



Exposing the True Costs of War and Militarism Since 1985

While Promoting a Sustainable and Peaceful World

# VETERANS FOR PEACE

Organized locally. Recognized internationally.

VFP National Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2025

NATIONAL STATEMENT RELEASED NOVEMBER 21, 2025

## Veterans For Peace Supports “Don’t Give Up the Ship”!

VETERANS FOR PEACE supports the members of Congress who produced the *Don’t Give Up the Ship* video to affirm and make clear the right and responsibility of all military servicemembers to refuse illegal orders. We are appalled at the president of the United States’ reaction, calling their statement of fact seditious and punishable by the death penalty. We call on all veterans to stand with these members of Congress and amplify their message so that Airmen, Marines, Seamen, and Army troops know that if they ever face the difficult challenge of refusing an illegal order, they are carrying out their oath to defend the Constitution by following the law. It is difficult for servicemembers to recognize when they have received an illegal order. The following resources can help:

- **GI Rights Hotline** 877-447-4487 | [girightshotline.org/](http://girightshotline.org/)
- **Center on Conscience and War** [centeronconscience.org/](http://centeronconscience.org/)
- **Military Law Task Force** 619-463-2369 | [nlgmtf.org/](http://nlgmtf.org/)
- **Quaker House** 910-323-3912 | [quakerhouse.org/](http://quakerhouse.org/)
- **Do Not Turn On Us** [linktr.ee/donotturonus](http://linktr.ee/donotturonus)



The need to remind servicemembers of their right and duty to refuse illegal orders arises from actions already taken by the Trump Administration. Supporting genocide is always illegal. Legal experts widely consider the airstrikes off the coast of Venezuela to be illegal under international and U.S. law, and cities across the nation are fearful and engaged in legal disputes with the administration over the deployment of the military to their communities.

Veterans For Peace calls on all service members to remember their duty to the Constitution, the nation, their communities, and their conscience. When you refuse orders to participate in illegal wars and war crimes, or unconstitutional deployments in the U.S., Veterans For Peace—along with the majority of Americans—will support you.



Left: Veterans brought the “duty to disobey” message to the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey this fall. Right: Veterans For Peace and allies staged a 40-day Fast for Gaza in New York City this summer, in resistance to Israel’s genocidal campaign in Gaza.

# Responding to the War at Home

*“The Nuremburg Principles established individual responsibility under international law. We in VFP take those principles seriously.”*

WE LIVE IN THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY TIME, when a “bone spur” president who avoided military service and a former Fox News anchor call together military honchos to talk to them about war—bragging how it leads to peace and the world power of the United States, while renaming the Department of Defense the Department of War. Of course, we in Veterans For Peace have always known the real purpose of the Defense Department. Now it is explicit.

And today they want to send military troops into our own cities, purportedly to decrease crime, but really to stem the rebellion against the cruelty of ICE operations: kidnapping of people, tearing apart of families, deportation and detention of thousands with no due process. They want to police our cities to counter the “enemy within”—that is, anyone who dares to disagree and push back on this unlawful administration’s illegal and immoral policies and actions.

The declarations made by this executive (who would be king), his cabinet, and congressional cohort as a show of power appear clownish, and upend the notion of gravitas befitting true leaders. On September 30, 2025, Hegseth pranced around a stage playing to the cameras while lecturing generals and admirals about returning to the highest male standards for military fitness, combat positions, and aggressive war-fighting mentality. In case any of us harbor delusions about the intent of these clowns, remember: Mr. Hegseth sports a tattoo with *Deus Vult* (God’s will) imagery and language derived from the First Crusade and now used by far-right, white Christian nationalist groups to promote racist, xenophobic, anti-Islamic attitudes and revive the warrior ethos.

Today we have in Washington, D.C., an administration

Susan Schnall  
National Board President



that speaks of using “dangerous cities” as training grounds for the U.S. military. The president signed an executive order designating Antifa (a loose-knit, horizontal movement/identity) a “domestic terrorist organization” and then issued a National Security Presidential Memorandum to “counter domestic terrorism and organized political violence” (while ICE is the entity that most closely fits this description). They are painting all of us—anyone who is “anti-capitalist,” or who opposes fascism and reject far-right ideologies, white supremacy, racism, authoritarianism, homophobia, and xenophobia—as “Antifa.”

How do we in VFP respond to this war on us? We are an organization of veterans who once vowed an oath to defend the constitution. Many of us have been to war; participated in its destruction, devastation, and death, and know well its impact on all living things. As our statement of purpose reads, we recognize our greater responsibility to serve the cause of world peace. We remember the Nuremburg Trials following World War II and those principles that hold military personnel accountable for immoral acts committed during war time and the following of “illegal orders.” The Nuremburg Principles established individual responsibility under international law. We in VFP take those principles seriously.

This newsletter is full of examples of the courageous and powerful activism of Veterans For Peace, as we continue the struggle, alongside so many, for peace and social justice at home and abroad. Thank you for all you have done, and continue to do, to effect positive change. Thank you for marching with us to a different drummer; for supporting and belonging to Veterans For Peace.

THIS POEM, read by Tucson VFP-013 member Hassan Clement at our 2025 national convention, captured its essence. (See page 6 for a recap.)

## VFP

Soldiers

Once  
Dead and disconnected  
Now  
Living Transformed  
Committed  
To Peace and Reconciliation  
Young old different  
Colors sizes styles and means  
One Heart  
A tapestry  
Veterans For Peace  
Las Vegas Nevada Conference  
July 24-27 2025

Breaking Our broken hearts more and more.  
We Hear, We See, and We Feel,  
the horrors, outrages and motivations,  
explained by the victims.  
We re-live, commit to memory, assimilate and  
share trauma.

We Hold each other,  
in Love, Respect, Joy and Peace.  
We find Our way,  
to soar,  
from the depths of despair  
to shared solutions.  
Over and over and over  
again again again...

WE KNOW!  
"Injustice any where  
is a threat to  
Justice every where"  
WE KNOW!

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A tapestry  
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Soldiers  
Heal&Resist  
LovePeace

—clement2025



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## VFP NEWSLETTER

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Please contact us for deadlines  
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chapters, projects, working groups,  
caucuses and action committees.

PLEASE DO NOT add us to your  
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## VFP POET LAUREATE

Jennifer Pacanowski  
jennywarriorpoet.com



# We Continue to Oppose War and Serve and Defend Our Communities and the Planet

I HOPE THIS NEWSLETTER finds you well during these challenging times and that you draw inspiration from the activities and actions of our incredible members and chapters featured here.

Veterans For Peace was established to oppose wars and to work toward transforming U.S. foreign policy away from violence and threats of violence as its primary tool to engage the world toward harmony between nations. The U.S. government (both Republicans and Democrats) continues to endorse violent policies that devastate lives, tear apart families, and escalate tensions that can easily lead to war. When it comes to war and the U.S. lack of peaceful diplomacy abroad, there is little difference between the two parties. However, here at home, existing divisions have grown so deep that they threaten to fracture our nation further, as the divide widens. We are facing the greatest threat to democracy, freedom, and our personal liberties that we have seen in our lifetime. Both domestically and internationally, we have a president who knows no limits, shows no shame, dismisses climate change as a hoax, has supported genocide in Palestine, and uses racism, xenophobia, and misogyny as organizing tools of division to ensure support from his base. He continuously seeks to enrich himself and his family while attempting to suppress all of us under his thumb.

As we always do, Veterans For Peace has risen to the moment. We have unofficially launched a Veterans Against Genocide and Repression campaign to stop the U.S.-supported genocide and attacks on Palestinians by Israel, and to face down the growing authoritarianism here at home. Since I last wrote to you, VFP members have taken part in a Gaza Fast, and members Robert Suberi and Phil Tottenham have courageously joined two different Gaza Flotillas.

On June 13, the day before Trump's authoritarian birthday military parade, members of Veterans For Peace partnered with About Face: Veterans Against War to hold a press conference in front of the Supreme Court and stage a sit-in on the Capitol steps to demand Military Off Our Streets and Benefits Not Bullshit. The Capitol Police arrested sixty of us, and we made headlines worldwide as veterans speaking out against this administration's policies. The Climate Crisis and Militarism Project completed the militarism and No Military Air Shows (NoMAS) tours. Veterans For Peace has called for no war

on Venezuela, the end of genocide in Sudan, condemned Israel's blatant violations of the Gaza ceasefire, and issued a statement

supporting the *"Don't Give Up the Ship"* video made by six Congressional members reminding military service members of their responsibility to refuse illegal orders. Ironically, the same day the video was released, I was on Capitol Hill with 40 other veterans in an ACLU delegation speaking with members of Congress about the politicization of the military, the dangers of using it in our communities, and the need to hold the administration accountable for its actions in the Caribbean and potential direct attacks on Venezuela.

On November 11, Veterans For Peace co-sponsored a Military Naturalization Town Hall with Black Deported Veterans of America, Common Defense, About Face, and 50501 veterans. One of our own, Zahid Chaudhry, Olympia VFP chapter president, is currently detained at the Northwest ICE Processing Center in Tacoma, Washington. His wife, Melissa Chaudhry, and Tanisha Hartwell-Parris, wife of deported U.S. veteran Marlon Parris, shared their experiences of how these deportation policies are severely disrupting military families and separating parents from their children. As VFP chapters and members do every year, we reminded the nation that Veterans Day is Armistice Day and that we must reclaim it as a day of peace and resistance to war. And there is so much more that you will read in these pages.

It's hard to believe that the Trump Administration has caused so much harm in just ten months. While I see this president as a unique danger because of his profound narcissism, complete disregard for the Constitution, and disrespectful attitude toward anyone or anything that doesn't benefit him, both Democrats and Republicans share responsibility for his actions. Over the last twenty years of endless wars, Congress has granted the executive branch ever more power. I don't have space to explain this fully, but I must ask: how different are the unlawful airstrikes in the Caribbean, which killed dozens of unidentified people claiming they are narco-terrorists, from the signature strikes killing unknown people based on their behaviour? An example is the



Michael T. McPhearson  
VFP Executive Director



# Veterans For Peace on the Rise

Dear Members, Allies, and Friends,

Veterans For Peace continues to grow—not just in membership, but in reach and visibility. Over the past year, we’ve seen a steady rise in both new and returning members, reflecting renewed energy across the organization. As of October 2025, membership has increased roughly **20% since our July convention** and **33% since the end of last year**, adding more than **650 new members in 2025 alone**.

This growth represents more than numbers—it represents a movement. Membership drives and consistent outreach have helped us reconnect with lapsed members while bringing new veterans, allies, and active-duty folks into VFP.

To carry that momentum into 2026, we encourage everyone to **sign up for monthly recurring donations**. It’s the easiest way to keep your dues active automatically, support the work year-round, and ensure your membership never lapses.

We’ve also seen a wave of **new chapters forming—several just this year**—from Virginia and Ohio to Mississippi, Idaho, and beyond, including our newest international chapter in Zambia. This growth proves that when our members are out there in our communities and taking action, our organization flourishes.

That visibility matters. We saw it most recently through VFP’s support for the **Gaza Freedom Flotilla**. We saw it in our visibility at the No Kings demonstrations across the country, where we were able to bring our messaging to audiences who often would not hear about us otherwise. If the mainstream will not stand up for justice in Palestine, for example, then we will carry that message where it needs to be heard. And we continued to raise our voices during upcoming Armistice Day events across the country in November.

Our growth is about more than numbers—it’s about commitment and connection. Now is the time to **get out there and continue to build Veterans For Peace and the broader peace movement**. We do this by linking the struggles against foreign wars and domestic repression, carrying forward the call for **Peace at Home, Peace Abroad**.

Veterans For Peace continues to model moral courage in public life. Each action expands our reach and reminds the world that the veteran’s voice for peace is alive, principled, and urgently needed in this moment.

Let’s keep moving forward together.



Joshua Shurley  
National Vice President &  
Membership Committee Chair

In love and solidarity,  
*Joshua*

### *Director’s Message continued:*

Biden Administration’s August 29, 2021, attack in Kabul, two days before the last U.S. soldier left Afghanistan. That airstrike killed an aid worker named Zamairi Ahmadi and nine members of his family, including seven children. Sumaya, the youngest child, was two years old. U.S. intelligence tracked Mr. Ahmadi for hours, concluding he was IS-K, a local branch of the Islamic State. The conclusion was wrong.

During the Bush Administration, we witnessed prisoners in Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay, and other detention centers subjected to “enhanced interrogation”—or what most of us would call torture. Under the Obama Administration, we saw targeted killings, including that of Anwar al-Awlaki, an American citizen, who was intentionally killed without a trial. According to an American Civil Liberties Union press release from November 8, 2008, the government claimed “...it should have unreviewable authority to kill Americans the

executive branch has unilaterally determined to pose a threat.” And under the Biden Administration, we’ve seen unrestricted support for the genocide in Gaza by providing Israel with weapons, intelligence, and political backing in the United Nations.

My point is that we cannot depend on politicians to end this chaos. It is our responsibility. All of us who share a similar vision for our country’s future must come together. To bring about the change we want, it is up to those of us who recognize that we are a diverse nation where everyone deserves recognition of their humanity. Even if we don’t all agree on the exact way to reach a peaceful and just future, we must unite today to change the country’s direction immediately.

Veterans For Peace is on the front lines, continuing to oppose war and serve and defend our communities and the planet. Thank you for your support. A heartfelt thank you to our members.

## ***“Learning from the Past, Building the Future”***



*Hibakusha Takenori Kuroda (a.k.a. Leon Cloder) and Jewish Voice for Peace leader Leta Hirschmann-Levy spoke during the Friday program.*



*Conscientious resisters shared their stories (L to R): Phil Tottenham, Susan Schnell, Juan Bettancourt, and Joy Metzler.*

VETERANS FOR PEACE members and friends traveled to Las Vegas, Nevada, the last weekend in July for our first in-person convention in six years. It was a real pleasure to gather in VFP’s 40th anniversary year, and to commemorate through our programming other anniversaries significant to our community: namely, the GI and veterans movements for peace and social justice that arose in the 1960s in response to the war in Southeast Asia (2025 marking the 50th anniversary of the end of that war), and the atomic bombing of civilian populations in Hiroshima and Nagasaki that accompanied the end of World War II (the 80th anniversary of these events). We heard from family members of Holocaust survivors active in today’s struggle for survival of the people of Gaza.

Turning to today’s challenges on the home front, other programming exposed our own government’s attack on veterans’ healthcare; on migrants and students attacked and kidnapped by ICE; on labor movements and LGBTQ+

veterans. We learned how activists are pushing back on these fronts, and were briefed on VFP’s alliance with labor unions and our work addressing militarism’s role in the climate crisis. Meeting in Nevada presented the opportunity to learn more about local struggles to stop destruction of indigenous lands and protect people from the dangers of nuclear testing.

The weekend closed with a strategy session in which both in-person and virtual attendees participated in sharing ideas for next steps. Our goal was to take what we had learned in the various panel sessions and begin shaping plans for future activities and a sense of direction for Veterans For Peace. One solid outcome was the beginnings of a campaign to organize, educate, and support active-duty troops called by conscience to resist both foreign wars fueled by the U.S., and war-like ICE operations at home.

Our work is cut out for us!



*Keynote Mike Prysner spoke about the importance of Veterans For Peace in his own life and work, and offered a powerful call for our continued action.*



*Anthony Donovan played “Taps” on the harmonica after Berry Riesch read the names and Dave Logsdon rang the bell during the traditional “Presente!” ritual remembering members lost during the past year.*

ALL PHOTOS BY MIKE JAMES





## Veterans For Peace Post-9/11 Veterans Caucus



## Calling all Post-9/11 Vets!

ARE YOU A VETERAN that “served” during or after September 11, 2001? We invite you to join VFP’s Post-9/11 Caucus!

Our community is finding our voice and building leadership within Veterans For Peace: driving creative projects, writing powerful statements, organizing rapid response and direct action, and recruiting younger members into the work of the national organization and our local chapters. Post-9/11 veterans see that we are vital to the health and long-term future of Veterans For Peace, so we’re investing in ourselves and the organization in new and creative ways.

