



THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

25¢

Vol. 11 No. 4

P.O. Box 25592 Chicago IL 60625

NOV./DEC 1981

Broken Promises

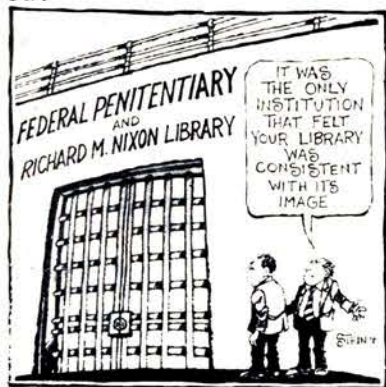
VIETNAM VETS HIT AGAIN

VET CENTERS TO CLOSE?

The Reagan Administration--and Reagan in particular--is hesitating to sign the veteran's bill that would, among other things, give birth to 33 new veteran's outreach centers and guarantee the continued operation of 93 others. The centers currently in operation are not receiving necessary funds to pay operational bills. They have been instructed to take no new clients.

Never popular among V.A. bigwigs, the Vets Centers have, in many locations, faced continual problems with V.A. heavies who are at a loss to explain why simple things like electric, water and phone bills aren't paid regularly.

Last spring a wave of protests by 'Nam vets across the country made David Stockman back down from the proposed shutdown of the Vets Centers. Now Stockman and the Reagan Administration are chipping away again. It may well be that large-scale demonstrations may again be needed to save this most useful of V.A. programs for the Vietnam vet--one of the few programs which has done any good.



Vietnam Veterans Against the War

National Office
P.O. Box 25592
Chicago, IL 60625

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VA ADMINISTRATORS: NAM VETS NOT WANTED

There may be some expert in bureaucratic in-fighting who can understand what's going on in the V.A. For those of us who would never get near the inner sanctum of the V.A., except when we force our way in to take it over, the shuffling at the top of the V.A. is one more indication of the Reagan administration's complete unconcern with the problems faced by vets.

It took until mid-July before Reagan could find someone to take over a V.A. director; Allen Clark, appointed to the number two job in the V.A., stayed for 9 1/2 days before he split the scene. In mid-September, the number 3 and 4 men resigned.

Most vets have to deal with the 90% of V.A. workers who are doing all they can to help vets. Some vets are stuck with dealing with the turkeys who couldn't care less--they only want to impress the bosses. None of us have to deal with the top hierarchy of the V.A. (fortunately). But these are the people who set the policies and the tone which filters down to the receptionist who tells the vets how long they have to wait to see the person who can help them.

So what we've got is Captain Nimmo whose qualifications seem to be that he's an old Reagan crony, rich, a cattleman--and utterly ignorant of the problems faced by vets. Some of his early comments demonstrate that Nimmo is well in the mold of other Reagan appointees.

"The mail I get from veterans all across this country--99% tell me they are pleased with the service they get from V.A. hospitals." This Nimmo comment proves one of four things: a secretary tosses out most of his mail; he only reads letters he wants to read; he can't read; he's lying.

Or there's Nimmo's now notorious comment on Agent Orange: "Thus far, there is simply no bo-

dy of medical evidence to suggest that Agent Orange causes anything other than what we call chloracne, which is very similar to teenage acne." Two tubes of Clerasil and all the problems of Vietnam vets will disappear--that and Nimmo's magic wand.

If Nimmo could make the problems of Vietnam vets disappear as easily as he seems to be able to make his top assistants disappear, Vietnam vets would erect a monument to him. Of course that's not about to happen because Nimmo is much more concerned about jockeying around his aides than he is in even learning anything about the problems of vets.

Besides presiding over mammoth cuts in funds available for vets, Nimmo has yet to show that his total lack of qualifications for the job is not a perfect prediction of what he can do on the job. Vietnam vets, who have gotten the short end of the V.A. stick for years, still have no representative anywhere near the top of the V.A. But Nimmo and the empty spots under him at the top of the V.A. are a perfect demonstration of Reagan's concern for vets. Given the performance of the V.A. over the years, vets might be better off if Nimmo were to quit and all the top jobs were left open!

VA BUDGET CUT

Reagan, Stockman & Co, Inc, are once again out with the ax to chop away at vets' benefits. In the much advertised "new round" of budget cuts for fiscal 1982, the V.A. is slated to lose \$451.7 million. This is on top of the \$110 million already chopped.

While the "new round" seems to be facing some firm opposition in the Congress, not wholly enchanted with Budget Director Stockman's blunders (like turning catchup into a vegetable, for instance), the prospect for the V.A. is that two-thirds of the cut would come straight out of medical care budgets. It would likely mean the cutting of 5,000 medical personnel from the V.A., and a reduction in daily patient population at V.A. hospitals of approximately 3,000 patients.

While running for president Reagan said: "To me it is unconscionable that veterans in need are denied hospital and medical care because of inadequate funding which has closed hospital beds and cut health care personnel within the V.A."

Certainly a man as interested in others keeping their word (witness the air traffic controllers) would not go back on his, would he, Ronnie???

VETERANS DAY... Page 5



VETS' NOTES Cutting Thru Red Tape Making Sense of Regs

In the past the Vets' Notes column in THE VETERAN has attempted to help vets by-pass some of the V.A.'s red tape to get some of the benefits that are ours, but which we often have to fight to get. With Reaganomics in full swing, and Davey Stockman—who managed to slither out of service in Vietnam—at the economic helm, we no longer can help get benefits; this column deals entirely with the benefits which are no longer.

Vets benefits which are now officially scrapped are:

*Unemployment compensation after discharge from the military. While it passed pretty much unnoticed at the time (except, of course, for vets applying for unemployment), this was a part of the "Omnibus Budget Act" passed this summer—namely that people leaving the service after July 1st, 1981, are ineligible for unemployment compensation based on their military service. Perhaps the military is now considered an honor, not a job?

*Burial benefits. There is still an allowance of \$150 for a burial plot, but the old \$300 allowance for a veteran's burial goes only to vets on a pension. This cut figures, since Reagan and Co are in a hurry to kill all of us off and would like to do it for free, if possible.

*Education loans. Because the GI Bill was never enough to

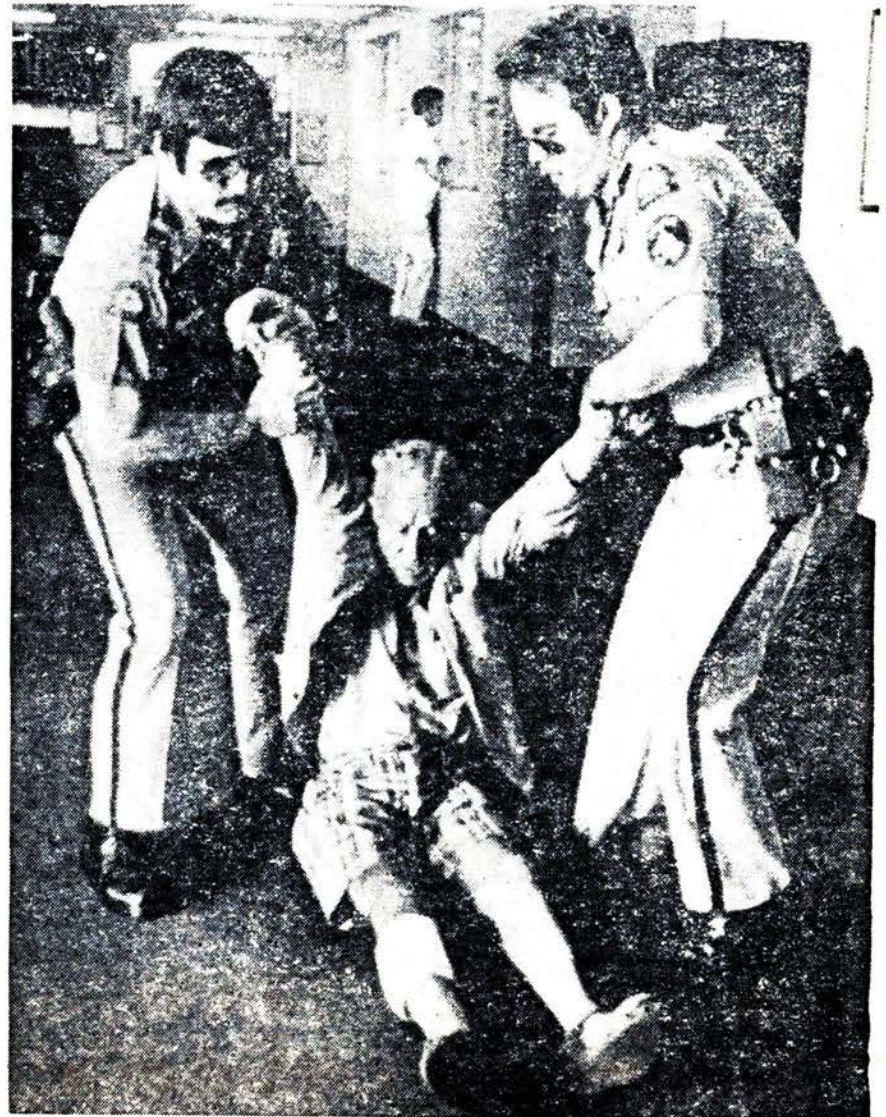
get by on—and was often late—many vets took out GI Education loans to get by. These are now eliminated. These loans, in the past, went through times when Vets advisors begged vets to take them out and other times when they were almost impossible to get—GI Bill loans were never very stable. But for many vets they were the difference between staying and school and dropping out.

*Flight training. Previously covered by the GI Bill, this option is now eliminated.

*Correspondence courses. The payment schedule has been changed from the V.A. paying 70% to the V.A. paying only 55%.

*Dental benefits. In the past the vet had a year after discharge to get dental benefits from the V.A.; the time has now been changed to three months after discharge.

Many of these benefits are important only to those who are using them; others have been used by hundreds of thousands of vets—and would be used in the future if they were there. What these eliminations mark is only the first step, however; more cuts are in the making, and if the government can get away with cutting a "few" things each year, vets will soon find themselves with nothing—which is just what Reagan, Stockman & Co want!



At 80, he's a vet against Reagan

Riviera Beach, Fla., police drag 80-year-old Bill Gandall out of the Veteran's Administration Out-Patient Clinic, where he was participating in a protest against Reagan administration budget cuts of veteran programs. Police said Gandall, leader of a group called Veterans Against Reagan, was arrested after he refused to leave the facility. (UPI)

HARI KRISHNA Vietnam Vet Rip-Off

In Beloit, Wisconsin, on September 25th, two scumbags from the Hari Krishna sect, wearing wigs and street clothes, were arrested for misrepresenting themselves as Vietnam veterans collecting money for Agent Orange victims. Police found \$1700 in cash, a van with assorted wigs and OD clothing, and maps and schedules of localities with various state-wide events. A 7x5 inch sticker is offered in return for a donation: it has a white background with a red eagle stenciled on it and the words, "Don't mess with the US." The Krishna's were charged with felony theft and fraud with a maximum fine of \$10,000 and a 2 year jail sentence. As for the Madison chapter of VVAW, which was informed of the arrest, "we're looking for a tail of hair for our flag standard!"

NATIONAL VETERAN Pig Roast

The 1st annual Vietnam Veterans Pig Roast, sponsored by the National Association of Concerned Veterans in Springfield, Missouri over the Labor Day weekend was an excellent experience. Due to many court hassles, some negative publicity, and an unusual right-wing backlash, there were not as many people as had been expected. Still, a thousand people showed up for the pig roast and concert featuring Country Joe McDonald—and it sure felt good to hear, once again, "1,2,3,4 what are we fighting for...."

