



# THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

25¢

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SPRING 1981

Memorial Day, 1981--this year on the 25th of May--marks the once-a-year pilgrimage of America's political leaders to the graves of those who died in this nation's wars. Armed with flags, wreaths and copies of the Gettysburg Address, politicians will fill the air with pious pronouncements about those "who gave their last full measure of devotion" and how their courage has saved the nation from all kinds of horrors. But, while heaping praise on the veterans who died, many of these same politicians will be casting their votes to slash to pieces the budget for taking care of the walking and living casualties of this nation's wars.

Leaders of the American Legion or Veterans of Foreign Wars will mount podiums, applaud the high school bands and the singing of the Star Spangled Banner; they will use the occasion to trumpet the triumphs of their organizations and try to concoct the kind of patriotic fervor that sent millions of young Americans off to fight in Vietnam. Most of them will give only the briefest of lip service to the problems of Vietnam vet.

"Noble cause," "devotion to duty," "high ideals," "God and country," are just a few of the phrases that will echo from podiums. Too often these phrases will lead to others: "Stop the Commies in El Salvador," "Bring back the draft."

And what will Vietnam Vets, usually excluded from the official ceremonies, do to celebrate Memorial Day? Many will simply ignore it since the relevance of the speeches and the patriotic hoopla is foreign from vets' experience. Some may drink a few beers to remember some particular friend who died in Vietnam--not for some "noble cause" or in some dramatic offensive or campaign, but simply because he happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time and got blown apart by a mine or hit by a mortar round. There were few tales of saving the nation since most vets who even believed in the war when they were sent to Vietnam, came back seeing that our lives had been squandered by the government for the profits of Michelin or Exxon.

For some Vietnam vets--and for VVAW--Memorial Day

## HONOR THE DEAD, FIGHT FOR THE LIVING MEMORIAL DAY '81

will be an occasion to honor those who died--in whatever war the U.S. has fought--but to try to turn that "honor" into something more than empty words. Instead, we're fighting for action, for testing and treatment and compensation for the victims of Agent Orange--while they are still alive--for a V.A. system that meets the needs of vets instead of just the needs of V.A. bureaucrats, and refusing to get involved in another war like Vietnam. To us Memorial Day says stop spilling the blood of America's youth--of our children--so that American corporations can grab a buck or secure a market. VVAW says:

HONOR THE DEAD,  
FIGHT LIKE HELL FOR THE  
LIVING!



## National Conference and Actions on Agent Orange

Memorial Day, 1981--a Day of Action! During the week-end of Memorial Day, May 22-25, the National Veterans Task Force on Agent Orange is holding a conference in Washington, DC to discuss the latest developments in the fight to get testing, treatment and compensation for victims of Agent Orange. In conjunction with this conference, VVAW is organizing a series of actions to bring the fight to the streets of Washington.

VVAW is one of 28 members of the Task Force which was formed in June 1979 to provide veterans' groups with a vehicle to coordinate efforts around Agent Orange poisoning. The May conference will include scientific panels, small group workshops, strategy planning and updates on the present status of the many activities going on to win testing, treatment and compensation for Agent Orange victims. Information will be available on the Veterans Class-Action suit against the manufacturers of Agent Orange, on send-

ing for records, on filing for disabilities.

VVAW's call to carry the fight to the streets, a call now joined by a number of other groups, is in part intended to build the conference. A picket line, scheduled for May 22 will begin at noon at the central offices of the V.A. (810 Vermont in Washington), and will be followed by a march past the White House and a rally in Lafayette Park at 2 PM. Vets will both demand the presence of the V.A. at the Agent Orange Conference to explain its footdragging on the issue, and protest the cuts in V.A. funds as part of Reagan's economic plan.

Following the Conference (which will begin at 9 AM on the 23rd at American University) there will be a wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery in memorial to Agent Orange victims, a group which is sure to be omitted from the "official" Memorial Day ceremonies on the following day.

While more and more vets

are becoming aware of the problems and potential problems of exposure to Agent Orange (often because we have no choice since we see the symptoms)

there is a need to make the problems more widely known. Because the government refuses to live up to its obligations to Agent Orange victims, vets have to carry the brunt of the battle to win testing, treatment and compensation. With actions such as those planned around the Agent Orange Conference, vets will continue to win the kind of overall support that is necessary to get what we need.

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

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# VETS' NOTES Cutting Thru Red Tape Making Sense of Regs

In a perfect world the vet who is sick or disabled or who has problems would walk into the V.A., describe his problems, and get treated. Of course that's not the way it is; instead every vet is assumed to be a freeloading liar until he can prove himself--it's the direct opposite of innocent until proven guilty.

This Vets' Notes column describes two areas where the vet has to prove himself--Agent Orange and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder--and gives some of the steps necessary to provide the proof the V.A. thinks it needs.

## AGENT ORANGE

Although Agent Orange was used almost everywhere in Vietnam, and although it is likely that even the smallest exposure could lead to severe health problems, it still becomes the responsibility of the veterans to "prove" he was exposed to defoliant sprays while in Vietnam. For vets who are part of, or plan to become part of the class-action suit against Agent Orange manufacturers, the information is also necessary.

Step one is obtaining a copy of military records. Standard Form 180 can be gotten from any V.A. office or from vets' service organizations. Once completed it should be sent to the National Personnel Records Center (Military Records), 9700 Page Blvd,

St Louis, MO 63132.

Section II, #1 of this form asks what information or documents you need. Ask for your complete 201 file (Army) or service record book. It should include all medical records, combat history, unit assignments, induction and discharge physical and so on. To get the file takes about 6 weeks; if there are problems, contact VVAW or the Veterans Information Center: 1-314-428-2534, or 428-0113.

A vet should also send for his or her H.E.R.B.S. tapes. These tapes are a computer record of 80% of the defoliation missions from 1965 through Jan 23, 1971. Write to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense "Health Affairs," Pentagon Room 3E349, Washington, DC 20301. Tell them where and when you were in Vietnam and ask for grid maps of those areas. With the maps and the grids on the computer tapes, you can see where most of the defoliant was sprayed in your area.