### Emerging Projects of the Post-9/11 Caucus:

- ☆ Publishing a Veterans poetry, prose, and art book
- ☆ Kickstarting a Post-9/11 Podcast
- ☆ Writing statements on pressing issues for these urgent times
- ☆ Recruiting younger generation veterans into VFP National organizing and local chapters
- ☆ Organizing a leadership and direct action retreat for post-9/11 veterans

*...and more!*

The caucus meets virtually on the second and fourth Sundays of the month at 7pm Eastern/4pm Pacific to move our creative projects and caucus-building efforts forward. We encourage leadership in chapters across the organization to let younger vets in your communities know about our work and how to get involved.

Post-9/11 era veterans can email [post911@veteransforpeace.org](mailto:post911@veteransforpeace.org) to join the caucus, learn more about our ongoing and emerging projects, and get involved in shaping VFP’s future.

We encourage Veterans For Peace members across the organization, allies, and the greater public to follow the Post-9/11 Caucus on Instagram and Substack!



# Wake Up to Climate Crisis and No MAS Tour 1 a success!

*Sometimes you can't wait for the people to come to you. We must take the message to the people. The global climate crisis is happening NOW, and wars and militarism are making it worse!*

## The Wake Up to Climate Crisis Tour

THE 2024 ELECTION seemed to show the majority of the U.S. electorate is indifferent to the climate crisis, despite the now-frequent extreme weather events, huge wildfires such as the conflagrations in Los Angeles, and numerous billion-dollar storm events.

Members of VFP's Climate Crisis and Militarism Project (CCMP), led by Dr. Jim Rine of VFP Detroit and Gary Butterfield of VFP San Diego, decided it was time to switch from Zoom meetings to meeting with people in their communities. Building on the successful No MAS (No Military Air Shows) campaign at the San Diego "Top Gun" show, our Wake Up tour began in California in September and October, visiting air shows in Monterey/Salinas and at Fleet Week in San Francisco. Along with engaging these communities to discuss the severity of the climate crisis and the links between militarism and the climate crisis, we also visited numerous college campuses along the way to engage with students. CCMP members traveling with "Naomi, the Wake Up Mobile" RV gave advice on how to advocate stopping the use of active-duty military aircraft in their town's air shows, and how to lobby lawmakers to reduce the obscenely bloated military budget!

To help dramatize the damage caused by the U.S. military, the tour also incorporated screenings of Abby Martin's new documentary, *Earth's Greatest Enemy*. At the screening in Sacramento on Oct. 15, Abby committed to joining with the 2026 tours with more showings of her movie.

## Why Was Tour 1 in California?

CALIFORNIA is one of the most militarized state in the nation. Its coastline is studded with Navy, Marine, and Space Force bases. Vast areas of the fragile desert in southeast California are off-limits, used for military overflights, practice bombing runs, and other war-fighting exercises. Being the most populated state, California pays a huge chunk of the nearly \$1 trillion a year military budget. For example, in 2023, San Diego taxpayers shelled out \$4.71 billion to the Pentagon, money that could have gone to build housing and provide services for the



*Tour members joined with VFP Chapters 69 (San Francisco) and 162 (East Bay), 1000 Grandmothers, and CodePink to protest glorification of military at Fleet Week in San Francisco on October 12, 2025.*

thousands of people (including military veterans) living on the streets, and for other much-needed social programs.

## Support the Wake Up Tour

VETERANS FOR PEACE has long advocated for their leaders and members to "expose the true costs of war and militarism." No costs are more long-lasting for younger and future generations than the climate catastrophe and environmental devastation caused by war. For a livable future and a sustainable economy and society, we must demand peace. We appreciate receiving a 2025 Howard Zinn Fund Partnership Award, which went a long way toward funding Tour 1. But more assistance is needed to continue to carry the message into 2026 with Tours 2 and 3. (Click the tour button at [veteransforpeace.org/ccmp](https://veteransforpeace.org/ccmp) to see maps of these planned tours, and flyers for specific events.)

This multi-phase Wake Up Tour is a big undertaking, and we ask for YOUR support to make it success. We invite you to do one or more of the following:

- **Donate!** Any amount will be much appreciated.
- **Follow the Tour on VFP social media:** Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, and/or TikTok.
- **Help spread the word:** If you or someone you know lives near one of our event sites, you can help publicize by downloading the event flyers posted online for each city on the Tour.
- **Join us for Tour 2 or 3, depending on your location.** Email [climate@veteransforpeace.org](mailto:climate@veteransforpeace.org) and let us know where you'd like to connect with the tour (see routes on our web page).

THIS PROJECT is endorsed by VFP, 350.org US, CODEPINK, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom U.S. (WILPF U.S.), National Priorities Project, World Beyond War, 1000 Grandmothers for Future Generations, Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community, and others.

*Submitted by Janet Weil and Jim Rine*



Jim Rine and Cindy Piester in Santa Barbara with "Naomi, the Wake Up Mobile."



## TOUR #1 ROUTE Sept.- Oct. 2025

Event Date / Location	Air Show / Institute
1 Sept. 26-29: Miramar - San Diego, CA	Blue Angels & UC San Diego
2 Sept. 30-Oct. 1: Northridge, CA	Cal State U Northridge
3 Oct. 2-7: Salinas - Monterey, CA	Blue Angels & Cal State U Monterey Bay
4 Oct. 8-13: Oakland - San Francisco, CA	Blue Angels & City College, SFSU, & UC Berkeley
5 Oct. 14-15: Davis - Sacramento, CA	UC Davis & Sacramento State U
6 Oct. 16-17: Fresno, CA	Fresno City College & Fresno State U
7 Oct. 19-20: Santa Barbara, CA	UC Santa Barbara

\*VETERANSFORPEACE.ORG/TAKE-ACTION/CLIMATECRISIS/WAKE-CLIMATE-CRISIS-TOUR

FOLLOW QR TO VISIT WEB PAGE\* & SCROLL DOWN TO SEE TOUR MAPS

Route Map showing all the communities and events visited during the first segment of the VFP Wake Up to Climate and No MAS Tour. Scan the QR code to see draft maps for subsequent tour segments planned to begin next spring.

Left: During Fleet Week in San Francisco, Colombian sailors check out the big puppets brought by the activist group, 1000 Grandmothers.



# Peace & Planet News



**Our VFP newspaper is a great organizing tool!**

THE FALL 2025 ISSUE IS NOW IN STOCK! This issue is full of articles about resistance to fascism, from Danish resistance during WWII, to New Yorkers confronting ICE, to active-duty service members refusing to turn on their neighbors, and lots more!

Order a few copies for yourself or a whole bundle for your chapter. P&PN is a great organizing tool for tabling and events. Leave copies at your local library, bookstore, cafe or campus veterans center, or hand them out at ongoing demonstrations.

People are hungry for the kind of news and analysis P&PN provides, and especially if you tell them it's a veterans' paper, they will snatch them out of your hands!

— Ellen Davidson, Managing Editor



Mike Ferner was in the Manhattan VA hospital receiving treatment post-fast for Gaza, and went AWOL to attend the first "No Kings" demo on June 14, 2025, to the consternation of his spouse and his doctor. (That's a heart monitor cable dangling out of his jacket sleeve.)



PHOTO BY ELLEN DAVIDSON | PEACEANDPLANETNEWS.ORG





FIND US ONLINE | JOIN OUR FIGHT | [veteransforpeace.org/SOVA](https://veteransforpeace.org/SOVA)

# Headlines mask Trump's failure on VA health care

Submitted by Arlys Herem

IF YOU ONLY READ THE HEADLINES, you might have the impression the Trump administration is backing away from staffing cuts and boosting funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). But a closer look shows that neither canceling the proposed 80,000 staff cuts nor adding \$83 billion to the overall VA budget actually benefits VA health care.

The original plan to cut 80,000 positions has been dropped, but 30,000 jobs will still be eliminated. According to the VA's workforce dashboards, since January the agency has lost over 750 doctors and 2,100 nurses—the only net loss in the past five years. Remaining staff are demoralized, and applications to work at the VA have plummeted. Chronic understaffing has plagued the VA for years. Recently, the Office of the Inspector General reported a 50% increase in the number of VA medical centers experiencing severe staff shortages. A proposal to return to 2019 staffing levels ignored this chronic understaffing as well as the 500,000 new patients added after passage of the 2022 PACT Act.

To make recruitment and retention even harder, the VA terminated all union contracts with employees except for VA police officers and firefighters. Bargaining rights, on-site offices, and equipment are gone. Union leaders argue this is retaliation for resisting staff and funding cuts and opposing efforts to weaken and privatize the VA. Secretary Collins, however, claims unions “...represent VA employees fighting against the best interests of veterans while protecting and rewarding bad workers.”

The VA's total budget—including the Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefit Administration, and the National Cemetery Administration—did increase by \$83 billion in the 2026 budget. But the details tell a different story. Private-sector health spending rose from \$22 billion to \$35 billion (a 50% increase), while VA clinical services funding fell from \$69 billion to \$57 billion (a 17% decrease).

These cuts are part of a broader effort to privatize veterans' health care. Current bills before Congress would further shift



*Since Veterans For Peace was the only group with a megaphone at this rally at the Minnesota State Capitol in Minneapolis, they quickly put it to use for an interchange of ideas between participants while SOVA members handed out bumper stickers and pamphlets.*

veterans from the VA to private providers—despite evidence that VA care is equal to or better than private-sector care and costs less. The VA is also unique in the United States as a holistic system, offering integrated medical, social, and psychological care under one roof for veterans nationwide. These bills also ignore the VA's other critical missions: conducting research that benefits all Americans, training health professionals across the country, and providing backup during national and state emergencies.

**Now is the time to truly “thank veterans for their service” by mobilizing. It is time to take to the streets, to network, to urge Congress to fully fund and staff the VA—it is time to act.** Stay informed and lobby your Members of Congress by visiting SOVA at Veterans For Peace [[veteransforpeace.org/sova](https://veteransforpeace.org/sova)] and signing up for updates. Over 92% of veterans who use VA health care want the system preserved and improved—not dismantled. Stand with them in defending their right to high-quality VA care.

*Arlys Herem was in the Army Nurse Corps 1970–75, including a tour in Viet Nam. She founded a local NGO in Cambodia doing home health care in villages for 20 years before returning to Minneapolis in 2018. She is a VFP Chapter 27 member and has been a SOVA steering committee member.*



# Deported Veterans face new challenges

IN THESE TRYING TIMES, with the present anti-immigrant rhetoric, our repatriated veterans are now facing new challenges to remain in the country they were willing to die for. Our deported veterans that are still exiled to their country of birth also continue to struggle with obtaining mental health and medical care. With this in mind, our Deported Veterans Advocacy Project/ Unified U.S. Deported Veterans Resource Center and VFP Chapter 182 office in Tijuana continues to be a vital lifeline of support to our deported veterans. Big things are in the works at DVAP for 2026 as we begin to work on a restructuring of the project, both in the USA and around the globe, to best serve our Deported Veterans in exile and those repatriated back into the U.S.

The addition last year and support of U.S. Army Chaplain Col. Robert Blessing (Ret.), who served two tours in Iraq, has brought new hope in his weekly visits to lift the spirits of our veterans. Through Chaplain Blessing's efforts, we will soon bring our deported veterans a program for medical evaluations and referrals for treatment.

If you or your chapter have an interest would like to invite a member of the DVAP team to speak via Zoom at your chapter meeting or in another forum, please contact Robert Vivar at [rvivar@uusdepvets.org](mailto:rvivar@uusdepvets.org). Also, if you want to learn more about the "Leave No One Behind" Mural Project (see below) and having a mural installed somewhere in your community, we would very much like to discuss the possibilities with you.

Submitted by Robert Vivar  
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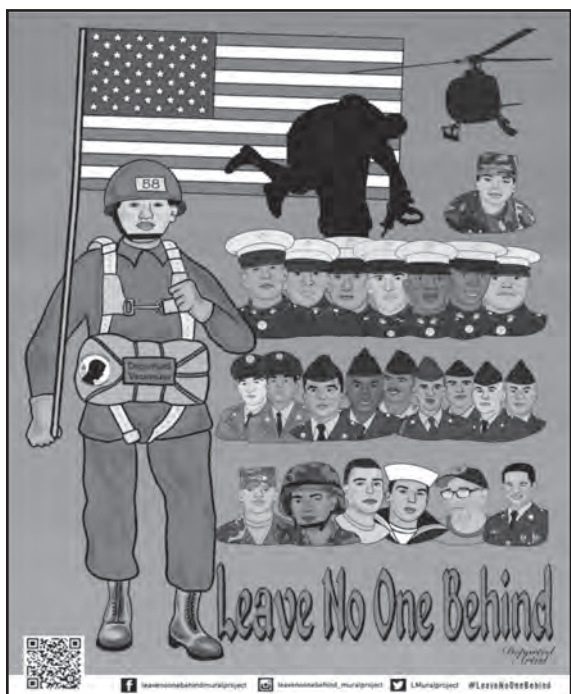


## "Leave No One Behind!"

Support DVAP's critical work on behalf of U.S. veterans! Give online by scanning the QR code, or mail a check to the National VFP office earmarked for "VFP Deported Veterans Advocacy Project."



Standing in front of the Tijuana office are (L to R): Megan Day, law fellow with the Immigrant Defenders Law Center (ImmDef); self-deported-after-repatriation U.S. Army Vet Ruben Robles; deported vet, DVAP Office Coordinator U.S. Army Vet Rocky Hernandez; and U.S. Army Chaplain Col. Robert Blessing (Ret.).



VFP Chapter 110 is working closely with Robert Vivar to put these posters up in VFW and American Legion Halls to raise awareness about our deported veterans.



## Deported veteran advocate elected to VFP National Board

James L. Smith II won one of four open seats on the 2026 Veterans For Peace National Board of Directors. (The other three seats were taken by incumbents Ellen Barfield, Michael Wong, and Gerry Condon.) James is a Marine Corps veteran, a member of VFP San Diego Chapter 91, and cofounder and director of Black Deported Veterans of America (BDVA). James is dedicated to advocating for veterans' rights and ensuring they receive the benefits they have earned. His advocacy is particularly focused on military naturalization, with a focus on addressing the unique challenges faced by Black veterans in this context. The formation of BDVA was driven by the realization that Black veterans were often overlooked in discussions and solutions concerning deported veterans. James works tirelessly to provide guidance, resources, and support to veterans, helping them navigate the complexities of accessing their earned benefits. His efforts are particularly crucial for deported veterans who face significant barriers in obtaining the assistance they deserve.



# Korea Peace Campaign Report



23rd Memorial Ceremony at Hyosun-Miseon Peace Park

## VFP sends solidarity message to the Korean people

IN RESPONSE to a request from the Hyosun-Miseon Peace Park Committee in South Korea, on June 1, VFP's Korea Peace Campaign (KPC) project sent a message of solidarity to the Peace Park Committee under signature of VFP National President Susan Schnall. The message was read to the approximately 170 Korean attendees of the 23rd Memorial Ceremony at Hyosun-Miseon Peace Park. The ceremony marks the untimely deaths of two young Korean school girls who were struck down by a heavy armored U.S. Army vehicle on June 13, 2002. Among other sentiments, our open letter offers our apology for the tragic deaths of Hyosun and Miseon, "as well as for many other deaths of innocent Korean civilians who were either killed or wounded by the U.S. soldiers or military machines in the past." In particular, we noted that these tragedies could have been avoided if the U.S. did not pursue its military domination of Korea. [Download the full letter at [veteransforpeace.org/index.php/download\\_file/view/5891](http://veteransforpeace.org/index.php/download_file/view/5891).]

## Please give to Hyosun-Miseon Memorial Archive

AS MENTIONED in the last VFP newsletter, we are in the midst of raising funds for the building of the Hyosun-Miseon Memorial Archive next to the Peace Park in South Korea. It will preserve documents, pictures, videos and other artifacts related to the incident, including the candlelight movement for justice that arose in South Korea soon after all charges against the armored vehicle's crew were dismissed by the U.S. Army's court martial. We have raised about \$1,000 so far toward our minimum goal of \$5,000. We thank all those who have given to this archive project so far. Can we count on other VFP members and chapters to add to the collected amount? If you are moved, please donate through our web page or mail a check to the VFP office with a memo entry "for Korea project."

