of two of our founding members, Fred and Cathe Norman. Fred, whose passing came at the end of 2021, was celebrated at Mount Diablo Peace & Justice Center's annual awards ceremony in Walnut Creek, California, on January 15. East Bay Veterans For Peace has been collaborating with VFP Chapter 69, our sister chapter

across the Bay, to plan a memorial at the Veterans Memorial Center in San Francisco for the couple. [Contact Paul Cox for the details, at paulcox@sonic.net or 510-418-3436.]

We plan to continue our involvement with the Crosses of Lafayette, with Homeless and Deported Vets, with monitoring the militarization of local police by the Berkeley City Council, and with the Pivot to Peace with China and the world. We are electing a new corresponding secretary to replace Cathe. In our next issue we will provide more information on these and newer activities being planned.

Eugene E. Ruyle

Chapter Reports continued on page 22...

VFP CHAPTER REPORTS continued

#168 – LOUISVILLE, KY



Carol Trainer (L) and Johanna Camenish (R) delivering our last Afghan resettlement donation to Catholic Charities, Louisville.

New Year's greetings from all of us to all of you!

COVID concerns prevented us from participating in the usual events this fall, but we were productive in other ways. We held our first Zoom chapter meeting, hosted by Steven Gardiner. In the

name of VFP, we collected five loads of furniture and household items for refugees. A shout out to associate member Johanna Camenish for collecting, storing, and—with the help of Kyle Ellsion, Judy Munro-Leighton and Steve Leavell—transporting much of what we collected. The chapter also raised \$1,000 to help settle Afghan refugees in Louisville. This reporter has been assisting in setting up newly refurbished apartments and homes for refugee families before they move in.

The chapter also contributed \$1,000 to our states Western Kentucky Tornado Relief Fund [see <https://kentucky.gov/>] to assist Kentuckians affected by the destructive tornado that hit Mayfield and surrounding areas.

We continue to support our community radio station, WFMP, 106.5 LP FM, and broadcast monthly VFP Radio Hour shows. Archived podcasts can be found at <http://www.forwardradio.org>, and the show is also on SoundCloud. Thanks to the five Louisville chapter members who make it happen: Steven Gardiner (who also arranges the productions), Patrick King, John Wilborn, Peter Berres, and Carol Trainer.

This reporter regularly participates in VFP's "Be the Change" book club and encourages all VFP members to join (look for information on the VFP website or Slack channel). Currently the group is discussing *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi.

While we agree that climate change and race relations are extremely important issues, we urge VFP to address what many of us see as our most pressing issue right now: voting rights and election integrity and security. Without that, the rest is moot. Respectfully submitted,

Carol Trainer

#1004 – JAPAN

On December 5, 2021, the sixth annual VFP Peace Speaking Tour in Japan was held online via Zoom [watch the recording at <https://youtu.be/y8uPoKE800s>]. Among other presenters that included VFP NYC Chapter 34 President Susan Schnall, Chapter 1004 co-chair Ken'ichi Narikawa reported on the recruitment and behind-the-scenes reality of Japan's Self-Defense Forces. This was followed by an online talk with VFP Japan associate

member Erika Abiko, owner of *Hachidorisha*, a social book cafe in Hiroshima, which was likewise focused on the realities of the Self-Defense Forces. Participants were interested and we expect follow-up events.

From late November to December, Takao Izutsu, Ken'ichi Narikawa, and Yukiko Takei were interviewed by a graduate student at Hitotsubashi University about VFP Japan's Activities.

Rachel Clark

Film briefs

FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: NOTES AND IMAGES FROM THE VIET NAM WAR (2022)

VFP associate member Jill Godmilow, Professor Emerita, Department of Film, Television & Theatre, University of Notre Dame, just released a 45-minute film she made to explain the 20-year Viet Nam war to high school students—a job teachers have reported is extremely difficult, according to Howard Machtinger, past coordinator of VFP's Viet Nam Full Disclosure project. Howie's comment is what inspired Jill to make this classroom-length film, which effectively tells the story through carefully sequenced, striking imagery. Accompanied by a soundtrack featuring *Bach Suite for Solo Cello #1 in G* along with Jill's matter-of-factual, concise narrative, the film achieves in 45 minutes what Burns & Novick failed to do in 18 hours.