Next, write to your branch of service for your unit's history. Sometimes these histories even mention spray missions or have maps where various operations took place. Your own operations are listed on your combat history page of your military records. The maps might place you in areas of spraying. For these records (Marines), write to Commandant, U.S. Marines, Headquarters, U.S. Marines, Washington, DC 20380. Others can write to the Headquarters of their branch of service or to the Military Archives Division, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, Washington, DC 20408.

With this information in hand you are prepared to prove you were sprayed. For further steps, write VVAW for a copy of the Agent Orange Self-Help Guide and we'll send a copy.

## POST TRAUMATIC STRESS

While the struggle to get testing, treatment and compensation for victims of Agent Orange is still in its earlier stages--and the V.A. only barely recognizes that Agent Orange might have caused problems--the fight for the V.A. to deal with post-traumatic stress is further advanced. Last fall the V.A. recognized stress disorder as an appropriate problem rating a service-connected dis-

ability from the V.A.

As with Agent Orange, proof must come from the vet who must do and say the right thing to get benefits.

If you go to the V.A. the first person you must convince is the examining V.A. shrink; he has the first determination and power of recommendation for your eligibility. If he turns you down you can take your problem to the V.A.'s Adjudication Section, but it's not easy to overturn the first step.

Under the manual used to determine eligibility for PTSD these are the requirements:

1. You must have a neurosis problem (not limited to having made death threats).
2. You must have additional problems which may include
  - a. Flashbacks or dreams
  - b. Emotional withdrawal from everyday problems.
  - c. Hypertension or exaggerated response to sudden noises.
  - d. Other related problems such as: sleep disorders, memo-

ry impairment, survivor guilt feelings, lack of concentration on normal subjects, reluctance to relive combat experiences through discussion, movies, etc, and a numbness to normal activities or emotional responses.

3. Your condition began to show up within a year after the experience that triggered it.

If turned down by the initial examining physician and you go to the Adjudication Board, it helps to have notarized statements from family, other relatives, friends, other vets, doctors, vets' counsellors, and about any "responsible" member of your community. If you're considering filing for this disability, find a vets counsellor at your nearest Vets Outreach Center (while they're still open) to help you prepare your case. And if you've applied in the past and been turned down, you may be able to reopen your case under the V.A.'s new recognition of post traumatic stress disorder.

## GRENADE Of The Month

The regular column "Fraggin'" by Spec 5 Willy (ret) does not appear in this shortened issue of THE VETERAN--it will return in the next issue. But Willy's award of The Grenade of the Month goes, after some debate, to the entire Reagan Administration individually and jointly.

\*To President Reagan who made such a point of declaring his opposition to any cuts in V.A. spending--until he was comfortably in office and now has even angered leaders of the VFW and American Legion--which takes some doing for a conservative President.

\*To Secretary of State Haig

who will seize command at any opportunity and get us all blown to small pieces.

\*To Secretary of the Interior James Watt who not only wants to turn all National Parks into oil wells but seems to have decided to rescind the temporary ban on the use of 2,4,5-T, the deadly active ingredient of Agent Orange.

\*To David Stockman whose budget ax swings every which way; after his days as anti-war protestor and draft evader, Stockman seems to have found a new religion which says billions for the military, not one cent to vets or to the poor.

## MARINE ATTACKS SUB

Peter DeMott, ex-Marine and Vietnam vet was sentenced to a year in jail on March 6th for actions which, he said, were taken "in the interest of peace and not with any other motive."

During launching ceremonies for a fast-attack submarine at the General Dynamics shipyard in New London, CT, the vet siezed a company van (with keys in the ignition) and drove it to the spot where a Trident submarine was under construction. He was not stopped because local security assumed he was a workman. Once he

reached the Trident he locked the doors and windows on the van and slammed the van in reverse into the rudder of the sub, up to fifteen times before security could finally get into the van.

During his trial, DeMott pointed out he was speaking against the insanity of the nuclear arms race when there is already enough nuclear weaponry to kill every man, woman and child in the world at least a dozen times.

DeMott's address is: Montville Correctional Ctr P.O.Box 1000 Uncasville, CT 06038

## Agent Orange PAMPHLET



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# On the Wrong Side Again EL SALVADOR

One has to question just how "free" and "objective" the press really is here in the good old USA. A few short months ago, there was constant news and questions about the U.S. involvement in El Salvador. But, as if by magic, Reagan and his boys uttered a few words about "Too much attention on El Salvador and its importance" and poof!, it's gone from the news.

In place of El Salvador stories are instead stories about the Soviet Union and its aggression (some of it very real, to be sure), including the imminent invasion of Poland. The Soviets denied it, the Polish government and workers denied it and most of Western Europe discounted it. But "I'm-in-charge" Haig bellowed about invasion either by direct use of Soviet troops or through some kind of osmosis. When the invasion didn't take place--a great victory and it proves that the Soviet Union is scared silly of Reagan.

But with all this sleight-of-hand, the U.S. cannot completely hide its presence and involvement in El Salvador. Nor can the government hide the very real similarities between the situation in El Salvador and the way the U.S. got involved in Vietnam.

