



VETERANS FOR PEACE

Organized Locally. Recognized Nationally.

Veterans For Peace 27th Annual Convention Edition

Liberating the Americas: Lessons from Latin America and the Caribbean

Convention 2012 • August 8-12

Marriott Hotel/Biscayne Bay, Miami, Florida

Navigating the Convention

We're about a month away from our 27th annual Veterans For Peace (VFP) national convention, to be held August 7 – 11 at the Miami Marriott (Biscayne Bay). Our theme, reflecting the host city, is "Liberating the Americas: Learning from Latin America and the Caribbean." Alice Walker and Father Roy Bourgeois are our keynote banquet speakers.

Our initial event Wednesday evening is a short rooftop/poolside reception (free hors d'oeuvres/cash bar) from 6 – 7pm. Immediately following, Phil Donahue hosts a fund-raising movie showing of "Body of War", featuring Iraq War vet Tomas Young.

Our opening plenary Thursday morning, co-chaired by Iraq War resisters Camilo Mejia and Victor Agosto, has Marleine Bastien, executive director of Haitian Women of Miami welcome us to Miami. Two plenary workshops follow. A Pan-Latin/Caribbean report from Haiti, Honduras and other countries precedes an active duty resistance panel, including the Bradley Manning Support Committee.

Friday's first 3 workshops sessions highlight VFP members presenting on a host of issues (see workshop selections). The last workshop session is comprised of 3 mini-plenaries, on 'Shutting down the SOA, 'War Trauma/PTSD', and 'VFP Internationally'. On Friday evening, 'Veterans Meet the Community' across the street from the hotel at the historic Trinity Church to share information and tie the struggle against war abroad to the struggle against war here at home.

Saturday is our business meeting, followed by an afternoon facilitated discussion of the way forward for VFP. The evening banquet, which features keynote speakers Alice Walker and Father Roy Bourgeois, will include Caribbean musical accompaniment.

Sunday's plan is a 6-block march mid-morning to the Torch of Friendship for a closing rally. A 6-day tour to Haiti, hosted by Melinda Miles of Let Haiti Live flies out that afternoon.

The convention will also feature lunchtime and late evening movies. For more information, go to www.vfpnationalconvention.org.

See you in Miami.

Patrick McCann



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Spring/Summer 2012

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2012 Convention Workshops

Belly of the Beast: How VFP Can Influence Congress, *Matt Southworth*

Legislative Associate on Foreign Policy @ FCNL; Iraq War Vet; Member of VFP's Board of Directors

Beyond Che Guevara: Resistance Literature from Central and South America,

Roger Marheine

Teaches at Pasadena City College; Designed Courses in post-colonial studies

Blood on Our Hands: Exposing US Complicity in the War on Drugs in Mexico,

Bruce MacDonald, Charles Goff

Goff: Raised in Columbia; founded Cemanahuac Educational Community Language School in Mexico; Activist involved with Frente Civica, Pastors for Peace, and Movimiento Por La Paz Con Justicia Y Dignidad opposing Mexican Governments combating violence with violence

Breaking The Corporate News Barrier: Earning Mainstream News Coverage VFP Chapters Want & Deserve, *Eduardo Cohen*

Vietnam Veteran; Media Relations Consultant since 1982 helping California progressive groups and veterans' organizations earn exceptional coverage

GI Resistance Today: Inspiring & Supporting Refusal to Fight In Afghanistan,

Michael Prysner, Kevin Baker, Danny Birmingham

Prysner: Iraq War Vet; Co Founder of March Forward!

Baker: Iraq War Vet and War Resister

Birmingham: Iraq War Vet and C.O.

Golden Rule Ketch Sails Again Against Militarism & Nuclear Weapons & Power,

Fredy Champagne, Sherry Champagne

Fredy: Pres of VFP Chap 22; Founder of Veterans-Vietnam Restoration Project; Co founder of VFP Iraq Water Project

Sherry: VFP Chap 22; Co-Coordinator of Golden Rule Project

Grassroots Action: What it Really Means to Help the People in Haiti, *Elaine Brower*

President of Sustainable Orphanages for Haitian Youth; Member of VFP & MFSO; National Steering Committee of World Can't Wait

Left and Right Together, *Robert Bowman*

Lt. Col. USAF Ret., Recipient of Eisenhower Medal, George Kennan Peace Prize, VFP's President's Medal, PHD in Aeronautics from Cal Teach

Misleading America: US Military Expansion since the End of the Cold War,

Sandy Davies, David Swanson

Davies: Writes for Z Magazine; Author of *Blood On Our Hands: American Invasion of Iraq*

Swanson: Author of *War is a Lie*; Host of Talk Nation Radio; Former Kucinich Press Secretary, Works for VFP

Obama's Pivot Toward Asia-Pacific: Dangerous, Destabilizing and Costly,

Bruce Gagnon, Mike Hastie, Elliott Adams, Tarak Kauff

Gagnon: E.D. of Global Network, deeply involved in JeJu Island Action

Adams and Kauff: Denied access to Korea

Hastie: Worked on JeJu Island Action

One Soldier's Heart: The Emotional Impact of War, *Ted Engelmann*

Vietnam Veteran, Air Force; Teacher; Photographer; Lived and traveled in Vietnam, Korea, Embedded as free lance photographer in Iraq (2008) & Afghanistan

Opportunities for VFP Engagement in Post-Occupation Iraq, *Thomas Fasy, Ali Issa*

Fasy: MD, PHD recently retired from Mt. Sinai School of Medicine; Visited Iraq two times; member of the Brussels Tribunal

Issa: Iraq/American field organizer for War Resisters League

2012 Convention Workshops

Reining in the Killer Drones, *Medea Benjamin, Col. Ann Wright, Nancy Mancias, David Soumis*

Benjamin: Co-Founder of Code Pink and author of *Drone Warfare*

Wright: Retired US Army Colonel who resigned in protest to Iraq War

Mancias: Coordinator of Code Pink's war criminals & ground the drones campaigns

Secrets of Successful Chapters, *Patrick Scanlon, Ron Dexter, 3 or 4 Chapter leaders selected by VFP ED and President*

Southcom and the 4th Fleet, *Raymond Del Papa*

SOA Watch Council, SOA Watch SF

Southcom: Repression and Resistance in Post-Coup Honduras, *Adrienne Pine, Rodolfo Pastor*

Pine: Asst Prof of Anthropology at American University; Author of *Working Hard, Drinking Hard: On Violence and Survival in Honduras*

Pastor: Former Honduran Diplomat; Masters of Latin American Studies from Georgetown University

Supporting Bradley Manning and All GI Resisters, *Jeff Paterson, Gerry Condon*

Paterson: Marine Corporal refused to fight in Iraq; Project Director of Courage To Resist

Condon: Green Beret refused to fight in Vietnam; Director of "Soldier Say No"; Co-Chair of VFP GI Resistance Group

The Environmental Cost of War, *Helen Jaccard, Bruce Gagnon*

Jaccard: Just completed a 7 month peace tour of Europe, including time in Sardinia learning about weapons testing

The Fall of the Republic and How to Fix It: Occupy, Public Banking and Monetary Theory, *Bill Warrick*

Gainesville Florida Family Practitioner; VFP Member since 1990

The Hidden History of Occupation from 1947 to 2012: What Americans Need to Know about Palestinian/Israeli Conflict,

Jack Dresser, Ken Mayers

Dresser: Behavioral Health Scientist; Vice Chair of VFP Palestine Working Group

Mayers: Former VFP Board Member; Member of Palestine Working Group

The Pathology of Massacre: The Corrosive and Deadly Effects of Racism in Civil—Military Institutions, *Eduardo Cohen*

Current Chair of VFP National Working Group on Palestine; Researcher, Analyst, and Lecturer on the Selling of War, Occupation, and US Foreign Policy

Investigative journalist in Central and South America; Human Rights Investigator in Iraq; Host and Producer of "The Other Americas Radio Journal" (KPFA in Berkeley)

The Pentagon in Latin America and the Caribbean, *John Lindsay-Poland*

Research and advocacy director of fellowship of reconciliation; founder of Colombia's Peace Team; Served with Peace Brigades in Guatemala and El Salvador and Columbia; Currently tracks U.S. Military Activity in Latin America

Veterans Peace Teams: Exposing State Violence, *Tarak Kauff, Ellen Davidson, Ken Mayers, Elliott Adams*