The final two days consisted of a grass roots symposium. There were workshops on Agent Orange, Delayed Stress, Video Tapes, and a big workshop on Dewey Canyon IV. Forty people signed up to go, and there were over \$150 worth of buttons, papers and literature sold. The weekend was a total success.

VETS' "Overpaid"

ILLinois State Vets Scholarship Bungle

The Illinois State Legislature, between fist fights and drunken brawls, managed to discover that veterans across the state who were receiving the Illinois veterans scholarship had been "overpaid" for the spring quarter. In reality, the state had screwed up on the budget and allocated no money for the vets.

To offset this injustice the State decided that the vets had to pay back the money, or at least a substantial amount. If they don't they won't be allowed to register for the fall (for which money has been appropriated); neither will they be allowed to get their transcripts to transfer to another school.

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Vietnam Veterans Against the War

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VIETNAM VETERANS ARTS GROUP PRESENTS "REFLEXES & REFLECTIONS"



October 6, 1981, marked a first in the Chicago art scene: the opening of a Vietnam Veterans art exhibition at the N.A. M.E. Gallery at 9 W. Hubbard St in Chicago. Presented by the Vietnam Veterans Arts Group of Chicago, the show is titled "Vietnam Reflexes and Reflections"; it's the first totally Vietnam vet artist exhibition in the Midwest and has collected art by Vietnam vets from around the U.S.

If crowds are any measure of success on opening night, this art show can be termed an

immense success. Approaching the gallery it was necessary to wade through a large crowd, standing, drinking and discussing the show. Inside, the people were wall-to-wall making the job of viewing the art an almost impossible task.

The crowd was easily as unusual as the event itself. Art critics and artists from the area rubbed shoulders with many young men in jungle fatigues peering seriously at the works, the captions, descriptions, and others in the crowd. No less unusual were the number of media person-

alities; TV crews, local celebrities and leadership of many local and national veterans organizations. Local art types were surprised by the sheer numbers attending. One Chicago filmmaker remarked that it was virtually unheard of to see such media coverage much less all the local stations filming and broadcasting live from the gallery.

Some insight into the interesting show was provided by an on-site interview with Rich Atzlan, the producer of the show and leader of the Chicago-based Viet-

nam Veterans Art Group.

Veteran: How many people do you estimate have seen this exhibition today, Rich?

Atzlan: We anticipate over a thousand today.

Veteran: That's a tremendous turnout. We understand you have a wide variety of artistic work here.

Atzlan: Right. We have art related to oil paintings, sculpture--some of it would be described as "descriptive" while other items are more abstract. We also have photos and slides which are one of the principal things we wanted to show. We felt that the war has been covered for too long by professionals and that's like learning to make love from a prostitute--they get paid to do it. We are looking at it from a participant's perspective and we want to show that.

Veteran: We notice that you have a large amount of war memorabilia, particularly PRG and NLF on display.

Atzlan: Right. Most of those were collected by GIs and were captured items.

Veteran: How many pieces do you have here on exhibit?

Atzlan: We have approximately 125 paintings and sculptures, 400 slides and 75 photos.

Veteran: As opposed to the standard fare for art gallery openings where they serve wine and cheese, I see you are serving something of a different nature.

Atzlan: Yes, we're serving C-rations and warm beer.

Veteran: Is that individual servings or squadsize chow hall portions?

Atzlan: We have individual servings and a wide selection of fruit cakes.

Veteran: And the ham and eggs you can still bounce off the wall?

Atzlan: Right!

Veteran: I supposed you are well stocked with the ever popular ham and lima beans?

Atzlan: Well, we have enough. They're not one of our more popular items.

This is a fine art exhibition. The quality of prints, painting and sculpture is outstanding. Differing from previous vet art shows around the country, this show is very upfront about the quality of life--and death. There are no punches pulled. Often, the Vietnamese people, both civilian and fighters, are shown sympathetically, from their own point of view. The artists show many different styles and approaches to their work. The slide show with music and taped fire-fights and attacks provides a good counterpoint to the more traditional forms of art.



NLF and PRG models by Ned Brodrick



Despite protests by Reagan and Company to the contrary, the draft is a very real prospect on the horizon. The simple fact is that there are not enough military personnel to staff the projected expansion of the armed forces, and with Reagan's blusterings about stopping the Russians wherever they appear (or he thinks they appear), the need for more troops becomes clearer and clearer.

Reagan's \$1.5 trillion gift to the Defense Department (more realistically, the War Department) calls for the building of more aircraft carriers, nuclear destroyers, subs, and even bringing old battleships out of mothballs. But wait! The Navy already is having problems with trained personnel to operate the fleet already in existence. In the past, the draft has been used only to fill the needs of the Army, and occasionally the Marines. But the draft does more than that: in fear of being drafted, many people are stimulated to join other services; while the Navy isn't great, it beats the hell out of stomping through the jungles in the Army, so there are people who join up even though it's for a longer period of time.

Reagan & Co have stated their insistence that any new draft would be fair and equitable. But the history of the draft suggests something different. There has been opposition to the draft and its glaring inequalities since the first draft law was enacted during the Civil War. Draft riots in major Northern cities were common. At the time, the law was written so that a man could simply buy his way out of the draft by posting a cash bond--\$800 was sufficient to buy a substitute. Many a patriotic citizen took this option, including the original Rockefeller who went on to build his fortune by selling shoddy arms to the Union Army, and Grover Cleveland who went on to become President.

The period of World War II was the one exception to the draft's glaring inequalities. In fact the level of education and social position of the military was higher than for the civilian population as a whole. Despite the absence of such patriots as John Wayne, draft policy was fairer than it was during earlier wars--and certainly later wars. In part the "equality" came from peer pressure; many were persuaded to join up simply because the country was united behind a cause in which the great majority believed, and to stop Nazi's, many men joined the Canadian military before

Rich Man's War, Poor Man's Fight

DRAFT NEAR



the U.S. had gotten into the war officially. More important, however, was the simple manpower needs of the military. At the height of World War II there were 16 million people in uniform, compared to 5 million during Korea and 6 million during Vietnam. And during those years the population kept on growing, so that the 16 million were a far higher percentage of the population than in later conflicts.

While percentages changed in later wars, so did the pool from which people were drafted. To put it bluntly, it became a poor man's Army. Increasingly, businessmen's children found ways to avoid the draft whether it was for braces for good teeth or exemptions to run the "family" business or perpetual schooling, or even divinity school. Yes, divinity school as either David Stockman (noted axeman behind Reagan's budget) or Jerry Falwell (noted moral majority preacher of patriotism) can testify! During Vietnam, only one third of the pool of eligible manpower ever served in the Armed Forces.

During the period of the Vietnam War the inequities of the draft became more blatant. Prior to Vietnam there were physical and mental requirements which had to be met, but with Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's "Project 100,000!" all of the rules were changed. The program was set up to draft youth whose qualifications were below draftable levels, run them through a cram government program, and send them off as cannon fodder for Vietnam in the combat arms. Meanwhile, physical deferments were handed out to \$100,000 a year sports stars.

The eye-catching upper-class bias of the draft, combined with opposition to the war in Vietnam led to the end of the draft, though the selective service system was left intact.

With signs pointing toward a reinstitution of the draft under the military madness of Reagan/Haig/Weinberger Administration, this draft promises to be as unequal as any. Under present projections only

about one in five draft-age youth would be needed in the military; even with a 10% increase in military personnel, the figure would still be one in four--a long ways from the World War II figure. All the rhetoric about "fair" and "equitable" service melts in the face of the fact that 75% - 80% would not serve. Even under straight lottery, there would always be the question of who gets out of the lottery altogether; there's always religion (remember David Stockman) or health (remember the sports stars or the ability of the rich to hire their own personal physicians). A straight lottery is only "straight" for the people who are a part of it.

Historically the draft has provided the cannon fodder for the military's combat arms--the infantry, artillery, armor and engineers--and there is no reason to believe that a new draft would be any different.

One clear side effect of the draft, however, is to increase the pool of personnel who enlist in the military rather than wait and take their chances in a draft, even though enlistment carries a longer term of service. Recruiters love it since it greatly increases their ability to fill jobs which are more specialized than humping through the mud with people who are more qualified. What this all adds up to is that people without the background, without the education will still end up doing the military's dirty work; options open to working class and minority youth will be severely curtailed (other than hand grenade throwing). In short, war will remain a poor man's fight.

Barry Romo
VVAW National
Office

NO DRAFT, NO WAR

1000 Miles in Desert VETS' LONG MARCH

Protesting unfair treatment by the Veterans Administration, a group of Vietnam veterans marched a 1000 miles through the desert, from Santa Fe, New Mexico receiving little attention from the public. Wearing fatigues and carrying packs and unloaded rifles, the vets dramatized 'Nam vets feelings about the way we have been treated.

The leader of the group, former Marine Mike Chavez, had been fired from his job; he flashed back to 'Nam when a helicopter landed at the hospital where he was working with trau-

ma victims. "For a minute, when I heard those choppers, I was back in 'Nam," he said; "I just couldn't handle it." He broke down and was unable to work, so he was fired.

The vets' only real problem on their trek occurred when they walked by George Air Force Base. The Base went on full security alert because of the officers' fear that they "might be terrorists." When the vets approached the Base, guards greeted them with loaded M-16's. Kind of reminds you of the reception the V.A. gives us when we ask for some of our benefits.



Blisters are a constant problem in the desert heat.

Vietnam Vets Bring New Meaning to Old Day **VETERANS' DAY-81**

Veterans Day, November 11th is a tradition-bound day of red, white and blind patriotism; perhaps a band kicking out those hits of yesteryear, and on the stage or reviewing stand, a cluster of local politicians and the aging representatives of the traditional veterans organizations. The programs, either long and boring or short and boring, are followed by the wreath-laying and color-guard ceremony; there are no startling developments, no controversial statements, and no Vietnam veterans.

In the recent past, at "official" Veterans Day activities, the Vietnam War and Vietnam vets were barely mentioned--if at all. The possible reasons for this are endless: Vietnam vets are unpredictable--they may not follow the program. Perhaps the old-line groups are embarrassed by the lack of Vietnam vets in attendance. Perhaps they're simply embarrassed by the war itself which created a chasm between the class of '45 and the class of '68. Regardless, Vietnam veterans have avoided Veterans Day activities like the plague.

In the last decade, Vietnam vets groups, including VVAW have established a Veterans Day tradition of their own. Beginning with direct confrontations on Vets Day with Vietnam vets demanding to be heard, court actions to fight for inclusion in traditional ceremonies, Vietnam vets groups, in many places, began separate Veterans Day activities either following the traditional ceremonies or even on different days. These Vietnam-vet ceremonies have consistently drawn more Vietnam vets than their counterparts and attracted 'Nam vets who are members of the old-line groups as well as veterans of all eras. Why? Simply because Vietnam vets have offered creative and informative programs on current topics facing Vietnam vets and the public. Those attending have been offered the opportunity to participate in the program and beyond, not like the roll-call membership of the traditional organizations.

Consistently, Vietnam vets have attracted the interest, and often the applause of the public by standing, as veterans of the last U.S. war, flat-out against the next war like Vietnam. Vets have taken a day traditionally

used to beat the drums of war and turned it back on those who would send the youth of America off to fight again.

Not only the next war but the remainders of the last war have been a big part of Vietnam vets' Veterans Day. And 1981, the year of Reagan's big crunch on nearly everything vets have fought for over the past 10 years will be no exception.

