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THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

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How Many Died for his Lies and Career PUT WESTMORELAND ON TRIAL

If even half the evidence presented on the January 23rd issue of "CBS Reports" is true, ex-general William Westmoreland should be shot or worse. Certainly he should not be allowed to parade around the country drawing huge honorariums for talking his trash and should certainly not be allowed to collect a military retirement paid for by U.S. taxpayers.

The Mike Wallace program, titled "The Uncounted Enemy" showed interviews with a number of high-ranking officers and ex-CIA members, all of whom made it clear that U.S. intelligence had a pretty good

sense of how many North Vietnamese troops were moving into South Vietnam in preparation for the Tet Offensive of 1968. Intelligence sources came up with a figure of 20,000 infiltrators a month; the figure that got back to the U.S. government was 5,000 a month. And it is clear that Westmoreland was the one who stopped the accurate figure and supplied a far lower figure.

Westmoreland and his little bunch of high-ranking assistants had their careers on the line. If the government and the American people had the correct figures, the movement to get the

U.S. out of an unwinnable war would have been almost irresistible.

But Westmoreland and his cronies were not the ones who were fighting the war--just the ones lying about it. They could afford to worry about their careers while the rest of us were worrying about saving our tails. They could trump up figures about how their military expertise and tactical brilliance had almost defeated the enemy, but we were out there facing an enemy that was three to four times greater than intelligence led us to believe.

Only the weirdest of command-

ers (and there were some of them) would have sent out a squad or even a platoon if he thought his position or area was threatened by an NVA Regiment instead of a VC Company. Yet during the Tet Offensive of 1968, American troops were chewed up all over Vietnam because lower level commanders were basing their plans on knowingly falsified intelligence figures. Straight from the office of MACV commander in chief, William Westmoreland.

After Tet--which was a great American "victory" according to

turn to page 14

A Limited Incursion into Congress' Land' OPERATION DEWEY CANYON IV



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

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 vets have the choice of crawling in the gutters to lick up the couple of crumbs we're given, or to fight back. Dewey Canyon IV, a vets offensive on Washington, says to "Fight Back!" We'll be lobbying, going to Congress, picketing the V.A. and the Office of Management and Budget, marching on the White House and the Capitol. No one can speak better about the problems of Vietnam vets than Vietnam vets and our families. Be there: bring your fatigues, your DD 214's and your medals (if you've still got any of them). On the final day we'll be remembering our friends who died with a ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery.

All vets, families, friends and supporters are welcome; we were used once and then thrown aside--we don't plan to let it happen again!

The basic scenario for the veterans' limited incursion into the nation's capital is as follows:

Beginning on the morning of May 12th we will set up a photo display on the history of the veteran's struggle, on the history of Vietnam vets and the war. In the afternoon will be registration and the opening of the camp beginning with the 5 o'clock follies (press conference). At 7 PM there will be a candlelight march on the White House with speeches and music by Vietnam vets and their families; as part of this ceremony we will be using photos of vets' children to help represent their great interest in what we are doing.

Thursday, May 13th: Wreath-laying at the spot where one of the Bonus Marchers was killed in 1932, followed by a picket line at the VA Central Office. In the afternoon, lobbying and confronting members of Congress. At the 5 o'clock follies, report on results to each other and the press. Music followed by educational and rap groups in the evening.

Friday, May 14th: A 10 AM demonstration at Stockman's Office of Management and Budget, followed by a picket line at the Department of Interior against domestic use of Agent Orange. More Congressional lobbying. At the 5 o'clock follies we'll continue to report on our reception by Congress and announce the final push for the following day. In the evening, a vets' cultural event followed by discussions on how to build the vets' movement and continue our struggles back in our hometowns.

Saturday, May 15th: At 11 AM we will assemble at the gates of Arlington National Cemetery to lay a wreath remembering our fallen friends. From there we'll march to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial for a brief ceremony, and from there to the Capitol. At the Capitol we will make our final statement for "Operation Dewey Canyon IV," giving vets and their families a chance to say their piece.

Where We Came From,
Who Are We, Who Can Join
**VIETNAM VETERANS
AGAINST THE WAR**

**A National Veterans
Organization Recognized
as Tax Deductible.**

Vietnam Veterans Against the War began in 1967 to join the ranks of those who wanted an end to 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, potentially, El Salvador, or the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan. We have supported, by whatever means were possible, those who are fighting for their own liberation. And we have stood with veterans of all eras in fighting for the things we need, have been promised, and have been earned.

From its early days VVAW has operated on the knowledge that the government will give vets what 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 accomplish, but when veterans unite to fight together, we can do much. VVAW has seen some real successes: we helped to put an end to U.S. troops in Southeast Asia, we helped get Nixon tossed out of office on his ear, we helped to win (to a great extent) amnesty for war resisters. With other vets groups we helped to stir up enough public furor that the Veterans Administration took its first halting steps to look for an answer to Agent Orange poisoning, and recognized what VVAW used to call Post Vietnam Syndrome when we were leading rap groups in 1970 (and is now called "post-traumatic stress or delayed stress syndrome") as a service-connected disability.