VFP's Legislative Efforts on Agent Orange, *Susan Schnall, Paul Cox*

Schnall: Vietnam War Era Navy nurse and War Resister; currently teaches @ NYU; on Board of Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign

Cox: Vietnam War veteran; on Board of Agent Orange Relief Campaign

Both have returned to Vietnam three times

Karen's Soy Nutrition, Program in Guatemala City, The Land Grab in Guatemala Happening Now

Tomas Heikkala, Jeffrey Keating, Palmer Legare

Vietnam Veteran, Charter Member of VFP, Counselor with GI Rights Hot Line, Founding Member of the Farm Community in TN and of plenty international, a developmental organization

VFP Peace Making, Building Successful Liberation Movements, Nonviolent Engagement

Elliott Adams, Janet Chisolm

Adams: NV Training Coordinator on Board of Creating a Culture of Peace, Active on various peace teams

Chisolm: Nonviolence trainer; Founder of National Training program, former E.D. of Fellowship of Reconciliation



Newsletter

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2012 Convention Speakers



Alice Walker is an author, poet, and activist. She has written both fiction and essays about race and gender. She is best known for the critically acclaimed novel “The Color Purple” (1982) for which she won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize

Alice Walker has had a long career as an activist; she participated in the 1963 March on Washington with Martin Luther King and worked throughout the South on voter registration. On International Women’s Day of 2003, on the eve of the Iraq War, Alice Walker was arrested along with 24 others for crossing a police line during an anti-war protest rally outside the White House. In an interview about this act of protest and hope she stated: “I was with other women who believe that the women and children of Iraq are just as dear as the women and children in our families, and that, in fact, we are one family. And so it would have felt to me that we were going over to actually bomb ourselves.” Walker wrote about the experience in her essay, “We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For.”

In March 2009, Ms. Walker traveled to Gaza along with a group of 60 other women activists from the anti-war group Code Pink, in response to the Gaza War and to attempt to persuade Israel and Egypt to open their borders into Gaza. In a June 2011 interview, she described the United States and Israel as “terrorist organizations” stating “When you terrorize people, when you make them so afraid of you that they are just mentally and psychologically wounded for life -- that’s terrorism.”

In her work as artist and activist, Alice Walker is a friend to all who work for peace and justice.



Father Roy Bourgeois is a veteran of the US Navy who served in Vietnam. After military service, Fr. Roy entered the seminary of the Maryknoll Missionary Order and was ordained a Catholic priest in 1972. He then worked with the poor of Bolivia for five

years before being arrested and forced to leave the country, then under the repressive rule of dictator and graduate of the School of the Americas (SOA) General Hugo Banzer.

In 1980 Fr. Roy became involved in issues surrounding US policy in El Salvador after four US churchwomen--two of them his friends--were raped and killed by Salvadoran soldiers. He became an outspoken critic of US foreign policy in Latin America. Since then, he has spent more than four years in US federal prisons for nonviolent protests against the training of Latin American soldiers at SOA at Ft. Benning, Georgia.

In 1990, Fr. Roy founded the School of Americas Watch; SOA is now named the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Co-

operation (WHINSEC), at Fort Benning, Georgia. Each year the school trains hundreds of soldiers from Latin America in combat skills, all paid for by U.S. taxpayers.

The School of the Americas Watch, located just outside the main entrance of Fort Benning and in Washington, DC, informs the general public, Congress and the media about the implications of this training on the people of Latin America.

Fr. Roy has worked on and helped produce several documentary films, including 1983’s “Gods of Metal” about the nuclear arms race and 1995’s “School of Assassins.” In 1997 Fr. Roy received the Pax Christi USA Teacher of Peace Award. In 1998, he testified in Madrid before Spanish Judge Baltasar Garzon seeking the extradition of Chile’s ex-dictator General Augusto Pinochet.

In the mid to late-2000s, Father Roy traveled extensively in Latin America, meeting with presidents, defense ministers, and officials of several countries, pushing for the pulling-out of troops from the SOA/WHINSEC. As a result, four countries - Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia and Venezuela – have stopped sending troops to the SOA/WHINSEC.

Fr. Roy continues to travel extensively, giving talks at universities, churches, and other groups around the country and speaking truth to power when power is used to oppress.



Marleine Bastien is founder and executive director of Fanm Ayisyen Nan Miyami, Inc. (FANM, Haitian Women of Miami), an important group that provides desperately-needed services to Haitian women and their families. FANM’s work includes programs to promote access to health care, breast I cancer prevention and treatment,

domestic violence intervention, computer and financial literacy, economic and small business development, after-school programs and more.

Ms. Bastien is a leader in South Florida’s Haitian community. She is the present chair of the Florida Immigrant Coalition, and vice-chair of the Haitian-American Grassroots Coalition. A passionate and articulate spokesperson for Haitians, she formed the Justice Coalition for the Haitian Children of Guantánamo to advocate for children incarcerated there in the early 1990s, appearing on the Oprah Winfrey Show to lend her expertise to a discussion of the devastating effect that prolonged detention at Guantánamo had on Haitian children.

Recognized with numerous honors and awards, Bastien was named one of The Miami Herald’s “Forty Special People To Watch in the Next Millennium.” She has received accolades from Amnesty International, Ms. Magazine, the Ford Foundation, Essence Magazine, the Red Cross and the Gay and Lesbian Foundation of South Florida, among others.

Speakers continued on next page

Speakers

Continued from previous page

A licensed clinical social worker and trained paralegal, Bastien has dedicated herself to the betterment and the benefit of others -- in health, education, economic survival and social justice.



Paula Joan Caplan is a clinical and research psychologist. She is currently an Associate at Harvard University's DuBois Institute, working on the Voices of Diversity project, and a Fellow at the Women and Public Policy Program of the Kennedy School at Harvard. Previously she was full professor of psychology, assistant professor of psychiatry, and lecturer in Womens Studies at the University of Toronto, and was chosen by the American Psychological Association as an "eminent woman psychologist". She is the author of "The Myth of Women's Masochism" and "Don't Blame Mother," plus a number of other books. Her twelfth and latest book is "When Johnny and Jane Come Marching Home: How All of Us Can Help Veterans," won the 2011 American Publishers Award for Professional and Scholarly Excellence in the Psychology category. Since the 1980s, Dr. Caplan has had concerns about psychiatric diagnosis, and people being arbitrarily "slapped with a psychiatric label". She believes that psychiatric diagnosis is unregulated, so doctors aren't required to spend much time understanding patients situations or to seek another doctor's opinion. The criteria for allocating psychiatric labels are contained in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, which can "lead a therapist to focus on narrow checklists of symptoms, with little consideration for what is causing the patient's suffering". Therefore to Dr. Caplan, getting a psychiatric diagnosis and label often hinders recovery



2012 VFP National Convention Schedule

WEDNESDAY • AUGUST 8

8:30 am - 8:30 pm	Registration – Marriott Hotel/Biscayne Bay 2nd Floor Lobby
9:00 am - 5:00 pm	VFP Board Meeting
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Opening Reception - Marriott Hotel/Biscayne Bay Rooftop
7:30 pm - 10:00 pm	Fundraiser Film: Body of War presented by Phil Donahue
10:00 pm	Poetry Readings

THURSDAY • AUGUST 9

8:30 am - 8:30 pm	Registration – Marriott Hotel/Biscayne Bay 2nd Floor Lobby
9:00 am - 11:00 am	VFP Board Meeting Wrap-up
11:00 am - 12:30 pm	Opening Plenary
12:30 pm - 2:00 pm	Lunch on your own Film: Hidden Battles - 65 min
2:00 pm - 3:30 pm	Latin American/Caribbean Plenary
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Active Duty Resistance Plenary
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm	Caucuses
9:00 pm	Movie: Occupy

FRIDAY • AUGUST 10

9:00 am - 7:00 pm	Registration – Marriott Hotel/Biscayne Bay 2nd Floor Lobby
9:30 am - 11:00 am	Workshops
11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Workshops
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Lunch on your own Film: Urano238 - 30 min
2:00 pm - 3:30 pm	Workshops
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm	War Trauma, SOAW, VFP International
7:00 pm - 10:00 pm	"Veterans Meet the Community" @ Church
10:00 pm -	Film: Witness to War 29 min

SATURDAY • AUGUST 11

9:30 am - 5:00 pm	Registration – Marriott Hotel/Biscayne Bay 2nd Floor Lobby
9:00 am - 3:00 pm	VFP Business Meeting
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Open Plenary - Town hall-type forum
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Banquet Social Hour (Cash bar)
7:00 pm - 11:00 pm	Banquet Main Event

SUNDAY • AUGUST 12

7:00am–11:00 am	Checkout - Marriott Hotel/Biscayne Bay
9:00 am	6-block march to Torch of Friendship
10:00 am - 11:00 am	Concluding ceremony

CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

VFP National Convention Aug 8-12, 2012



LIBERATING THE AMERICAS: LESSONS FROM LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

Please type or print the information requested below.
When filling out the registration form, please enter all

First Name Last Name

VFP Chapter Name & Number

Address

City State Zip Code

Phone Number

Email



The VFP National Convention is ADA accessible. If you require special accommodations, please check below and complete the information needed. We will call you to discuss any specific needs.