Designed as a teaching aid for high school history teachers, who will be invited to download it for free, this film will also be a great tool for talking about war with adults of all ages and educational levels. The film is not available commercially, but VFP members may access it via this Vimeo link: <https://vimeo.com/647937850/6712d0ce3d>

THE DRUMMER (2020)

Veterans For Peace teamed up with *About Face* and *In These Times* January 27 to organize a screening and panel discussion of *The Drummer*. Set in 2008, the film revolves around active and former members of the U.S. military, illustrating how, with the U.S. engaged in a seemingly perpetual war, the devastating traumas that soldiers suffer abroad continue to be felt at home across generations.

The program was hosted by Natasha Erskine and Garrett Reppenhagen, and the panel featured Danny Glover, actor and political activist, Eric Werthman, writer, and director of *The Drummer*, and Aaron Hughes, artist, organizer, and Iraq war veteran. Film Trailer: <https://youtu.be/9n4G87VrZj8>.



FILM REVIEW

THIS IS NOT A WAR STORY

Directed by Talia Lugacy • 2021 • 1h 52m

Reviewed by Sam Coleman

At its best, a motion picture about veterans reveals their most profound afflictions, and writer-director Talia Lugacy achieves this in her superbly crafted *This Is Not a War Story*.

The movie compels viewers to care from the get-go by depicting the drug overdose death of a young man on a New York subway. It's Marine corporal Timothy Reyes (Danny Ramirez), who had been in peer counseling with fellow veteran Will La Rue, played by Sam Adegoke. Isabelle Casale, played by Lugacy, is a recently discharged Marine trying to return to her life in Brooklyn. She meets Will at a veterans' art collective, and their interactions revolve around mutual struggles to come to terms with military trauma. Isabelle's dysfunctional family isn't making it any easier. Her mother had disowned her after she enlisted because she had defied the mother's "womanly" aspirations for her daughter.

The veterans' art collective is modeled after the actors' real-life experiences working out trauma in poetry and prose or in visual art using paper made from shredded uniforms. The actors' near-ritual act of cutting up their uniforms feels as powerful as seeing medals thrown over a White House fence, and the genuine camaraderie among the artists draws strength from its intergenerational mix, from Vietnam to OIF veterans.

Thanks to Lugacy's diligent research on moral injury in all aspects, the movie lives with veterans' struggles in its bones and sinews. Veterans contributed to characters' stories and played important parts, so the dialogue rings entirely familiar to anyone who has listened to returned soldiers. The references in the dialogue to America's atrocious military adventures might feel didactic, but they're compact, and Lugacy has placed them where they can educate the uninformed about the sources of our veterans' grief and anger.

This Is Not a War Story is garnering reviewers' praise from all corners for every aspect of its production. It has been



A still of Timothy Reyes (played by Danny Ramirez) from the film, *This Is Not a War Story*

nominated for the Independent Spirit Award and, at the time of this writing, has racked up eight award wins and a Rotten Tomatoes 100 percent approval rating based on 31 reviews.

This movie defies Francois Truffaut's dictum that it's impossible to make an antiwar movie. The work introduces us to a struggling but vital new culture in our country, a path to resistance birthed in unfathomable pain but finally claiming its voice. It's a call for all who care to learn more and take part in bringing our veterans home at last.

Sam Coleman, PhD, MSW, coordinates VFP's Military Trauma Working Group, which is committed to learning about and addressing the extensive costs of war for veterans and their families. Find group info at <http://veteransforpeace.org>, under "Our Work." Contact Sam at samcoleman@gmail.com.

SEEING THE FILM: Please access this film only through official channels, in order to support indie producers, talent and staff and help fund subsequent projects. *This Is Not a War Story* is currently available for streaming on the HBO Max platform (one month of HBO costs less than a movie ticket). Copies of the film on BluRay DVD will be released this summer. To check availability for educational screenings or lectures, please contact Talia Lugacy at lugacyt@newschool.edu.

MEDICATING NORMAL (2021)

This documentary reveals what can happen when profit-driven medicine intersects with human beings in distress, including veterans suffering the effects of PTSD. *Medicating Normal's* three-year, nationwide run on public TV started with the new year, and options for viewing the film are now on the film's website, at: <https://medicatingnormal.com/watch/>.