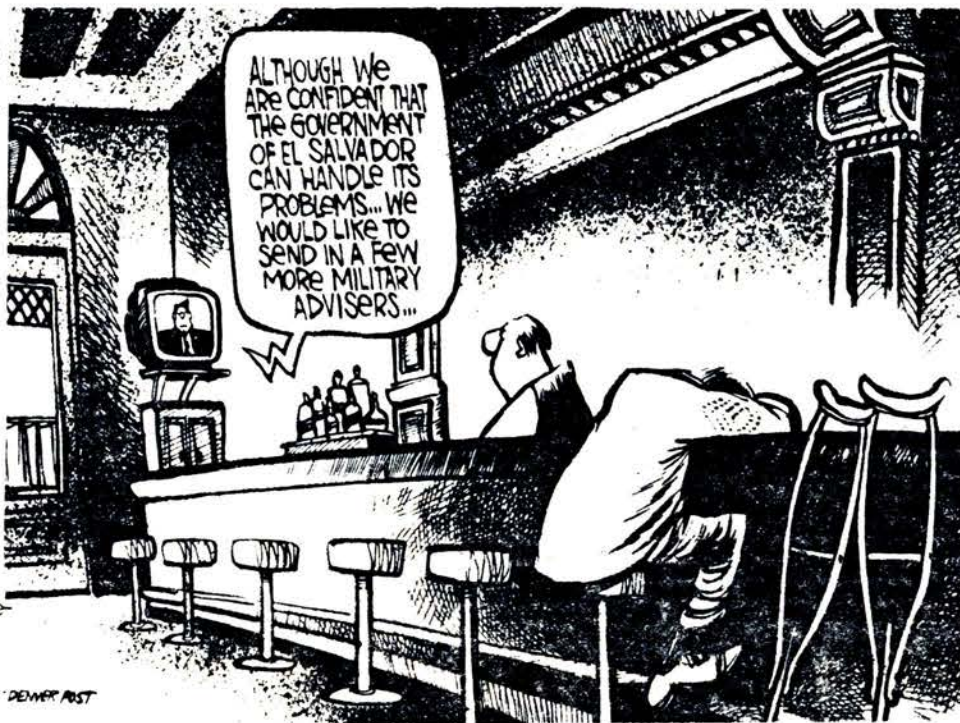
To begin with, the government of El Salvador is run by the military for the benefit of the extremely rich, a small group of 14 families which quite literally own the nation. The nominal President is a civilian but he holds office by grace of the Vice-President, the former military commander of the coup that "turned over power" to a "civilian government." The government exists at the discretion of the military, many of whose officers attended West Point and other U.S. military schools. There's a land reform program, made much of by the government, but patterned on and run by the same people who brought us "pacification" and "land-to-the tiller" in South Vietnam; the program gives the rocks and the mountains to the poor and saves the best land for the 14 families and their henchmen.

According to the Reagan United Nation's Ambassador, the El Salvador government is only "moderately repressive," and is thus worth American lives and money. According to the Catholic Church (hardly a Commie front group), 9,000 of the 10,000 war deaths in El Salvador last year were the direct responsibility of the government, not

the guerilla forces.

The guerilla forces range in political philosophy from strict Catholic to orthodox Marxists. The bulk of the anti-government forces are peasants who are tired of hunger, repression and persecution; the Catholic Church, and trade unions. Much noise has been made about where these "guerilla forces" get their weapons, but tales of Soviet and Cuban involvement cannot hide the

place in the last year--and which have not produced pro-Soviet governments. Zimbabwe provides one example. Only a few months ago the talk was about the Soviet-armed and trained Black guerillas seizing what was then Rhodesia--but it didn't happen. Reagan and friends lay all unrest in the world to a Soviet plot; every revolution or rebellion against a U.S. backed regime is Soviet inspired and



fact that most weapons are American made. They're the same weapons the U.S. supplied gladly to the El Salvadorian military for years and which were bought back from government troops on the Black Market for a fast buck (which may sound familiar to Vietnam vets); many came from revolts within the military: during the last guerilla offensive, a whole battalion guarding one town changed sides with its weapons and equipment.

The El Salvador government is in trouble. It doesn't have the support of the population and needs the U.S. to prop it up. So the U.S. government sends in advisors and equipment and money. But as has happened so many times in the past, the U.S. is backing the wrong side. The Reagan administration cannot or will not see the utter corruption of a regime that Reagan is so willing to sacrifice young Americans (not including ballerina Ron Jr, no doubt) for. Hung up on the old "Red-under-every-bed" theory of foreign policy, the Reagan-Haig view of the world sees the Soviet Union behind each and every legitimate desire of a people to throw off a repressive government.

The bankruptcy of their position is evident in a number of revolutions which have taken

directed, so the U.S. ends up supporting every two-bit Mussolini around the world. By this "logic" Zimbabwe must be a Soviet puppet--at least so the right-wing proclaimed. But during independence ceremonies in Zimbabwe, Eastern-block countries were excluded and the Soviet Union was not even allowed to open an Embassy until recently. The country of Zimbabwe has steered a course independent of either the U.S. or the USSR.

There's no reason to think a similar course would not be taken by El Salvador. It's hard to blame the guerillas for accepting aid from wherever they can get it when facing the local murderers and torturers bought and paid for by the U.S. government. In fact U.S. policies drive insurgent movements into the arms of Cuba and the USSR in response to U.S. money and advisors.

Why is the U.S. involved in El Salvador--as in Vietnam--in fighting against the people? The simple fact is that Reagan is looking after American interests such as American Fruit and the Bank of America, just like presidents before him looked after Michelin and Texaco in Vietnam. The question remaining is whether the American people believe it's worth their tax dollars

to support dictatorships--which will lose, sooner or later--and whether it's worth sacrificing their children once again for multi-national corporate interests.

## MARCH 8th VETS' UNITY DAY

Veterans' Unity Day, March 8th, took place in over 25 cities around the U.S. Cities included Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Anchorage, Milwaukee, Chicago, St Louis, Rochester, Flint, Pittsburg, and New York City.

There were a series of rallies, press conferences and other events, all pointing toward the problems of Vietnam vets, the need for a delayed re-entry program, the newly announced cutbacks, and the contradiction between the treatment of Vietnam vets and the treatment lavished on recently returned hostages from Iran. Plans for the Agent Orange Conference in Washington on the 21-24th of May were also announced.

Veterans Unity Day was one more concerted expression of the anger of Vietnam vets, and an indication of increasing numbers and activity within the veterans' movement. Each passing day brings new attacks leading to the conclusion that, in many cases, vets are fighting for their very lives.