Yes, special accommodations are necessary.

Please specify _____

REGISTER EARLY FOR THE BEST RATES!

HOW TO REGISTER

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www.vfpnationalconvention.org

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AmEx)*

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Signature _____

This year we will include a list of convention attendees (Name, phone, email, location) in each registration packet. If you would like, you can opt out of being on this list.

Please DO NOT share my contact information.

REGISTRATION OPTIONS

Full Convention Registration includes Convention Banquet. Please indicate your banquet entree choice.

Convention Registration (after July 1, 2012): \$250 _____

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

 Saturday Banquet Only \$60 _____

 Convention Tshirt: \$15 _____

TOTAL: _____

Saturday Banquet Entree:

- Grilled Veggie Pasta
- Pan Seared Chicken
- Citrus Grill Mahi Mahi
- Skirt Steak Chimmi-Churri

All entries include salad, dessert and beverage

President's Message

We Are Stronger Together

This is my first newsletter message for the membership, and I want to preface my comments by telling you how proud I am to be the President of Veterans For Peace. This is a very exciting time for our organization—we have added staff, chapters are popping up all over, we have a new website, and we have a great board—but my first message to you is not going to be a list of all our accomplishments or why we are a great organization. I want to use this opportunity to convey my vision for VFP and my thoughts about how we can maximize our potential.

Veterans For Peace is the only national veterans' organization that calls for the abolishment of war. Please read that again, because it's important. We are the only one. I believe that everything we do should relate back to that concept. VFP members are involved in many worthwhile projects, but as a national organization, I believe we need to focus on the message that is uniquely ours, and emphasize that concept at every opportunity. There are hundreds of organizations that advocate for veterans, or provide humanitarian assistance, *but if we want our voice to be heard we need to assert ourselves and focus on our unique status.* I see the role of the members as that of our voice, and I see the role of "national" to be the means to "turn up the volume" of our voice.

When we talk about "national," we are really talking in large part, about the board, which is elected by the membership. The rest of "national" is the staff that works at the direction of the board. Many times I have heard members talk about "national" as if it were a separate entity, instead of the coordinating structure of the entire organization of VFP. In order to maximize our potential as an **organization** I think we need to focus more on how we can better coordinate and promote the fantastic work that is being done by our members (whether it is done in the context of a chapter, a working group, or by an at-large member), instead of thinking in terms of "national" and chapters. There is a great deal of interdependence between the two, and I think it is important to remember that neither can be very effective without the other. It is a symbiotic relationship.

At our most recent board meeting we talked about VFP being an organization that "amplifies the voices of veterans in opposition to war and militarism." As I said before, I see my job as the president of the board to figure out how we as an organization can amplify your voices, and become a more influential and prominent force in opposing war and militarism.

Coordination. I believe that one of our greatest assets as an organization is that we are located in every part of the country. An action in one place can be effective, but the same action, coordinated and repeated in many locations can greatly increase its impact.

Media. We have recently hired a part-time media professional to handle press releases, media outreach, op-ed placement, and similar tasks, to better let the rest of the world know about the great work our membership is doing. We will be expanding our use

of social media, and building on our new website.

Membership. We are working on a membership plan to explore ways to pull in new members, helping members get new chapters chartered, and trying to target some areas where our presence is underrepresented. We will soon start doing some advertising/marketing via Facebook.

Outreach/Networking. I believe that it is very important for VFP to work in collaboration not only within our own organization but also with other peace and justice organizations. There is power in numbers and there are many groups that are working on the same issues. We need also to develop relationships with other constituencies, like organized labor, faith-based groups, and environmental groups.

Development. This is a critical function, but for the first time we now have a professional part-time Development Director on staff who is trained in all areas of development (fundraising) and is working closely with the Executive Director and the board to create a development plan.

Strategy. Our last board meeting saw significant progress in the creation of a strategic plan. This may be the most important work that we do as a board. The strategic plan will help us prioritize and plan, and will be instrumental in helping the Development Director succeed with grant applications and major donations.

I am often asked how I can tell if I am making a difference. Most of the time I can't. This kind of work isn't quantifiable—but you must know that the work we do as Veterans For Peace does make a difference. Our mission to abolish war is a daunting one, but I believe that VFP has only scratched the surface of our potential as a force for peace. Our collective voice is much louder than our individual voices—we are truly stronger together. I look forward to seeing many of you at the convention in Miami as we continue our work together.

Leah Bolger



Direct Costs of War and Occupation As of June 12, 2012

Total: \$1.341 Trillion

Iraq: \$804.3 Billion

Afghanistan: \$597.4 Billion

Source: costofwar.com/en

Executive Director's Message

Hello Sisters and Brothers of VFP,

For those I have not met yet, please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Mike Reid and I was selected as the new Executive Director this past February. I am a native of St. Louis (Go Cards!) and a proud member of Chapter 61 and served in the United States Air Force as an Aircraft Armament Systems Specialist from 1981-1985. I have a Masters Degree in Social Work and an extensive background in non-profit management, community organizing, and fund development.

As my feet hit the ground, I am both excited and humbled by the task at hand. Being selected as the new Executive Director of VFP will provide me the opportunity to do what I enjoy doing most, promoting and sharing my passion for Peace. I feel the immense weight of the position and eagerly look forward to the challenge.

Most of all I hope to unite and grow our VFP family. We all share amazing insight, and I hope together we will create a new and exciting chapter in the history of Veterans For Peace. I will need "all hands on deck" as I attempt this task.

Veterans For Peace derives its strength through its members. As the membership base grows, so grows the strength of VFP. Every chapter needs to understand this and commit to making membership growth the cornerstone of all chapter activities.

That being said, the VFP National Office has initiated an aggressive VFP Recruitment and Retention Campaign (VFP R&R).



The objective of this campaign is to provide ideas, suggestions and initiatives to help VFP chapters recruit and retain members. We will be offering reduced renewal rates for lapsed members and for new members recommended by current members. We will also be providing a VFP R&R toolkit to assist you in this campaign. Look for more information on our newly designed website and in your mailbox.

Every chapter is unique and serves a unique community of members. But our commitment to peace is the common element that all chapters share. This campaign recognizes the individuality of each chapter and tries to offer a broad menu of initiatives for chapters.

The Board of Directors, national staff, and membership committee are available to assist. But recruitment and retention must take place most effectively at chapter level. Chapters must commit to specific initiatives to recruit and retain members. The support network is in place. The rest is up to you. Together we can and will succeed. We must not accept continued decline or even stagnation in our membership base. We must continue to grow, or surely we will see our effectiveness and influence wane.

I look forward to meeting more of you at the convention in Miami and to working with you all...

Peace
Mike Reid



Doing the Right Thing

I first met Jerry Cashion during my sophomore year of college in the late summer of 1981. He was a big, 18 year old kid from southern middle Tennessee who was a football star and hometown hero. I was also from a small town in Tennessee. We were in college Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) together. Both of us were caught up in the Reagan-era military hysteria of the early 1980s. We were instant friends and we even shared a place for a couple of years. Our house was the center for the campus ROTC Ranger Club which teaches cadets guerilla tactics and so on. It was effectively our college fraternity.

After graduation Jerry went on to the Old Guard in Washington DC, and I went to the 82nd Airborne Division in Fort Bragg NC. Three weeks after arriving at Fort Bragg, my unit went to Panama for Jungle School. There, our battalion commander let us run wild and by the time word got back to Fort Bragg, he was relieved of his command.

In November 1985, I met the man who changed my life, Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Ronald F. Rucksack (not his real name), my new battalion commander. Looking back, it is entirely possible that he changed Jerry's life too. Soon, I grew to loathe the man and the Army. By the spring of 1986, I had decided to leave as soon as my enlistment was up. My unit re-located (permanent change of station "PCS") to Vicenza Italy in May of 1986.