## Korean Peace Advocacy Week: June 9-13, 2025

KPC MEMBERS again participated in this national week of advocacy, this year urging our House members to cosponsor H.R.1841, the Peace on the Korean Peninsula Act [congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1841/text], which was re-introduced this year by Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA) for the 2025-26 session. It calls for serious, urgent diplomacy in pursuit of a binding peace agreement to formally end the Korean War, a review of the travel restrictions to North Korea, and establishment of liaison offices in the U.S. and North Korea. The unresolved state of war is the root cause of tensions and militarism in Korea. A peace agreement that officially ends the Korean War is the most realistic and effective method for resolving the security crisis on the Korean Peninsula. The new bill has 39 cosponsors at present, including two Republican members. Is your representative a cosponsor? If not, please contact them and urge them to sign on now.

## Armistice Anniversary and People's Summit

WE OBSERVED the 72nd anniversary of the Korean War Armistice Agreement on July 27. In connection with this anniversary, a national coalition of peace groups sponsored a national conference, the People's Summit for Korea, at Riverside Church, in New York City, July 25-27. VFP National endorsed the Summit as a supporter. KJ Noh, a VFP member, was one of the speakers at the conference. Munjo Yu, one of the VFP members who participated in the conference said, "The energy and solidarity of the participants—along with their powerful messages of 'U.S. Out of Korea' and 'U.S Out of Everywhere,' challenging U.S. imperialism—left a profound impression on me." Use this short link to access a playlist of recorded sessions: [bit.ly/4obfRKM](https://bit.ly/4obfRKM)

## Join us!

KOREA PEACE CAMPAIGN project holds monthly online meetings. If you are interested in attending a meeting, or if you have any questions, please contact [kpc@veteransforpeace.org](mailto:kpc@veteransforpeace.org).

Submitted by Ann, John, and Munjo  
VFP Korea Peace Campaign Coordinators  
[kpc@veteransforpeace.org](mailto:kpc@veteransforpeace.org)



<< QR code leads  
to our Donate page.



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# Golden Rule Voyage Connects Dots in San Francisco Bay



*During this summer's San Francisco Bay tour, Golden Rule crewmembers connected with (L to R): activists working to save temporary protected status (TPS) for immigrants, kayaktivists protesting the genocide in Gaza, and a group working to slow freighter traffic in the bay to save whales. At right: Project Manager Michelle Marsonette shows off proclamation received from the Mayor of Richmond.*

**THE GOLDEN RULE anti-nuclear sailboat, a national project of Veterans For Peace, spent most of August sailing around San Francisco Bay, visiting multiple cities, holding a wide variety of events, and taking lots of happy people out sailing on the Bay.** The 34-foot wooden ketch, which famously attempted to stop U.S. nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands in 1958, arrived to Pier 39 on San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf on August 5, 2025, where it was greeted by members from VFP Chapters 69 (San Francisco) and 71 (Sonoma County), as well as local television and radio reporters, and a Japanese wire service.

From there the *Golden Rule* sailed to multiple cities around the Bay, including Alameda, Oakland, Berkeley, Richmond, San Mateo, and back again to San Francisco. At each stop, the iconic peace boat and its crew were welcomed warmly and enthusiastically.

Event highlights included the Oakland theater screening of a new film, *Golden Rule: The Journey for Peace*, produced by Nolan Anderson, a member of the crew that sailed the boat from Honolulu to San Francisco in 2022. The 34-minute film was very well received, and was featured at several other events around the bay.

*Golden Rule* Project Manager Michelle Marsonette did a terrific job coordinating the busy schedule and spoke at many events, as did project chair Gerry Condon. Former project manager Helen Jaccard spoke at the annual Hiroshima/Nagasaki commemoration outside Lawrence Livermore Laboratories, the nuclear weapons research facility co-founded by Edward Teller, "father of the hydrogen bomb."

In Richmond, the *Golden Rule* was ushered into the harbor by kayaktivists known as the Rich City Rays. The crew was invited to attend a meeting of the Richmond City Council, where the Mayor Eduardo Martinez presented them with a proclamation honoring their mission to abolish nuclear weapons. The mayor and his wife then sailed on the *Golden Rule* with a flotilla of activists expressing their opposition to President Trump's stated plan to turn Alcatraz island—now a national park and a sacred Indigenous site—into an immigrant

detention center. They also sailed past the Chevron refinery, which has a long history of polluting Richmond's environment, and supplies oil to Israel, fueling its genocide in Gaza.

The focus on Alcatraz and Chevron that day is just one example of the intersectional nature of the *Golden Rule's* visit to San Francisco Bay. Captain Steve Buck and crew took a lot of activist groups out sailing, including Code Pink, Sonoma County Veterans For Peace, the NorCal TPS Coalition (an immigrant rights organization), the Task Force on the Americas (a Latin America solidarity group), the Cal Sailing Club, the People's Arms Embargo (organizing to stop U.S. weapons shipments to Israel), and the Comfort Women's Justice Coalition, which advocates on behalf of the thousands of Chinese and Korean women whom Japan forced into sex slavery during World War II.

In San Francisco, *Golden Rule* crewmembers were greeted with a Chinese Lion Dance and the event was given prominent coverage in Chinese-language TV, radio and newspapers. Another unique event and solidarity sail brought attention to the alarming increase in whale deaths in San Francisco Bay and called for freighter ships to slow down.

San Francisco Veterans For Peace hosted a well-attended farewell event on August 27 at the Veterans War Memorial Building in San Francisco's Civic Center. Representatives of many of the aforementioned groups who had sailed on the *Golden Rule* in the previous weeks showed up and were invited to speak about the important work they are all doing. Longtime anti-nuclear crusader Jackie Cabasso, who had just returned from events in Japan marking the 80th anniversary of U.S. nuclear bombing of the civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was the keynote speaker. This culminating event underscored that the struggle for the abolition of nuclear weapons is intrinsically connected to the struggles for peace and justice, at home and abroad.

The *Golden Rule* safely returned to its homeport in northern California's Humboldt Bay, where it will remain for the winter. A voyage to southern California and Baja Mexico is under consideration for next spring or summer.

*Submitted by Gerry Condon and Michelle Marsonette*



# VFP CHAPTER REPORTS



## #001 – PORTLAND, ME

Members of VFP Chapter 1 took part in a powerful remembrance hosted by Mainers Ending Nuclear Dangers on August 6 [photo above], marking the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—events that forever altered the course of history and the lives of generations. Titled “Remembrance and Reflection: 80th Anniversary of the Hiroshima & Nagasaki Bombings,” the commemorative gathering honored the victims and survivors of nuclear warfare, amplified the call for peace, and reflected on the global impact of nuclear weapons. Maine Chapter President Adam Toothaker and board members Doug Rawlings and Peter Morgan were in attendance. The evening featured an exclusive screening of *Silent Fallout*, an award-winning 2023 documentary that delves into the devastating impacts of radioactive fallout in the U.S. stemming from more than 100 above-ground nuclear tests conducted by the U.S. government. There were stories, a short statement from U.S. Representative

Pingree, poems, cranes, a song, and postcards signed in support of HR 317, “Urging the U.S. to lead the world back from the brink of nuclear war and halt and reverse the nuclear arms race.”

*Lynn Ellis*

## #010 – ALBANY, NY

Members of Chapter 10 supported the 27th annual Kateri Peace Conference featuring Phyllis Bennis, who gave the keynote address, “Genocide in the Time of Monsters.” The talk can be accessed on YouTube [see [youtu.be/TBLhcsBQ8-c](https://youtu.be/TBLhcsBQ8-c)]. Sana Wazwaz, a Palestinian-American writer, theater artist, and organizer best known for her advocacy for Palestinian rights, also spoke passionately.

Albany chapter members have been working to end the genocide in Gaza by joining local vigils and writing and calling our representatives.

*John Amidon*

## #013 – TUCSON, AZ

Tucson VFP Jon Miles Chapter 13 has been very busy this last quarter. In addition to being recognized as the VFP Chapter of the Year at the VFP Convention in Las Vegas, we continue to hit the streets with our counter-recruitment and Save Our VA vigil weekly. We also provide peacekeeping for several groups in town, including at pro-Palestine rallies. In addition, we attend vigils monthly at Raytheon and Davis Monthan Air Force Base. Chapter President Cara Bissell recently returned from Range Safety Training in Virginia in support of the GUNS TO GARDENS program. We will continue to fully support the City of Tucson and hit the streets accordingly.

*William Peterson*



MEMORIAL DAY 2025, ALBANY, NEW YORK



**VFP Jon Miles Chapter 13 (Tucson, Arizona) was awarded Chapter of the Year at the 2025 VFP National Convention in Las Vegas. Shown accepting the award (L to R): Adrian Crawley Fernandez, Hassan Clement, William Peterson, and Cara Bissell, with flags representing beloved deceased chapter members Alice Ritter, Gretchen Nielson, Bob Phillips, Jon Miles, Richard Conroy, and Dalton McClelland.**

PHOTO BY MIKE JAMES

## #019 – RIVERSIDE / SAN BERNARDINO, CA

Jon Castro VFP Chapter 19 celebrated the International Day of Peace on September 21 with an awards ceremony in Desert Hot Springs honoring community leaders and organizations involved in immigrant support, Gaza ceasefire efforts, and veterans' advocacy. Keynote speaker Stephanie Manesis traveled from Fargo, North Dakota to speak about her forthcoming film, *Marked by Grace: Compassion Prevails on the WWII Battlefield* [info. at ZenLily Films: zenlilyfilms.com].

On September 24, Tom Swann Hernandez, founder and president of chapter 19, along with veterans Rick Tice, Chuck Parker and Felica Nunez, met with Frank Ruiz, District Director and Priscilla Garcia, veteran liaison, for Rep. Raul Ruiz (CA-25). They discussed concerns around threats to VA health care, ICE operations in the district, among other issues. Rep. Ruiz staff promised representation at the Veterans Day ceremony in Cathedral City on November 11. Rep. Ruiz also presented the Jon Castro VFP Chapter with a Congressional Certificate of Recognition.

Chapter 19's ongoing efforts include ending the war in Gaza, supporting the California LGBTQ Veterans Memorial, and planting Peace Poles in San Bernardino County.

*Tom Swann Hernandez*

## #023 – ROCHESTER, NY

VFP Chapter 23 activists have doubly focused their work on the Middle East:

First, we again held our annual commemoration of the June 1967 attack by Israeli military forces on the USS *Liberty*, a U.S. Navy electronic intelligence vessel posted in the eastern Mediterranean during the Six Day War. The IDF attack by air and

sea left 34 American crew members dead, plus 174 wounded. Despite testimony from the crew that the *Liberty* flew the U.S. flag, the Israeli government insists its forces took it as Egyptian and thus a legitimate target. Rochesterians, led by VFP Chapter 23, erected a monument to the *Liberty* dead and wounded in a county park, and every year we gather by Lake Ontario to salute them with prayers, reminiscences, and the strains of Taps.

Also on the Mediterranean: Chapter 23 members attend weekly street demonstrations against Israel's genocide in Gaza and atrocities against Palestinians in the West Bank. These demos, with many young people and local Palestinian-Americans, are cries in the wilderness amid the failure of our institutions to speak out. Chapter 23 continues its other work—including August Hiroshima/Nagasaki commemorations—but we emphasize the struggle for justice in Israel/Palestine.

*Jack Bradigan Spula*



**Memorializing the dead and wounded of the USS *Liberty* in Rochester, New York, June 2025.**

## #027 – TWIN CITIES, MN

We are busier than ever here in the Twin Cities, and public sentiment seems to be bending our way. Line 3 protests are ongoing every Monday at the Governor's Mansion (Line 3 being the Enbridge oil pipeline stretching across Minnesota from Canada). Wednesdays we can be found on the "Peace Bridge," and Fridays we join Women Against Military Madness (WAMM) in St. Paul, protesting the horror in Gaza.

In addition to weekly rallies, we have been doing outreach at Open Streets events in Minneapolis this summer [photo below], giving out hundreds of buttons and stickers, and more importantly, talking with our neighbors about the costs of war. Our spring newsletter carries articles addressing genocide, antisemitism, free speech, and the Israeli lobby, as well as VA funding cuts, and we have distributed 3,000 copies throughout the Twin Cities.

*continued on page 16*



## VFP CHAPTER REPORTS



*Twin Cities VFP Chapter 27 brought messages of peace and engaged with neighbors at Minneapolis Open Streets events this summer.*

### *Twin Cities Chapter #027 continued:*

This spring we stood in solidarity with freedom of expression advocates from the University of Minnesota. We also supported the Veterans and Allies Fast for Gaza with signage and flags beginning on May 22 in downtown Minneapolis. Weekly “Free Palestine” rallies are ongoing.

Our chapter headed up a protest of several hundred at the Minnesota State Capitol concerning cuts to the VA. Jeff Roy and Arlys Herem continue their important work to Save Our VA.

Chapter 27 President Dave Logsdon organized a VFP-hosted screening of the film, *The Doctrine*, a documentary about the Doctrine of Discovery, authored and used by the Catholic Church to justify the robbing, subjugation, and killing of Indigenous peoples around the world for hundreds of years. Chapter 27 has been supporters of this project since 2018.

Several of us were excited to be able to meet up with other VFP members at the national convention in Vegas this summer.

*Mike McDonald*

### **#031 – PHILADELPHIA**

Six members of Philadelphia VFP Chapter 31 showed up Sunday, September 21, to commemorate the UN’s International Day of Peace with the Chester County Peace Movement (CCPM) in West Chester, Pennsylvania. CCPM presented W.D. Ehrhart with their 2025 Anne Moore Peacemaker Award.

*Bill Ehrhart*

### **#034 – NEW YORK CITY**

NYC VFP Chapter 34 hosts online monthly meetings with interesting speakers, and in-person events regarding urgent peace, environmental, and social justice issues.

Recent speakers/topics: Ann Wright on current threats to our democracy; student activists from Binghamton and Cornell, and Jack Gilroy of Broome County VFP, on activities including migrant farm worker organizing, protesting military

contractor recruiters on campus, and ending university support for genocide in Gaza and Israeli colonialism; VFP National Vice President Josh Shurley on the VFP delegation to Nicaragua with fellow delegates Gerry Condon and New Jersey Chapter 21 President Michael Kramer; Ken’ichi on the re-militarization of Japan; Joy Metzler and Mike Ferner on the 40-day fast for Gaza.

Chapter president Susan Schnall’s speech at the March 14 Veterans Rally in Washington, D.C., can be accessed on YouTube [[youtu.be/sMS3FXsvIP8](https://youtu.be/sMS3FXsvIP8)].

The 40-day Veterans and Allies Fast for Gaza commenced on May 22 at the Isaiah Wall, followed by a march to the U.S. Mission, where participants conducted a daily vigil. Over 700 people nationwide participated in the fast, which was concluded on June 30 with civil disobedience actions at the U.S. and Israeli Missions. Learn more at <https://www.fosna.org/2025gazafast>

Many of our NYC chapter members attended the excellent 40th Annual National VFP Convention in Las Vegas; special thanks to Ellen Davidson and Sean Nestor on tech and Phil Josselyn on video. Rachel Clark and Bob Keilbach were honored to receive the Ken Mayers Service & Stewardship Award.