THEY SAY CUT BACK,  
WE SAY "FIGHT BACK!"

## SPECIAL!

WHAT IS AGENT ORANGE...page 16

THE VETERAN  
Vietnam Veterans Against the War

Veterans' Investigation into Effects & Problems  
VETS SAY 'TREAT AGENT  
ORANGE', TARGET VA



16 pages of testimony by victims of Agent Orange and experts on the effects of the chemical on Vietnam Vets and thier families. 50¢ post paid.

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## AUSTRALIAN VIETNAM VETERANS FORGOTTEN AND THROWN AWAY

"The myth that Australia has the best repatriation system in the world is being shattered as more and more cases of injustices committed against Vietnam Veterans and their families are revealed.

"Widows are denied pensions. The widow of one young veteran was lucky, she managed to get a part-time job a month ago--she couldn't work while her husband was in the terminal stage of his illness and this is her first job since he died. Her husband was killed by a contaminated defoliant, not by a D-10 mine or an AK-47 bullet, so she does not get a war widow's pension. If he had been blown up or shot maybe she would have been better off, he just got in the way of some deadly chemicals so the government says his death was not 'war-caused.'

"...This unfortunate situation has arisen because of the laziness, the stupidity, and the political bootlicking of a handful of key officials in ex-service organizations who are too frightened to stand up for the interests of their own veterans. It is worth bearing in mind that these are the same few ratbags who went chasing imaginary Reds-under-the-beds while we were fighting against flesh and blood communist soldiers in the real world. The government knows it can rely on these clowns to stop veterans 'making trouble.'

"And what of the future? The government's mishandling of the whole issue of Vietnam Veterans--particularly in the Agent Orange controversy--has shown that Australian soldiers can no longer trust the government.

"Up until the Vietnam War every soldier knew that if he was injured on active service he and his family would be looked after. That vital trust, a morale factor worth far more than any high-technology weapons system, has now been destroyed by a few ruthless politicians and their bureaucratic hangers on. Let's hope we are not involved in another war."

From an article by Graham Bell,

President of the  
Queensland Branch of the Aus-  
tralian Vietnam Veterans Association

# REAGAN CUTS VET PRO

In 1980 unemployment among Vietnam veterans jumped by 44%, making unemployment for Vietnam vets 5.9% of the total unemployed workforce, up 1.8% from 1979. Among minority and younger vets unemployment statistics are in the range of 20% and 17%.

So, what is the response from the Reagan Administration which, when it was trying to get elected, made lavish promises about no cuts in veterans' programs? Under the knife of David Stockman, Reagan's chief executioner, there are massive cutbacks for all American people who are most in need of government programs, and death for nearly all significant programs that vets--and particularly Vietnam vets--need most.

At the very least, six major economic programs for Vietnam vets are targeted for assassination. These include educational assistance through the Vets Cost of Instruction Program, employment opportunities through the Targeted Technical Assistance Program, White House Outreach for blighted Urban Areas with high vet population, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program--and the list goes on.

Further cuts include elimination of the Legal Services Corporation which is presently helping thousands of vets on discharge review, some V.A. medical research programs, some V.A. special programs such as kidney dialysis, 20,000 jobs in the V.A.'s Department of Medicine and Surgery, and 2 V.A. hospitals.

But for many Vietnam vets the most crucial of the Reagan-Stockman slashes was the program of Vets Outreach Centers, one of the few V.A. programs which went to Vietnam vets where they were (instead of waiting for vets to trickle into the V.A. offices). Employing many Vietnam vets as counsellors, and providing help with any number of vet's problems, the Outreach Centers have been, up to now, the single most successful V.A. program designed to do something for Vietnam veterans.

All in all the Reagan Administration has a hit list of 141 programs that will effect millions of people including vets and their families in nearly every economic sector of our society. One good example is in Chicago where vets were preparing to sue the Department of Labor, the Illinois Department of Labor, and the City of Chicago for non-compliance with the affirmative action program for Vietnam vets under the Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Act. Not only is

the CETA program in question going to be axed, but so is the funding for the Legal Assistance Foundation which was going to bring the suit on behalf of the vets--who are left between a rock and a hard place.

Proposed V.A. cuts will amount to a little more than \$300 million. While that seems like an incredible amount of money to most vets, it's a mere

drop in the bucket when compared to what the U.S. government is plotting to spend on "defense" over the next several years: \$400.5 billion (yes, that's billion!) by 1982 alone!

There's no doubt that the Reagan Administration is out to screw millions of non-rich Americans; many Vietnam vets point out that the Reagan gang is gearing up for another war

## VETS PROTEST



Vets march in Chicago vs cutbacks

During March 1981 Vietnam vets and their supporters demonstrated in cities across the nation, showing their anger and, in many cases, outrage as the Reagan administration's ax fell on vital veteran's programs, specifically on those for younger and Vietnam-era vets.

This groundswell veterans' movement, brewing among Vietnam vets' groups and individual vets for the past decade, exploded with the news that major vets programs--including the Vets Outreach Centers initiated under the Carter Administration--were going on the budget chopping block.

Still smoldering with resentment from the hype and glad-handing received by the returning Iranian hostages, Vietnam vets, using the 91 Vet Outreach Centers across the U.S. as hubs of action, moved into the streets as word of the cuts filtered down.

In California vets jumped in to action with initial press conferences followed by large picket lines and demonstrations in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Southern California.

In Milwaukee on March 20th, 45-50 vets assembled and picketed the Regional V.A. for an hour. Veterans representing groups of the local Vets

Center, the National Association of Black Veterans, and VVAW raised demands to halt the cuts to vets programs overall, with particular emphasis on the cuts in incarcerated vets programs, and Agent Orange testing, treatment and compensation. The assistant regional director, Jerry Moore, a Vietnam vet, personally accepted the demands of the picketing vets. He then astonished the assembled vets by complementing their demonstration and stating, "Without your demonstrations, the V.A. would not survive as an agency," a statement which underlines the need for vets to continue to pressure the V.A. with demands to get what we need.