In Italy, I served as the company executive officer ("XO"). I was the number two man in a company of paratroopers number-

ing about a hundred men. I was responsible for supply. The unit in Vicenza had no training area to speak of so we often traveled to Germany for "Field Training Exercises" or "FTX's." Usually, the company XO arrives a few days before and stays a few days after the FTX to coordinate administrative tasks and so on.

When a unit of several hundred paratroopers executes a peacetime jump into a drop zone, things can go wrong. On a particular jump into Germany, everything that could go wrong did go wrong. I was very late re-supplying my soldiers that night. Somewhere during the confusion, I ran into our medical platoon leader, Bruce Hazelton. He was visibly shaken. I asked what was wrong, and he told me that LTC Ronald F. Rucksack, had just physically assaulted him. Striking a soldier is a very serious offense in the Army. If Bruce reported it, and it was found to be true, LTC Rucksack's career would have ended.

How is this incident in Germany connected to "doing the right thing" or Jerry Cashion? That is a story 25 years in the making.

That night on the drop zone, I encouraged Bruce to report the alleged physical assault to our internal Judge Advocate General (JAG) officer. This would have started an investigation. Several days later, I ran into Bruce again. I asked if he planned to report the physical assault. He said "No."

At that point, I had a choice too, and I chose to do *nothing*. Was it the right choice? I could have reported my second-hand

Right Thing continued on page 19

Chapter Reports

Chapter 1, Portland, ME

Chapter 1 is proud to announce that we have changed our name to the Tom Sturtevant chapter, in honor of our beloved friend. Tom was a Korean veteran and the heart of Chapter 1. We marched in the Topsham/Brunswick Memorial Day parade with his daughter Susannah holding our new banner.

One of our chapter's members, Dud Hendrick, made his third trip back to Vietnam to participate in a Habitat For Humanity build with 29 other veterans. They built three brick houses. While there, Dud visited some of the 2-3 million victims of Agent Orange living there today.

Representatives of Chapter 1 met with Maine's Congressional Representative Chellie Pingree to ask her to co-sponsor H.R. 2634 to provide assistance for veterans and American-Vietnamese exposed to Agent Orange, to enhance the availability of medical care for descendants of veterans of the Vietnam era, and for other purposes such as cleaning up hot spots which continue to expose the people of Vietnam to dioxin. After we presented the facts, Representative Pingree immediately agreed to be a co-sponsor.

Clarence Smith

Chapter 9, Greater Boston, MA

On March 18, 2012, after months and months of planning and a two hour delay, the big moment finally came. The St. Patrick's Peace Parade: People's Parade for Peace, Equality, Jobs, Social and Economic Justice was finally stepping off to march in South Boston on a gorgeous day, a mile behind the "official" St. Patrick's Day Parade of the Allied War Veterans Council. The official marshal of the Peace Parade was



Chapter 1 with Greater Brunswick PeaceWorks at the start of the Memorial Day parade in Topsham, Maine.

National VFP President Leah Bolger.

This year, once again, the Allied War Veterans Council denied the Smedley D. Butler Brigade of Veterans For Peace request to join in the "official" Saint Patrick's Day Parade. Last year, the Allied War Veterans Council's reason for denying the VFP request was that they "did not want the word 'peace' associated with the word 'veteran'". This year, the "official" parade organizers did not give any reason for their decision; they simply referred us to the Hurley Supreme Court decision.

Last year was the first St. Patrick's Peace Parade in South Boston, and there were approximately 500 marchers. This year, that number at least tripled as there were 1,500 or 2,000 marchers. This year's Peace Parade included seven contingents and two marching bands. The contingents marching were the veterans; peace groups; religious/faith-based groups; labor; political groups; and an "Occupy Everywhere" contingent. Perhaps most poignant, the Peace Parade included a large gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) contingent; VFP reached out and invited GLBT groups before anyone else knowing that 18 years ago, GLBT groups were also denied the chance to march in the "official" parade by the Allied War Veterans Council. In spite of the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell", the Council still does not allow GLBT groups to march in its "official" parade. This year,

Join the Impact and MassEquality requested to join the "official" parade and were also denied.

The biggest challenge of the day was that the Peace Parade was supposed to step off at 2 p.m., but the actual step off time was approximately 4 p.m. The "official" parade had 130 groups marching (as opposed to 70 last year).



Smedley Butler Brigade St. Patrick's Peace Parade. (Photo by Pat Westwater-Jong)

Neither VFP nor the Boston Police Department had any indication that the "official" parade would be so much bigger this year (whereas the Peace Parade was quite clear all along that it might have 2,000 marchers this year); therefore, there was no way to anticipate the delay. Almost all of the Peace Parade marchers waited through the delay in the heat, an intrepid group! Those watching were largely appreciative of the message of peace; there were a minimum number of hecklers. Many worked very hard to make the day possible, but no one worked harder than Smedley member Tony Flaherty, who dreamed of a St. Patrick's Peace Parade nearly 20 years ago.

Lara Hoke

Chapter 14, Gainesville, FL

Every spring, the Civic Media Center holds what it calls its "SpringBoard" fundraiser. This year's SpringBoard was on March 30, and it was a rousing success, with abundant food, very popular raffle items and a solid silent auction.

As of last year, the Jack Penrod Committee joined the event with its own award presentation as part of the SpringBoard, honoring a local, young activist with the John A. Penrod "Brigadas" Award for Peace and Justice. The Penrod Committee grew out of the inspiration of Gainesville Veterans for Peace, the Alachua County Labor Party and United Faculty of Florida to honor the life of John "Jack" A. Penrod. Jack worked with the Congress of Industrial Organizations and helped organize the first faculty union at UF, United Faculty of Florida. He was a member of Veterans for Peace and a vocal opponent of the



Joe Courter presents Katie Walters with one of the two Jack A. Penrod "Brigadas" Award for Peace and Justice. (Photo by Jessica Newman)

Iraq War; he helped found the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, worked closely with the National Organization for Women and Gainesville Women's Liberation, and also dedicated time to the Alachua County Labor Party.

This year's two awardees both had CMC ties, Kimberly Hunter and Katie Walters, and each received a \$1,000 check along with a plaque honoring their work for social justice.

Katie, 26, first became involved in social justice work as a student through the UF Campus National Organization for Women and Gainesville Women's Liberation. She formerly worked as a coordinator at the CMC and currently is a committed organizer with the International Socialist Organization.

Kimberly, 25, is a dedicated organizer for national health care with the Alachua County Labor Party and a former volunteer with the CMC. As the co-founder of the Interfaith Alliance for Immigrant Justice, Hunter educates and connects local congregations with national immigrants' rights movements, like the Coalition of Immokalee Workers.

Bill Gilbert

Chapter 27 Twin Cities

Chapter 27 Twin Cities initiated the Free Bradley Manning Midwest tour by Courage to Resist. Emma Cape, organizer from Courage to Resist spoke to a group of 35 people in Minneapolis about the status of Bradley's legal case, as well as his morale

and the international efforts to secure his release. The support for Bradley is intense, and his case is being followed around the world. The stakes are high.

The chapter's "Peace Education Project" (formerly called the "School Project") continues to make headway in Twin Cities schools. Classroom visits by vets talking about their own experiences as well as alternatives to military service continue unabated. Counter-recruitment tabling at high school "career day" events, always heavily target by military recruiters, is on-

going. We have noticed that with cutbacks and the lowering of staff security, there are more obstacles to getting into schools. But persistent effort, including direct solicitation to teachers, these can be overcome.

On the March 18th, Tenth Anniversary of the US Invasion of Iraq, Chapter 27 vets joined a "Fast and Reflection on the Costs of the War in Iraq" near the Minnesota State Capitol. A bell was rung 11 times, in between two minute reflections, including: "Did we do all we could to prevent this tragedy?" and "Are we doing all we can to prevent the next unnecessary military disaster?"

Andy Berman

Chapter 41, Cape Cod, MA

In December, we began preparing for our 17th Annual Poetry for Peace Contest which culminated in April with an Awards Ceremony and Reading by this year's winners. We set a new record with over 800 poems submitted in age groups from kindergarten to adult. The April 28 event was a great success with 180 poets, parents, friends and teachers in attendance. Again we welcomed the chance to talk about the way to peace with 'regular folks' not just preach to the choir.