The years have been difficult for Vietnam veterans. The concessions won from the Nixon-Ford-clone administrations and the scraps, bones and peanuts thrown out during the Carter years were hard and bitterly fought campaigns; for the first years they were fought against the backdrop of the continuing war; there were 600,000 of our brothers with "bad paper" discharges, and we had to fight the media image of rampaging "bug-eyed" vets "right here on our streets."

Now the Reagan administration is calling in nearly all the programs, good, bad or of no consequence, like a Detroit auto defect recall, only we won't get the car back to drive. Beyond this, benefits and services effecting veterans of all eras are quickly being slashed to the bone, or gradually phased out of existence.

Until now, 1981 has had its bright spots. The massive backlash among Vietnam vets to the "Sterling service" afforded the returning Iranian hostages while the needs of Vietnam vets went unnoticed, did focus public attention on vets for awhile, but with no substantive results.

The Reagan administration's announced plan to close the Veteran Outreach Centers brought large national protests, united virtually all Vietnam vets groups and brought a retreat from Reagan, Stockman & Co, Inc, who promised a couple more years of life for the Centers, a program which was created 10 years too late and which still earns thinly veiled hostility from V.A. bigwigs.

The major battles are still before us. All veterans have been offered the new disability for post-traumatic stress disorders, but the jury is still out on the ease of recognition and the availability of being accepted for a rating. It's for sure they won't be handing out disability ratings like candy, not given the dismal outlook on disabilities

overall which calls for the V.A. to tighten its belt and choke us. Decent V.A. healthcare and benefits must become a major focus of activity by Vietnam vets and vets of all eras.

Chief among health concerns has been the on-going fight for testing, treatment and compensation for Agent Orange victims. Progress has been made only in the area of uniting more veterans and their families in the fight. More vets have died, more widows have come forward, more vets have fallen ill, and more of our children have come into the world with birth defects.

Victories have been won in various state legislatures and Congress has ordered "priority" medical treatment for vets with Agent Orange "related" problems. But this is from the V.A. which recognizes only chloracne (a skin rash) as an Agent Orange-related problem, with the burden of proof of Agent Orange exposure (the when and where) still resting on the veteran.

Both the Environmental Protection Agency and the Government Accounting Office reports say that Agent Orange is dangerous--a potential killer (but we should listen quickly before Reagan disbands both offices and puts Dow in charge of evaluating pesticide safety). Secretary Schweiker of Health and Welfare says that more of us were exposed to Agent Orange than previously reported.

The V.A. maintains there is still no proof; the V.A.'s "Agent Orange Registry Program" is in shambles in many areas. V.A. officials, using notorious right-wing information-gathering sources and chemical company reports, have circulated internal documents claiming that Agent Orange is a "hoax" perpetrated on the American people by the media and Vietnam vets.

The military sits on its collective fat ass and sneers at all of us, still not releasing mounds of vital information on spraying missions and chemical agents. Everyone is doing studies, some announcing that "Agent Orange is A-OK" before the initial stages of the investigations are even completed. Other studies are telling us to hold our breath while they await outcomes some 6, 8, 10, 20 years down the pike. Chemical companies plead innocent, as if they weren't still

making their bucks off the crap.

As-yet-still-unconvicted felons, millionaires and right-wing mutants in Congress seek re-introduction of 2, 4-D and 2, 4, 5-T for widespread use in the U.S. once again.

THE FIGHT FOR TESTING, TREATMENT, AND COMPENSATION FOR AGENT ORANGE VICTIMS IS A LONG WAYS FROM BEING WON!

Indeed the problems of Vietnam vets are manifold. Unemployment in our ranks has increased. One-third of the U.S. prison population is us. Over half a million brothers still have bad discharges. Our lives are shattered by a staggering divorce rate and more brothers have died by suicide than in the mud, sand and jungles of Vietnam.

The Reagan administration does not listen to us, doesn't care, and probably is quite content for us to die off and be quiet. The billions of dollars from social programs--including vets programs--are being poured into a military budget that will create fewer jobs, blow the tattered remains of the economy to dust, and line up our kids and relatives for another war in some place like El Salvador. Reagan's policy of "mutter obscenely and swing an expensive nuclear club" to counter a not-less gross Soviet international policy leads him to support pipsqueak dictators like President Duarte of El Salvador who recently kissed ass all over Capitol Hill for more money, weapons and advisors to counter the recent guerilla offensive in El Salvador. Vietnam vets don't need this little tin-horn punk pulling us into the bloodbath he has helped to create there. With no more U.S. aid for him, the people of El Salvador will most likely bring Duarte to an abrupt end.

The bottom line for Vietnam vets, our families, and our supporters as we approach Veterans Day, 1981, is that the situation is not improving but, in fact, deteriorating rapidly. Now is not the time to lay back and look at whatever we've got, but to build a veterans movement to keep what we've won and then secure what we need. Join with VVAW and other groups on Veterans Day, 1981, to take our fight to the American public.

NEVER FORGIVE--

NEVER FORGET!

--Bill Davis, VVAW
National Office



A Limited Incursion into Congress 'Land'

OPERATION DEWEY CANYON IV

Wed. thru Sat., 12th thru 15th May



Dep. of Vets Affairs, Wisconsin Letter of Support

Dear VVAW,

It has been gratifying to have the support of your organization in our fight in Wisconsin for more equitable assistance to Vietnam veterans in helping to relieve the personal problems created by their war-time service, and to work with you toward the common goals. The Vietnam veteran has been very badly used by the state and the nation, and your efforts to aid the American victims of the conflict in Southeast Asia are to be commended.

I support your goals:

1. Test, Treat & Compensate Agent Orange Victims.
2. Decent Benefits for all Vets.
3. Stop all VA cuts.
4. Support Incarcerated Vets,

and I commend you for VVAW's efforts to increase public awareness of the problems and public demand for redress.

Sincerely,
John R. Moses
Secretary

Department of
Veterans Affairs
State of Wisconsin

National Planning Meeting VVAW Steering Comm.

The VVAW National Office along with members of the VVAW National Steering Committee and assorted experts held a meeting in Chicago in early October to discuss permits, schedules, plans and progress for national veterans activities in Washington, DC next May.

Concretizing plans, the group filled out permits, signed them and sent them off to the DC police to arrange for campsites, march routes and rally points (the schedule is printed on the back page of this issue of THE VETERAN). Discussions were held around fund-raising, travel, speakers and other items, and beginning security and logistics committees were set up.

The planning group will meet again in Milwaukee in early December and, at that

time, make final plans for a larger meeting to include all interested vets and endorsers of Dewey Canyon IV for Chicago in mid-February.

"Not Since the Bonus Marches...."

(Reprinted from the North Country Anvil (P.O. Box 402, Winona, MN 55987)

"...Vietnam veterans are not sitting idly by waiting for official government recognition of the problem. Like John Lindquist in Milwaukee, the vets are mounting their own offensive. Not since the bonus marchers of fifty years ago has the government been faced with a more committed and angry group of veterans.

"Plans are underway by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War for a protest march and camp in Washington, DC, next spring. Lindquist says it will

be a 'limited incursion' into the mall in front of the U.S. Capitol.

"There, facing the white obelisk of the Washington Monument, a motley army camped amid the bluster and banalities will confront a nation trying hard to forget them.

"Vietnam...our first mad, psychedelic, stereophonic war....They hope to make it our last."

Attention: AGENT ORANGE PARENTS

As part of the first day's activities during Dewey Canyon IV we will introduce children affected by Agent Orange as part of the candlelight march on the White House. We will leave photos of these children taped to the White House fence. Even if you can't come to Dewey Canyon IV--or if you can--please send photos of children affected by Agent Or-

ange.

Test, Treat & Compensate Agent Orange Victims--especially our children!!!

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Partial list of individuals and groups endorsing Operation Dewey Canyon IV:

National Association of Black Veterans; "Country" Joe MacDonald; Bill Davis, Chairman, Illinois Veterans Civic Council; United Professionals of Madison, Wisconsin (Nurses); Pete Seiger; O'Hare Local, American Postal Workers Union; Jack Gladden, President, Student Body, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee; Tom Loftus, State Representative, Madison, Wisconsin; David Bridgman, Professor, Colby College, Colby, Maine.

Remember this?

In early September, Secretary of State Alexander Haig, shooting once again from his well-worn hip, blasted the Soviet Union for its use of chemical agents in Southeast Asia. Banner headlines in papers across the U.S. carried his charges along with his promise to present his evidence at the United Nations

Few people doubt that the Soviets have--and would use--chemical agents as nasty as anything the U.S. has--and has used. For at least some Vietnam vets there was the suspicion that Haig might have been presented with Agent Orange residue leftover from the U.S. blanketing of that part of the world

Not quite so simple, however; it seems instead that Haig's mouth was working before his brain was in gear. The particular chemical on which he was basing his charges exists naturally all over the world.

For Free 2 Color 'DCN' Poster, Write VVAW



A Limited Incursion into Congress 'Land'

OPERATION DEWEY CANYON IV



AS VIETNAM VETERANS THE TIME HAS COME TO REACH INTO OUR CLOSETS AND PULL OUT THE FATIGUES, THE BOOTS AND THE MEDALS. IT'S TIME TO MARCH, TO LOBBY, TO DEMONSTRATE, TO TAKE A NATIONAL VETERANS'

MARCH RIGHT INTO THE MIDDLE OF WASHINGTON, DC. WE'RE GOING TO DEMONSTRATE TO REAGAN, TO THE BUREAUCRATS, TO THE V.A., TO THE CONGRESS, AND TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THAT WE'RE ANGRY AND DEMANDING OUR RIGHTS! WE CAN'T TAKE THE CUTBACKS THAT ARE ALREADY HERE, AND WE SURE AS HELL AREN'T GOING TO TAKE ANYMORE!

FIFTY YEARS AFTER THE BONUS MARCH OF 1932, AND 11 YEARS AFTER VVAW'S "OPERATION DEWEY CANYON III," IT'S TIME TO MARCH AGAIN, NOT BECAUSE WE WANT TO BUT BECAUSE WE HAVE TO. WE WERE SENT OFF BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO FIGHT A DIRTY WAR IN VIETNAM--A WAR IN WHICH WE HAD NO INTEREST--AND ONCE WE CAME HOME WE WERE IGNORED AND ABUSED BY THAT SAME GOVERNMENT: WE WERE "USED ONCE, THEN THROWN AWAY!" NOW, CUTS IN THE VA BUDGET ARE BEING AIMED STRAIGHT AT VIETNAM VETS WHILE THE MONEY IS GOING TO DICTATORS IN EL SALVADOR OR NEW TOYS FOR THE ADMIRALS AND GENERALS IN THE U.S. MILITARY. AND THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO USE OUR CHILDREN TO FIGHT THEIR WAR, JUST AS THEY ONCE USED US.



VICTIMS OF AGENT ORANGE ARE IGNORED AND LIED TO; VICTIMS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS ARE STUCK INTO VA PSYCH WARD AND DRUGGED INTO STUPOR; VETS IN PRISON HAVE ALL THEIR VETS' RIGHTS STOLEN FROM THEM. FOR ALL THE VETS WHO CANNOT BE IN WASHINGTON, AND FOR THOSE WHO CAN WE MUST SPEAK OUT. WE NEED JOBS, NOT PROMISES; CAMPAIGN PROMISES CAN'T REPLACE DISABILITY PAYMENTS OR A DECENT GI BILL. WE NEED PROGRAMS TO MEET OUR NEEDS, NOT HIGH-SOUNDING WORDS. WE CAN'T WAIT TO BE "GIVEN" THESE THINGS, WE HAVE TO GET THEM OURSELVES. FOR FOUR DAYS WE WILL MARCH AND DEMONSTRATE AND LOBBY TO GET WHAT VETS NEED. WE WILL FIGHT TO KEEP OUR CHILDREN FROM FIGHTING THE NEXT VIETNAM. WE WELCOME ALL, VETS AND NON-VETS WHO SUPPORT OUR CAUSE. BUILD OPERATION DEWEY CANYON IV.