Milwaukee vets then drove to the War Memorial where they met with representatives of the State Veterans' Affairs Office who publicly endorsed the demands of the angry vets. The Milwaukee vets plan a follow-up demonstration to keep the pressure on the Reagan Administration on May 15, the day before Armed Forces Day.

In Chicago, 150-200 vets marched through the downtown area to bring their demands to the public. Beginning with a morning press conference at the Blackstone Hotel, Chicago

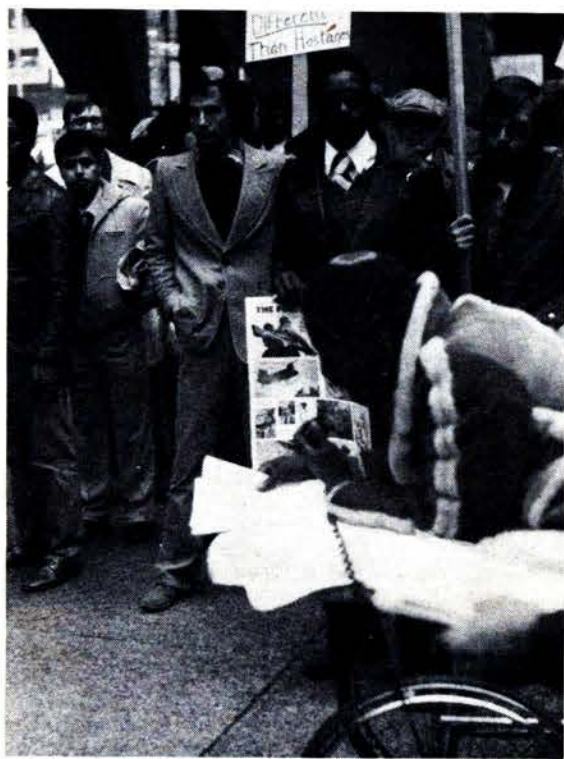


# PROGRAMS

and they haven't even paid Vietnam vets what they were promised from the last one!

One VVAW member remarked on a recent TV talk show that while the Reagan Administration pushes our backs even harder against the wall, they'd better stop and consider who they're pushing! We won't take it, and while they say "cut back," vets will say "fight back!"

# CUTBACKS



Disabled brother speaks out

representatives of vets groups, including the Vets Centers and other Vietnam vet organizations including VVAW, said that "The cuts are a slap in the face of Vietnam vets and the last straw for many of us who have suffered too long." Moving to Daley Plaza, the largest group of Vietnam vets assembled in the city in recent years began a picket line as speakers talked about the demands; particular targets were programs of the City of Chicago whose record on Vietnam vets has been sorry. A surprise speaker was Alderman Louis Farina, a World War II vet who pledged his support and initiated a city and state resolution in support of the demonstrators. As the speakers continued their remarks, the vets formed up and marched to their next target.

Moving through the crowded Chicago Loop, vets passed out thousands of leaflets detailing their fight and got hundreds of signatures of support on petitions from people on the street. Chanting "We won't take your cuts no more, Reagan, Reagan," the marching vets swung into the Federal Plaza opposite offices of

Illinois Senators and Representatives, amid the applause of on-lookers and passing motorists. After some introductory remarks it was the turn of individual vets on the march. One after another they stepped forward to detail what the David Stockman/Reagan Administration cuts meant to them personally. Trembling with rage, many of the vets expressed their sense of betrayal by the same people who sent them off to Vietnam, ignored them when they came home, and are now moving to take away what little vets have won from the government and the V.A. in the past ten years.

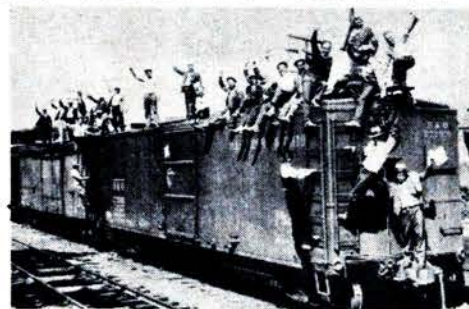
Emotionally fired-up vets undertook the last leg of the day's activities, a march to the V.A. where Congressional aides to Illinois' Senators and Representatives were receiving a day-long briefing on "how the V.A. works." The vets were determined to give them a few opinions on how Congress is dropping the ball and on how well the V.A. often doesn't work!

As the vets pulled up to the V.A. building, security people locked the doors, denying entrance to vets. A team of negotiators went in to secure meeting space inside for all the vets and the Congressional aides. The V.A. pleaded lack of space (obvious nonsense) and arranged for groups of four vets at a time to go inside. After the first group talked with the aides vets' anger increased as their speakers were cut off by aides "too busy" to listen to the vets.

During the course of this entire fiasco, vets kept up their picket line outside, and dozens of vets spoke out in anger. One vet remarked, "Who the hell do these people think they're kidding? Don't they think a hundred of us couldn't roll right over a handful of security at the door? This won't happen again. The next time we come back--and there will be a next time--we get in, one way or another." After almost four hours of marching and picket lines, the vets went home, angrier than ever and vowing to return.

Major demonstrations took place across the country in almost every location where Vets Outreach Centers have been set up. For the first time in years Vietnam vets from all sectors of society, all races and nationalities, came together putting aside political differences and personal conflicts to fight this massive economic assault by the Reagan Administration. The fight goes on; plans for actions in Washington, DC at the end of May are described elsewhere in this paper. And vets will be in the streets until we can get what we need.

# EDITORIAL DEWEY CANYON



1932 Bonus Army heads for D.C.

As THE VETERAN surveys the situation of vets today we see some encouraging signs: the outrage of thousands of vets at the difference between how we were treated when we came back from Vietnam and the way the Iranian hostages were treated when they returned; anger about the cutbacks in essential vets programs under the Reagan economic plan; the growing number of vets groups who are trying to make some changes. As the oldest of vets groups made up primarily of Vietnam and Vietnam-era vets, we believe the time has come to act.