On March 17, members of the chapter joined with the Smedley Butler Brigade and other New England VFP Chapters to march in the St. Patrick's Day Peace Parade in South Boston (with other groups excluded from the 'official' parade). We joined with members of the Lucey family to march

for peace in memory of Jeffrey and other victims of the Hidden Wounds of War.

On Memorial Day we marched to our usual warm public welcome with other veterans and community groups and one of our winning poets read at the ceremony.

Our efforts to focus on PTSD, suicide in the military and other "combat stress injuries" have led us to work with the staff of our local congressman on legislation to prevent the redeployment of stress-injured troops. We plan to talk to IVAW's "Operation Recovery" about this idea as well.

This summer, we are planning to continue with this theme in our BIGGEST EVER presence at the main July 4th parade on the Cape and possibly with a public film festival featuring several outstanding 'Hidden Wounds' films.

Chapter 041 also continued to join local coalitions focused on non-violence and social justice, two of the key foundations of a peaceful society. These included the Occupy Cape Cod, Justice for Trayvon Martin and Close Pilgrim Nuclear Plant coalitions.

Duke Ellis

Chapter 87, Sacramento, CA

The Sacramento chapter recently hosted Jeff Paterson of Courage to Resist talking about the new book, "About Face," about GI resistance from the Vietnam War to Bradley Manning and WikiLeaks. The three dozen plus attendees were eager to hear Jeff talk about the case against Bradley Manning and the latest news about his situation.

Some of our members attended the second annual northern California Veterans For Peace Conference. Along with some wonderful programs, it was a great chance to meet VFPers from all over northern California.

We will be shifting focus in our weekly and monthly anti-war vigils to emphasize the need to support Bradley Manning and avoid war with Iran. And we continue to support BDS actions, Occupy, and other causes that are in accord with VFP's concerns.

John Reiger

Chapter 157 North Carolina Triangle

Our founding president, Wally Myers, passed the leadership torch after serving for four years since we were chartered in 2008. Air Force veteran Myers became known as a jack of all trades and master of most of them. Wally crafted the script and performed the role of Smedley Butler in "War



Wally Myers

Is a Racket” for our 2009 five-city “mountains to the coast” tour of “The Peace Mom & the Patriot” with Cindy Sheehan and Air Force Lt. Col. (Ret) Bob Bowman. Wally also wrote the script for “Saving the Soul of America,” a dramatic dialogue between Dwight D. Eisenhower, Thomas Jefferson, and Martin Luther King Jr, which opened the 3-day conference The Military Industrial Complex at 50, held in Charlottesville, VA last September. The play, which Myers directed (and performed the Jefferson role), is available in the book MIC at 50, edited by VFP associate member David Swanson. (See www.mic50.org for ordering info.) It is also available at our website, ncveteransforpeace.org, which Wally created and maintains. The book and website also feature associate member Mia Austin-Scoggins’ “The Extra Casualties of War” which Mia presented at the Charlottesville conference.

Before retiring as an elementary school teacher in Wake County, Wally advised his school’s student council to raise funds for orphans in Afghanistan. During his tenure as Chapter president, Wally also served ably as the chair of NC Peace Action, and was instrumental in building a strong, collaborative relationship between NCPA and VFP. The leadership Myers provides, as a teacher, writer, speaker, poet, performer, director, artist and webmaster leaves us with a legacy of inspiration as we strive for peace.

On April 10, Chapter members delivered criminal complaints against Condoleezza Rice to the Durham Sheriff and police chief prior to her speaking at Duke. The charges included crimes against the peace and

complicity in war crimes. We did not have tickets to get into the auditorium to perform a live “Rice Check,” but we did vigil outside and passed out Prosecute Rice cards to people entering the venue. CodePink and World Can’t Wait have great resources available for forming unwelcome parties when the war criminals come to visit, hawking their books or seeking academic respectability.

The Eisenhower Chapter’s current activities include participation in the planning for “Occupy Wall Street South,” working to make the DNC Convention event this September in Charlotte focus on peace and justice. We are also supporting Sam’s Ride for Peace. WW II Marine combat vet Sam Winstead is leading a 360 mile bicycle Ride for Peace from Raleigh to Washington DC April 29—May 5th.

John Heuer

Chapter 161, Iowa City, Iowa

Our young chapter continues to grow, with attendance of over twenty at each of our monthly meetings. Since December, some of our members have participated in Occupy activities in Des Moines and Iowa City. Members have spoken to community groups such as Methodist men, Sertoma, and Optimists, and visits to high school classrooms are anticipated before the end of the school year. In the past few months we’ve handed out about 1500 quarter-page fact sheets entitled “What Have You Done Today to Stop the Wars?” A VFP member spoke at a large Trayvon Martin rally in Iowa City on March 26th

In early March we held a fundraiser at a great local restaurant, Thai Flavors. They donated a portion of the day’s sales to our chapter, and we engaged patrons in “Prevent War with Iran” discussions and provided them with lobbying materials. On March 20 & 21st, in conjunction with Des Moines Chapter 163 and other groups such as American Friends Service Committee and Physicians for Social Responsibility, we sponsored a four-venue speaking tour by James Zogby, President of the Arab-American Institute. Four hundred folks listened and asked hard

questions as he talked about US/Iran relations in Des Moines, Cedar Falls, Cedar Rapids, and Iowa City.

Members visited the offices of Rep. Loeb sack and Senators Harkin and Grassley regarding Iran, delivering hundreds of postcards and letters from citizens urging diplomacy, not war. A face-to-face meeting with Senator Harkin is in the works, and a conference call with Sen. Grassley was held on May 9th. Why is it difficult to see that a war with Iran based on Israel’s supposed sense of insecurity would be utterly absurd and obscene?

June 8th was the 45th anniversary of Israel’s attack on the USS Liberty, which resulted in the death of 34 US servicemen. Chapter 161 held a remembrance observance on that day. We will be participating in Bradley Manning rallies, and are looking forward to a summer of high visibility in Eastern Iowa. Planning is underway for activities related to our cosponsorship of the “Windows & Mirrors” exhibit to be held at the Coralville Public Library in September, and work is proceeding on getting a new chapter chartered in Cedar Rapids.



Friends of the Golden Rule

The Golden Rule Project reports a great deal of progress lately and are moving forward with our restoration. The best news is that our shipwright has finished the last plank, the “Whiskey Plank” on the starboard side. See the latest photos on our website’s “Restoration Photo Gallery”.

Golden Rule continued on page 12



Golden Rule Project gets Nation Project Status

Golden Rule

continued from page 11

All of the planking has been completed, sanding of the hull is progressing, caulking is taking place. We will soon be applying a gleaming new coat of paint. The hull is intact and stronger than original. We are now planning the interior floor, and preparing to replace deck beams and new deck. It's an exciting time around the yard these days.

We have the gear taken from the original boat, and are taking inventory to update our Wish List on the website. Many thanks to the hard working volunteers from VFP Chapter 056 and others in the community.

We've received donations of sails, plywood, 1200 Bd Ft of Port Orford cedar and are working on closing up the envelope. We also just received a donation suitable to pay for our new Yanmar marine diesel package. We are ordering this engine now, and expecting delivery in April. We thank an anon vet from Ohio who wishes other vets would also contribute to the Golden Rule Project.

Camp Family Foundation Support - We recently received a grant from the family of Katherine Camp and we thank Nelson Camp & family for their support.

Please visit our website at: <http://www.vfpgoldenruleproject.org>, and see the progress we have made recently.

On January 8th, 2012, the team celebrated the completion of the hull repairs. The final plank, the "Whiskey Plank" was cut and fastened solid. All of our friends and supporters were invited for a celebration party.

The biggest news is that VFP National has elevated our project to "National Project" status at it's Jan 28-29 Board of Directors' meeting in San Francisco. Mike Ferner and Elliott Adams travelled to Humboldt to present the "National Project" status document to the project members.

We are now seeking letters of endorsement, or resolutions in support of this project from all the chapters in VFP.

We are anticipating sailing operations in Humboldt Bay, CA in the summer of 2012. We are still on track to visit San Francisco Bay during the summer of 2013. We intend to be present in San Francisco Bay every day during the America's Cup Yacht Races.

Fredy Champagne, VFP Golden Rule Project, VFP Chapter 022, Garberville, CA

Phone 707.599.5378 <http://www.vfp-goldenruleproject.org>



UK Veterans Launch VFP Chapter

The first chapter of Veterans For Peace in the United Kingdom is now a reality. On a dreary "Easter Monday" afternoon in a working class section of London, England, veterans, allies, friends, and families gathered for the inaugural event of Veterans For Peace UK.