Wed. thru Sat., 12th thru 15th May, 1982



Veterans' Counterattack

TEST, TREAT & COMPENSATE AGENT ORANGE VICTIMS!
DECENT BENEFITS FOR ALL VETS!
STOP ALL V.A. CUTS! SUPPORT INCARCERATED VETS!
JOBS or INCOME! SINGLE-TYPE DISCHARGE!
NO AID TO EL SALVADOR! NO WAR!

VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR
P.O. Box 25592, Chicago, IL 60625 (312) 463-2127, 989-4684, 275-0043

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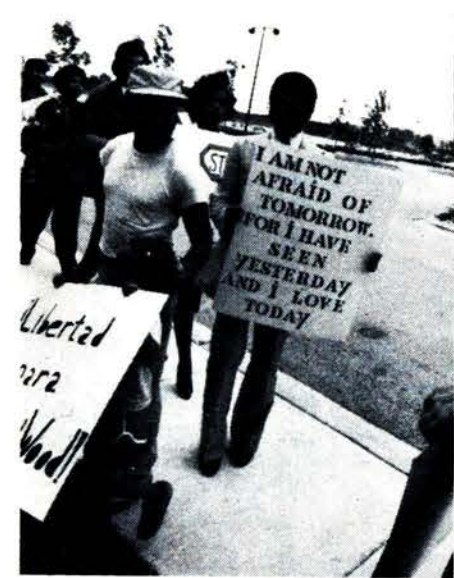
SKYDIVING FOR VIETNAM VETS



Brewer (center) with VVAW members.

Jeral 'Lucky' Wood

'NAMVET AND VICTIM



VVAW members march with Jeral Wood (center, with sign) before court appearance.

Jeral Wood is married, the father of two children and a Marine 'Nam veteran. Jeral "Lucky" Wood is also charged with attempted murder, aggra-

vated battery and armed violence.

In August, 1980, Wood was working at the Ford Assembly plant in Chicago as an assembler. He reached his explosion point on the 22nd when General Foreman Cecil Harrell, after two years of harassment, cursed him out. A notorious facist and bully, Harrell made Simon Legree look like a member of the NAACP. Harrell had several discrimination charges pending against him at the time of the incident including sexual harassment from a Black woman whom he pressured for sex. He had his own brother fired and cursed his Father out during a union hearing. Wood snapped under the harassment and got a gun and shot Harrell in the plant. He then turned himself into to the police.

Jeral Wood remembers 'Nam, his friends who died there, and the pressure. He has been attending rap groups at the local vets center. Like thousands of Vietnam vets, the memories and society's pressures were too much for him to handle. Rather than Jeral being on trial it should be the government--on trial for tossing aside vets without so much as a thank you. If you want more information on the case, write:

Jeral Wood
15803 Paulina
Harvey, IL 60426

The following letter was written by Vernon E. Brewer II. He passed through Milwaukee in late August, doing skydiving for Agent Orange. He drove in on a 1200 cc Harley chopper that needed some work, and VVAW was proud to be able to help him out. He held a press conference, and when nobody came, wrote this letter to the editor:

Milwaukee Sentinel & Journal

The unique and very real health problems Vietnam veterans face today are well documented and well known. Just as the real cancer rate of atomic bomb guinea pigs from desert tests years ago continues to vastly overshadow the national norm. My own great uncle died with one lung missing from mustard gas in World War I.

The one thing all three sets of these vets have in common is the cold fact of an unexaggerated neglect so derelict in its manifestation that one need not be surprised to learn it has been perpetuated by a government organization. I am speaking, of course, of the Veterans' Administration.

What Veterans? Not mine. I received three purple hearts in Vietnam. I spent nine months in Ft Devens Army Hospital. I volunteered for 'Nam. I have never received anything but lip service and cold indifference from the V.A.

My son had to sleep in braces for the first 3 years of his life to correct a birth defect. My skin is covered by a strange and uncomfortable rash. I suffer from constant migraines and anything I eat, including tums, turns to gastritis. I am not unique.

I have found veterans in every state my travels have taken me into with mirror-image complaints--finger nails rotting off I found in Milwaukee; the man is ill, the V.A., she don't know nothin'.

I got frustrated, angry, depressed, imprisoned, divorced. Now I want to get even. The way for all Vietnam veterans suffering Dapson or dioxin-related disabilities to beat the system is to use the system itself in the way it was designed to bring the necessary changes in V.A. policy.

Together with Save-a-vet, Brockport State University Dean of Veterans Jim Wood, the help, direct aid and blessing of the U.S. Parachute Association, Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America, and the very active Vietnam Veterans Against the War, I embarked on a cross-country skydiving tour. The purpose of my

trip is obvious; as a paratrooper in Vietnam, I represented the people of America. At 18 I did not shave but I loved my country so much I was a lifer's dream. I was young enough to be quick, dumb enough to want to fight for this country in a war halfway around the world. I gave America my honest best and then some. All I got in return was guilt projections, ruined health, and the angry memory of infant braces.

Now I'm skydiving once in each state around the continental U.S.; Milwaukee was my 19th. I travel via Harley Davidson motorcycle, no thanks to Harley Davidson of Milwaukee. Originally Harley Davidson led myself and Save-a-vet to believe they would donate a motorcycle for the trip, Sunset Orange. They ultimately, after two weeks of "looking for the money in other departments," turned us down cold. So I went \$4000 in debt to purchase, yes, a Harley Davidson--an American bike for an American trip. After approximately 6000 miles of constant use (from New England to the Midwest) I asked for a pit stop, help in restoring everything that had burned out, vibrated off, was slipping, leaking and non-functional. They declined, afraid of setting a precedent, you know. Though I support this trip solely by packing parachutes at U.S.P.A. centers in each state after I jump, and make only enough funds for gas, oil, and an occasional McDonald's repast, Harley said "No."

Milwaukee came through, though; the Vet's Center contacted VVAW who closed ranks and literally swarmed in to help by putting me up, feeding me, arranging a snubbed press conference at the dive, and putting me in contact with Tim Southworth, the owner of "The Cycle Empire." Tim did what Harley wouldn't. He donated the majority of the parts I needed. VVAW members and I got my pit stop, enabling me to continue on to Minnesota. I hope the spirit of vets helping vets is catching, even to you who never experienced the horror of war.

Organize. Stand up, be counted, get involved, stay committed. Only then will the V.A. seek out, do realistic biological test for Dapson and/or dioxin poisoning, treat the victims (including deformed children and the wives of veterans experiencing spontaneous abortions), then compensate fairly anyone damaged in the service of his or her country. Goodbye, Milwaukee, and thanks.

Vernon Brewer II
Seneca Falls, NY

VETERANS' HIS

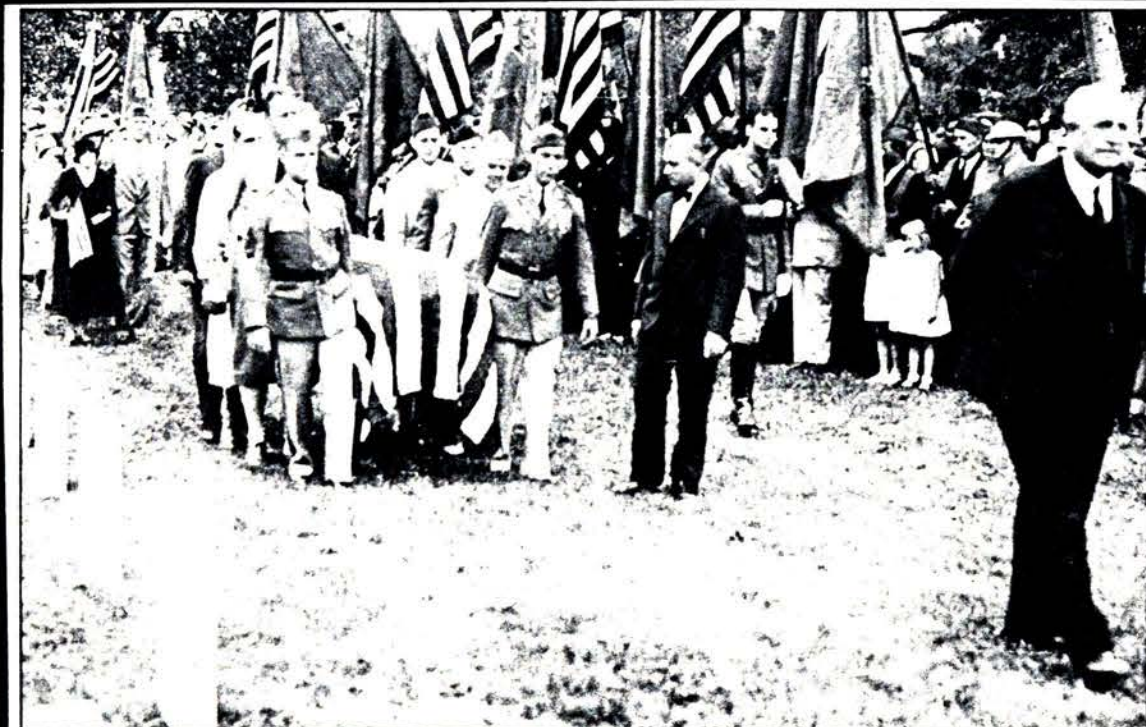
1932-WWI Vets Protest in Wash. BONUS MARCH



GAS AND GUNS: BONUS MARCHERS ARE CLEARED FROM THE STREETS OF WASHINGTON BY MEANS OF TEAR GAS AND FIXED BAYONETS.



ATTACK: ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF DOUGLAS MACARTHUR (LEFT) AND HIS AIDE, MAJOR EISENHOWER (RIGHT), WATCH THEIR TROOPS BEAR DOWN ON THE PACKING-CRATE DWELLINGS AT ANACOSTIA.



WHAT PRICE GLORY?: SHOT TO DEATH BY MACARTHUR'S TROOPS, AN UNEMPLOYED BUTCHER, WILLIAM HRUSHKA, IS BORNE TO HIS GRAVE IN ARLINGTON CEMETERY BY HIS BONUS ARMY BUDDIES.

Vets camped out around Washington DC demanding decent treatment from the government--and especially that the government live up to the promises it had made to veterans. Vets coming to the Capital from all over the country, bringing their wives and children, and the movement growing until one authority said that he believed, "the institutions of our government have been severely threatened."

This is no description of Dewey Canyon IV nor even of Operation Dewey Canyon III where vets threw away their medals in disgust at the way the U.S. government was continuing to kill off our brothers in Vietnam. The quote in fact comes from General Douglas MacArthur, Army Chief of Staff under President Herbert Hoover; the General was talking about the Bonus March of 1932.

In May, June and July of 1932 over 25,000 World War I veterans and their families descended on Washington to demand that the Hoover Administration pay them the bonus they had been promised as compensation for their service in World War I. While the government could come up with all kinds of tax breaks and outright gifts for big business, it could only put off giving vets their promised bonus; vets had begun to refer to it as the "tombstone bonus." To vets trying to keep together families in the heart of the great Depression, even a small bonus was sorely needed.