Spring of 1982 will mark the 11th year after Vietnam vets discarded medals on the steps of the Capitol. It will mark the 50th anniversary of the 1932 Bonus March when World War I vets--25,000 of them and their families--came to DC to demand that the government give them what it had promised.

To veterans groups, to vets, and to other interested individuals, we are proposing Operation Dewey Canyon IV to take place in Washington in the spring of 1982. With the cutbacks, with the consistent refusal of the government to deal realistically with the problems of Agent Orange, and with the prospect of another war lurking just over the horizon, we believe the time has come to hit the streets of DC once again, to take our feelings and our demands to the place where they will most be seen. We invite comments and suggestions from any and all who are interested.

VVAW National Office





# LETTERS TO VVAW

VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR ~ National Office ~ (312)275-0043; 989-4684; 463-2127

**THE VETERAN** welcomes letters, comments and criticisms. Please write. Also, send along any poetry, drawings, photos or stories you would like to see in the paper.

**P O Box 25592  
Chicago, IL 60625**

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the copy of THE VETERAN. It is one of the few papers I have seen which stands up for us and our problems. Enclosed is a check for twelve issues; also, please send me information on becoming a member of VVAW.

Birmingham, Alabama, claims the dubious title of having the longest streak of Veteran's Day parades held on November 11th--a streak which now stands at 30 some-odd years. This past year was one of the biggest ever and came on the heels of the election of the ultra-right "victory" in the national elections. This event was attended by the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Chief Chaplain of the Air Force, a retired commandant of the Marine Corps ad nauseum, and the entire 3-hour debacle was televised by a local station.

However, this parade had a first: its first group of protesters! Several of us appeared in front of the city auditorium as the "dignitaries" arrived for a "World Peace Luncheon." (These guys have a "peace luncheon" has to be the absolute pinnacle of hypocrisy and jackassery.) It was a trip to hold up a sign which read "Stop World Terrorism: Shut Down the Pentagon" as these old fools walked by! Birmingham is the last place they expected to find people who would oppose their idiocy.

Of course, like Chicago, there was no mention of 'Nam or those of us who wasted our lives being over there. And, as expected, there was the usual gang of retardates from VFW, American Legion and other butt-kissing organizations riding by in their convertibles waving like so many clowns.

Our protesting was brought to a halt by the local cops who were sent over by our mayor. The good mayor sent word that we were "embarrassing" the city. I suppose we didn't embarrass the city when we went to 'Nam and made war on the people who were struggling for their freedom. Thanks again for the paper and for taking a stand for the 'Nam vet....

Sterling Lynn  
Birmingham  
Alabama

\*\*\* \*\*

Dear VVAW,

This Iranian hostage business was an insult and disgrace to all our vets. All our sons who were drafted were hostages of the U.S. government--what choice did a draftee have? If the former Iran hostages sue the government, every draftee hostage should counter-sue for being a U.S. hostage....

Ann Pine  
Gold Star  
Mother  
Trenton, NJ

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear VVAW,

I thought you were a defunct outfit. Years ago I had correspondence with you, marched in demonstrations, etc.

Now, like too many of us, I

have a problem with dioxin. Could you send me any information you may have about treatment. Thank you very much and I hope the war ends soon.

San Antonio,  
TX

\*\*\* \*\*

Dear Sirs,

I am a high school senior. I just recently have become aware of the awful episodes that were a part of the Vietnam War. It seems like no one wants to tell what happened in that war to my generation. Just recently also I have been assigned a research paper to write. My thesis question is, "What are the negative effects of having been in the Vietnam War on veterans?"

Would it be possible for you to send me some information? It would be much appreciated. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter---

Ventura, CA

\*\*\* \*\*

Brothers:

I just finished "Recollections" and I do agree. Vietnam has become the "in" thing for the media. It is all bullshit!

Enclosed is a copy of my recollections (soon to be a book, I hope). I hope enough of us contribute recollections so America will not be allowed to get amnesia about the war.

Peace,  
New York, NY

\* \* \*

Dear VVAW,

This is a belated response to your excellent October mailing. I don't know any veterans, really at least not any that would listen to me! I am 85+, have long fought against war, the utter in-

sanity of making burnt sacrifices of human beings. Now one should really be scared. More power to you--success to your efforts....

Dorchester, MA

\* \* \*

Dear VETERAN,

As an anti-draft, anti-war activist, I've seen the VVAW do an excellent job of making the young kids of today think twice about Uncle Sam. Many of them are being blinded once again into thinking we need the draft, and how right this next war will be.

The last issue of THE VETERAN (Feb/March '81) was particularly good with the interview on El Salvador and the article on Poland. Just where you get some of your inside info, I'd like to know.

When I was in high school the VVAW made a big impact on my life. I used to walk over to the vet house and learn the real story about that war. The VVAW did more to radicalize me than any other anti-war people I had run into. Of course, I was happy to see you're still here, fighting the good fight to stop their next war of aggression and to get Vietnam vets what's rightfully theirs.

Keep up the good work. You seem to get better with age.

NWSCARD  
P.O.Box 190  
Forest Park, IL  
60130



## Agent Orange Shorts

### Army Use in '80

Demonstrating its unconcern about the health of both civilian and military personnel, the U.S. Army spread 2,4,5-T (partially banned by the Environmental Protection Agency and the carrier of deadly dioxin as used in Agent Orange throughout Vietnam) at Fort Greely and Allen Air Force Base in Alaska in April and May of 1980. As usual, tromping on its own dick, the Army was spraying the defoliant just a month or so after their Defense Department spokesman testified no such defoliant had been used since 1971.

Caught in a bit of a bind

the Army compounded its problems by stating that they would isolate the sprayed area by restricting public access. But further investigation showed 2,4,5-T had been sprayed over the source of the water supply of much of the adjacent area.