The Giuseppe Conlon Catholic Worker House hosted the event in the sanctuary of an old church draped with banners proclaiming peace and justice. British and Scottish veterans, young and old, fresh from their first official meeting as a VFP chapter, testified in word and song that they will go to war no more.

Ben Griffin, a former self-described "gung-ho" SAS soldier who deployed to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but then refused to deploy again, took the lead in pulling together a diverse group of veterans. He and several of the veterans have already been active for months, participating in Occupy London, and demonstrating solidarity with Wikileaks founder Julian Assange and alleged Wikileaks whistleblower, PFC Bradley Manning.

Barry Ladendorf, president of the VFP chapter in San Diego, California, flew a very long way to be present on this historic occasion. When Barry was in London last year, he had attended a public meeting where he heard Ben Griffin speak about countering the influence of the military in British schools. Barry told Ben, "Hey, you ought to think about forming a Veterans For Peace chapter." The seed was planted.

A large good-looking banner reading "Veterans For Peace UK, Established 2012" graced the altar of the church. Decorated with the VFP dove-on-helmet logo, the banner was sent by Gene Marx, VFP National Membership Coordinator, and a member of the Bellingham, Washington chapter. Gene had been maintaining regular communication with Ben leading up to the London launch. Ben and other veterans repeatedly said how much it meant to them to receive so much support and guidance

from VFP members in the U.S.

Several of the founding members, including Ben Griffin and Michael Lyons, have resisted illegal wars and occupations while in the military.

"I was 18 years old when I joined the Navy," said Michael Lyons. "It was economic conscription. I was told I could give medical aid. I spent about five years in Diego Garcia in the middle of the Indian Ocean. I started questioning the government, wondering, are we really the good guys? I learned Diego Garcia history and decided that I'm the bad guy here, supporting B-52 bombings and torture. I'm part of this."

"I was told to go to Afghanistan," continued Lyons. "I didn't buy the lies. Wikileaks came out and I knew that I couldn't be part of that." Lyons applied for Conscientious Objector status but was sentenced to prison for seven months.

"Military prison was tough," said Lyons. "I got support from Ben, Ciaron, my family, and strangers who sent my wife money and wrote to me every day."

At its first official chapter meeting, the UK veterans agreed to pursue three priorities; Nonviolent resistance to war; supporting war resisters, and countering militarism in society, including in schools and on Armistice Day.

You can check out their website and say hello at www.veteransforpeace.org.uk

Helen Jaccard and Gerry Condon



Michael Lyons VFP UK.

Working Group Reports

Palestine Working Group

It is difficult for Americans to know and understand the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the role our government plays. Our national government is radically pro-Israel. Our mainstream news media take most of their cues on US foreign policy from the White House and are the most pro-Israeli body of press in the world. Even the Israeli press is more critical of the Israeli government than American reporters and news organizations.

So our first responsibility is education -- facilitating access to alternative sources of more independent and objective information for our board members, chapters, and members.

First, we must provide better information about the history and realities of Israeli occupation. Second, information about the duplicitous role that succeeding US Administrations have played for decades – in violation of international and domestic law – in supporting Israel. Third, the dangerous and even subversive role that Israel's lobbies have played in US politics and policy.

Fourth, detailed information on the numerous domestic and international laws that are broken with each dollar of US military aid sent to Israel. And fifth, the propaganda and lies which are disseminated by both Israel and the US to cover up the criminality of their enterprise and win the acquiescence of the US public which is footing the bill for 3 to 4 billion dollars of military aid each year while roads, schools, and infrastructure crumble here in the US.

One of the most insidious and pervasive elements of pro-Israeli propaganda is the false equation of responsibility for the violence. We recognize the occupation as the source of violence and acknowledge the difference between the violence of occupation and the violence of resistance. We understand that as the occupying power Israel is responsible for the violence and could end it simply by ending the occupation.

Our second responsibility is to make members, chapters, and board members aware of things that we can do to help hold the US government accountable for its responsibility in prolonging the conflict and to help VFP become a force for positive change in the Middle East.

First, as citizens of the nation that has subsidized the illegal occupation of Palestine for decades and which has used its veto power in the United Nations Security Council to protect Israel from international law and sanctions, American citizens have a role to play in bringing this long ordeal to an end. We will design and implement campaigns to help VFP play a major role toward that end.

Second, we will help VFP members and chapters learn about things they can do to help the growing international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Campaign (or BDS) and support BDS efforts in their communities.

We plan to make our webpage within the VFP website into a resource for important educational and historical materials, analysis, campaigns they can participate in and other resources. Many of our members have visited Palestine and can connect VFP members with groups going to Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel.

It is important for our members to understand that for decades the Israeli government has used the so-called 'Peace Process' as a ruse to indefinitely postpone a final peace agreement while, every year, methodically confiscating more Palestinian land and water resources, demolishing more Palestinian homes, building and ex-

PTSD Working Group

As both (or how many wars do we really have?) our wars are winding down, where does Veterans for Peace go from here? After losing a good friend (Marine Viet Nam veteran) a dozen years ago, I became interested in PTSD, and the associated maladies, TBI (traumatic brain injury) and Suicide. I have been collecting some resources that can be used between counseling sessions and posted them on the working group page. Also I have read several books on the subject. Seems to me that support groups may be a way chapters or individuals can help with this big problem. The biggest problem is the reluctance for the affected troops to come forward and ask for help. A publicity campaign to help reduce the stigma might be a great help. The Veterans' Administration is trying to help, but people are slipping through the cracks. Part of the problem is distrust of the VA. Thus there is room for VFP, the faith community and others interested in helping with this problem.

After 58,000 deaths on the battlefield in Viet Nam, ending around 1974, the number of suicides by 1984 were 60,000 - and now number 120,000 for Viet Nam veterans. The suicide rate of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans will probably be similar. It's a shame that these losses are taking place here - after their return from the war zone - where help should be available. I'd urge all chapters to have a program on suicide prevention. When you suspect someone might be suicidal you must ask them if they are. You are not pushing them into suicide, but away - you're showing them that you care.

If you don't see me at the Convention, call me and I'll be glad to talk with you about PTSD.

Dave Dittmore, skype ddittmore, c: 253-590-8501, ddittmore@aol.com

panding more illegal Jewish settlements and building Jewish-only roads that cut the West Bank into isolated Bantustans and in doing so Israel has made a viable Palestinian state in the West Bank a near impossibility.

Many Palestinians are looking therefore to other models of resolution including a single secular and democratic state, and our group sponsored a resolution at last year's convention that divorced Veterans for Peace from its commitment to a Two-State Solution that may no longer be possible. We felt that neither VFP nor the US government should try to tell Palestinians what options they should consider in their pursuit of justice. We chose not to support either a one-state or two-state solution and not to contribute to an often-hostile debate that threatens to divide a Palestine solidarity community that cannot afford to be divided.

At the upcoming convention in Miami our co-Chair, Dr. Jack Dresser, will present a workshop entitled 'The Hidden History of Occupation from 1947 to 2012: What Americans Need to Know about the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict.' Former Board Member Ken Meyer, who was a passenger on the US Boat to Gaza and who will have just returned from spending two weeks or more in Gaza, will be joining Dr. Dresser to report on his experiences there.

I will be presenting a workshop entitled 'The Pathology of Masacre: The Corrosive and Deadly effects of Racism in Civil and Military Institutions.' In the section addressing anti-Arab racism in US news coverage I will be using coverage of the Palestinian-

Palestine Working Group continued on page 19

Marv Davidov: My Friend, My Inspiration

Marv Davidov, the man the noted historian, Howard Zinn, called “the apostle of nonviolent direct action,” died on January 14 at 80 years of age. The litany of Davidov’s life as a devoted advocate matches the turbulent history of the peace, justice, labor, and environmental movements over the last six decades. He was a Freedom Rider and protester on the Peoples March on Washington, a hunger striker in several Southern jails, a union organizer, a protector of family farms and Native American rights, an anti-war activist, and a riveting speaker and teacher.

Best known for founding the Honeywell Project in 1968, a worldwide movement to stop the production of indiscriminate weapons of war, Marv also founded the Minnesota chapter of the War Resisters League and helped found the Minnesota Campaign to Ban Land Mines, which was part of the international organization that was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize.