Vets came from every corner of the country and, as the early contingents arrived in Washington or made news along the way, more and more decided they would join their brothers to demand their rights. With unemployment at record levels, many vets had nothing to keep them at home.

Stories of the various contingents and their travels to Washington deserve whole books; there were pitched battles with police in the railroad yards of Youngstown and Cleveland. Rail traffic in St Louis was closed down for days until the trains carried the vets closer to Washington (soap on the tracks was a favorite vet device). Along the rail lines, local farmers--

who didn't have all that much themselves--left care packets of food for the vets to eat. A group of California vets not only had most of its donations stolen by its supposed leader, but almost 2/3s of the vets were lost during the month-long trip (some were later found in the Tennessee mountains. The governor of West Virginia brought a fleet of trucks to the state border to carry the vets across his state as quickly and quietly as possible.

At the focus of the march in Washington, the Hoover Administration was trying--without any success--to solve the Depression by pouring money into big business in hopes that somehow the money would "trickle down" in terms of jobs (an economic theory which has a large popularity in Washington today). Faced with growing thousands of the victims of their policies, however, the Administration became much less theoretical and much more practical. Right off they decided to do nothing to help the vets--except what could divert the vets from their plans to demand an immediate payment of their bonus. The Administration provided campsites--but so far away that they were useless. So the vets found their own, occupying abandoned buildings along Pennsylvania Avenue and erecting campsites on vacant lots.

The government tried hard to provide the vets with leaders of their own leaders, of course. W.W. Waters was named "Commander in Chief of the Bonus Expeditionary Force"; in fact he was nothing but a front man for the chief of the DC police, an ex-general who was Hoover's man on the scene. Time after time these leaders bought a few more days before the vets would boil over.

Perhaps the greatest deception of the vets' stay came when the Senate finally voted against the Bonus. This was prearranged: the House would vote for the Bonus, then the Senate would vote against, saving President Hoover from having to veto the Bonus when he would be running soon for re-election. A day and night march through the Capitol went on for five days before the vote (it was planned as a camp-in, but the Administration refused

STORY

n. D.C.

RCH

the vets permission to sleep on the Capitol grounds), and it was clear that something would have to be done to divert the vets' anger once the no vote was announced. The solution: the leaders of the march, Waters among them, contrived to get arrested. Vets were angry, of course; when the police chief—who had arranged the whole thing in the first place—released the vets' leaders, who then announced the Senate vote against the Bonus, anger against the government was diverted into the apparent victory of getting their leaders released. And when a military band mysteriously appeared to play "America," vets cheered for their leaders, cheered for the police chief, and even allowed three "boo's" for Herbert Hoover to be turned off as disrespectful.

The vets' anger, fueled by simple desperation, would not be silenced or misguided forever. The five-day "Death March," with an endless stream of vets walking in and out of the Capitol (one vet passed out twice during the march, only to get up and keep on marching) sparked a growing public sympathy and support for the vets not only in Washington but across the country.

None of this was lost on the Hoover Administration. From the beginning of the March, the government's greatest hope was for the vets to go home and leave the government alone. Hoover and his cronies tried all kinds of tricks from offering a small bonus plus free transportation and food to get home, to attempts to starve the vets out of DC. One vet leader, firmly in the pocket of the government, tried to get the vets to leave immediately after the "no" vote on the Bonus to defeat local candidates. A few vets left; most stayed, understanding that Washington was where the Bonus payment would be decided.

Finally Hoover found himself with no more options and brought in the military. His first try failed when Marines refused to lift their rifles against veterans. But, on the 28th of July, 1932, a specially gathered military force (they had been kept on hold far from Washington where

they could hear as little as possible about the Bonus marchers) under the command of Douglas MacArthur moved into the city. First the DC police tried to evict vets living in makeshift homes and camps; gunfire broke out; one vet was killed. Vets fought back with bricks and stones. Then came the military. Tanks (under the command of Major George Patton) moved down Pennsylvania Avenue, following lines of soldiers with bayonets at the ready. Slowly, fighting for each inch, the vets retreated, picking up tear gas cannisters and flinging them back at the troops. The vets' camps were burned, their few belongings destroyed. And the vets were pushed out of Washington, finally disbanding and returning home. They had little choice.

But the Bonus March did not end just because the marchers were dispersed by a desperate government. The militance of the vets, and their learning of their need for organization won the Bonus payment several years later. Their march gave impetus to the drive which won the fight for unemployment compensation, one of the vets demands. And it taught the vets a lot.

The great majority of the Bonus Marchers went to Washington with faith that the government would give them what they deserved, needed, and had earned. They were more than willing to follow leaders who offered a way of patriotically winning what they needed. The government not only refused to meet their needs but drove them away at gunpoint. Despite all kinds of misdirection and a media barrage, it was clear to most vets who was throwing them out of their Capital. Perhaps the experience and lessons was best summed up by one Bonus Marcher, Benjamin B. Sheperd from Philadelphia, who said: "When I marched off to war in 1917, I remember a Civil War veteran, over 70 years old, telling me, 'Son, you are all heroes now. But some day they'll treat you like dogs.'"

Vets of the most recent U.S. military venture—those of us who have, like the Bonus Marchers of 1932 been used once and then thrown away—are faced by an equally hostile government, equally interested in supporting big business at the expense of those who can least afford it. The determination and eventual victory of those vets and their families who marched in the 1932 Bonus Army are a lesson for the Vietnam vets of Dewey Canyon IV. We will not forget.

V.A. Rule Change

MEDICAL CARE

One of the supposed benefits of being in the military—so we were told—was the ability to get medical care at a V.A. facility once we were out of the service. But not anymore; now it requires a certificate of poverty before we can get treatment. New V.A. eligibility rules for medical treatment require that a veteran "reveal" his financial status, and that those whose income exceeds \$15,000 per year will be told to get treatment somewhere else.

According to Congress, this rule change will save the V.A. \$109 million a year; a V.A. spokesman says it will save only \$9.3 million with the added cost of sending investigators around to check financial status before a vet will be treated.

Let's face it; very few vets go to the V.A. willingly. A vet has to be pretty sick to tolerate the lines, the bureaucrats, the poor care, the need for interpre-

ters to talk to the doctor—the list goes on and on. A sizable majority of vets making over the federal minimum also have some kind of medical plan—and would probably not go near a V.A. facility on a bet. Those who don't also do not need to go through the additional hassle of proving anything before they can be cared for.

When we went out to fight for the good old U.S. of A., we weren't told that our benefits would depend on how much money we earned. The fact is that the government is trying to erode every benefit that vets have—a little at a time in hopes that vets won't stand up and fight the cuts. This change in rules is simply one more step in that process.

(Information from the National Vietnam Veterans Review, P.O. Box 35812, Fayetteville, NC 28303.)



RADIATION & VETERANS

It took a reversal of the 4th appeal to the V.A. Board of Appeals before Ken Marshall of South Dakota finally forced the V.A. to admit that removal of a non-malignant tumor from his thyroid was a service-connected disability stemming from his exposure to radiation while in the Navy in 1946. It took Marshall 7 years and his battle is still going on. Civilians living on the Marshall Islands near where Marshall was exposed have been awarded lifetime medical care and \$25,000 when they have exhibited thyroid problems; Marshall has been told by the V.A. he is entitled to nothing, and his disability rating has been determined to be 0.

For the National Association of Atomic Veterans Marshall's victory was a step forward; winning compensation is still being

fought. NAAV is actively seeking other victims of atomic radiation exposure and has been instrumental in getting Atomic Veterans included in one of the Bills now in the U.S. Senate which would provide treatment for Agent Orange victims. The parallels between the fight of Agent Orange victims and that of Atomic Veterans are many and close; neither group has gotten any relevant cooperation from the government which was perfectly happy to use us once; both are fighting a growing struggle as more and more vets find they have been affected. And each small victory for one group is a victory for both.

For more information on the National Association of Atomic Vets, write NAAV; 1109 Franklin St, Burlington, IO 52601, or call (319) 753-6112.



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

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 used 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!

Contributions to VVAW are Recognized by the IRS as TAX DEDUCTIBLE !!



Membership Form

P.O. Box 25592, Chicago, IL 60625
(312) 463-2127, 989-4684, 275-0043

DATE.....

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

VIETNAM VETERANS TELL THEIR STORY RECOLLECTIONS



To the Americans Who Were Used in That War
To the Indochinese Who Fought Back
To Our Brothers Who Died To Our Children
In the Hope that Our Real Stories
Will Help Stop Future Wars of Aggression

12 NON-FICTION
STORIES BY VIETNAM
VETERANS ABOUT
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BY
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Chicago IL 60625**

IF YOU HAVE A "WAR"
STORY YOU WANT TO
TELL, SEND IT TO
VVAW

We would also like
poetry and photos.

CHAPTER SHORTS SAN ANTONIO, TX

Along with plans for their own Vets Day ceremony, San Antonio VVAW has applied to join the official ceremonies. The chapter is also preparing a pamphlet explaining state veteran's laws.

The most unusual activity involves Spanish-speaking members of the Chapter who have been going to a nearby refugee camp for people who have fled El Salvador. There they have been providing humanitarian aid in helping refugees fill out the necessary forms for political status so that the Reagan administration will not be able to classify them as economic re-

fugees and send them back to their death in El Salvador.

For more information contact
San Antonio VVAW, 519 Everest,
San Antonio, TX 78209 (512)
826-2441.

NEW YORK CITY

Members of VVAW in New York City joined a Coalition of New York Vietnam Veteran Organizations in planning two days of testimony and rallies at hearings of the New York State Dioxin Study Commission at the end of September.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Members of the DC Chapter are still organizing their chapter, working with other vets

groups and other organizations, particularly in getting together some of the early details for Operation Dewey Canyon IV.

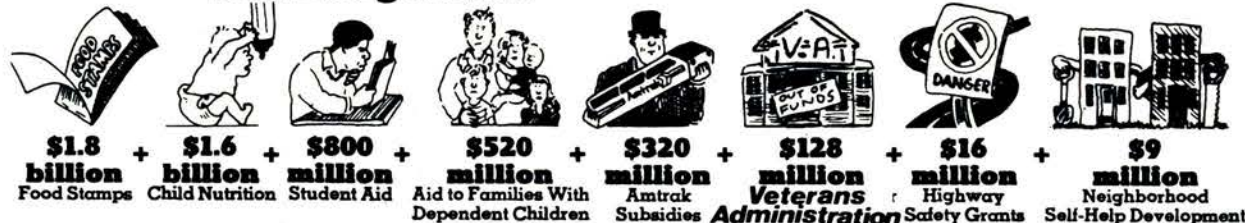
BIRMINGHAM, AL

Plans are well along for activities for Veterans Day, working with the local Vets Center and concentrating on guerilla theatre to be put on during the city's Veterans Day ceremonies.

For further information

THE VETERAN
Vietnam Veterans Against the War
P.O. Box 25592
Chicago IL 60625
(312) 275-0043, 989-4684,
or 463-2127;

1982 Budget Cuts

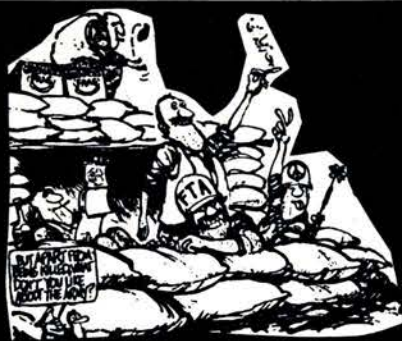


1982 Tax Subsidies for Oil Companies



= \$5.2 billion

Adapted from People & Taxes



FRAGGIN'

Sp 5 Willy(Ret.)