Since the full-length version of *Medicating Normal* was screened at VFP's August 2021 convention, the filmmakers have produced a shortened version of the film, which is now available for free viewing via the PBS app. More streaming options coming soon!

WAR ON TERROR FILM CLUB

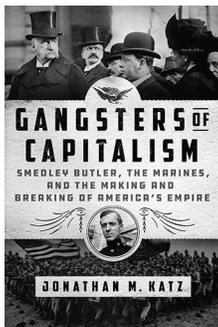
Discovered via an event announcement shared on a VFP listserv: The War on Terror Film Club is a monthly public virtual program that features award-winning films made over the last 20 years that document abuses, highlight crimes, and satirize absurdities of the so-called "War on Terror." Film screenings include an accompanying live panel discussion featuring filmmakers, survivors, scholars, journalists, and resisters, who reflect on the challenges of living through the policies of the "War on Terror" and telling their stories. No-cost registration gives full access to film screenings, live panel discussions, updates, actions, and more. The War on Terror Film Club is entirely free and accessible to the public. Find it at <https://www.wotfilmclub.com/> [descriptions are from the website].

RECOMMENDED READING

GANGSTERS OF CAPITALISM SMEDLEY BUTLER, THE MARINES, AND THE MAKING & BREAKING OF AMERICA'S EMPIRE

by Jonathan M. Katz
St. Martin's Press, 2022

Highly recommended by Paul Appell



I have just read the first quarter of *Gangsters of Capitalism*, but am very impressed with the details that Katz provides from his five years of intensive research obtained by traveling throughout the world to places that Butler was stationed. In the chapter on Guantánamo, as he is walking back to his assigned quarters in Guantánamo while doing research there, Katz tells how he was

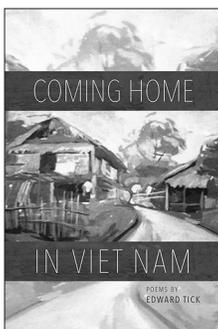
reminded of his friend James Foley, who went to the same journalism school as Katz. In the video of Foley's beheading, Katz notes that Foley was dressed in exactly the same uniform as the prisoners in Guantánamo and feels it was done to send a message to the U.S. about Guantánamo. Two weeks before Foley went back to Syria where he was soon captured, he was with us at the VFP protest in the park at the NATO protest in Chicago. I remember his comment there, that the first thing that is done before going to war is to designate the enemy as "other." As I read the book, it is clear that U.S. policy hasn't changed for the better.

COMING HOME IN VIET NAM

POEMS BY EDWARD TICK

Tia Chucha, 2021

NOTE: See page 25 for the announcement of a very special panel discussion featuring Dr. Ed Tick and friends, in celebration of his new book, created for and sponsored by Veterans For Peace



This book chronicles the poems of witness which have come from the past 20+ years during which Dr. Tick has been leading annual journeys back to Viet Nam for American veterans, their loved ones, and in community with the Vietnamese people. Like the journeys themselves, the poems offer powerful testimony to the atonement, reconciliation, re-humanization, and healing that is possible

for people on all sides of war. As a peace activist for over 50+ years, Ed's practice of returning to Viet Nam—and the way he walks into the warriors' wounds—are all based on principles of non-violence. For more info, visit <https://mentorthesoul.guide>.

Recommended by Pete Rogers, an American veteran:

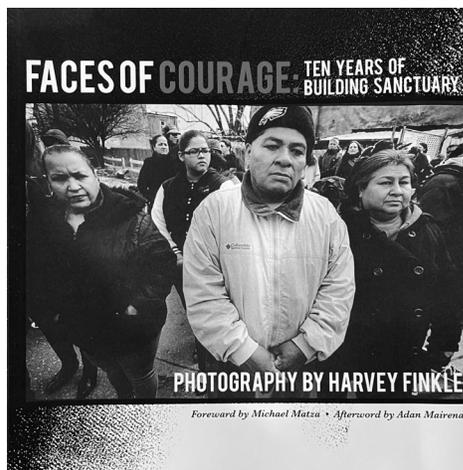
I am not a poetry reader...but I am a Vietnam war veteran who served with an infantry brigade in 1968, and experienced deep long-lasting wounding. Ed Tick's book has brought a new level and type of healing that I didn't expect. His poems are mostly written in a short form, including Haiku, which hammer the reader's heart with images of battles and bullets, scorched and poisoned earth and then with those of a recovering countryside, shared Buddhist rituals, and loving and forgiving people. This book will be loved by all who read it—but especially anyone connected to or drawn to Viet Nam. It goes beyond history and politics by immersing the reader in the souls of our Viet Nam veterans and the people of Viet Nam who survived and now celebrate our shared connection.