With Marv’s life of dedication and unflagging work across the country, it would be hard to find a famous peace and justice worker who didn’t know Marv. He was admired and embraced by the likes of Phil Berrigan, Fr. Daniel Berrigan, Dave Dellinger, and Noam Chomsky, to name a few. In fact, the Justice Studies Association chose Marv for its 2007 Noam Chomsky Award. To honor Marv and his contributions, the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul and the Minnesota House of Representatives proclaimed March 10 as Marv Davidov Day.

Soon after he died, I was in Marv’s room at a local nursing home helping his closest friend, Barbara Mishler, and my wife, Cynthia, with his possessions. We stepped out of the room when the man from the Cremation Society arrived so he could do his job. A few minutes later, he told us he would now bring out Marv’s body. He slowly wheeled the blanket-draped gurney out of the room and paused where the three of us had lined up to offer our deep respect and love for this giant of the peace and justice community. We said our last goodbyes and stood there for a few moments more, almost at attention, as one would do when the body of a dignitary or national hero passes for military review.

Marv and I were both in the service, and I thought of saluting but dismissed the idea even though it always struck me that the story I heard Marv tell repeatedly was about the incident while in the Army that launched his activist vocation. He refused to participate in the brutal beating of another soldier and that act of courage resulted in his own beating. If it wasn’t his Greek fisherman’s cap that covered his head, it was his faded Veterans for Peace hat, and

as a fellow member of the organization, I wanted to pay tribute to his bravery.

Although acquaintances for two decades, Marv and I became good friends after he agreed to address the students in a class I co-taught in 2007 about Vietnam and the 60s. Wearing his Honeywell Project T-shirt (as did I), his bushy white hair exploded from under his Vets for Peace cap. “Mine was a breach birth,” he began. “I came out feet first kicking and then screaming and I’ve been doing it ever since.” Then he recounted his Army story, fresh as if it was the first time, complete with his characteristic drawn-out vowels and no-holds-barred-expletives. He finished an hour and a half later only pausing occasionally to breathe. He so transfixed the students that they ranked his presentation as the highlight of the course.

On that Saturday morning with Marv, January 14, Cynthia and I joined Barbara and two other close friends of Marv at his bedside as he lay dying. His breathing was somewhat labored and, for a time, he seemed to try to speak to Barbara who sat close to him on his bed.

Earlier, Barbara described some of the last words Marv spoke the night before he died. “I said to him, ‘Marv, what should I do with the rest of my life?’ He thought for a long, long time; so long that I thought he forgot the question. Finally, he turned to me and said: ‘You must locate your deepest private feelings—philosophical, religious and spiritual—and then decide to live out these beliefs in a commensurate way, in public, as much as possible without compromise.’” It’s no surprise I loved and admired him immensely.

As we gathered close around Marv, Cynthia sang him the Beatles’ lullaby, “Goodnight”. He reached up to touch Barbara and she held his hand gently. He relaxed and his breathing grew softer. At about 1:15 p.m., he turned his face and gaze towards the ceiling as if he recognized something (or someone), then shut his eyes and died peacefully moments later.

Over the last months of his life, we started a little ritual when I visited him. I always gave him a little kiss on the top of his bald head as he laid in his bed and we both said, “I love you.” Just before the tall man in the long black-leather coat took Marv for his last trip, I completed my role in our ritual one last time.

Michael Orange



About the Author:

Michael Orange, a member of VFP Chapter 27 since 1991, served as a Marine in Vietnam and experienced combat in numerous search-and-destroy missions and patrols during his one-year tour of duty. Afterwards, he returned to his former university campus, Kent State, in May 1970, just before Ohio National Guardsmen shot thirteen of his fellow students, killing four. In 2001, he published a memoir of his service, “Fire in the Hole: A Mortarman in Vietnam.” Michael teaches a class on the history of the Vietnam War at venues including the University of Minnesota’s Compleat Scholar Program.



P O E T R Y

Artifacts

The world is full of shipping clerks
who have read the Harvard Classics.

Charles Bukowski

File this between the supply sergeant
who was teaching himself New Persian
and the MP who spent her leave
walking the Camino de Santiago across Spain,
earning herself into the Pilgrim's Mass.

Simmons got his chance
after a friendly fire incident
which took the colonel's nerve
and reduced our mission
to the padding of flight hours.

With the Yossarian indirective
to avoid engagements
yet burn a full bag of gas,
our guy began to narrate
the ruins passing under us.

He knew his Babylon
from a history degree in Illinois.
If a route recon was particularly quiet
we'd breeze through the target deck
then rough out a report

and divert to a spot on the map
marked Site of Antiquity.
"They were sure a sun god
sent down the rule of law.
Justice meant the opposite of night."

Buzzing a lost city
to snap souvenirs with the Army's camera;
now a survey of archeology
sits in my cigar box
with the ribbons and coins and knives.

Paul Wasserman / pwtikrit@gmail.com

Paths of Glory

First the thunderheads of stormy statesmen,
Their voices sparking terror to our fear,
Then lofty slogans: Honor! Country! Valor!
From public servants, skillfully sincere.

What heart so dead to patriotic duty
As not to be aroused by these fierce charms?
The Masters in their grace have shared their vision,
And common folk must heed their call to arms.

And so we go, because our country says so,
Because it is a risk we have to take.
Nobody says we bleed for others' profit,
Or tells us that we die for a mistake.

Now killing fields grow green as earth grows crimson,
And victims fall by thousands (but alone).
The Masters praise the sacrifice (of others):
The world we die for is the world they own.

Phillip Appleman

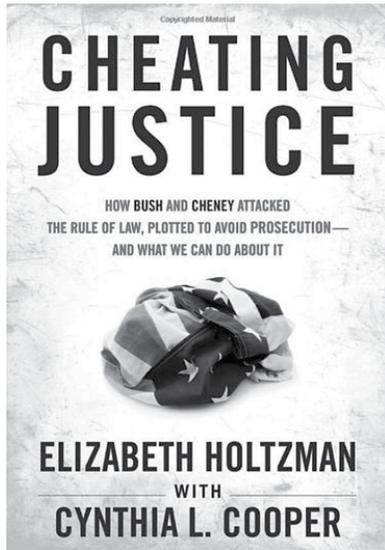
Vietnam

"Woman, what's your name?" "I don't know."
"How old are you? Where are you from?" "I don't know."
"Why did you dig that burrow?" "I don't know."
"How long have you been hiding?" "I don't know."
"Why did you bite my finger?" "I don't know."
"Don't you know that we won't hurt you?" "I don't know."
"Whose side are you on?" "I don't know."
"This is war, you've got to choose." "I don't know."
"Does your village still exist?" "I don't know."
"Are those your children?" "Yes."

Wisława Szymborska 1923-2012 (RIP)

BOOK REVIEWS

Two books on the unlamented administration of George W. Bush



Cheating Justice: How Bush and Cheney Attacked The Rule of Law and Plotted to Avoid Prosecution And What We Can Do About It

by Elizabeth Holtzman with Cynthia L. Cooper.

Beacon Press, www.beacon.org
208 pages hardback.

Of all of the subjects about which I have longed for books to be written, how to bring to justice the war criminals of the George W. Bush administration tops my list.

More than my personal antipathy to the person I think by all odds was the worst president in our history, this book is needed to try to restore faith in our fading, battered American democracy. (And please don't confuse our American democracy with The American Dream, the apotheosis of Darwinian capitalism if you just think about it. Another book on another topic for another Beacon author or two for sure.)

Based on her track record as a highly effective member of the House Judiciary Committee that brought down the Watergate House of Nixon, the always-smirking W had better watch out for Ms. Holtzman and Ms. Cooper.

This book proves Ms. Holtzman in particular is as learned in the law as she is thorough; as in command of real-world strategies and tactics as others are only in nebulous rhetorical conjecture, and as resolute as she is patriotic.

Assuming that most readers of this

journal well remember the transgressions of Mr. Bush, Vice President Cheney, Sec. of State Rice, Sec. of Defense Rumsfeld, mastermind Karl Rove and all of the other Bush era political misanthropes, Ms. Holtzman nevertheless recounts them all for the benefit of those who forgot or just weren't paying attention during the eight dark years of the reign of King George.

Do memories come flooding back when you read words and terms from those cursed times such as weapons of mass destruction, torture, waterboarding, Abu Ghraib, broken treaty obligations, the International Criminal Court, not to mention wiretapping and eavesdropping, just to name a few?

Make no mistake, Ms. Holtzman and Ms. Cooper leave no stone unturned, no Bush unexamined.