Did you see where Reagan gave a \$10,000 bonus to four secret service agents who were with him when he was shot. Three other agents got bonuses of \$1000 or more--and that's pretty good combat pay.

Hell, if I remember right I got somewhere around \$65 a month while I was in Vietnam. Now I don't want to say that these agents weren't brave, or that they weren't risking their lives. They were. But a grunt in Vietnam didn't see but about \$800 a year and he put his ass on the line many times; he didn't have 8-hour shifts, and his duties didn't include many state banquets or balls--and he got at least as many purple hearts as these guys.

Maybe the difference in combat pay comes because troops in the military are so crude. That's what the Army would have you believe if you read the guidebook given to the members of the 4th Infantry Division at Ft. Carson before they headed for Germany for Reforger Exercises (that's the yearly picnic where U.S. troops are flown to Germany to tear up the German countryside, kill four or five civilians, two or three GI's and a bunch of livestock as we pretend to turn back a Russian invasion).

The guidebook is supposed to tell the troops how to behave during Reforger. Among its illustrations is a picture of an infantryman wearing a horned helmet with a ball and chain saying, "Whoopie, now's my chance to rape, burn and pillage and jaywalk all over Germany."

Of course that's why GIs go to Germany since they're nothing but a bunch of animals to start with. Jaywalking all over Germany. But then the book goes on to say, "Wrong. You ain't on your own block." It's too bad, fellows; you can't go rape and pillage just like you used to do back home.

No doubt, somewhere in the 4th Division are some criminal souls, but the guidebook's a bit off base. It was printed too late for Vietnam and a little too early for El Salvador or Nicaragua or Libya or whatever's next. "Don't get grabby with the frauleins," it says; "You

ain't part of no conquering Army." It must be part of official Army policy that when we are a conquering Army (as we were supposed to be in Vietnam) then it's fine to rape, pillage, burn and grab frauleins.

Well, by now the troops are back home. Let's hope that none of them got caught jaywalking. It might ruin the Army's image!

SAVING MONEY

The Army has come up with a new way to save money. Since ammunition for some artillery pieces costs so much money, they've got an experimental program going on down at Ft. Stewart. Instead of live ammo, they're using computer games--like the kind you find at arcades or hook up to your TV.

The idea is that hitting a moving target on the screen develops hand-eye coordination. The Army says that "there appears on the screen a potential real life-threat vehicle." Of course these "life-threat" vehicles are supposed to look like non-NATO vehicles, just like the "aggressors" when we were in training always wore black PJ's.

This is a great innovation. Now GI's can prepare for battle in the pinball room. No cold nights under the stars and in the rain. A beer between games. No one shooting back. All you have to do is shoot at asteroid invaders or dive bombers with a push of your button. At least that's sort of like practicing against MIGs and Backfire bombers.

And it's not a laughing matter, either. Think of the potential. This may be a giant step toward world peace. Just think: someday we might be fighting the Russians over some chunk of sand in the Middle East. Instead of sending troops there, we could get on the hotline and make a deal; "Hello, Leonid. I'll send my best players to meet your best at this arcade in Paris on the left bank. Winner takes Kuwait--deal?"

This way we will have cleaner wars. With them cutting back on V.A. hospital care, we can't afford too many casualties--maybe those in Washing-

ton can, but we can't.

If nothing else, using games will save a few bucks. The Army will need the extra money to buy Worcestershire sauce. After all, they just spent \$6,000 to do a 17-page study on how to buy a 15-ounce bottle of Worcestershire sauce (which costs \$1.50). I don't know why they made the study. You're supposed to use Worcestershire sauce on steak and I don't remember getting much steak in the Army. Maybe they use it at the Pentagon in one of their many subsidized dining-rooms. They probably do, but they felt that \$1.50 a bottle wasn't up to the standards of a colonel--so they inflated the price.

GRENADE of the MONTH

The award for this paper is another difficult choice: there's the general fired from National Security Counsel because he said that the Ruskies were just over the next hill waiting to swoop down on us; and there's the Congressional candidate in California who said we should have a military coup in the U.S. But despite the strong competition, the award goes to Robert Nimmo, new chief of the V.A. This turkey displayed his ignorance almost the moment he got in. He passed over Agent Orange as causing nothing more than a skin affliction and promised a medical coverup study.

And he didn't stop there.

He went on to point out that Vietnam vets had not been short-changed. Ninety-five percent of Vietnam vets are doing well according to Nimmo. That's some really good news. If you subtract the 50+ thousand vets who have committed suicide, the hundreds of thousands who make up a third of the prison population around the country, the uncounted thousands in asylums--that must mean that all of us not in one of those situations must just be sitting back with the bucks rolling in. It's sure good to know! Thanks, Director Nimmo.

Vietnam Veteran Partners

As part of the Outreach Program offered to veterans and their families in the Madison, Wisconsin, area, VVAW and Vets House are working to establish a group with partners of Vietnam vets.

The University of Wisconsin in conjunction with Vets House have agreed to fund and staff a program designed to bring together wives and families of veterans to meet and educate each other on delayed stress and Agent Orange related problems and to learn self-help techniques in stress management.

We also hope to provide the opportunity for vets and families to obtain information on services available in the area such as genetic testing, developmental evaluation and special educational programs for children with Agent Orange-related disabilities.

The program will begin in early November. For more information contact VVAW, 1051 E. Johnson, Madison, WI 53703.



"IRISH VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR?"

Reports from England, where British youth frustrated by Prime Minister Thatcher's wonderful economic programs took to the streets for a couple of weeks of riot, say that the first youth arrested during the rioting was a young soldier home on leave from the British occupation of Northern Ireland. Right on, Brother!



PATCHES T-SHIRTS BUTTONS



all with the VVAW insignia in three colors:

T-shirts: \$7.50 (specify size--small, medium, large, or x-large)

Patches: \$4.00

Buttons: \$1.00

Any of the above can be ordered from the VVAW National Office, P.O. Box 25592, Chicago, IL 60625; make checks payable to VVAW.

The battle for testing, treatment and compensation for Agent Orange victims in Australia rages on. For Australian Vietnam veterans and the people of Australia the outcome must be successful or a grave injustice affecting even generations to come will forever mark the credibility of both the U.S. and Australian governments and, in all probability, deliver a felling blow to either country's ability to maintain and field an army abroad.

While the struggle and condition that Vietnam vets face in both countries are essentially the same, recent development in Australia in the last 4 months can give American Agent Orange activists some indication of the battles to come.

Major portions of the Australian press and media (unlike their U.S. counterparts) have maintained a high profile on Agent Orange coverage, keeping the issue before the public. Even a few members of the Australian Parliament have taken an interest beyond giving lip service to the issue and have pursued the issue actively. One Member of Parliament, Clyde Holding, hit the nail on the head in a March, 1981 press release in which he stated, "The government has consistently refused to hold a judicial inquiry where Vietnam veterans could call evidence to prove the efficacy of their claims. Every concession the veterans have won to date has only been after months of haggling and negotiation."

Holding went on to say, "There are two obvious reasons for the government's 'cover-up.' First, the government is concerned about major political embarrassment to the Prime Minister and three senior ministers, Messrs Killen, Lynch and Peacock. Each of these four men were ministers with direct responsibility for parts of Australians involvement in Vietnam at some time during the crucial 1965-1971 period. Secondly, any adverse findings about chemical use will have a major impact on chemical companies' markets in Australia (more about that later)."

True to form, in July the Australian government fronted by Tony Messner, Minister of Veterans Affairs completely undermined and stalled attempts by Australian vets, led by the Vietnam veterans association, to establish a judicial inquiry into defoliant poisoning. Of six proposals presented by Vietnam Veterans of Australia Association (VVAA) only one was approved. Like the U.S. Veterans Admini-

AGENT ORANGE & AUSTRALIAN VETS

stration, Senator Messner is hinging everything on an epidemiological study hoping to stall action as long as possible. Phil Thompson, President of VVAA, stated that the study "would not prove a thing."

One month later in Canberra, scene of the July fiasco, traditional vets groups (similar to our VFW and American Legion) added insult to injury by rejecting a call by VVAA for their support for a judicial inquiry into Agent Orange. The conference of ex-servicemen's organizations did, however, pass a wishy-washy resolution calling for unsuccessful death benefit's applications by Vietnam veteran's widows to be reopened.

When Senator Holding referred to American chemical companies having an influence in these matters, he wasn't whistling in the dark. Incredibly enough, the sales, distribution and widespread use of 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D (the components of Agent Orange) have not been curtailed in Australia. This situation has not escaped the notice of the Vietnam veterans, the public, or a large number of Australian scientists. In spite of American chemical companies, and the U.S. and Australian governments, this knowledge also has not escaped the world's scientific community or national governments. 2,4,5-T, 2,4-D, TCDD, dioxin, Agent Orange--these and other petro-based chemicals have long been recognized as doing the very things Vietnam vets in the U.S. and Australia claim--since the 1930's, in fact!

In early July, an appointed commission of the government of Queensland, ruled that no evidence in the U.S., Vietnam or Sweden proved any problems with 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D. They further ruled that there would be no change in administering or using these chemicals in the state of Queensland.

Meanwhile, two Canberra scientists from the Australian National University have uncovered evidence that war-surplus Agent Orange, acknowledged by many scientists to be the deadliest chemical ever manufactured, was smuggled into Australia by way of Singapore in the late '60's and early '70's. The result, according to the scientists, has been an epidemic of newborn infants dying from birth abnormalities linked to TCDD.

BENIER ON THE NSW DROUGHT



These are other well publicized cases of workers having problems after proven exposure will no doubt bolster public opinion and bring together a strong coalition of Australian environmentalists and Vietnam vets.

In what was probably the most underhanded and slimy move to day, Messner--Veterans Affairs Minister--visited the U.S. with almost no press publicity. He slithered around DC, met with leaders of traditional vets groups, V.A. assholes and VVA leader Bobby Mueller. Messner wisely avoided almost all other Vietnam vets groups including Vietnam vets in Congress, and most certainly any Agent Orange activists.

Upon returning to Australia, Messner stated that, "...there is no credible evidence at this stage of the game that indicates that there is any connection between Agent Orange and any disabilities." He had been reassured by groups and individuals he met with, he said, that Agent Orange was no problem among vets in the U.S. Messner held a series of press conferences and radio and TV shows to publicize his "new" theory that Vietnam vets' problems were due to re-adjustment and stress disorders solely, not to any Agent Orange related exposure. His main staple on every appearance was that, "I spoke to Mr Bobby Mueller of the Vietnam Veterans of America and he assured me that Agent Orange was not a problem among Vietnam veterans in America but rather a problem of re-adjustment into society." We certainly hope that Mueller was being misquoted.

In an interview with the student paper of Griffith University in Australia, Graham Bell, President of the Queensland branch of VVAA, spoke for Australian vets and for U.S. vets and our families when he stated, "And what of the future? The government 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."

Bill Davis
VVAW National
Office

(VVAW gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Bob Gibson of Sydney VVAA and Graham Bell of Queensland VVAA.)



AGENT ORANGE SHORTS

Schweiker, Sec. of Health & Human Ser. Discovers A.O.

To the total lack of surprise for Vietnam vets, the U.S. government has suddenly discovered that Agent Orange was dumped on military bases and other sites occupied by U.S. troops in Vietnam. Apparently in response to the fact that sources outside the government were prepared to release "new" information about Agent Orange dumping, Secretary Schweiker of the Department of Health and Human Services announced that, "As part of a continuing search of Vietnam War files...there was a larger exposure area--both personnel and physical--than was originally admitted."