*Bob Keilbach*



**A group portrait of Philadelphia VFP Chapter 31 members taken on the International Day of Peace (L to R): Bill Ehrhart, Mike Gillen, Chuck Rossi, and John Grant. Also present but arriving too late to be in the photo: Susy Rettig and Harvey Finkle.**





**New York City Chapter 34 President Susan Schnall and Vice President Jerry Hassett (plus Zool, visible in background) protest the genocide in Gaza at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in New York.**

PHOTO BY HIDEKO Otake

## #035 – SPOKANE, WA

Our 80th Anniversary Hiroshima/Nagasaki Nuclear War In Real Time commemoration at All Saints Lutheran Church was well attended. VFP Executive Director Michael McPhearson gave the keynote address with humility and penetrating integrity, calling for continued resilience of our valued communities. Pax Christi, Jewish Voice for Peace, Peace & Justice Action League of Spokane, Dorothy Day Labor Forum, Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, and NW Coalition Against Nuclear Weapons cosponsored. Six organizations sent notes of support. Raging Grannies provided music. Rose petal peace offerings were placed in a brass urn of water. Organizers honored the presenters with a luncheon following the event.

Previously, a reading of *Sadako and the Thousand Cranes* was held at Shadle Park Library, followed by folding of paper cranes. Chapter president emeritus Rusty Nelson was interviewed on KYRS Thin Air Community Radio.

We joined Indivisible for rallies at Clark Park, and INW Coalition for the Liberation of Palestine for a pots & pans rally at Foley Federal Building. We joined Pride for Peace tabling at the Pride Festival June 14, which included a Stonewall Rally, and joined Indivisible again for the No Kings parade through downtown Spokane. We also participated in Garland Pride on August 16.

Attendance at meetings has doubled. We are grateful to VFP National for its part in the inspirational 40-day Veterans and Allies Fast for Gaza, and for organizing the 40th Anniversary VFP convention in Las Vegas!

Hollis Higgins

## #041 – CAPE COD, MA

The highlight of Chapter 41 activities this winter and spring was conducting the 30th Annual *Voices of Peace* poetry contest for K-12 students and adults across Cape Cod and the Islands. Thirty years ago, our chapter held its first peace poetry contest as part of Cape Cod Community College's Peace Week ceremonies. In the past 30 years, more than 14,746 student poets have participated. These are difficult times for finding peace and reconciliation, both at home and abroad. Students start here, by expressing their feelings and thoughts through poetry, to find peaceful solutions to conflict and war. We are deeply appreciative of all the writers who have responded to the contest and of the teachers and parents who encouraged their students. This contest has indeed become a peaceful tradition in our local community. [See photo and poem on next page.]

Duke Ellis

## #042 – CONNECTICUT

We invited SSgt. Bryce Lockwood, USMC, survivor of the USS *Liberty*, purple heart and Silver Star recipient, to Wethersfield, Connecticut. The town was hosting the American Veterans Traveling Tribute and "Cost of Freedom," a set of panels that travel the country. But the display does not list the attack on the USS *Liberty*! So we brought our own 3 ft. x 5 ft. rigid panel naming the 34 Americans that were killed by the Israeli attack of June 8, 1967—in events never fully investigated by

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**Left to right: VFP Connecticut Chapter 42 members Greg Laxer, Guy Blais, Jon Peskin, and Bill Potvin, show off their display with USS Liberty survivor Bryce Lockwood (far right), on September 11, 2025.**

PHOTO BY JIM BRASILE



*Award-winning sixth grade student Olivia Michniewicz reads her poem, "Thank You," at the 2025 Memorial Day observances following the parade in Centerville, Mass. Cape Cod VFP's 30th annual Voices of Peace poetry contest received entries from 583 students this year!*

PHOTO BY JIM CANAVAN

## THANK YOU

You have seen scary things,  
during the war,  
There was no peace in your eyes,  
no room to restore.  
All of the memories,  
that were reminders of home,  
were nowhere to be seen,  
nowhere to roam.  
You have forgotten that peace,  
that you hold in your heart,  
It is scary not to remember,  
It leaves a big mark.  
But you have the power to remember,  
The good times in your life,  
When your eyes were clear,  
You saw your kids, parents,  
Husband or wife.  
You might have been scared,  
And I know you can't unsee,  
The horror,  
That you had to go through,  
To protect me.  
Thank you for all you do,  
I am so sorry about what you have seen,  
I will always remember that,  
You deserve peace.

— Olivia Michniewicz  
Grade 6, Oak Ridge School  
Sandwich, Massachusetts

### *Connecticut Chapter #042 continued:*

Congress. SSgt. Lockwood, a very polite and distinguished gentleman, spoke at our gathering on September 11 and at the Islamic Association of Greater Hartford the following day. Thanks to *Struggle Video News*, Lockwood's full presentation at the Islamic Center can be viewed on YouTube [youtu.be/UXZpOFnNM5A]. It is important to educate people on this event and think about how the USS *Liberty's* attack and subsequent coverup may contribute to what we are seeing in the Middle East presently.

Our chapter continues to vigil weekly with Doctors Against Genocide and Healthcare Workers for Palestine Connecticut, at Yale, St. Francis Hospital in Hartford, and UCONN Medical Center in Farmington.

*Jim Brasile*

## #047 – PITTSBURGH, PA



*On July 15, 2025, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, VFP members Jeff J., Phil E., and Pablo D. joined with Veteran allies and hundreds of others to protest Donald Trump's visit to Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), which received a \$1.5 billion DoD contract in 2025 to create new AI and robotic military weapons.*

## #050 – NORTHERN MICHIGAN

After a few years of negotiations, Traverse City commissioners finally approved our request to erect a peace monument at one of our parks. We will honor two people yearly who have worked for peace and justice with an "induction" ceremony. Their names will be engraved on the monument.

We had a large turnout for our annual Memorial Day ceremony in which we remember all those lost in war, to include veterans lost in suicide, veterans lost in war, and innocent civilians throughout the world. Special emphasis this year has been on the genocide and suffering that continues in Gaza.

On the 50th anniversary of the end of the American war in Viet Nam, our chapter showed a double feature at our local theater. The film screening was attended by hundreds. The



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films shown were *Coming Home*, starring Jane Fonda and Jon Voight, and *Naneek*, the documentary about a combat veteran's return to Vietnam with his son to meet and make peace with his former "enemy."

We are currently reviewing applicants for our annual Veterans For Peace Scholarship at our local college. The award is given to a veteran or child of a veteran.

Peace is the answer.

Tim Keenan

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## #055 – SANTA FE, NM

On the 80th anniversary of the U.S. bombing of Nagasaki, Japan, members of the Santa Fe Joan Duffy Chapter of Veterans For Peace joined the commemoration in Los Alamos, New Mexico, where the atomic bomb was first developed and built. The U.S. government first bombed New Mexico on July 16, 1945, at Trinity Site, now a National Historic Landmark.

Even though the U.S. knew that Japan was suing for peace at the end of World War II, the U.S. wanted to "test" its atomic bombs against civilians. The first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. The second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. The two atomic bomb blasts killed over 250,000 Japanese civilians. At least another million Japanese died after August 1945 from cancers and leukemia resulting from the nuclear fallout.

The 80th anniversary commemoration in Los Alamos included speakers, prayers, songs, and a march. The day was capped off at a local theater where two documentaries were shown, *Nagasaki Journey*, which tells the story of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, and *Dark Circle*, a documentary about the development of nuclear weapons in the U.S. and its ties to the nuclear power industries, and the protracted U.S. environmental costs to our citizens. These two films may be available at your local library or online.



Albuquerque VFP Chapter 63's Charles Powell and Pam Gilchrist at the 80th anniversary commemoration in Los Alamos.



Santa Fe and Albuquerque VFP chapters and allies gathered in Los Alamos, New Mexico, on August 9, 2025, for the 80th Anniversary Commemoration of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Japan. Holding the VFP flag in the photo is Santa Fe VFP member Bushrod Lake.

The 80th anniversary commemoration was co-sponsored by Santa Fe VFP Chapter 55, Albuquerque VFP Chapter 63, New Mexico PeaceFest, the Taos Environmental Film Festival, NukeWatch NM, and Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety.

For the past 24 years, Santa Fe Veterans For Peace has led a weekly nuclear disarmament and peace vigil in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This tradition was started by Ken Mayers who founded the Santa Fe chapter. Ken, a well known peace activist, both locally, and internationally, passed away earlier this year.

Roberto Roibal

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## #057 – GREEN MOUNTAINS, VT

The largest concern of VFP Will Miller Chapter 57 is to find younger members who can answer the call for timely witness that requires travel, speed, and strength. Meanwhile, we continue to meet on Zoom and try to meet in person at least once a year during the summer. We have made some charitable gifts in support of VFP activities, though chapter gifts are naturally decreased. We have welcomed a few younger folks who are interested, and we have refreshed the regional distribution of VFP literature. Some of us have been active in weekly witness locally in Vermont—standing for ceasefire in Gaza, for Black Lives, and against kidnapping and national war policies.

Bud Haas

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## #061 – ST. LOUIS/ST. CHARLES, MO

On the anniversary of D-Day, more than 100 veterans and supporters gathered at the Missouri State Capitol in Jefferson City for a peaceful rally titled "Stand With Veterans: Defend the Constitution." Organized by 50501 Missouri and 50501

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# VFP CHAPTER REPORTS



*On June 6, 2025, the anniversary of D-Day, members of Chapter 61 marched with allies to the Missouri State Capitol, where three of them spoke at a “Stand with Veterans: Defend the Constitution” rally.*

*St. Louis/St. Charles Chapter #061 continued:*

Veterans, with leadership from Veterans For Peace Chapter 61, the event ran from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. at the Capitol steps.

Bob Suberi, President of Chapter 61 and Vietnam veteran, opened the event with powerful words reflecting on the true cost of war and our civic duty to pursue peace. He was followed by Kevin Barry, who addressed the erosion of democracy in the U.S., urging direct engagement with elected officials. Ashley Salazar, a post-9/11 Air Force veteran and mother, shared a heartfelt message about moral injury and the toll of modern war on families, children, and the Earth itself.

Despite the strong turnout, no media outlets covered the action. Documentation and coverage were created independently by attendees.

Videos from this event are available on our social media channels [see [linktr.ee/vfpc61](https://linktr.ee/vfpc61)].

This rally served not just as remembrance, but as a unified stand for peace, justice, and the defense of our democracy.

*Ashley Salazar*

## #062 – NEW HAMPSHIRE

The A.J. Muste chapter has been quite active over the spring and summer. Our members participated in the “remembrance of the Nakba” vigil in Manchester in May, formed a team to participate in the national 40-day Veterans and Allies Fast for Gaza from May 22 to June 30, and took part in the June 13 “Veterans Demand Benefits Not Bullshit” protest in D.C. We continue to participate in weekly vigils and protests at our legislators’ offices and the State House, calling for peace in Palestine and an end to the war in Ukraine. We attend the “NH 50501” and “Hands Off” rallies around the state to make New

Hampshire VFP’s presence known. We actively participate in the NH Coalition for A Just Peace In The Middle East (NHCJPME); and write op-eds and letters to the editors of local newspapers.

As a chapter, we’ve endorsed and are assisting New Hampshire resident Bob Sanders’ Ride Against War on Gaza. We’ve co-sponsored screenings for the films *No Other Land* and *There Is Another Way* in Portsmouth and Concord. One member hosts a public access program, called *Now Is the Time to Talk*, to discuss peace and justice issues. Another member has been very active in his community hosting refugees through Project Home in Keene since December 2023 and volunteering in actions to help the unhoused in various ways since 2019. As a chapter, we just held our summer picnic on Iraq veteran Will’s farm.

*Jesse Gillis*



*Left to Right: Two local members of WILPF, Nadya Williams, and Vince Dijanich were there to welcome the Golden Rule upon its arrival in San Francisco on August 5, 2025 during its Bay Area tour. On the right is new Golden Rule Project Manager Michelle Marsonette.*

PHOTO BY LOU FLORES





*Peace crusader Susan Lamont (top) and Sonoma County VFP Chapter 71 President Fred Ptucha.*

## #069 – SAN FRANCISCO

This summer, VFP Chapter 69 members participated in the No Kings march on June 14 in San Francisco. It was the largest protest since the Vietnam war with around 200,000 people attending. Chapter 69 assisted with the San Francisco Gay Pride parade on June 29 by taking tickets and ushering at the grandstand.

In July, Chapter 69 members joined AFGE union member VA workers in their weekly protests at the Fort Miley VA health care center in San Francisco. Chapter members attended the VFP National Convention, both in person and online.

In August, the historic *Golden Rule* peace boat sailed to the Bay Area to sound the alarm about the growing danger of nuclear war, and to promote an end to war and militarism. The 34-foot wooden ketch and its four-person crew sailed around the bay throughout August, making stops in multiple cities, including San Francisco, Alameda, Berkeley, Richmond, and San Mateo. VFP members were present at many of the stops.

Chapter 69 co-hosted a screening of *Golden Rule: The Journey for Peace* on Agent Orange Awareness Day (August 10) and hosted the *Golden Rule*'s final tour event on August 27 at the Veterans' Building in San Francisco.

*Vince Dijanich*

## #071 – SONOMA COUNTY

Chapter 71 just dedicated its 85th Peace Pole planted in Sonoma County schools, and was active in the *Golden Rule*'s San Francisco Bay visit in August. Gerry Condon was inducted into the County's "Living Peace Wall" in Sebastopol on September 6. Five of our chapter members attended the VFP National Convention in Las Vegas.

*Terence McNeill*

## #072 – PORTLAND, OR

The Portland, Oregon, chapter has been busy these past couple months! We were happy to welcome folksinger David Rovics to the one of the Sunday Vigils for Gaza held weekly at SE 12th & Hawthorne Blvd.

We were an endorser of the Global Sumud Flotilla Global Day of Action August 31 at Sellwood Riverfront Park, along the Willamette River, where a Palestinian high school student named Hannah gave an emotional delivery of her deeply insightful poem, "Written in Water" [youtu.be/50kJTdnaUnI].

Chapter 72 has joined in solidarity with a global movement holding first-Wednesday-of-the-month vigils to *Close Guantanamo Bay Prison*. Organizations invited to join our coalition that had representation at the September 3 vigil include Resist U.S.-Led War, Clownbloc, War Resisters League,

*continued on page 22*



*Chapter 72 members Dawn Regier (associate) and Brett Trosclair tabled with chapter president Dan Shea at the Workers Over Billionaires Labor Day Rally at Battleship Oregon Memorial Park on September 1, distributing information about the VFP Labor Working Group and Save Our VA national project.*

PHOTO BY DAN SHEA

# VFP CHAPTER REPORTS

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*Portland, OR, Chapter #072 continued:*

Workers World, and Cuba Solidarity groups. Our expanded messaging: “Close Guantanamo Bay,” “End the United States Blockade and Sanction against Cuba,” and “End Deportation of Immigrants to Guantanamo or any country—immigrants deserve and have the right to due process.”

Dan Shea was requested to be official videographer of the Oregon Palestinian Press Conference held on September 4 at Portland City Hall [video at [youtu.be/iNP1jZovDNk](https://youtu.be/iNP1jZovDNk)]. Dan also spoke, offering a veteran’s perspective, at an emergency meeting called by the Muslim Education Trust on September 28 in support of the Global Sumud Flotilla.

The Portland chapter is an organizational member of International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP), active with ICHRP-PDX. Dan Shea represented VFP-PDX at ICHRP’s national rally and conference in San Francisco the weekend of September 19–21.

VFP chapter meetings are held in person and on Zoom the second Tuesday of each month. We joined with other veterans and activists, and organizations to push back on the deployment of troops to Portland. Check out Dan’s video postings on YouTube @DanSheaVFP.

*Daniel Shea*



*Chapter 75 members Richard Scott (left) and Richard Smith got to table at the Phoenix Graham Nash concert in April.*

## #075 – PHOENIX, AZ

The Mark Von Hagen–George Mizo Chapter activated this spring when Graham Nash invited us to table at his April 16 performance in Phoenix. We decided prior to the concert, since it would occur within a few weeks of the 55th anniversary of the Kent State tragedy, to distribute, in addition to our VFP material, information about that dark day in American history.

We engaged in numerous productive conversations with concertgoers, not only about Kent State, but also current events signaling the clear and present danger the convicted felon who occupies the White House poses to our country and the world.

On May 4, we tabled at the Changing Hands Bookstore, as we have done for the past several years, to commemorate the Kent State tragedy. We returned to the bookstore on August 4 to commemorate and remember the victims of both the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, and again on November 11 to distribute poppies to remind store patrons of the significance of Armistice Day.