FACES OF COURAGE

TEN YEARS OF BUILDING SANCTUARY—
PHOTOGRAPHY BY HARVEY FINKLE

New City Community Press/Parlor Press, 2021

Reviewed by W. D. Ehrhart



Harvey Finkle has been photographing the struggle for peace, justice, civil rights, and human decency for decades. Based in Philadelphia, he has created photographic histories of homelessness, poverty, drug addiction, deaf

culture, abolition of the death penalty... oh, goodness, you name it, he's photographed it.

His latest effort records Philadelphia's New Sanctuary Movement (NSM), founded in 2007 to promote immigration reform, protect and shelter immigrants from deportation, and resist the militarization of our southern border. NSM is a coalition of 32 churches and synagogues crossing religious, ethnic, and class lines that engages in fundraising, letter-writing campaigns, public demonstrations, civil disobedience, and the actual harboring and sheltering of illegal immigrants.

Finkle's photographs, captioned in both English and Spanish—most of these immigrants are from Central America—are starkly powerful. They vividly convey the fear, tension, anguish, and heartbreak of these immigrants and their supporters, but also their determination, resolve, sense of community, warmth, and love.

...continued on page 25

FACES OF COURAGE book review continued...

Also recorded are some of NSM's successes and triumphs, of which there have been many, including ending Philadelphia police collaboration with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, and reversing the deportation order for Honduran-born Angela Navarro.

NSM, of course, is not limited to Philadelphia. A number of other cities have become sanctuary cities, and Finkle's photographs are representative of this larger movement. But if you want to learn more about NSM, this book is an excellent place to begin. Also included are a foreword by former *Philadelphia Inquirer* staff writer Michael Matza, who provides a historical context for NSM, and an afterword by Honduran-born Rev. Adan Mairena, who movingly explains both his own background and why he chose to provide physical sanctuary for Angela Navarro.

And if that weren't enough, there is also a detailed chronology of NSM, a list of additional resources, a glossary, and a list of names and contact information for the various congregations involved in NSM of Philadelphia. And all of this in addition to Finkle's marvelous and moving photographs.

One of the most powerful scenes ever filmed is when Quasimodo scrambles up the bell tower of the cathedral with Esmeralda slung over his shoulder—in Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*—turns, and shouts in triumph at the mob below, "Sanctuary! Sanctuary!"

This beautiful book is a real-life version of the ancient concept of sanctuary.

W. D. Ehrhart is a member of the Thomas Bradley Philadelphia VFP Chapter 31, as is Harvey Finkle.

Save Our VA (SOVA) report

...continued from page 8

We plan to meet more Members of Congress or their staff and are looking for people from their Congressional Districts to join us for the Zoom meetings. A constituent being present adds strength to our effort. Contact us at sovamail@yahoo.com if you have contacts with Congressional staff already or are willing to join us in a meeting.

The SOVA Campaign sent over 2,000 letters to Congress through our Calls to Action (CTAs) this year. Most of the 435 Representatives receive a letter from one constituent, though some receive more. We want to increase the impact of our CTAs and are looking for more people to sign up to receive CTAs and help us with this effort. The more letters each Congress person receives, the more they pay attention. We send a SOVA update every three weeks to SOVA supporters that includes the latest CTA asking Congress to respond to issues important to saving our VA.