Surprise, surprise! Back in 1970, veterans talked about U.S. troops in Cambodia (where we weren't supposed to be) and the Nixon government vehemently denied that any such thing could possibly be going on. A couple of years later it all came out that vets had been telling the truth all along. And here we go again. VVAW and other vets groups have been saying, since the Agent Orange story broke in March of 1979, that the defoliant was used all over the country and that almost anyone who served in Vietnam was potentially exposed to Agent Orange. In 1970 we didn't talk about troops in Cambodia because we read it somewhere--we talked about it because we were there! In 1979 we didn't talk about Agent Orange because we researched files--but because we felt it, saw it, breathed, drank it, sprayed it, and have seen the results in our

bodies and the bodies of our families.

In his press conference, Secretary Schweiker went on to say, "There are still parts of the iceberg that haven't been seen yet. We do know that there are reports of perimeter clearings where chemicals were dumped to clear clearings in jungles, and obviously a lot of concentrated chemicals had to be dumped there."

Vets saw these chemicals used not only to clear perimeters around bases; we saw it used along roads (to make it more difficult for potential ambushes from covered areas); we saw it used out in the open to kill off potential "hostile" food supplies; we saw it used within hours of the time when U.S. troops would go through an area. Secretary Schweiker's "iceberg" is one hell of a lot larger than he knows, or at least will tell at this point.

The government has--and will continue--to let out this kind of information when they feel they have no choice whatever. Vietnam vets are constantly faced by the full weight of the U.S. government apparatus (to say nothing of the power of the chemical companies) which will refuse to pay one nickel until they have no choice.

Secretary Schweiker says that the study continues. Independent sources say there are 10 and a half miles (that's right--miles!) of files about spraying and who was where and at what time which are in something close to complete disorder, so don't hold your breath waiting for the final solution. And don't wait, either, for the government to act on their new findings. They will act when vets for them to act.

News for Civilian Victims of Agent Orange

With recent revelations by the government and the on-going discussion about Agent Orange poisoning, civilians who were stationed in Vietnam during the war as Defense Department employees, Red Cross workers, USO workers, members of the press or other occupations are beginning to suffer some of the same anxieties and problems as veterans. However, while vets have an agency--the V.A.--which is supposed to help (even though it has slammed the door in vets' faces up to this point) civilians have no such agency to which to turn. Joan Maiman, chairperson of the Veterans Leadership Conference, stated recently on a Chicago TV show, that "a vehicle and methodology must be established whereby civilians who are experiencing the same problems must be dealt with. At this time the Veterans Leadership Conference is receiving numerous inquiries from around the U.S. about Agent Orange." Maiman, herself a civilian nurse who spent a long period of time in Vietnam, stated further that, "The Veterans Leadership Conference is establishing an outreach program and will respond to questions that civilians who spent time in Vietnam may have about Agent Orange exposure."

The VLC may be contacted by writing Veterans Leadership Conference, 300 N. State St #3409, Chicago, IL 60610, or calling (312) 828-9563.

"ILLINOIS LEGISLATURE BUNGLES AGENT ORANGE LEGISLATION"

In the most empty of bows to Vietnam vets, the Illinois State Legislature passed an Agent Orange Bill, Senate Bill 16. With a budget of between \$30 and \$100 thousand, the bill sets up a committee of 13 legislators and private citizens to investigate the problem of Agent Orange among Illinois citizens of the State and report back to the Legislature in two years.

And that's it. Along with passage of the bill came the decision to ax any outreach, treatment or activity programs since they were "inappropriate" and beyond the scope of any State legislature; apparently they had not heard of bills in Texas, Wis-

consin, or New Jersey. Finally, to ice the cake, Legislator Carl Berning was appointed to head the committee; Berning has the distinction of being rated as the State's most incompetent legislator by several watchdog groups--a real honor given the competition, but not much help to vets.

THE VETERAN invite other vets' organizations to let us publicize their activities also.

Agent Orange Pamphlets

VETERANS SELF-HELP GUIDE
 Do It Yourself Guide
 CHEMICAL TIME BOMB
 IN VIETNAM VETERANS

Symptoms
 Do It Yourself Guide
 AGENT ORANGE VICTIMS

25¢ Post Paid

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

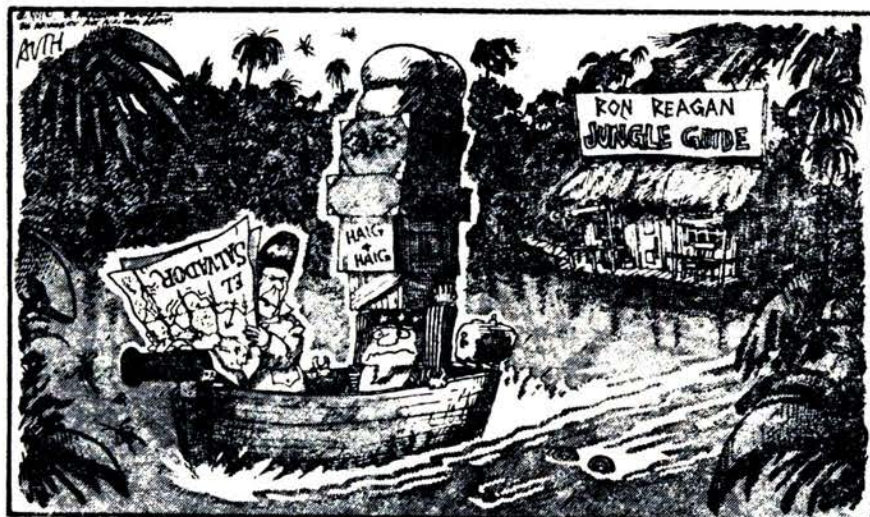
16 pages of testimony by victims of Agent Orange and experts on the effects of the chemical on Vietnam Vets and their families. 50¢ post paid.

VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR

AGENT ORANGE DOSSIER

"AGENT ORANGE DOSSIER"--43 pages of information about Agent Orange including maps of areas sprayed and information on how an individual vet can work on his own case. \$2 each;

Make checks payable to
VVAW
 P.O. Box 25592
 Chicago IL 60625



"Of course I know what I'm doing . . . I've been talking about this sort of thing for years!"

WOUNDED MEN, BROKEN PROMISES

How the Veterans Administration
Betrays Yesterday's Heroes

ROBERT KLEIN

Many vets don't need a book of horror stories about the V.A.--we know them from personal experience. But Robert Klein's Wounded Men, Broken Promises goes well beyond a simple compiling of V.A. atrocities (though there are plenty of these); based on 2 1/2 years of research both inside and outside the V.A., the book tries to explain why the nation's second largest agency (right behind the Defense Department, of course) does such a stinking bad job.

The book primarily takes on the V.A.'s medical care system, including disabilities and the "doms" (where older vets are warehoused). It doesn't try to deal with the massive V.A. educational programs or employment or home loans or the hundreds of other spots where the individual vet is overwhelmed by the V.A. bureaucracy.

Klein makes it clear that there are thousands of dedicated workers in the V.A. who, "despite overextended case loads and the interference of heavy-handed bureaucrats, still manage to point their faith and energies toward the promotion of quality care at the V.A."

But in all areas of the V.A.'s large kingdom, the system works against such dedicated individuals. Starting at the top, fund-

ing comes from Congress which listens--and closely--to traditional vets' organizations. But the VFW and American Legion, which for years have trotted their national commanders into posts as head of the V.A., care little about medical care. First, the various commanders have special codes at the V.A. and they receive markedly better care; second, because members of these groups tend to be established members of their communities, they have less need of relying on V.A. medical care. A close and cozy relationship between the V.A., the vets organizations, Congress and the Defense Department creates a tremendous system of not rocking the boat. So, until recently when more and more Vietnam vets demanded that the V.A. system start doing something for them, the V.A. has been directed away from those who need it most.

Klein sees the time when the V.A. decided to turn its hospitals into research hospitals by allying with medical schools as the point where V.A. care began to go backward. Though the V.A. had the funds, the medical schools called the shots and their needs immediately took precedence over the needs of the vet/patients. One of the worst symptoms of this merger is shown by the fact that during one two-month study, 17,500 V.A. patients were part of research projects; during another study, 28% of the patients interviewed were not aware they were participants in a research program.

The book provides plenty of evidence for a problem which seems to afflict many bureaucracies: while many workers who are in direct contact with the "customers" are interested in being as helpful as possible, they run into the brick wall of supervisors whose view is "up"--to the next level of management--rather than toward the goal of aiding veterans.

Full of statistics, facts, views from V.A. apologists and stories from V.A. customers, Klein's book provides an excellent starting point for future investigation of why the V.A. is so bad. But, according to Klein, the situation may be changing because Vietnam vets are making the problems a public issue. "Of the contributions made by the Vietnam combatant to this nation," Klein says, "from the dead soldier to the live veteran, surely the raising of our collective consciousness must be placed at the top."

THE GRUNTS

The Grunts, by Charles Anderson; Presidio Press, \$10 (hard-back).

There are lots of books about Vietnam coming out, and THE VETERAN tries to cover as many as we can. But this book deserves special interest because Anderson, a "grunt" marine, describes both his experiences in Vietnam and the experience of Vietnam vets back in the world.

The first part of the book, "The Tour," covers the operation of one Marine company on a 58-day operation. Like most of the biography-type stories it does not portray war like John Wayne in the "Sands of Iwo Jima" or "The Green Berets," but then Anderson was walking through jungles, not the back lot of some movie studio. While it is one Marine's story, it also captures glimpses that we can all remember:

"The call from Battalion came at about eleven in the morning; the hated frenzy of preparation was taken up again. The company was caught at a time more awkward than usual: there was too much water and too many C-rations to carry.

But an heroic effort was made to consume it all."

"A night in the 'Nam always comes alive to some degree--things are either seen or heard. If something is both seen and heard, it usually turns out to be a tiger, rock ape, or North Vietnamese. With a half-moon out tonight Sorenson expected to see bushes move and work on the imagination."

"Hill 174 shook as in a death rattle and then for Bravo Company the world turned into a dark chaos of noise, dirt, hot metal and blood."

Part Two, "The World" doesn't mince words when it takes on the questions of atrocities, alienation or alliances and tries to give answers to them: "The Vietnam War in particular provoked a unity of sorts between the minority of the young generation who went and the majority who did not. Those who were bloodied in the hundreds of demonstrations against the war were also lied to and deceived and tasted disillusion. They and the veterans have resolved to tolerate less abuse of authority and deception in life than previous generations."

it-like-it-is chronicle that will choke the likes of Howard Cossell. Lee Ballinger, a Vietnam vet and Ohio steel worker, fed up with the sports situation in this country today, explodes many of the myths of sports, amateur, collegiate and professional.

In Your Face is a hard political and economic look into racism, graft, greed in U.S. sports. There are eye-opening explanations of why the people who foot the bill for sports in the U.S. can hardly afford the tickets to the games, who's really raking in the cash, and why our children will never have the opportunity we had for participation in organized sports. The book is a must for sports enthusiasts--get it!

In Your Face!

Sports for Love and Money

Sports books generally fall into the categories of amusing anecdotes, exposes of one particular team of a particular sport, or shocking tales of the ravages of drugs upon pro athletes. Good, comprehensive books on who makes the money in pro sports, and corruption in sports from high school to the pros are practically non-existent, until now.