Chapter after chapter, this book is itself an indictment and it reaches its high point with its final challenging chapter to you and to me: "What To Do: The Time Is Now."

So as not to spoil a good read, I will let you pick it up from there and if you ultimately share my assessment of the importance and timely utility of this book, by all means call it to the attention of Pres. Obama, his cabinet, your Congresspeople and your media.

Shout out the good news: We haven't forgotten about W and his criminal regime and we're coming to get them! ---

Will Shapira

VFP Chapter 27, Twin Cities



Blood on Their Hands. How Callous Conservatives Capitalize on Clueless Constituents

by Forrest P. Redd
University Press of America
222 pages paperback

The indictment of the Bush Administration and of many in the Republican Party is presented in this white-hot, angry, engaging book by Forrest Redd. Mr. Redd, an Army veteran who served in Operation Desert Storm and Operation Joint Guard (the NATO-led multinational peacekeeping force in Bosnia and Herzegovina) and a member of Veterans for Peace, here deplores the loss of an American common purpose in the militarized, atomized, bellicose 21st century America. He describes his book

as a "letter to America," one written by a disappointed patriot, "...a plea to the nation to come together to practice common sense and strive for enlightenment." This is a conservative book in the sense that the author wishes to preserve what was and is fine about America.

Mr. Redd knows exactly when the book took inchoate form—November 3, 2004, the day George W. Bush was re-elected President. Mr. Bush is the villain of the piece, and Mr. Redd excoriates the former President in a fiery and sometimes funny chapter titled "A Four letter Word Which Starts with B." Redd sometimes get a bit overexcited and claims to get inside Bush's head and attributes ignoble motives to Bush when descriptions of the outcome of events whatever the motives behind them would have been sufficiently damning. He chronicles with economy and grace the young Bush's business failures made good by wealthy family friends, his becoming wealthy through some political machinations, and his political career in Texas as the beneficiary of republican party regulars and influential family friends.

Redd is quite good on the Bush-led attempt to dismantle the American welfare state (such as it is) and the meager social safety net that seems lately always under threat. He is incisive on Bush as so-called war president and makes on page 141 the case for Bush as war criminal. There is a deep sense of history, almost sacred history in the author's respect for American institutions. However, he is very critical of such institutions as the American media and the Democratic Party, and especially critical of the American electorate for acceding to the Bush Administration's radical agenda. He also sheds light on the role of the religious right in facilitating the implementation of the agenda in a funny and enlightening chapter titled "The Religious Right and the Speed of Light." He summons here a bit of quantum physics and biblical exegesis to good effect.

In the moving epilogue, Mr. Redd elaborates a kind of multilateral, world-engaging American conservatism that the Bush revolution overturned. Mr. Redd emerges through these pages as a kind and honest man who has written a book that deserves a wide readership.

Chuck Rossi





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Right Thing Continued from page 8

knowledge to the JAG officer myself. We often hear in the news of someone reporting something they have heard and it starts an investigation that leads to a conviction. Maybe the JAG officer could have gotten Bruce to talk.

I was short-timer. Besides, I only heard about the alleged assault from the alleged victim. Bruce would have to live under the tyranny of LTC Rucksack, not me.

Could I have misunderstood Bruce? It is possible, but not likely, because I asked him about it twice. It would be unlikely that the incident happened without eyewitnesses. Would other eyewitnesses tell the truth if the JAG officer opened an investigation? Was Bruce afraid that no witnesses would back him up? Or, was Bruce's mind-set similar to that of an abused wife, thinking he brought the alleged assault upon himself? I do not know if Bruce told any other person in our unit. I would be surprised if he didn't tell his wife.

I left the Army in July 1987. President Reagan decided that there were too many lieutenants in the Army and offered those of us who had met certain criteria an early-out. I jumped at the chance. We went to Jerry's parent's farm in Tennessee for a big party around Thanksgiving 1987. That was the last time I saw Jerry for years. He stayed in the Army and went up through the ranks. I would talk with him on the phone or exchange an occasional email.

Jerry along with several of my Army buddies deployed for the first Gulf War in the fall of 1990. I opposed that war and was glad to be on the outside looking in. Before that war, the Army promoted LTC Rucksack to full Colonel and gave him command of a brigade in the 82nd Airborne Division. It is one of the most elite commands an infantry Colonel can have.

Fast forward to March 16th 2012 (there is a connection here, I promise). Jerry emailed a bunch of his old college buddies with this message:

"Brothers,

I have been off the net for a while and I apologize for that up front...in May (2011) I was dealing with a lot of abdominal pain but was unsure what exactly it was. A long summer of continued gastro issues and really bad infections resulted in about 75 pounds lost weight and a November diagnosis of stage-4 pancreatic cancer. I have been on chemo since December. Good news this past week is that the tumors are responding to a newer round of chemo and beginning to shrink. The tumors can't be

removed surgically, so hopefully the chemo can manage it. For now I am back at work full time with the exception of the chemo days and keeping up the fight."

Even though we had not heard much from Jerry in the last 25 years, you can imagine the shock. The "full time" work he described in his email was his teaching job at the Army War College as a full Colonel. Three of us in the Nashville area went to Jerry's home in Carlisle Pennsylvania as soon as we could.

What I learned during this short visit disturbed me.

Jerry was 6 feet tall and weighed only 155 pounds. He weighed more than that when we graduated from Ranger school! Around 2002, he had a non-cancerous growth cut off his lymph nodes. He said that his cancers were not supposed to spread to the thigh, but he had a tumor there too. He is an only child and neither his mother nor father has cancer.

During the March 2012 visit Jerry told me something that made me question my "non-decision" in Germany 25 years earlier.

For years, I had heard that an Army unit blew up "something" during the first Gulf War that spread dangerous carcinogens to everybody downwind. Several years later after Gary, another ROTC buddy, got out of the Army, he received a letter saying that his unit was downwind and he has an increased risk of cancer. I am sure Jerry received the same letter. Who knows how many people received this letter?

Jerry told me that Colonel Rucksack was the one who ordered the demolition. According to Jerry's account, Rucksack did not know what was inside.

You can imagine what went racing through my mind. What if I had reported what I heard on that drop zone? I would have likely ended Rucksack's career. If another Colonel had been in charge during Desert Storm, would he have blown up that toxic dump? After all, that is what paratroopers do, blow stuff up. They destroy stuff: marriages, the enemy, themselves, it does not matter. They obliterate everything they come in contact with.

I can't stop asking myself the question, "what if I had reported that alleged assault?" Bruce may have resented me going behind his back. He may have told the JAG that I misunderstood. But then again, maybe he would have said Rucksack assaulted him thus starting the wheels of military justice rolling.

Between Jerry and me, we knew at least two officers whose careers were ruined be-

cause Rucksack had given them bad Officer Efficiency Reports (OER). I quit the Army because of Rucksack. I hated him, but I have never looked back with regret at leaving the Army. I became a pacifist 15 years after I left. Effectively, Rucksack was the start of me changing my life for the better.

As contrary as it may seem, my love of all sentient beings sprang from a visceral hatred of Ronald F. Rucksack. I can thank him for that.

But as I looked at Jerry's decaying body, I could not help but feel partially responsible. We all ask ourselves "what if" questions from time to time. What if Gary gets cancer too? Who else on that battlefield that day has cancer? Was Rucksack held responsible by the Army? I doubt it since he was later promoted to General. Has the Army covered this up?

Is cancer the price Jerry must pay for participation in the evils of war? Will Gary pay a similar price? In the words of Charlie Sheen in an episode of "Two and a Half Men," "Karma is a fickle bitch my friend." I have not been able to find Bruce, but if I find him, I will ask him about the "what ifs."

Jerry was so weak that during our visit he got pneumonia. He had been vaccinated, but that did not stop it.

I know we can't change the past, and we can't live in it. As a Taoist, I know we can only live in the moment, the eternal now. What I can do is do the right thing... now; and the right thing is getting this message out there. Tell my story; tell Jerry's story. Maybe someday you or I will be confronted with a situation, a "decision point" if you will. Maybe we will choose to do the right thing.

Joey King



Palestine Working Group Continued from page 13

Israeli conflict for examples of the numerous ways that news organizations give the lives of some people a much lesser value than the lives of others.

We also plan to have a caucus where we'll be talking about how VFP members can get plugged into BDS efforts and chapters can help expose how AIPAC money is influencing and compromising their local Representatives.

We hope to be meeting and working with many VFPers who share our concerns.

Eduardo Cohen, Chair



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