The military justified its spraying by noting that the ban on spraying by the Environmental Protection Agency "does not expressly grant...authority over actions of federal agencies...."

### Wis. Program

Wisconsin's Agent Orange Information Program recently was funded for another year. The

program was supposed to end in June, 1981, but calls from Vietnam and other vets from around the State squeezed the necessary \$66,000 out of the State Legislature. Up to this point, Ron Lauren, the Vietnam vet in charge of the program, has headed up a worthwhile program.

A total of 68,000 pieces of mail were sent out with over a 42% return. Over 21,000 vets responded with over 67% declaring they had definite exposure to defoliants and another 31% think they had exposure. The new year's program will include more mailing and a program to include a doctor's education program to travel around the State.

### "Not Harmful"?

The American Council on Science and Health has announced that Agent Orange is "not hazardous to people." "When used properly," said a spokesperson for the Council, "it is a very useful chemical." Useful, as vets know, for killing off plants, messing up kids

The Council, which says it gets no money from the chemical companies, has consistently made findings that the chemical companies have found delightful. This latest discovery was released while Dow Chemical, the major manufacturer of Agent Orange, is in negotiations with the Environmental Protection Agency concerning a total ban on use of their product.





Who Are We, Where We Came From, Who Can Join

# VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR



Vietnam Veterans Against the War began in 1967 to join the ranks of those who wanted an end of U.S. involvement in Indochina. Basic principles of the organization have continued ever since: we have fought against unjust wars, whether the U.S. invasion of Indochina or the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan. We have supported, by whatever means were possible, those who are fighting for their own liberation.

From its early days VVAW has operated on the knowledge that the government will give vets the things we need only when forced to do so--that vets get nothing for nothing. We've learned that when one vet fights alone, there is a limited amount he or she can do, but when veterans unite to fight together, there is no limit on what can be accomplished. VVAW has seen some real successes: helping to put an end to U.S. troops in Southeast Asia, helping to get Nixon tossed out of office on his ear, winning (to a great extent) amnesty for many who resisted the Vietnam War, getting the Veterans Administration to begin the process of looking for answers to Agent Orange poisoning and to recognize Post-Vietnam Syndrome (now called "delayed-stress syndrome") as a service-connected disability.

VVAW has consistently stood with the interests of vets of all eras, especially Vietnam and Vietnam-era vets, and this has often brought us into conflict with more traditional veterans' organizations. While the Legion or VFW have hawked more wars, VVAW

has fought against future U.S. wars of aggression as in Vietnam; while traditional organizations have waved the flag at every opportunity, VVAW has always asked "Why?" We've opposed moves toward war, are fighting against registration and the draft which will follow, welcomed vets with bad discharges into the organization and fought to get the discharge system dropped entirely from the military.

We know what it means to have been unused once by the government and its corporate backers, and then thrown away with a bad GI Bill, wretched healthcare, Agent Orange ravaging our bodies, no jobs and all the other problems that Vietnam vets face. We do not intend to see our children go through the same thing in the next war for somebody else's profit!

VVAW is a democratic organization built on local chapters around the country; meetings of representatives from the chapters (the National Steering Committee) and a yearly meeting of the entire membership of the organization develop programs and policies, and elect the members of the National Office which is responsible for the daily operation of VVAW. VVAW welcomes veterans of any era as well as non-vets who are interested in building the struggle to win what vets need. For more information on joining the chapter in your area, or for building a chapter in an area where there is now no VVAW chapter, please contact the VVAW National Office,

P.O. Box 25592  
Chicago IL 60625



## Membership Form

P.O. Box 25592 Chicago, IL 60625

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NAME \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

DATES OF SERVICE \_\_\_\_\_ BRANCH \_\_\_\_\_ UNIT \_\_\_\_\_

OVERSEAS DUTY \_\_\_\_\_ DATES \_\_\_\_\_

MILITARY OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_ RANK \_\_\_\_\_

VVAW welcomes all people who want to join together to build a fighting veterans' organization. Although the majority of our members are vets of the Vietnam-era, we want all veterans of all ages--as well as interested non-vets--to join to build the vets' struggle. Membership requirements are participation in the life of the organization, and payment of \$1 per month to the national organization with a \$5 initiation fee.

VVAW is a democratic organization. Chapters decide on local projects and programs under the general guidelines of the national program. Chapters elect local leadership and representatives to the National Steering Committee meetings where major organizational decisions are made and national coordinators elected. These coordinators are responsible for day-to-day leadership and publish the national newspaper, THE VETERAN.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to Vietnam Veterans Against the War



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# RECOLLECTIONS

The episode is one of a series of recollections from recollections--the "war stories" which often go a long ways toward showing what Vietnam and the military. VVAW hopes to print a book of such rich man's war was all about. We invite veterans to contribute their recollections

Gordon A. Perry 2323394  
M 3/9, 3rd Marines  
RVN, 4/67--4/70

Cordoned by security's barriers  
Sanity fogs experience's harshest landscapes;  
Blankets memory's poisoned streams,  
and devastated meadows, and forests.  
Restless dreams penetrate the murk  
Compelling recall to explore  
hope's wasteland.  
Once more, fear-frayed voices protest;  
shock-stretched pupils stare  
at exhaustion, despair and plundered futures.

Yep, the five of us beat the odds,  
Stayed together from boot camp to here.  
Five ignorant grunts, soon disabused.  
Fresh bodies don't go straight to the field,  
Base-working parties mark their first day.  
Standing at the battalion supply shed:  
awed by the Donald Duck voiced sergeant;  
red scar leering across his throat,  
"Got it last fall, during Hastings...!"  
With GI cans of boiling water and  
toilet bowl brushes; we cleaned deuce gear.  
"Them? Yeah, they all went home--one way or another,"  
he offered as we scraped gore, skull plates  
and hair from helmets; thinned, crusted blood  
on flak-jackets, packs and webgear.  
The spring sky swept by, fresh, light, and cool  
blowing away the cold and drench of monsoon.  
Endless shades of green spread softly around  
covering grim crimson gouges and stifling  
percussive murmurs of war.  
An office pogue came by, scarfing us up, at noon--  
against Division Orders--but what the hell.  
Within a year the odds would beat us--  
to pulp. We died, one way or another,  
in bits and pieces, a little at a time.