*Richard Smith*

## #089 – NASHVILLE, TN

Hector Black Chapter members have been out on the streets for a number of rallies and protests organized by the Party for Socialism and Liberation in support of immigrant rights, in which member Craig Bardo spoke eloquently. We also attended a rally in support of veterans benefits. Harvey Bennett traveled all the way from Charleston, South Carolina, to Nashville to join us at the local “Hand Off!” rallies where we shared the message that peace in Gaza is also important. Harvey has been active in Charleston with the Elbit out of South Carolina Coalition at their weekly pickets and at council meetings. We featured two of their organizers on our VFP Radio Hour show.

Jim and Arnold show up at the Friday rally in front of the Federal Building in Nashville and Jim was interviewed by channel 2 in Nashville while at the Stand up for Vets, Stand up for Unions rally. Harvey and Jim continue finding great people to interview for their syndicated radio hour including Suzanne Gordon, Russ Lemle, Bruce Carruthers, Brian Becker, Bill Ehrhart, Esa Galloway, Will Faulkner, Leslie Gill, Mike Ferner, Bill Astore, and more, while also sharing important voices you don’t hear on mainstream media like Francesca Albanese, Noura Erakat, Gideon Levy, Kyle Kulinski, and Glenn Diesen. The show is on Spotify and Soundcloud—just search Veterans For Peace.

Peace!

*Jim Wohlgenuth*

## #091 – SAN DIEGO

San Diego Veterans For Peace members kept busy during the second quarter of 2025. We have a new, younger, active board, now made up of almost all new members, a healthy sign. On April 16, we were outside the La Jolla VA Hospital in support of the nurses who were protesting the firings and budget reductions coming from D.C. We were back there on June 6 to join another large protest, and we will be organizing monthly protests there or outside other VA centers in San Diego on an ongoing basis.

On May 10, many of us attended a talk and book signing by Vietnamese author Le Ly Hayslip, and on May 30, we attended a talk and book signing by author and VFP Advisory Board member Chris Hedges.

Chapter members support and attend a weekly Saturday protest in Ocean Beach organized by CODEPINK, calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Throughout the spring and summer, we





**MEMORIAL DAY 2025  
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA**

PHOTO BY NATHAN WHITWORTH  
USED WITH PERMISSION

were active demonstrated and supported rallies led by other organizations all over San Diego County, in protest of the Trump administration's many injustices and unlawful actions.

The chapter set up our Hometown Arlington West Memorial on Memorial Day, May 26, in front of the USS Midway Museum here, and it received good press and lots of public participation. We continue to purchase and give out sleeping bags downtown to the thousands of unsheltered people in San Diego, with 5,750 bags distributed to date.

*Gilbert Field*

**#092 – SEATTLE**

Members of Daniel Ellsberg VFP Chapter 92 were among the over 1,500 demonstrators who gathered on May Day at Cal Anderson Park in Seattle to protest Trump/Musk illegal firing of federal workers and attacks on immigrants. VFP 92 stood in solidarity with American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) with leaflets, a Save Our VA banner, and AFGE signs. VFP is now partnering with AFGE members to protest staff firings at the Seattle VA every Tuesday with signs and handouts. Our collective presence at the entrance is met with enthusiastic honking and shouts.

Our chapter held a Memorial Day Zoom meeting to remember the dead of all wars—in contrast to the sappy self-serving patriotism of most media programs—and to remind people of the real costs of war, especially the civilian dead who are almost never included in the rampant jingoism. You can listen to the broadcast of this special program on Seattle VFP

Radio Show at KODX 96.9 FM [[kodoxseattle.org/seattlevfp/](http://kodoxseattle.org/seattlevfp/)]. You can also find it at [vfp92.org](http://vfp92.org).

Seattle VFP's protest of the Blue Angels, the Navy war planes, was covered by Bridget Chavez of King 5 TV, in a story titled "'Say No to Blue Angels': Seattle billboard challenges Seafair tradition" [[bit.ly/4nK2yAz](https://bit.ly/4nK2yAz)]

*Michael Dedrick*



**Seattle members turned out on May Day to rally with AFGE union members to protest illegal firings of workers and Save Our VA.**

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# VFP CHAPTER REPORTS

## #097 – KANSAS CITY, MO

Kansas City Chapter 97 has had a continued presence at local rallies and protests to support our local allies, as well as to recruit potential veterans or associates who have not yet found a community to channel their energy. As a chapter that borders Kansas and Missouri, we have been working to expand our visibility in both directions. From Topeka to Jefferson City, we are expanding our network of allies and making it known our veterans' voices are powerful tools for peace.

Members attended an activist fair organized by Boots On The Ground Midwest (BOTGM), where we worked to educate interested individuals and reach out to potential members. At another BOTGM event with several hundred in attendance, member Theodore John gave a speech on the state of our country, the costs of war, and the effects of VA cuts on himself and fellow veterans. We have supported PeaceWorks KC in their ongoing efforts to oppose the new construction of buildings at the Kansas City National Security Campus, a facility currently making parts for new nuclear weapons. Members also provided a meal at Cherith Brook Catholic Worker House: 64 servings of Chili and Cornbread!

Chapter 97 Kansas City now has a website at [vfpkc.org](http://vfpkc.org), and we have begun building it out with basic information about VFP and our chapter, plus a few resources. We look forward to adding articles and other content as time goes on. We have also opened chapter social media accounts on Bluesky and TikTok, with the hope of spreading our message to a wider audience. Find us on Bluesky @kcvetsforpeace.bsky.social, and on TikTok @vetsforpeacekc.

Bryson Ripley

## #099 – ASHEVILLE, NC

For more than 22 years, chapter members have stood at the crossroads of Western North Carolina in downtown Asheville, holding a weekly peace vigil. This summer, Bob, Jerry, Chris, and Rusty carried on that tradition, reminding the community of the enduring call for peace. Drivers often responded with a friendly honk, echoing the message: *Honk for Peace!*

As the summer of 2025 winds down, we look ahead. By this time in 2026, we intend to celebrate with at least 50 new members standing alongside us. Join us and help the vigil continue as a beacon of community spirit.

Gerry Werhan

## #102 – MILWAUKEE

Our chapter played a leading role in winning passage of a Back from the Brink: The Call to Prevent Nuclear War resolution [[facebook.com/PreventNuclearWar](https://facebook.com/PreventNuclearWar)], which was adopted unanimously by the Milwaukee Common Council and signed by the mayor. It calls on U.S. leaders to: actively pursue a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals; renounce the option of using nuclear



*Milwaukee's Back from the Brink resolution is signed by Mayor Cavalier Johnson. Witnesses (L to R): Julie Enslow of 350MKE, Pam Richard of Peace Action Wisconsin, Steve Watrous of UN Association of Greater Milwaukee, Paula Rogge of Physicians for Social Responsibility-Wisconsin, and Bill Christofferson of Milwaukee VFP.*

weapons first; end the sole, unchecked authority of any U.S. president to launch a nuclear attack; take U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert; and cancel the plan to replace the entire U.S. nuclear arsenal with enhanced weapons. VFP Chapter 102, Physicians for Social Responsibility-Wisconsin, Peace Action-Wisconsin, United Nations Association of Greater Milwaukee, and 350MKE were the lead organizers. A coalition of 18 peace, justice, religious and community organizations endorsed it and worked for passage.

In June, our chapter sponsored a delegate to the Rotary's annual World Affairs Seminar at Carroll University. Some of



*Carrying on a tradition of peace, stalwart members of VFP Chapter 99, Bob, Jerry, Chris and Rusty (out of frame), carry on the weekly peace vigil that has been held at the Crossroads of Western North Carolina in downtown Asheville for more than 22 years!*

PHOTO BY GERRY WERHAN



our members took part in a panel on Healing from Vietnam, which included Hmong refugees who, with the veterans, shared their journeys to find peace. “Peacebuilding: Creating Lasting Change” was the theme of this year’s seminar, attended by 200 high school-age delegates.

Our 19th annual Reclaim Armistice Day event on November 11 will feature speakers Sarah Blum, a Vietnam veteran and author of *Warrior Nurse*, and Ziad Abbas Shamrouch, a Palestinian refugee who is executive director of Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA).

*Bill Christofferson*

## #106 – DALLAS



**VFP Chapter 106 in action, Dallas, Texas**

PHOTO BY SAM BORTNIK

VFP Chapter 106 is focused on Palestine. We participated in the Veterans and Allies Fast for Gaza, some members fasting for 40 days and one continuing to 64 days. With allies, we made calls to Maersk to demand they stop shipments of U.S. military cargo to Israel as well as to alert employees to their company’s complicity in genocide.

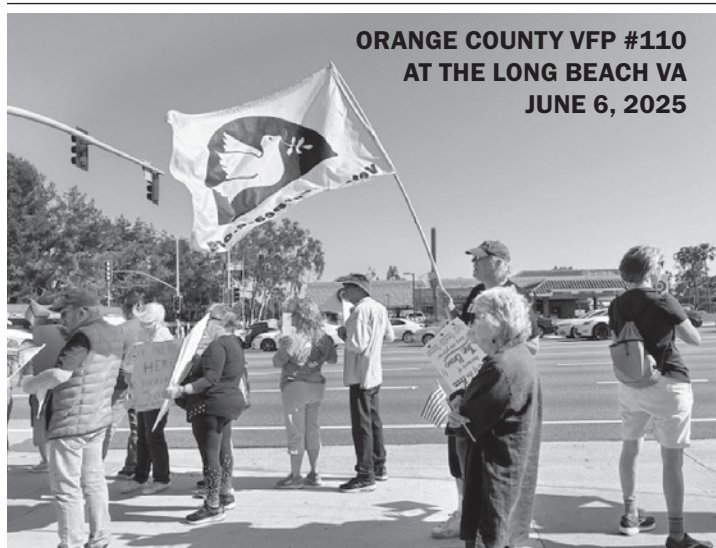
As the Freedom Flotilla set off with the first wave of boats this year, we answered the call to urge the public and officials to support them, displaying our TO GAZA WITH LOVE banner at government and corporate offices, and delivering letters to consulates. We’ve participated in myriad Free Gaza rallies, marches, and banner drops. We rallied in our land-boat, “sailing” across a freeway overpass bridge between a busy transit station and the Bush LIE-bury.

We displayed our SAVE OUR VA banner at the Dallas VA Medical Center and Senator Cornyn’s office. VFP flags flew at Kings Day protests in Dallas, Flower Mound, and McKinney, Texas. We had a presence at the VFP National Convention and the People’s Conference for Palestine.

Kudos to Chapter 106 board member and “glue that holds the Dallas activist community together,” Patricia Murphy, the 2025 recipient of Dallas AFL-CIO’s Outstanding Woman of Labor Award!

*Leslie Harris*

## #111 – ORANGE COUNTY, CA



**Orange County VFP Chapter 110 at the Long Beach VA, June 6, 2025.**

## #111 – BELLINGHAM, WA

VFP Chapter 111 remains small but mighty. Like many chapters, we continue to face challenges in activating both new and long-time members. Our monthly meetings have averaged only one or two attendees this past year, while special events have typically drawn around six participants.

Where our chapter truly shines is in community representation and solidarity. Members are consistently visible in local movements, proudly wearing VFP shirts and pins as we show up to support actions led both by our chapter and by allied organizations. Below are some chapter highlights and ongoing work:

- Website & Blog: Maintained with dedication by Gene Marx, who ensures our chapter’s presence remains strong online.
- Community Action: Michael Colfer continues to protest ICE overreach and abuse at a busy intersection during rush hour traffic.

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# VFP CHAPTER REPORTS

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## *Bellingham Chapter #111, continued:*

- Counter-Recruitment: Chapter 111 provides the largest volunteer base for the Alternatives to Military Service program coordinated by Aneesa Ahad through the Whatcom Peace and Justice Center.
- Regular Presence: Members maintain active participation at Growing Veterans (an organic nonprofit farm), the weekly Peace Vigil, and weekly bannered actions to end the genocide in Palestine.
- Special Events: This past year we hosted a presentation at Western Washington University on conscientious objection to war; organized a community screening of the film *What I Want You To Know*; led an anti-nuclear proliferation art-activism workshop; and welcomed author Sarah Blum, who shared her experiences as a field nurse in Vietnam and her journey of healing from moral injury.

While our membership numbers at meetings remain low, Chapter 111's strength lies in showing up—whether at peace vigils, counter-recruitment efforts, educational events, or solidarity actions with allied groups. We remain committed to carrying forward the mission of Veterans For Peace in our community by being present, engaged, and visible.

Aneesa Ahad

## #112 – VENTURA COUNTY, CA

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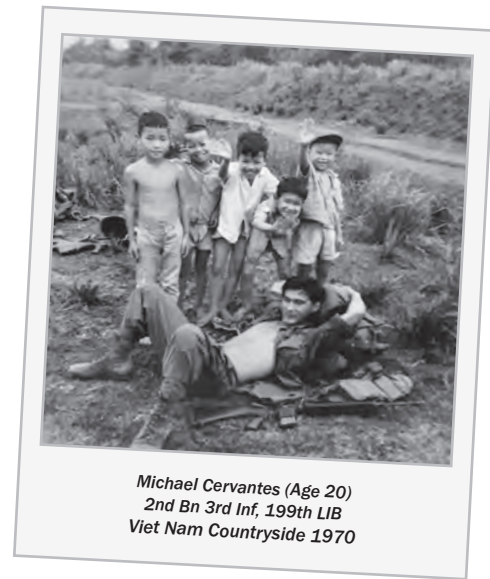
January 2025 began with invitations to set up booths, march, and rally at community events. The first was the ninth annual Justice for All—sponsored Women's Day Rally and March. The second was an early morning half-mile MLK, Jr. Day march in downtown Oxnard, followed by late morning tabling at another MLK, Jr. event in Ojai.

Members continue to attend weekly peace vigils organized by the Ojai-based U.S. Department of Peace. March found us tabling at a well-attended International Women's Day and immigration-focused informational event in Santa Paula.

We again were invited to a local high school district career expo where all branches of the military were present. Two months later, we conducted a review to make sure VFP counter-recruiting brochures were displayed in the career centers of nine area high schools.

Chapter member, Army infantry Vietnam veteran Michael Cervantes loaned his unique war photo for the "We Remember: Ventura County to Vietnam and Back" exhibit depicting the experiences of local Vietnam war veterans through interviews, photos, film, music, and readings. The exhibit was at the Broome Library on CSU Channel Islands campus in Camarillo (its sponsor), March 29–May 30.

April brought more opportunities to have information booths at two junior colleges in the cities of Moorpark and Ventura. Additional opportunities to engage with the public presented themselves in June, at the very delightful Redbird's Powwow at Oxnard College and the Juneteenth Festival at Oxnard Plaza



Park; in July, at the City of Ventura's highly popular 4th of July Street Fair; and in August, at the Chicano/Chicana Moratorium Commemoration in Santa Paula.

From January through September, we have been in the streets with thousands of fellow county residents for We Fight Back, Unite for Veterans, Hands Off, No Kings, Good Trouble, ICE Out of 805, and Labor Day's Workers Over Billionaires protests! On the International Day of Peace, September 21, Chapter 112 took its mobile informational cart to a combined Gaza/ICE rally that drew 100 people and received good coverage in the *Santa Barbara Independent* [see <http://bit.ly/4nsltQB>]. One of the *Independent's* photos shows VFP members Michael, Gilbert, and Joy, with VFP flag, table and banner in the foreground, at the very spot on the beach where they had set up Arlington West Santa Barbara every Sunday for 10 years running (2003–2013).

We've gained three veteran members since last reporting.