Upcoming Events

FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 8PM ET

Healing, Homecoming & Reconciliation in Viet Nam

Dr. Ed Tick has been leading annual healing journeys back to Viet Nam for veterans of that war (and other people) since 2000. This evening, he and others share the depths of healing, atonement, reconciliation, and peace-making made possible by returning to that land and transforming individual relationships to the people, place, and experiences there. The event is in celebration of Ed's new book, *Coming Home In Viet Nam*, a 20-year collection of his poetry from these journeys [see page 24]. Ed and four friends—veterans of both American and Vietnamese forces and a war widow—will share stories, poems, and wisdom from the Vietnamese as well as American perspective:

- Lawrence Markworth, Navy
- Michael "Magoo" Philips, Army
- Tran Dinh Song, ARVN Air Force, re-education camps
- Jan Carlson-Bull, war widow

As the date nears, look for the event registration link on the VFP National website and in future VFP eNews blasts.

SATURDAY, MARCH 19

Veterans For Peace Board of Directors Meeting

12:40pm ET | 11:40am CT | 9:40am PT on Zoom. Watch our eNews and/or website for the link.

SATURDAY, MARCH 26—SATURDAY, APRIL 2

Shut Down Creech Spring 2022

Shut Down Creech is a national mobilization to nonviolently resist killer drones, sponsored by CodePink and Veterans For Peace. Mark your calendars and PLEASE JOIN US at our 2022 weeklong spring convergence in the desert near Las Vegas, Nevada. Due to the persistent pandemic, we will continue to follow COVID-safe practices. All activities will be held outdoors, including overnight camping. Our Spring Action is again dedicated to The Ahmadi Family, who lost 10 beloved family members, including young children, in a reckless U.S. drone attack on August 29, 2021. Find more info and registration link at: <https://shutdowncreech.blogspot.com/>

SUNDAY, APRIL 17—SUNDAY, APRIL 24

War Industry Resisters Network Week of Action

The War Industry Resisters Network (WIRN)—a new coalition of a new coalition of groups opposing their local war companies—is calling on local groups to organize an action in their community that targets the war machine and promotes investment in a peace economy. More information here: <http://veteransforpeace.org/WIRN>

BERLIN, BELFAST, BELGRADE, BAGHDAD, BASRA

Too many wars. Jarred awake, the house broken,
the brute butt of a gun against the pretty
dish your neighbor brought you — look around, so much
to lose. The shoes you bought for style and thrift will
flay your feet on the rain-swept road; the photo
folded next to your heart will rip with your dress;
your scrubbed flesh will turn rancid; you will eat filth
and hope for more of it. Tell me you haven't
yet imagined this, felt the knife at your throat,
seen your own uncle's blood on the kitchen floor.

Too many wars. Safe in our sealed car, nations
away, we hear the blood splatter, trickling through
the radio's local concerns — three minutes,
maybe, every hour. Refugees, thousands,
spill over the borders, seep back in, a sponge
squeezed and loosened, loosened and squeezed. Returning
to devastation, they want their turn-about,
and who can blame them — the neighbors, however
many cakes they bring or glad embraces, did
not save them, can never look the same. Beyond

the signal's reach, we twist the dial: too many wars,
three minutes each, the wrongs festering, the blood
rancid, the neighbors hesitating too long
before knocking, cake and dish in hand — and who,
Lord, is my neighbor? Which of us drops the gun
first? Which takes or eats the cake? Which speaks sweet reason
so as not to change a thing? Unmarked ourselves
by knife or chilling blood today, no one we know
cowering in the roadside ditch as our car whips by,
we twist the dial as tourists do, just neighbors.

— Nathalie Anderson

Reprinted from the *2015 Anthology of Featured Poets:*
Moonstone Poetry Series.

POEMS SELECTED BY
W. D. EHRHART, EDITOR-AT-LARGE

AFTER HORSE

My play closed last night, not to raves and wows but the
wild fury of that act of impersonation on the stage in quiet
light and the audience's applause. It was a good show. The
play was about a reunion of two friends after many years,
their division having been Vietnam, how one went, the
other stayed behind, and how they used to play basketball
together, and were playing now, and the fact that that dirty
little war ripped the souls out of a generation of us who
cared to notice it was raging, oh it was raging, and it still
does for some, it still rages in the body so many years after
termination. Then, edgy, I went out the next day for a long
walk with my future ex-wife down Broadway, and we stopped
into Tower Records, buying Aretha, Taj, and for reasons
which I didn't understand until this moment, a tape by Nina
Simone. Who is she? my wife asks, a singer herself, and I
explained how I used to go hear her at the Village Gate with
my friend Paul Lee when we were kids, and before he went
off to Vietnam, and I listened to the tape, and remembered
how Paul and I listened to her records, her and Coltrane
and Miles in his basement through that long summer on
Long Island. The week Paul came back from Nam, we drank
beers, but it was never the same, and we didn't speak
again for ten years, it was at a brother's wedding, and I was
thinking of him again, and then a couple days later, another
brother calls me to say that Paul had died on that Monday.
Agent Orange, the brother said, and he was thirty-eight years
old, and ran a successful restaurant on the Island, and there
was nothing left to do but listen to that tape of Nina Simone,
and hope that the emptiness wouldn't last forever.