She was ugly.  
Sleek, with efficiency's viciousness.  
Glowed grimly, black and hate-filled.  
I met her when young,  
left her life times later.  
I loved the ugly little whore--  
She killed, maimed and wounded for me.

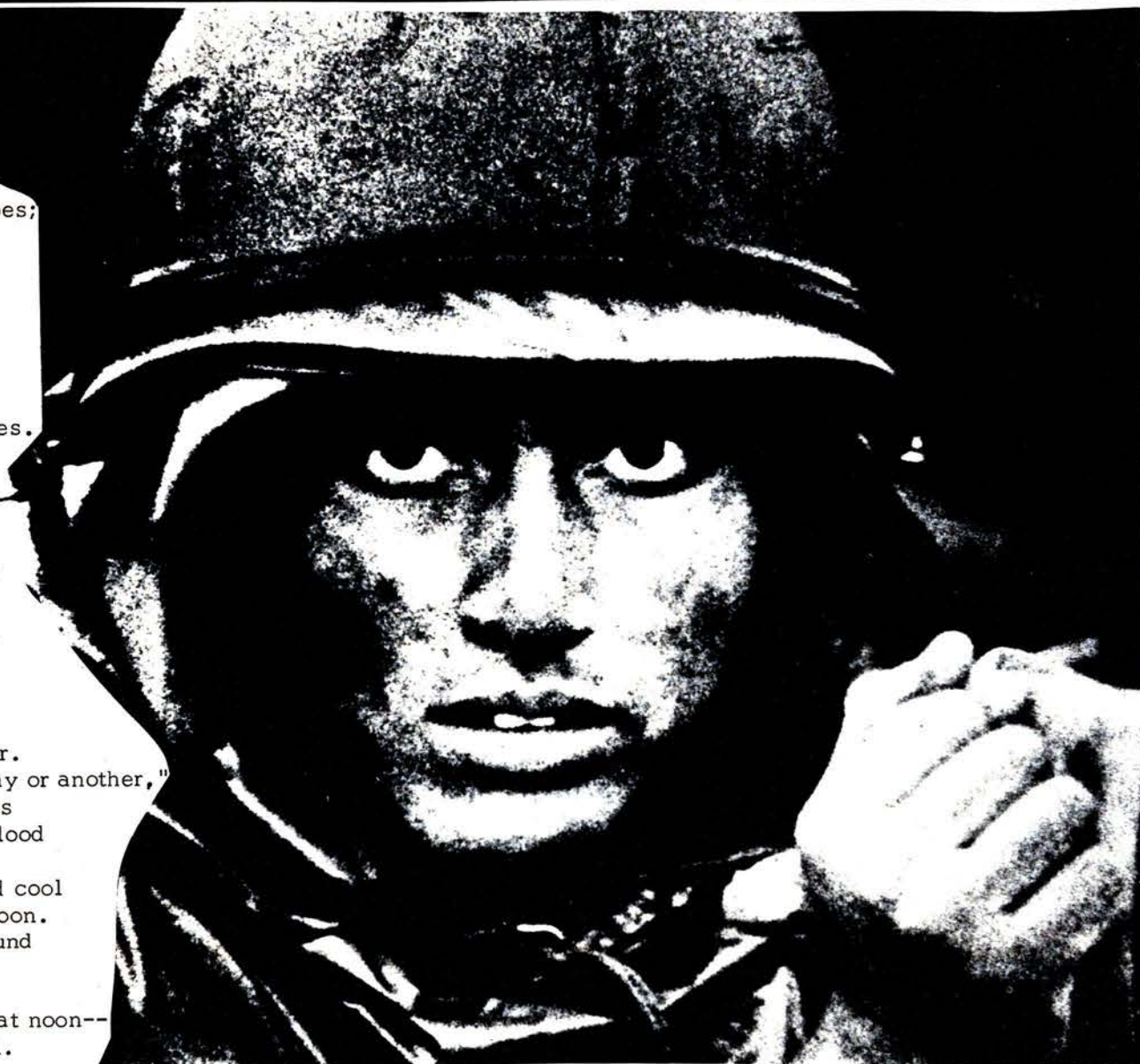
Enveloped in a deluge of flame,  
a foetus betrayed,  
he writhed to reclaim his breath.  
The heart-beating link of fire  
rudely disbanded the congressed  
solemnity of molecules;  
disrupting their synapsed vitality,  
dispersing them.  
My veins surged, renewed,  
as his life became mine.

Small, delicate, nut brown, supinely  
lying, nearly awash, in an inhuman  
vastness of blood:  
A child basking in a backyard wading pool.  
His oval, bold-filled grimace  
silently hinting at the hammering horror  
that labored through him  
as his obedient heart strove to re-flood  
creation--if that was his whim.  
"Hùng," the AK's wooden stock cautiously  
whispered--sensing Americans about.

In a micro-mini-second  
of cosmic comprehension  
your eyes recognize  
destiny tapping  
en clair  
your epitaph.  
Transforming your meager spirit  
into mangled corpse.  
Waste and rags so corrupted,  
that all eternity  
will not coax your  
soul  
to re-enter the hulked remains.

So what the fuck  
you can't live forever  
the lifers' always cluck.  
You're just dumb grunts,  
life's curse.  
Die mother-fuckers  
the world won't be any worse.

My company has so long been of men  
only. The low longing that hated  
my diffidence and clumsy conversing,  
tumorously grew deforming my eyes.  
Love now seems the endless dying of friends  
and expresses itself tentatively awaiting  
smashing rounds and cutting shrapnel's  
certainty.



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