Shane Meserve

## #113 – HAWAII

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Chapter 113 co-coordinator Ann Wright was a speaker at several events during the 2025 World Conference against A and H Bombs, and spoke at 80th anniversary commemorations of the U.S. dropping of atomic bombs in both Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Ann Wright

## #117 – BOISE, IDAHO

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Veterans For Peace Idaho Anne Frank Chapter is a new chapter. Our first (pre-chapter) meeting was held on May 21 to discuss the chapter formation process, and in September, the VFP Board confirmed our official status as Chapter 117! Our first meeting as an official chapter and our first election took place on October 15. Raymond O'Dell was elected as the first





*While in Japan for the Hiroshima and Nagasaki 80th anniversary commemorations and the World Conference against A and H Bombs, Ann Wright met energetic 94-year-old Ms. Park Jung-soon, of Busan Branch, Korean Atomic Bomb Victims Association, who gave inspiring talks to all the conferences.*

chapter president; John Merrill was elected as vice president; and Nancy Daniels was elected Secretary/Treasurer. It is truly exciting to be a part of Veterans For Peace and see the chapter take shape.

So far, Idaho chapter efforts have been focused on several fronts. Recruiting is a priority, so we are making ourselves as visible as possible at as many local events as possible. Liaising is another priority. Our liaison process has begun, and we have established solid contacts now with several groups. We were invited to set up our tent at an Idaho 50501 event on June 14 at the Idaho State Capital and to share a tent with Veterans for Idaho Voters at the Boise VA Fair in July.



*On Wednesday, October 15, members of Boise, Idaho, Veterans For Peace Chapter 117 gathered for the chapter's first meeting and election after being granted official chapter status in September.*

Our chapter has taken SOVA as our primary focus and Raymond O'Dell is the newest member of the SOVA Steering Committee. We have been "flyering" at our Boise VA in support of "Save Our Veterans Administration" (SOVA), as well as at our local military facilities in support of "Don't Turn on Us."

On June 6, VFP Idaho members Nancy Daniels, Tim Teater, and Raymond O'Dell joined about 100 veterans in a rally to support the Boise VA. The event drew veterans from all over the state. More recently, we tabled at the No Kings 2.0 rally at the Idaho State Capitol.

On June 18, VFP Idaho members collaborated with other local groups to welcome Bob Sanders to Boise and gather an audience to hear Bob speak about his cause. Bob and his companion, Naor Deleanu, were riding from San Francisco to New Hampshire on a rolling protest of the war on Gaza. [Learn more at [nhpeaceaction.org/event/raw-gaza-x-country-tour/](http://nhpeaceaction.org/event/raw-gaza-x-country-tour/).] We gathered in a shady spot at Boise's Shoreline Park next to both the Boise River and some tasty food trucks with live music. Both Bob and Naor spoke passionately to a crowd of about 20 people before heading a few miles into the city to speak again at a pop-up rally protesting Israel's attack on Iran.

*Raymond O'Dell*

## **#120 – BOULDER, CO**



*Boulder VFP Chapter 120 members and friends circled up after the weekly peace demo. "We are getting a lot of positive feedback these days," they reported. "Passersby are honking, waving, and cheering for us as we stand out on the street corners." A few days before that, a talk they organized on Nuclear Winter given by a professor from the Atmospheric Sciences Lab that drew an audience of 55 people.*

*SUBMITTED BY GEORGE NEWELL*

## **#122 – AUBURN, CA**

Members of Chapter 122 took to the streets in Placer County to protest the U.S.-enabled genocide and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians on many days throughout this summer. [See photos on next page.]

We also distributed leaflets on the same issue at local Democratic Party delegate registrations.

*Jim Hard*

*continued on page 28*



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Hitting the streets in Auburn, California (L to R): Unidentified veteran, Jim Hard, Toni García; Victor Rivers, Jim Hard, Ray Lee; Toni García.

## #125 – ATLANTA, GA

Members of Atlanta VFP Chapter 125 joined in the September 1 Labor Day rally and march from Woodruff Park to Ebenezer Church. The event drew a crowd of 1,500 people, including representatives of local unions, Black Lives Matter, Atlanta Grassroots Foundation, GLAHR Action Network, PSL, DSA, ACLU, Resist Fascism—anybody and everybody who loves freedom and hates war and dictatorship.

*Geoff Sumner*



VFP Chapter 125 member Geoff Sumner and an unidentified veteran carry a Veterans For Peace banner in the September 1, 2025, Workers Over Billionaires march from Woodruff Park to Ebenezer Church in Atlanta, Georgia.

## #134 – TACOMA, WA

2025 has been plenty active thus far for this chapter. Every Monday we hold one of a variety of banner messages over the I-5 corridor through downtown Tacoma. We most recently completed construction of a 20-foot-long banner reading: END USA ARMS FOR GAZA GENOCIDE / VETERANS FOR PEACE [photos at right].

In January, Chapter 134 had information tables at the citywide MLK Jr. Day event at the downtown convention center, as well as at the Redeeming the Prophetic Vision MLK event at the Evergreen State College. In May, we were represented at a Mother's Day action to protest nuclear arms at the Bangor Naval Base, with the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action. Some of our members attended a May Day protest against the laying off of Federal workers at the Washington State Capitol in Olympia, Washington. Others attended local Tacoma protests against measures restricting Social Security. We bring signs to hold up at weekly visibility actions held at the Tacoma Farmer's Market as well as at two other widely-trafficked local locations. The Tacoma chapter engaged in information tabling at community festivals and events throughout the summer, and this activity will continue into the fall.

*Kristi Nebel*







**Veterans Rob Mulford of Fairbanks VFP Chapter 146 and Shelby Bowling of About Face marched with other community members in the iconic (Peoples Republic of) Ester 4th of July parade.**

## #146 – FAIRBANKS, AK

Chapter 146 had a fairly eventful spring and summer. Alan Batten returned to Viet Nam for another peace tour with Hoa Binh VFP Chapter 160 in April, and also attended the VFP National Convention in Las Vegas in July.

On June 6, members took part in a D-Day rally/protest of the current administration in Washington D.C., where member Rob Mulford spoke to the crowd of approx. 100 veterans about the ongoing genocide in Gaza, reminding them of a service person's duty to refuse illegal orders, and asking them to spread the word. On June 21, along with members of About Face and Fairbanks for Palestine, in the midst of thousands attending the popular Midnight Sun Festival, we took part in a die-in for Gaza, where we handed out packets containing the Military Law Task Force's publication, Refusing Illegal Orders, and spoke with over 25 active-duty service members. Chapter members marched in the iconic (Peoples Republic of) Ester, Alaska, 4th of July Parade. Our members also staffed tables at several events: Earth Day (April 19), Angry Young and Poor Festival (July 12), the Fairbanks Pride Festival (July 26), and the Tanana Valley State Fair (July 25 to August 3).

*Rob Mulford*

## #147 – ADIRONDACK, NY

Adirondack Veterans For Peace Chapter 147 has been very actively involved in the local upstate New York peace and justice movement, going to local rallies every Saturday in Glens Falls, New York, since they started in April, 2025. This reporter has been proposing a Peace/Community Fair to interested parties, planned for Fall of 2026 in Glens Falls, New York.

*David LaCarte*

## #157 – TRIANGLE REGION, NC

Despite floods and hurricanes, Chapter 157 has remained connected to community actions for peace. Inspired in May by a meeting with VFP Executive Director Michael McPhearson, we co-sponsored a public panel discussion on "Guantanamo's Future: Detention, Expansion, and Resistance." Also in May, our annual alternative Memorial Day observance was highlighted by a keynote address by Medea Benjamin, and a guest appearance by truth teller Dr. Mark Perlmutter, recently returned from another heartbreaking medical mission to Gaza.

In June, we participated in a "No Kings Day" event where chapter president Douglas Ryder spoke to a crowd of 2,500. He ended his speech with a declaration that VFP "will not remain silent in the face of tyranny and repression. We reaffirm our commitment to a government 'of, by, and for the people,' and we thank you all for your service by showing up today."

After returning from participation in VFP's July delegation to Nicaragua, Ryder shared his experience in two public forums, one sponsored locally by Balance & Accuracy in Journalism and the other a VFP webinar titled "Our Time in Nicaragua: Veterans For Peace Report Back."

On August 6, the 80th Anniversary of the U.S. Bombing of Hiroshima, we co-sponsored an annual and solemn public observance marked by the reading of VFP's annual statement, the ringing of bells, and the distribution of origami cranes. Together, we pledged "Never again."

*Vicki Ryder*

## #159 – LANE COUNTY, OR

Where in Oregon are we? Eugene, Springfield and surrounding area. Lane County Veterans For Peace Chapter 159 has rejuvenated after a very long hiatus! Our chapter *continued on page 30*



**Lane County, Oregon, VFP Chapter 159 members (L to R): Shelley Corteville, Mike Peterson, Ron Schwinler, and Frank Harper.**

PHOTO BY TRISHA DRISCOLL

# VFP CHAPTER REPORTS

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*Lane County Oregon Chapter #159, continued:*

participates in three weekly protests—ICE, Gaza, and Save Our VA—and joins other protests in collaboration with local activist groups.

Recently we organized an action for a town hall by our Congresswoman Val Hoyle, who refuses to use the word genocide when asked about Gaza, and has taken money from the pro-Israel J-Street lobby. At a press conference before her town hall, we demanded she say the word genocide and return the money. During the town hall, six VFP-159 chapter members stood as a unit and loudly chanted together: “It’s a genocide! Say it, Val!” Media coverage of our action went statewide.

For a chapter that has been inactive for a number of years, we have been extremely busy and are in the process of planning future actions. We play a small part in saving our country to create something better for the future. Our guiding mission is to wage peace by organizing, educating, and agitating.

*Shelley Corteville*

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## #160 – VIET NAM (EXPATS)

Hoa Binh Chapter 160 members joined Vietnamese citizens in celebrating historic anniversaries this year.

Since VFP Chapter 160’s April 2025 peace tour of Viet Nam, our 11th tour over the years, we have continued to be active with other commemorative activities, including marking, in April, the 50th anniversary of the end of the war on April 30, 1975.

We also joined in the celebration of Viet Nam’s 80th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence against French colonialism, which took place on September 2, 1945.

These celebrations were huge, joyous occasions, with much emphasis on peace, goodwill, and friendship among all nations. Thousands of young soldiers join the ranks of army, air force, and navy units to practice marching through the streets of Ha Noi as throngs of excited onlookers wave national flags of red backgrounds and yellow stars. The Vietnamese got into the spirit of the occasion, celebrating their hard-won independence! Representatives of Chapter 160 were invited to participate as longtime friends of Viet Nam.

In addition to our educational tours, Chapter 160 continues to work, year after year, on alleviating the still vicious legacies of the American War—unexploded ordnance and Agent Orange. Through generous donations from our members and others on our tours, we have to date contributed more than \$325,000 to those efforts. Also, working with VFP’s Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign, we continue to work on gaining congressional support for two Agent Orange Bills, H.R. 3051 and H.R. 3052, sponsored by Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI). Please ask your congressperson to co-sponsor.

*Chuck Searcy*



*Fresno Chapter 180 members and allies continue to show up and connect the issues at demonstrations in downtown Fresno.*

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## #180 – FRESNO, CA

Fresno VFP Chapter 180 remains active on multiple fronts as we continue to confront war, empire, and repression. In recent months, our members have joined frequent demonstrations calling attention to the ongoing genocide against Palestinians, including a powerful protest targeting Chevron and demanding boycott in solidarity with the Palestinian people. Alongside our allies in the Fresno Peace Coalition (Raza Against War, Peace Fresno, and the Party for Socialism and Liberation), we have been calling out local, state, and national officials for their complicity in war, occupation, and the profiteering of the military-industrial complex.

At the same time, we recognize the links between U.S. foreign wars and repression at home. Our chapter has been showing up in solidarity with immigrant rights groups to protest ICE abductions and to challenge the expanding machinery of domestic surveillance and criminalization in our own communities. Though small in numbers, Chapter 180 continues to raise awareness, stand with allies, and build resistance to imperialism and mass murder—whether carried out abroad or within our own borders.

*Joshua Shurley*

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## #184 – MISSISSIPPI

Plans to protest at an Israeli-owned weapons manufacturing company in Mississippi were postponed indefinitely as we seek new recruits and more ally participation. Mississippi chapter members are scattered across the state, so we are currently supporting larger local organizations like the Mississippi Gulf Coast Mutual Aid Collective and the Party for Socialism and Liberation. We plan to rally and hope to recruit more members at the Keesler AFB airshow in November and on Veterans Day.

*Ray Nacanaynay*



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## #183 – CENTRAL OHIO

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*September 19 and 20, at the Air Force Marathon at Wright State University, Central Ohio VFP Chapter 183 members and friends distributed hundreds of flyers to military runners and families, along with displays of Gaza photos. Olga Garcia, VFP member from Las Vegas, ran the marathon and finished with a VFP flag. The action was organized by Dirk Lakovich-Van Gorp.*

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## #185 – EASTON, MD

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Easton VFP Chapter 185, a vibrant peace-making addition to the Maryland Eastern Shore, is led by resolute Chapter Coordinators Bruce Butler (Navy) and Ben Mauro (Army). Their inspiring leadership has brought together a team of eight veteran members, three potential veteran members, and two associate members. They formed a temporary chapter in early 2025, and the permanent Easton VFP Chapter 185 received official recognition and approval from the VFP Board in May 2025, serving as a testament to its unwavering commitment and marking a significant milestone in its journey.

Chapter 185's impactful initiatives have included hosting informational meetings, attending political rallies, and taking

part in a parade celebrating the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. We also stood in solidarity at No Kings Day rallies in Easton and Cambridge in protest of Trump's military parade. When ICE unjustly detained Pastor Daniel Fuentes Espinal, several chapter members and friends rallied along Route 50 in Easton. Their public outcry and advocacy, along with support from lawmakers, led to his release, empowering us to make a difference.

Additionally, we collaborated with a Vet Support Group in Centreville, Maryland, to help launch a support group gathering space, providing a platform for support and healing within its veteran community. Chapter 185 plans to establish a similar veteran's support group in Easton, Maryland.

We have formed a Facebook group page called Easton Veterans For Peace Chapter 185, and find it an excellent platform for sharing information. We have uploaded over 125 posts and files on assorted topics related to the mission and



*Bruce Butler (left) and Ben Mauro celebrating the chartering of Easton VFP Chapter 185, located on Maryland's eastern shore.*

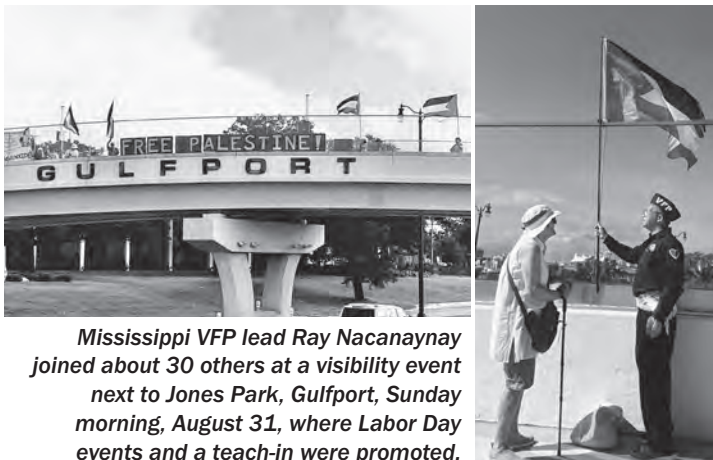
purpose of VFP and our chapter. Our current Facebook page reaches twenty-six members, including veterans, active-duty military personnel, and friends of the Easton VFP chapter.

Chapter 185 is steadfast in its mission to promote peace and justice, reduce military and non-military conflicts, protect human rights, and foster a compassionate society. This unwavering commitment is the driving force behind all our activities and initiatives.

Chapter 185's vision begins as a welcoming group of veterans along the Eastern Shore. We follow up by actively supporting peacebuilding and exposing the root causes and costs of military and non-military conflicts. We strive to educate the public about war and peace, advocating diplomacy over violence, peaceful protests, community organization, and supporting veterans and civilians affected by military trauma and oppression.