— M. G. Stephens

Reprinted from *History of Theatre or the Glass of Fashion* by
M. G. Stephens, Mad Hat Press, by permission of the author.

Solidarity Center of Puerto Rico seeks funds for new vehicle

CENTRO SOLIDARIO OF PUERTO RICO (CSPR) is a community project that centers solidarity as a response to U.S. colonialism, imperialism, and militarism in Puerto Rico. CSPR supports a variety of local, national, and international solidarity activities. Locally, CSPR provides transportation to medical services for the peoples of Vieques and Culebra, who continue to suffer devastating health impacts of the U.S. military's presence. The project was created by Monisha Rios, a Viequense and former veteran member of VFP. Recently, CSPR's vehicle broke down and needs to be replaced. To learn more about the group or support its vehicle campaign, go to <https://gofund.me/e25d34e4> or contact monisha@centrospr.org.



CONNECT WITH OTHER MEMBERS

SLACK

SLACK is a channel-based messaging platform that allows multiple conversations to take place in the same space, grouped by category. VFP is using SLACK to help build community by allowing members to easily keep in touch and share plans, ideas, and resources with each other. The app is easy to download for smart phone or laptop/desktop, so you can access conversations from any device.

To join VFP on SLACK, you have to be a VFP member. To get started, please fill out the form at:

<http://bit.ly/VFPSLACKSignUp>

VFP staff will respond with a SLACK invitation that will be good for 30 days!

VFP-ALL Google Group

The VFP-ALL listserv is open to all VFP members for sharing announcements and information with other members. VFP-ALL was recently moved from Yahoo! (which stopped supporting listservs) to Google.

To join the VFP-ALL group, go to:

<http://bit.ly/VFPALLSignUp>

Look for the Join Group link at the top of the page, and click to automatically be added. If you have problems, email shelly@veteransforpeace.org with a request to be added to the new VFP-ALL google group.

Weekly VFP Social Hour

Held on Zoom every Friday at 6 pm (Eastern) | 5 pm (Central) | 4 pm (Mountain) | 3 pm (Pacific). To join the gathering, go to our website at that time, <http://veteransforpeace.org>, and look for the meeting link under the Events tab.

Be the Change Book Club

Held on Zoom every other Sunday at 5pm ET | 4pm CT | 3pm MT | 2pm PT. As this newsletter goes to print, the group is just wrapping up its discussion of *How to Be an Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi. The next book choice and sign-up link can be found online at: <https://veteransforpeace.salsalabs.org/vfpbookclub>

3407 S. Jefferson Ave. #219, St. Louis, MO 63118
Ph: 314-725-6005 • Fax: 314-227-1981 • veteransforpeace.org

Veterans For Peace is a global organization of Military Veterans and allies whose collective efforts are to build a culture of peace by using our experiences and lifting our voices. We inform the public of the true causes of war and the enormous costs of wars, with an obligation to heal the wounds of wars. Our network is comprised of over 140 chapters worldwide whose work includes: educating the public, advocating for a dismantling of the war economy, providing services that assist veterans and victims of war, and most significantly, working to end all wars.

Statement of Purpose

We, as military veterans, do hereby affirm our greater responsibility to serve the cause of world peace. To this end we will work, with others both nationally and internationally:

- To increase public awareness of the causes and costs of war
- To restrain our governments from intervening, overtly and covertly, in the internal affairs of other nations
- To resist racism and repression in our home communities
- To oppose the militarization of law enforcement
- To end the arms race and to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons
- To seek justice for veterans and victims of war
- To abolish war as an instrument of national policy.