In Your Face--Sports for Love and Money by Lee Ballinger is a refreshing, no-holds-barred look into the world of sports, a tell-

"Attention sports fans: If you haven't read In Your Face by Lee Ballinger, it's well worth the small investment. Readers will learn that greed rather than players' salaries determine ticket prices, that athletes often can't give 100 percent because they're tired from traveling all night, that increased length of schedules is nothing more than a sports version of speed-up and overtime."

IN YOUR FACE!
SPORTS FOR LOVE AND MONEY

"The freshest, toughest, most exciting new voice in sports."
Robert Lipsyte, author of Sportsworld:
An American Dreamland

STEELABOR, June 1981
Order from: Vanguard Books
P.O. Box 3566, Chicago, IL 60654
\$2.95 per copy, plus
\$1.50 handling and postage

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Vietnam Veterans Against the War
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P.O. Box 25592, Chicago, IL 60625

LETTERS TO VVAW

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 VVAW,

Could you enroll me--or whatever? If you need \$, let me know and send what info you can. I need to get something going for myself and a few others who thought you all died out a decade ago. Thank goodness you're alive and going well in Chicago and elsewhere. Thanks. Looking forward to corresponding with you. Need your help.

Peace,
Eureka Springs
Arkansas

Dear Vets,

I'm an ex-paratrooper who at this moment am sitting in a small cell here at the Indiana State Prison. My crime was buying weapons for use in Africa. I "was" a very much involved person in affairs against commies, etc. My family, friends and even fellow teammates felt often I was too full of hate.

Now I honestly feel that war itself is the real enemy to all of mankind--it's not the answer! There are a lot of us vets in here who agree that it's all got to change; we are limited but dedicated.

If you will, send us all info on your group's goals, objectives, ideas, support. I for one will be free in December if the members of the parole board decide in all their wisdom to release me.

I, like many, do not wish to see the kids sent off again on those fools in power orders to become cannon fodder for king and country in another useless war. The betrayal we suffered is enough for me to fully understand the waste of it all. Many of us here discuss the problem often, so we heard your address given out on the radio and I decided to write for info.

The present administration in DC is without question preparing for war again. This time they overtly speak of it.... People must remember, the waste must not be released again.

Michigan City, IN

Dear VVAW,

I'm currently taking a course through Indiana U-Purdue U at Ft Wayne at the Vet Center on Vietnam. Our texts have included Lifton, Santoli, Emerson, Lang, Baron and various handouts and films. We're also doing in-depth interviews with vets as a form of outreach and knowledge.

I would like to know if I could receive your very worthwhile paper, THE VETERAN? My husband is a vet along with my brother and lots of friends. I hope to continue my education in this cause and do as much as possible! Our Ft Wayne Vet Center has done so much good. I feel an especially heart-felt thanks to Rick Ritter, counselor at the Vet Center and one of the two instructors in this course. His dedication and putting his ass on the line has made the Center a place a lot of vets feel they can go to.

Thanks for being there.

Sandy Thieme
Ft Wayne, IN

(This letter, and the poem which follows it, was written by a VVAW member in Madison, WI to a Dow Chemical executive who had been quoted as saying that only weirdos and worse could object to 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T.)

Dear Mr. Barnes,

My only reason in writing you is that I have just recently read a letter written by you to Reverend Roos, who is a stockholder in your company.

In your letter to the Reverend, you referred to the people who are interested in the serious effect of 2,4,5-T as "activists, liars, quacks," and using Hitler type propaganda. You also extended an invitation to the Reverend to visit your toxicology labs and to talk to your scientists.

I am the wife of a Vietnam veteran. We are not activists and we are not radicals. We are fighting for something we firmly believe in. Agent Orange is a killer. Thousands of Vietnam vets are suffering from the effects of Agent Orange, and many have died.

I know what a living Hell it is, because I have to live with it. My husband is one of those vets suffering from the effects of Agent Orange. I have seen other vets whose exposure to Agent Orange is much more

severe than my husband's. It's a crying shame. All I can do is pray for these men, and thank God my husband isn't that badly effected.

Your chemical 2,4,5-T may be very effective in destroying marijuana but so is manual labor. Your chemical 2,4,5-T has also been very effective in destroying the lives of thousands of veterans and their families.

Of course it's very important to you to keep your stockholders happy. It wouldn't do anyone any good to talk to your scientists. After all, Dow Chemical signs their paychecks, and the only thing a person would hear from them is what you want them to hear.

We no longer buy Dow Chemical products, and we have encouraged our friends and relatives, here in Wisconsin and Michigan, to do the same.

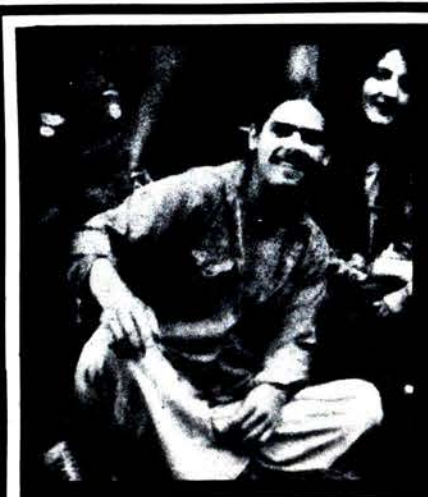
It's not us common folk who will stop at nothing; it's you people and Dow, and the U.S. government. You have committed a sin against mankind. A very deadly sin. It is called Agent Orange.

Kathy Gauthier

Listen my people,
And you will hear,
Of a horrifying story,
And what vets have come to fear.
The Government said,
"We want you, my son,
We're going to send you
To a place called Vietnam."
To they taught me how to kill,
And they taught me how to fight,
Little did I know,
It was the beginning of my plight.
I spend nine months,
In that man-made hell,
When I came back home,
I wasn't feeling so well.
Little did I know,
That while doing my time,
Dow was spraying me
With a deadly herbicide.
Agent Orange, Blue, and White
It's been named;
It's killed many vets
And left their children lame.
The Vietnam vet is
Continuing his plight,
Asking all vets,
To unite and to fight.
"Test, Treat and Compensate,"
Is our cry,
How many more vets
Are going to have to die?
The government is blind,
They don't want to see,
That the real killed in Vietnam
Was 2,4,5-T.

The day will come
When Dow will fall to its knee,
Crying Mercy, Mercy,
Have Mercy on Me."
But I'll show no Mercy,
For they've shown none to me.
Is this government so blind,
They cannot see,
What their fucking war
Has done to me?
They don't realize
It's still not too late,
All the vet asks,
Is to Test, Treat & Compensate.

Kathy Gauthier



The Milwaukee Chapter of VVAW is continuing its work with a great sadness. On Oct 11, 1981, the youngest member of our chapter was killed in a tragic motorcycle accident. Tom Ramm joined VVAW eight years ago at the age of 13! He joined because he was strongly against the Vietnam War, and supported our politics and approach. It is people like Tom who help us be more than just another vets organization. He helped to make us what we are -- a strong community-based organization focusing on vets issues but with a strong link to the non-veteran community. For eight years Tom worked to strengthen that link--demonstrations, fund-raisers, social events, and all the unglorious shitwork that goes into making a strong chapter--posting, licking stamps and addressing newsletters. He took a personal position on the war machine by refusing to register for the draft Tom has a family which has supported VVAW too. Without the beautiful example of these wonderful people Tom would not have grown into the excellent man that he was. The whole family has taken a leadership role in the community and among their peers. We love and support them all, and we will miss Tom.

RECOLLECTIONS

VVAW invites contributions to "Recollections"--stories or poems describing the military or Vietnam.

(The following recollection is from a collection of writings given to VVAW several years ago, all signed "The Last Grunt"; we have no other name, but if the writer reads his story we'll be glad to print his name the next time around.)

Ambush-Armored Column



The armored column rolls by through the highland paddies, across old battlefields, through the dismal rain of I Corps. On it rolls, unstoppable, toward an utter hell. The '50's and '60's are loaded to the hilt, and the tanks' cannon are bent on raising hell.

Then the lead track passes over a command detonated 250-lb bomb, and then the next, and then an explosion like the wrath of God must be; white hot steel expands skyward carrying pieces of men with it. The track driver arcs upward 50, 100, 150 feet into the air and his body shatters into a million pieces like some kind of frail china doll. The company RTO is hit with a 3-inch piece of steel, and the '50's begin. My God, the noise--my God, an orchestra from the pit of hell. 102mm guns fire, '50's fire, '60's fire, claymores detonate, frags explode--the world must be ending. The noise, and the grunt struggles in the mud as the shells explode and the world becomes a white hot flame and a belly-level view is all he can see crasling in the mud and firing his puny '16 and on and on the fire goes burst after burst, explosion after explosion and then silence and count the dead.

--The last grunt

Survivors' Manual

If your arms and legs
are still intact
you are a survivor
If your nightmares
will wait for the night

you are a survivor
If the faces of passing children
remain the faces of passing
children,
you are a survivor
If tall meadow grasses
delight you with sudden pheasants
you are a survivor
If you can find your way
back into someone's love
you are a survivor.

Flashbacking

"...stare upon the ash of
all I burned."
--Wilfred Owen--

Suddenly
the ash catches,
bursting into
betelmouth mamasans,
licking at
that open sore
in my head
nibbling at
the scars
of what I was:
their searing tongues
searching for the wound
that would ignite
what I still
might
be.

"Semper Paratus: To the Class of '81"

If they got you
thinking about signing up
just to kill you
some time
(since nothing else
is going down)
you better be
getting ready to kill you
some women and children too
preparing
to spend you
some time
doing time
doing some long time
locked up
in
their
screams.



AGENT ORANGE

I harvested the bitter fruit
From the Quang Ngai valley,
And I shall carry it
Until the day of my death.
I felt the feathery mist,
But I had no fear.
My trust, and my ignorance,
Shielded me from it.
Now I walk the safe streets,
Seemingly normal.
I should find a place to hide,
But is there such a place?
Am I a bug, an insect,
Wiped out by 20th century technology?
I cannot act,
So I think the unthinkable.

Dale Reich
Whitewater, Wis



The Dow Legacy

The seed
that your malicious
wizardry
planted in me
on the banks
of the Bong Son River
may now be bearing
fruit
in my own children:
innocent passengers
on your
agent orange special
heavy
with your brainchild
festering
in their genes.

Flash Back

Kay Richardson
Peoria, Illinois

Flash Back
Brain bolt Striking
Shock moment lightening
Flash Back
A long ago where I spent
In black memory moment
Flash Back
Time-machine inside me
Ancient images I see
Flash Back
Prisoned time
In yesterday I find

Flash Back
Cyring pain
Memorial rain
Flash Back

Prometheus Again

he once brought
fire
down
on some village
children
in that latest
crazy
forgotten
war of ours
now
he's come home
to spend
his days
asleep
beneath
newspapers
of inconsequence
and
his nights
chained
to our
garbage cans
drunk on
ripple
muscatel
thunderbird
retching our guts up
in to
the relentless
dawn.

Tin Cloth Medals, 1981

got a letter
while ago
'bout a
tin cloth
medal
i'd
been
awarded
4 my time
in nam
sent all
the "others"
2 Nixon
in 71
got me
2 thinking
ha! Kinda
like
boy scouts again!
tin cloth
medals
don't mean
a job 4 me
don't mean
an end
2 mi
agent orange
miseries

don't mean
quality V.A.
healthcare
tin cloth medals
r good 2 throw
at
those
who told us
all the lies
those who
stabbed us
in the back
tin cloth
medals
r
bureauquacks
mentalities
"Dewey Canyon IV
here i come"
R. Koenig
Madison, WI