*Ben Mauro*

*continued on page 32*



*Mississippi VFP lead Ray Nacanaynay joined about 30 others at a visibility event next to Jones Park, Gulfport, Sunday morning, August 31, where Labor Day events and a teach-in were promoted.*



### #413 – RIVER VALLEY, MA

Veterans For Peace River Valley Chapter 413 has remained a voice for justice, peace, and demilitarization in Western Massachusetts. The chapter continues to hold stand outs at Westover Air Reserve Base, standing in peaceful protest against the militarization of U.S. foreign policy and advocating for a world without war [photo above].

This spring, members joined May Day marches and rallies in Springfield and Northampton, Massachusetts. The group's presence underscored the voices of those who have served in the military and now speak out against the violence of empire, and stand in solidarity with the labor rights movement. Chapter members also attended rallies on the April 5 national day of action to bring a message of anti-imperialism.

In collaboration with World BEYOND War and Demilitarize Western Massachusetts, our chapter participated in a stand out at Barnes Air National Guard Base as part of the #closebases call to action. Together, these groups called attention to the environmental and community impacts of military operations in the region, including the deployment of F-35 fighter jets, and U.S. complicity in violence in Gaza.

Chapter 413 also showed up to support LGBTQ+ rights and inclusion by marching in both the Hampshire and Franklin County Pride parades.

River Valley Chapter 413 will continue to stand in solidarity with our community—domestically and abroad—to call for peace everywhere.

*Donovan Lee (he/they)*

### #1004 – IRELAND

On March, 10, 2015 I was involved in the establishment of Veterans For Peace Ireland Chapter. I had attended a number of meetings and events with VFP UK where I met with VFP activists including Barry Ladendorf and Tarak Kauff who helped with the process of forming a chapter. I had already been active with national level peace groups in Ireland since 2001, so why bother to get involved on an international level with VFP? My reasoning was that humanity has been experiencing a range of interconnected, self-inflicted, existential crises that could lead to the destruction not only of humanity but of all living creatures on Planet Earth. These crises include environmental destruction, the risk of nuclear war, the reality of conventional wars causing deaths of millions of people, and the destruction of the rule of international and humanitarian laws. Small groups of isolated peace activists can only achieve limited success at local and national levels, especially in small countries. The crises facing humanity are of a global nature, so international and global action and cooperation is needed to overcome the many obstacles to international peace and global justice. I also became involved in World BEYOND War and I am a member of WBW board of directors.

As I write these words, over 104 Palestinians including 46 children have been murdered in Gaza over the past 24 hours in the ongoing genocide being perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian people. Thousands of people are being killed in conflicts in Africa and elsewhere. However, there are some bright lights in this dark horizon including the election of peace



and justice activist Catherine Connolly as President of Ireland, supported by thousands of younger voters, as well as by us older VFP members. Let's hope this peace and justice example will spread globally to help restore the now non-existent rule of international law. In accordance with our VFP Statement of Purpose, Veterans For Peace is a nonpartisan organization that, as a body, does not endorse a political party or candidate. However, that does not mean we are void of political analysis, preferences or hopes. Catherine Connolly, a left-leaning independent, has supported various initiatives of VFP Ireland Chapter 1002, including support of the Palestinian people and Irish neutrality. Prior to her election as President of Ireland, and in her capacity as a member of the Irish Parliament, she had agreed to transmit a letter to the Irish Prime Minister on Irish neutrality. Our work for peace and justice must continue.

*Edward Horgan*



**Flanked by members of VFP Ireland Chapter 1002, Gerry Rooney and VFP Ireland President Edward Horgan, then-Irish Parliament Member Catherine Connolly holds a copy of the letter she agreed to transmit to the Irish Prime Minister on Irish neutrality. Connolly was elected President of Ireland in a landslide on October 25, 2025.**

## #1004 – JAPAN

Japan is currently undergoing militarization from north to south, including the remote Okinawa Islands. In this context, Ken'ichi Narikawa's participation in the VFP National Convention in Las Vegas alongside the Okinawa/Japan team was meaningful. They raised their voices in opposition across Japan. He also participated in the 80th Hiroshima/Nagasaki vigil in Binghamton, New York. This event led to the 2025 Okinawa/Japan speaking tour. Upon returning to Japan, we held a briefing session to report on his participation in the convention. We understand that the groups that participated in the national convention plan to hold similar briefing sessions in their respective regions in the near future. In late October, an Okinawa/Japan tour organized by VFP members commenced, with support from our Japan VFP Chapter.

*Yukiko Takei*



**Japan VFP Chapter 1004 member Ken'ichi Narikawa (in grey tshirt) participated in the vigil commemorating 80 years since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, held in Binghamton, New York.**

## #1005 – SPAIN

*Adios! Hasta luego, greetings, and a wave goodbye!*

After six years of existence, VFP Spain has left the building and closed the Chapter 1005 doors. What a wonderful walk we had with the VFP clan, working and struggling for peace with dedicated veterans and non-veterans alike.

To date, 2024 and 2025 left chapter 1005 with an active and impactful exit from the roster.

Last year VFP Spain and VFP Ireland helped found and organize the first International Neutrality Congress in Bogota, Colombia, which was attended by over 50 representatives from 20 countries and six continents.

This year, our group organized the International Active Neutrality Colloquium in Geneva, Switzerland, and formally handed off the responsibility of organizing next year's Second International Active Neutrality Congress next year to the Geneva Center for Neutrality. The Colloquium hosted over 90 participants from 27 countries and 5 continents.

VFP Spain also had a hand in founding and organizing the Global Veterans Peace Network, an NGO now based in Geneva, Switzerland. Its mission is to have veterans around the world working and educating together about how the tool of active neutrality can help support a global community.

Wishing travel mercies to all as we continue our journeys.

*With gratitude,  
Ren McDonough*

# VFP Labor Working Group active on several fronts

THE LABOR WORKING GROUP (LWG) has been meeting every two weeks, with meetings averaging 10–12 people. A five-person steering committee meets additionally every other week. New people have joined as a follow-up to their interest in our convention workshop.

## SOVA: A Natural Ally

Some LWG members take part in regular protests against the attacks on the VA by the ruling regime. Amidst the brutality of these attacks, we note that attacks on VA workers (many of whom are veterans) and attacks on the VA services to veterans cannot be separated. The Federal Unionist Network (FUN), a rank-and-file worker-based group of various federal workers' unions that formed early in 2025 in response to the regime's attacks, has consistently made this connection between federal workers' issues and attacks on the public who use the government services that the regime is trying to destroy. LWG is working closely with SOVA around the VA issue.

## People Over Pentagon!

The People Over Pentagon campaign to reduce Pentagon spending and make money available for education, healthcare, and other pressing human needs is steadily growing. We now have the endorsements of 77 labor organizations, along with National VFP and 26 VFP chapters. No pay or benefits for military personnel or veterans would be cut by this bill. We are working with Mark Pocan and Ilhan Omar's staffers to get a bill in the current Congress, and to ensure that it includes "Just Transition" language.

## Holding Leadership to Account

LWG is supportive of labor union leadership when it takes progressive action and engages in resistance. One example is Labor for Democracy, a network of 15 national unions and hundreds of local and regional unions and labor groupings that organizes against both the federal regime's attacks on collective bargaining and its attacks on overall democracy. On the other hand, LWG is not tied to institutional labor or any political party, and this enables us to be critical of union leadership that is not meeting the moment.

## Labor and Global Solidarity

We write this in early October, just after the Global Sumud Flotilla was intercepted in international waters, and hundreds of those sailing were arrested and brutally treated by the Israeli government. Veterans For Peace members and Italian dockworkers were among the diverse international crew of the 50 vessels. Italy experienced a major response to the Israeli government's attacks on the Sumud Flotilla in the form of two 24-hour general strikes, on September 22 and October 3, that shut down the country.



*Italian general strike for Gaza in Ancona, September 19, 2025*

The first weekend in October saw hundreds of massive rallies held worldwide in support of the people of Gaza and protesting the repression of the Sumud Flotilla; they were especially huge in Rome, Barcelona, Amsterdam and Cape Town. [*Independent* article here: <http://bit.ly/47BMR9g>] There were protests in the U.S. and within Israel. The U.S. corporate press barely covers any of this, of course; and unfortunately, the sources that *have* covered the Flotilla and related protests have often not given the workers' dimension the publicity it deserves.

Dockworkers internationally have organized solidarity strikes stopping weapons shipments to Israel from their ports. This year, such strikes took place in April in Morocco; for six days in May in Sweden; in June in Marseille, France; in July in Piraeus, Greece; and repeatedly in Genoa, Italy. An international conference of dockworkers to coordinate stopping weapons shipments was held in Genoa the last weekend in September.

Recent general strikes and the upsurge in political activism in Italy after a long period of relative inactivity can trace its origins to the Autonomous Dockworkers' Collective—CALP—which formed in Genoa in 2011. CALP's shutdown of the Genoa port in 2019, refusing to ship Saudi weapons against the people of Yemen, has led to these international port shutdowns where workers refuse to ship weapons of war.

*Submitted by Steve Morse*

**Contact LWG:** [labor@veteransforpeace.org](mailto:labor@veteransforpeace.org)



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# Veterans For INNER Peace introduces PEP program

**Craig Klawuhn** is a Vietnam Veteran, 2 tours USMC. Struggling with integrating back into civilian life, he had a profound experience of personal peace, and was motivated to share this opportunity with others. He worked with a fellow Army veteran to establish the first **Peace Education Program (PEP)\*** for military veterans. They put out the word through the VA and had seven responders. After meeting **Gerry Werhan** via Asheville, North Carolina, VFP Chapter 99, the two began a collaboration to revive the VFP **Veterans For INNER Peace Working Group** as a vehicle for bringing the peace course to other veterans.

Craig calls his own experience with the PEP program “transformational.” He says it gave him a deeper appreciation and respect for being alive. “My own experience taught me a lot. One, it is very important to listen to people non-judgmentally. And two, understanding that peace is a moment-by-moment awareness. I have watched people [in the program] grow and change week by week.”

Veterans For INNER Peace is currently offering the 10-week Peace Education Program course for veterans. The course is free and sessions are provided online, so veterans may participate from anywhere in the world. The program consists of 10 classes, approximately 1 hour each. More info about PEP is available online at [tprf.org/peace-education-program](http://tprf.org/peace-education-program).

Please email **Craig Klawuhn** at [herbzone@gmail.com](mailto:herbzone@gmail.com) if you would like to sign up, have any questions, or want to receive an invitation to the next Veterans For INNER Peace–hosted program.

\*The Prem Rawat Foundation [[tprf.org](http://tprf.org)] is a global nonprofit offering humanitarian programs such as PEP and Food for People, mostly run by volunteers. Both programs are very successful.

HERE ARE TWO SHORT VIDEOS that illustrate the value of the Peace Education Program for military veterans:



Formerly homeless veteran Alyce Knafllich, who had served for 16.5 years during “peacetime,” went on to found a shelter for women veterans after reconnecting to herself through the PEP program. [[youtu.be/BHJc3RJ5TS4](https://youtu.be/BHJc3RJ5TS4)]



An Iraq veteran discovered the PEP pathway to peace while in prison: “When you say ‘peace,’ people think ‘war and peace,’ they don’t think about *inner* peace.” [[youtu.be/\\_KkL7OicbE4](https://youtu.be/_KkL7OicbE4)]

## FOCUSED AND READY FOR ACTION!

# Conscientious Resistance Working Group (CRWG)

**LAST SPRING, the GI Resistance Working Group was revived as the Conscientious Resistance Working Group (CRWG).**

The renaming reflects a broader scope of resistance to militarism and our role in providing support for service veterans, service members, and civilians who take a stand against war and military conflict.

Initially, the group worked on building community and identifying key points of interest and need. Having established three focus areas—Moral Injury, Counter Recruitment, and Conscientious Objection—CRWG is now ready for active involvement in our communities and in partnership/support of similarly aligned groups inside and outside of VFP.

Current projects include establishing monthly moral injury support groups, organizing counter-recruitment workshops to strengthen our community outreach, and providing support for service members contemplating conscientious objection and/or refusal of unlawful orders.

To support broad participation, CRWG meets twice each month, on two different days/times: the second Sunday at 8pm Eastern/5pm Pacific, and the second Tuesday at 11:30am Eastern/8:30am Pacific.

Second Sunday meetings center on moral injury. Non-VFP participants may attend these meetings when invited by a

VFP member. The purpose is to provide grounded, accessible support while adhering to VFP policies and standards. After a brief opening, participants divide into three breakout groups:

- Veterans-only Moral Injury
- Non-veterans Moral Injury support group
- General conversation group

Second Tuesday meetings are focused on working group business, emphasizing needs assessment, planning, and resource-sharing. These sessions are ideal for bringing forward events, seeking connections, and coordinating work across CRWG projects.

As the working group continues to develop and grow, the CRWG is seeking co-facilitators with vision, commitment, and the willingness to help guide its work forward. Note that the roles of co-facilitators are works in progress; together we will define roles and responsibilities to best meet our goals of group sustainability and effective outreach.

Whether you want to attend a meeting, join a breakout team, or simply learn more, your participation strengthens the collective effort. Please email CRWG coordinator Aneesa Ahad at [ConscientiousResistance@gmail.com](mailto:ConscientiousResistance@gmail.com) for upcoming meeting dates/plans and Zoom links, or if you have any questions about the Conscientious Resistance Working Group.

# State Medal of Friendship recognizes Veterans For Peace efforts on behalf of Agent Orange victims

ON SEPTEMBER 2, 2025, the 80th Anniversary of Vietnam's National Day (A80), in a celebratory tribute to international friends hosted by leaders of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in Hanoi, the Government of Vietnam honored organizations and individuals who have made significant contributions to the country with the award of the National Friendship Medal. Based on the recommendation of VAVA (Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin), this year's awards went to two organizations and two outstanding individuals from the USA, "who have made long-standing contributions to the friendship between our two countries and especially supported victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin over the years." These include **Veterans For Peace**, the **Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign** (VAORRC—a national project of VFP), and **Paul Cox**, a Vietnam veteran who has long collaborated with **Susan Schnall** and others to seek justice for Agent Orange victims through VAORRC. Paul has also assisted with Chapter 160's Vietnam tours, a fundraiser for multiple charities addressing Agent Orange and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) in Vietnam. And, he was active with Susan and other VFP members in the "Viet Nam Full Disclosure" campaign toward an honest commemoration of the American War in Vietnam [vietnamfulldisclosure.org].

Paul wrote the following statement in response to VAVA's email announcing his State Medal of Friendship award:

*"I am honored to be chosen to receive the National Friendship Medal from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; and my deepest thanks to VAVA for the nomination.*

*"Also, on behalf of Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign, we are humbled by this expression of friendship from the people and country that is a beacon of independence and diplomacy to the world.*

*"Our meager but heartfelt efforts to mitigate the legacies of a vicious war on Vietnam have been rewarding to us in healing and solidarity. We trust our work has also been helpful to the victims of Agent Orange and unexploded ordnance we have encountered during our work. We will cherish these awards and continue our work to deserve them."*

Neither Paul nor Susan were able to travel to Hanoi for the A80 celebration, but VFP Chapter 160 President Chuck Searcy was on hand to address the gathering of approximately 75 people—international delegations from Cuba, France, and half a dozen other nations hosted by the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations, plus numerous Vietnamese government and party officials including the Foreign Minister and the Chairman of the Fatherland Front. Chuck spoke about the important roles that Susan Schnall, Paul Cox, and other members of VFP



**VFP Chapter 160 President Chuck Searcy speaking at A80 event on behalf of Veterans For Peace. [Named the "Hoa Binh" or Peace chapter, VFP-160 includes both American ex-pats living in Viet Nam, and veterans like Paul Cox, who resides in the USA.]**

have played in post-war reconciliation, and how these efforts contributed to bringing the U.S. and Vietnam closer.

Chuck Searcy is a previous recipient of Vietnam's National Friendship Medal, presented on the 70th Anniversary of National Day, for his valuable work with Project RENEW, a Vietnamese-run mine-clearing organization in Quang Tri Province. RENEW runs a Mine Education Center that hosts grade-school students from all over the province to learn of the dangers of UXO and safety measures. They also provide emergency response and ongoing support to affected families.