To achieve these goals, members of Veterans For Peace pledge to use non-violent means and to maintain an organization that is both democratic and open with the understanding that all members are trusted to act in the best interests of the group for the larger purpose of world peace.

Veterans For Peace Code of Conduct

~ a living document, to be updated as we learn ~

1. We will use our anger at injustice as a positive, nonviolent force for change.
2. We will approach every encounter, with fellow members and the public, with positivity and mindfulness, and with the assumption that concerns raised are coming from a positive place and present a learning opportunity.
3. Our attitude, as conveyed through our words, symbols and actions, will be one of openness, friendliness, and respect toward all people we encounter.
4. All members have an important role to play within Veterans For Peace, regardless of previous military rank, branch, or combat experience. We will respect one another as equal parts of a whole.
5. We will not assault, verbally, in person or online, anyone, to include fellow members and those who oppose or disagree with us, even if they assault us. This does not preclude a member's right to defend him or herself against a physical attack.
6. In keeping with our commitment to achieving our goals through non-violent means, there is an expectation that members will not carry weapons with them to VFP events or while representing VFP, regardless of the laws in their location.
7. We will follow the directions of the designated coordinators during public actions organized on behalf of VFP.
8. We will use democratic principles within our organization to ensure an open, fair, inclusive, and transparent environment.
9. We will speak as members of VFP but not for VFP, unless designated as a spokesperson for VFP. All members are free to speak for themselves or on behalf of their chapter as appropriate.
10. Sexist, racist, homophobic, ageist, transphobic, gender discriminatory, and all other discriminatory language and actions are common within the military; they are not acceptable within VFP.
11. Our words and actions will maintain the political and financial independence of VFP.
12. To achieve the above goals, we will also engage in "active listening"; that is, fully concentrating on what is being said rather than just passively "hearing" the message of the speaker.



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Saint Louis, MO 63118

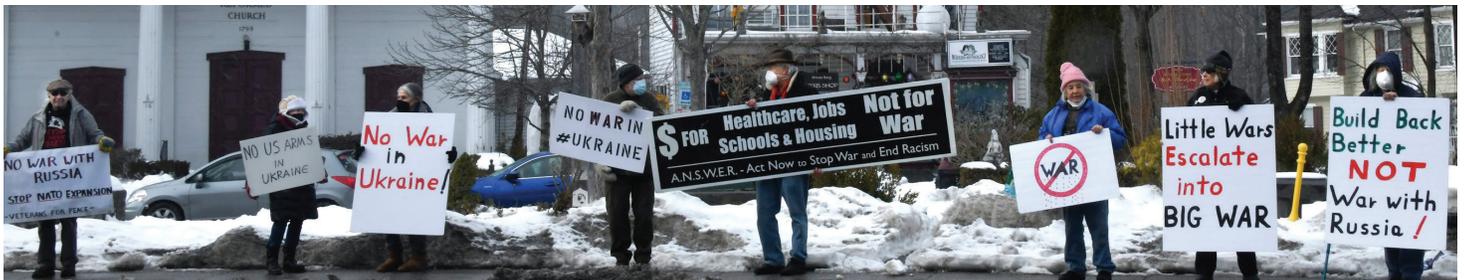
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

LET US ASPIRE to make Thay’s continuation and transition serve as a bell of mindfulness! A reminder that positive transformation takes place through the diligent practice of interbeing, compassion, deep listening, and mutual understanding. We can employ these practices in our families, in our workplace, in politics, and in every waking moment of our lives. We will often fail. And in the moments in which we fail, we can hold our negative emotions tenderly and transform them so that we become better at our practice.

— Richard J. File-Muriel

Excerpted from a longer essay titled “Reflections upon the Transition of Thich Nhat Hanh.” Richard J. File-Muriel, a U.S. Army veteran and VFP member, is Associate Professor of Spanish & Portuguese and Co-coordinator of Delegación Colombia at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.



Veterans For Peace members and other locals braved the cold and falling snow for a NO WAR WITH RUSSIA demo in Woodstock, New York, on Friday, January 28. The protestors got a lot of honks and thumbs from passing pedestrians and motorists.



Actions taken by VFP Chapter 99 members in support of Reject Raytheon in Western North Carolina includes “Freeway Blogging” over Interstate 240.

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