In 2000, the very first Viet Nam National Friendship Medals were bestowed upon VFP member George Mizo (d. 2002), his partner Rosi Mizo, and French veteran Georges Doussin (d. 2016), all cofounders with the Vietnamese of the Vietnam Friendship Village Project in Hanoi. That ceremony was attended by General Vo Nguyen Giap, senior military commander for Vietnam during both the French and American wars; the general's famous remark as he hugged George and Rosi's young son Michael—"Never go to war."

The people named above represent just a handful of the many American veterans who have returned to Vietnam for healing and reconciliation since the war's end. It is gratifying to know that a good share of those have been VFP members.

—Becky Luening

\* Vietnam National Day is a public holiday observed annually on September 2 to commemorate Vietnam's independence from French and Japanese occupation. Originally known as Independence Day, September 2 is the date in 1945 when President Ho Chí Minh declared independence by reading the Declaration of Independence of Vietnam at Ba Đình Square in Hanoi.



# VFP Delegations: Witness, Solidarity, and Education

Joshua Shurley, VFP National Vice President



## Nicaragua: A Work in Progress, A Model in Defiance

A VFP DELEGATION WITNESSES SOCIAL PROGRESS DEFYING EMPIRE'S GRIP.

In March, a Veterans For Peace delegation traveled to Nicaragua to witness a country forging its own path despite decades of U.S. intervention, economic warfare, and relentless disinformation. What we saw was not a dictatorship, but a defiant nation under siege, and a society very much in motion.

Nicaragua is still healing from the wounds of the brutal U.S.-backed Contra War in the 1980s, which devastated communities and left deep scars across the country. That war and the political destabilization attempts that followed were meant to crush a revolution. But today, we saw something else: reconciliation, resilience, and a renewed commitment to build a dignified society.

Much of that spirit is being carried forward by young people and leaders within the Sandinista movement, who are focused not on revenge, but on rebuilding. The work is ongoing but it's making real gains. For example, the delegation visited Casa Materna maternity homes, part of a national network that has helped reduce maternal mortality by 80% since 2007. We saw clean, free public hospitals and clinics and massive investments in education, disaster response, and rural infrastructure.

While these gains are unfolding, U.S.-funded media and opposition groups continue to push a false narrative of repression—one that ignores how

far Nicaragua has come. In truth, the country is investing in public health, gender equity, environmental protection, and grassroots democracy at a time when those same metrics are in decline in the U.S.

As former VFP president Gerry Condon said during the trip, "This is what resistance looks like when it grows crops, heals mothers, and educates the next generation."



## Viet Nam: A Living Classroom of Anti-Imperialism

VIET NAM ISN'T A CLOSED CHAPTER—IT'S A LIVING LESSON.

This spring, a Veterans For Peace delegation traveled to Vietnam during the 50th anniversary of the country's reunification. From Ho Chi Minh City to Hanoi, we witnessed not just the scars of war—but the stunning resilience of a people who defeated U.S. empire and rebuilt on their own terms.

In the most heavily bombed regions of the war, we joined Project RENEW's demining teams and met with families still suffering the intergenerational effects of unexploded ordinance and Agent Orange. At My Lai, we stood in silence where a U.S. massacre once took place. At Hoa Lo Prison, we heard from author Tom Wilber about his father, a captured pilot who came to oppose the war from within. These were searing reminders of war's cruelty and the power of moral awakening.

But the story doesn't end in grief, but in solidarity and hope. Vietnam today offers a model of what's possible when a

nation refuses to be broken. The people have turned trauma into unity, isolation into independence, and devastation into determination. The national consciousness is high, and the will to resist exploitation remains strong.

This was not just a trip to the past. It points the way forward. Future VFP delegations to Vietnam can offer a living political education for younger veterans and allies seeking clarity in a chaotic world. Vietnam's path teaches vital lessons in dignity, sovereignty, and anti-imperialism—lessons we need now more than ever.

VFP continues to support long-term projects in Vietnam, including demining efforts, medical aid, and support for Agent Orange survivors. These programs are building lasting bonds between U.S. veterans and our Vietnamese counterparts—former enemies turned allies in the fight for peace.

As VFP member Jay Wagner put it so well, "Peace isn't a slogan—it's a relationship we choose to build."



Al Glatkowski in Managua

## Interested in Future Delegations?

Veterans For Peace delegations are not just trips—they're acts of witness, solidarity, and education. Whether it's Vietnam, Nicaragua, Palestine, or beyond, these journeys connect us with communities resisting empire—and deepen our own commitment to peace.

If you're interested in joining or helping organize a future VFP delegation, we want to hear from you! Contact national staff or email Josh Shurley at [josh@veteransforpeace.org](mailto:josh@veteransforpeace.org) to get involved.

Another world is possible. Let's go see it—and build it—together.

# WINTER READING

Books recommended by VFP members and/or publishers

## **Smart Fish Don't Bite**

by W.D. Ehrhart (Moonstone Press, 2025)

"Bill Ehrhart's new collection of poems offers the reader a glimpse into our world through the eyes of a veteran who refuses to let down his guard. He's got our backs. Now in his 70s, he lives and writes for his family, his former students, and his brothers and sisters in the military veteran community. What I appreciate about his poems are their accessibility, for sure, but also his exquisite intelligence and empathetic perspective. He reaches out and touches so many of us. Personally, as a fellow namvet, I find his words about his military experience as a Marine in the American War in Vietnam to be evocative and moving. But not in a depressing way. More like a clarion call to continue our action to put an end to war. Bill is a longtime member of VFP, so he deserves our support on that account; but he also has earned a place in our hearts through his poetry. Please consider picking up a copy of this latest collection of poems. It'll make your day." [Buy copies: <http://bit.ly/4hsish9>]

—Doug Rawlings, former VFP Poet Laureate

## **For a Greater Good: The Tom Swann Story**

by Thomas A. Swann (Austin Macauley Publishers, 2025)

Tom Swann Hernandez, longtime VFP member of Riverside/San Bernardino Chapter 19 in California, came out of the closet in 1992 as a gay Marine Corps veteran. As a civilian worker with a secret clearance for the Department of the Navy, he was assaulted and faced discrimination and retaliation from Navy officials. His access to classified information was challenged by the government based on being a member of the LGBTQ+ community. Successful ACLU litigation against the Navy prompted the Navy Secretary to add sexual orientation protection to the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy for all civilian employees—more than four years before the other branches of the military. As DEI and the EEOC are now being shut down, Tom's story sheds light on how difficult work was before DEI and why these programs are so vital for our nation.

Just released in October. Info at: [austinmacauleyusa.com/book/for-a-greater-good-the-tom-swann-story](http://austinmacauleyusa.com/book/for-a-greater-good-the-tom-swann-story)

## **Breaking Up with the Patriarchy: Decolonizing our Lives and Returning to Kinship Worldview**

by Susan L. Herrmann with Laura B. Fox

Foreword by VFP member Four Arrows (*Wahinkpe Topa*), aka Don Trent Jacobs

The anxiety about our children's future, the grief for our dying planet, the exhausting isolation despite being more "connected" than ever—these are all symptoms of living under the patriarchy, a worldview that has alienated us from our own wisdom and each other for the last 10,000 years. In this book therapist Susan L. Herrmann reveals that the systems causing our collective suffering aren't just political or economic—they live within us, shaping what we believe is possible—and the revolutionary truth: we can return to the Kinship Worldview that sustained humanity for 99% of our existence.

## **Our Grief Is Not a Cry for War: The Movement to Stop the War on Terror**

by Jeremy Varon (The University of Chicago Press, 2025)

The definitive history of the popular global protest movement that arose to challenge George W. Bush's War on Terror—the greatest case of "we told you so" in modern political history.

"This book is more than an exposé of a criminal war; it is a necessary warning for all those who struggle for a more peaceful world today and tomorrow."

—Tom Morello, singer/songwriter, VFP Advisory Board Member

## **The Cross and the Olive Tree: Cultivating Palestinian Theology amid Gaza**

Edited by Palestinian theologians John Munayer and Samuel Munayer (Orbis Press, 2025)

From the lived theology of grandmothers to traditions of scholarship, from ancient liturgies to contemporary resistance, eight Palestinian Christian theologians offer a crucial and vibrant perspective on liberation, reconciliation, and divine imagination. Written within the heart of suffering, the cross and the olive tree interpret each other in an unwavering hope, symbols of faith and homeland.

## **Civic Self-Respect**

by Ralph Nader (Seven Stories Press, 2025)

As federal judge Learned Hand said in 1944 during a famous brief speech at Central Park, New York City—neither the laws, the courts or other related institutions can be saved without the underlying exercise of the democratic spirit by the people. This book argues the importance of developing a civic personality, as distinguished from a private personality, with the two co-existing for a moral life participating in the common good.

## **The Antiwar Trilogy by Carl Boggs (Mindstir Media)**

Book 1—*THE GREAT FEAR: One Century of the Russian Threat—Myth and Reality* (2024)

Book 2—*THE MILITARIZED SOCIETY: No End to War?* (2025)

Book 3—*THE DOOMSDAY THREAT: On the Brink of World War III* (2025)

Book site: <https://www.carlboggs.org/the-antiwar-trilogy.html>

## **Christina and the Whitefish**

by Stephen Vittoria (Alternative Book Press 2025)

This debut work of fiction by award-winning filmmaker and nonfiction author Stephen Vittoria takes place in 1994. Christina, a young Gulf War veteran struggling with PTSD and the loss of both parents, drives cross-country in a borrowed car, desperately seeking relief and redemption in Asbury Park, the seaside mecca of her childhood.

"To call the novel *Christina and the Whitefish* haunting, is an understatement of mega-proportions....As powerful as Dalton Trumbo's iconic anti-war novel, *Johnny Got His Gun*."

—Beth Moroney's Book Reviews



### Woody Powell, Presente!

IN MID AUGUST, we received word that Wilson M. “Woody” Powell, IV, a veteran of the Korean war (Air Force) and longtime Veterans For Peace member from St. Louis who once served as VFP’s Executive Director, was in home hospice. Mike Ferner wrote that Woody was “still sharp as a tack, but with a heart that is getting tired after 93 years keeping him going.” He then shared a couple of Woody’s most recent poems, in which he explored his own mortality.

Ferner’s email elicited a dozen or so responses from friends and acquaintances expressing love and admiration and sharing remembrances. One of those was Ward Reilly, another longtime and much loved VFP member (Vietnam era), who wrote the note below. Little did we know that Ward himself would be gone barely a month after writing these words:

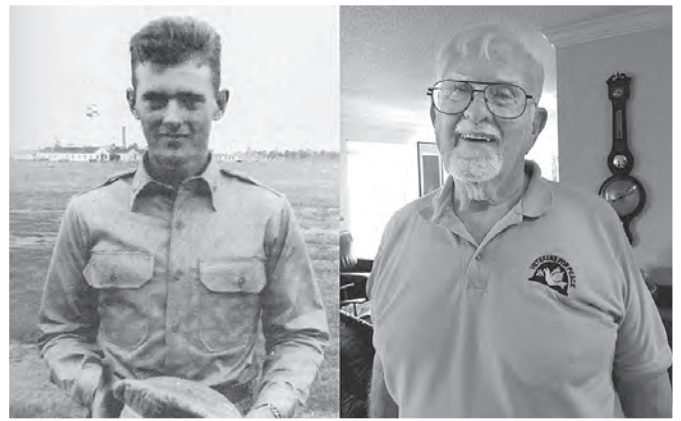
“You’re one of my longest-time Veterans For Peace friends, Woody, since 2000. Thank you for coming to Baton Rouge to speak at LSU before “Shock & Awe” ever happened, for coming back to south Louisiana to help us with the Katrina Relief effort when I called you and Dave Cline to come here to help keep that from spiraling out of control in 2005. Thank you for the signed copy of your lovely book, *Two Walk The Golden Road*, a true story of reconciliation with a former adversary in Korea, and of course, all you have done for Veterans For Peace. You’re a great man and friend, and I hope you aren’t suffering any physical pain. We will continue to fight for peace.”

—Peace from Ward Reilly\*

ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2025, the world saw the passing of Woody, a treasured VFP comrade and lifelong peace activist who inspired many, many others to become active. Woody was director of Veterans For Peace from 2001 to 2005 and set up our national office in St. Louis on September 11, 2001. He was there during the Iraq debacle, and acted as a spokesperson during the shock and awe and aftermath.

Woody tells his story in Michael Messner’s book, *Guys Like Me*, which profiles five different veterans whose quest for healing led them to become peace activists. Woody also coauthored a book, *Two Walk the Golden Road*, with Zhou Ming-fu, son of a Chinese street merchant who also experienced the battlefields of Korea. The two teamed up to write about their intertwining journeys and the vision they shared of a world without war.

In sharing the news of Woody’s passing, former VFP Director Mike Ferner wrote: “Yesterday, a light went out in a world sorely in need of light... I knew Woody as a dedicated and dogged activist and administrator. His ability to be a kind, compassionate human being was, in my view, his greatest gift. He shared that unconditionally with all.” Woody’s wife Joan is requesting that, in lieu of flowers, people give a memorial donation to Veterans For Peace.



*This pair of Woody Powell pics is featured in Michael A. Messner’s 2019 book, **Guys Like Me: Five Wars, Five Veterans For Peace**. Several of Woody’s essays, including “The Making of a Veteran For Peace” are on the VFP website, under Member Highlights.*

### SOMETHING OR NOTHING AT ALL

Preparing to die,  
One would think that there was something to prepare for.  
I can prepare for Dying.  
I can anticipate pain or not.  
I can make arrangements for all who will attend the final moments.  
Or maybe not, if I am not conscious.  
There is somewhat of a set of circumstances  
That I can anticipate.

Should I prepare for entry into the next world?  
Might it be based on merit system?  
The deserving to be met by a celestial choir,  
The undeserving tossed into a pit.  
In either case, the soul derives some sort of satisfaction,  
It got what it thought it deserved.

Of course that is trite.  
So much written about the afterlife is trite.  
Hardcore, earthbound mental capacities  
Are not capable of divining the divine.  
But after that??

Reincarnation is the first thing to come to mind.  
There are many iterations of that belief,  
But they all require me to remain me,  
And to live on.

Of course that type of reincarnation  
Dispenses with one’s conscious consciousness;  
I could become a plant or an animal,  
Something alive but not aware of the past Lives.

Then there is the nihilistic view.  
Nada. Nothing. No consciousness at all.  
Some may find comfort in that.  
Others might find the prospect quite terrifying.

Aware, unaware, the end or the beginning,  
This is the extent to which my little mind  
anticipates something or nothing at all.

—WMP 2025



## VETERANS FOR PEACE

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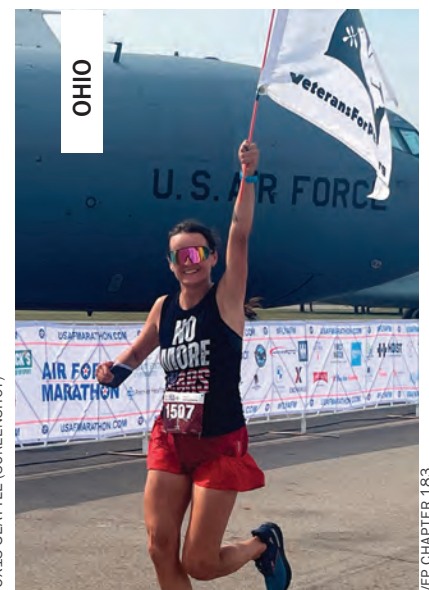
KING DEMETRIUS PENDLETON



WASHINGTON

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fox13seattle.com

SUPPORTING VETERANS FACING DEPORTATION



OHIO

VFP CHAPTER 183

Top (L to R): Phil Tottenham (NY) and Joy Metzler (FL) taking action for Gaza; Marie Purcell (MN) resisting an ICE raid. Bottom Left: Speaking out on behalf of deported veterans before Auburn, WA, Veterans Day parade; Right: Olga Garcia running for peace in September Air Force Marathon.