VVAW has consistently stood with the interests of vets of all eras, especially Vietnam and Vietnam-era vets. Sometimes this has brought us into conflict with the "traditional" vets organizations. While they have tended to stand behind the U.S. government and its various warlike maneuverings, VVAW has always asked "Why?" We've opposed moves toward war, fight against registration and the draft which will follow, opposed inflated defense expenditures, 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 be thrown away with a bad GI Bill, wretched healthcare, Agent Orange ravaging our bodies, vivid memories of the war often ravaging our minds, no jobs, and all the multitude of other problems Vietnam vets often face. We do not intend to see our children go through the same thing in the next war for somebody else's profit!

Vietnam Veterans Against the War
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Vietnam Veterans Against the War

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AGENT ORANGE~SUPREME COURT Chemical Companies Get Over

In 1978 Paul Reutersham started the \$40 billion lawsuit against 9 chemical companies which manufactured Agent Orange. Paul was dying of cancer after exposure as a door gunner on helicopters flying support for Operation Ranch Hand. He fought hard until his death in November 1978.

Following the Supreme Court decision on December 14, 1981, the suit remains in limbo. On that day the high Court refused to hear an appeal of a lower court decision to deny veterans compensation on an individual level in the federal courts.

Basically, the suits are what are known as "Product Liability Suits" against the companies for manufacturing a product that was dangerous. Agent Orange contained dioxin, one of the deadliest chemicals

known to man, and it is clear that the chemical companies were aware of this.

The issue of the appeal was whether there is a federal common law that governs the lawsuits and gives veterans access to the federal courts. Some 600,000 veterans live in 19 states where suits are impossible because of restrictive statutes of limitations which have already expired. These statutes require veterans/victims to file within 3 years of injury. Most vets didn't even find out about the potential of being poisoned by use of Agent Orange until 12-15 years after they were exposed.

By refusing to hear the case the Supreme Court reaffirmed as a fact of life that U.S. doctrine is one of "Used once and then thrown away!"

The issue of the chemical companies' liability in the federal courts is not dead, only the right of individuals to be compensated. We are still trying to stick the chemical companies with the compensation cost.

Future developments are now uncertain according to Victor Yannacone Jr, the main lawyer for the class action suit. The main hope is to get state legislatures to relax state statutes of limitations, something that has been done in New York and New Jersey.

VVAW sees the main task as building a fighting veterans movement, and sees Dewey Canyon IV as a vital part of that process. Only through united and long term fighting will we ever win testing, treatment and compensation for Agent Orange victims. Get involved! Get Active! Fight Back!

John Lindquist
VVAW National
Office

Words from On High NIMMO SPEAKS

Speaking recently about about veterans, Head of the Veterans Administration Robert Nimmo said, "What has to be recognized by those people (vets) if they want to be realistic, is that there are more words in the dictionary than 'more, more, more.'" While the remarks were aimed at vets in general, they were specifically directed at World War II vets as the Reagan Administration searches des-

parately for a way to weasel out of a long-standing obligation of the government to provide care for veterans once they have passed the age of 65.

With an increasing number of World War II veterans approaching the age of 65 the VA can see that their case loads may will be in for a rapid rise. And with the Reagan Administration trying to funnel every possible nickel into the military and away from every

service program possible, the VA is scrambling to figure out how to reverse a tradition of healthcare that is many years old. Free medical care has been provided to veterans over the age of 65 without question in the past.

The problem is not that vets want "more," a fact that Nimmo would know if his background showed anything more than being a wealthy cattle rancher crony of Reagan. Vets are fighting to hold on to what we've won in the past and to hold the government to the promises it has made to veterans.

Victims Win-Lose One RADIATION & VETERANS

Veterans and their families, victims of radiation poisoning, scored a win and a loss in recent court decisions. Vets were exposed to dangerous levels of radiation either by being sent into Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or in various nuclear tests both in this country and in the Pacific; in some cases troops were set up close to ground zero to test their reactions; in all cases, little or no precautions were taken to insure the safety of American GI's. The result has been a series of health problems, especially cancer, among the veterans and sometimes severe birth defects among the children of these vets.

The victory was in a federal court in Philadelphia where the judge denied a government motion to dismiss a suit brought by the family of Howard E. Hinkie, a radiation victim; according to the suit one son is physically and mentally handicapped and another died before his second birthday as a result of their father's exposure to radiation during atomic tests in Nevada in 1955. By allowing the suit to continue the judge, in effect, said that the law which grants the government immunity from suits by service-people or veterans does not apply to the families.

In a second case the Third Circuit Court of Appeals threw out the claims of a veteran

who sued officers and the Atomic Energy Commission for violating his human rights by making him into a guinea pig and exposing him to nuclear blasts. The court, with two justices dissenting, said allowing his claim would be detrimental to military discipline and further that the VA provides adequate care for veterans. All that decision proves is that the justices have never tried to get medical care from the VA.

Vets and their families who are suffering from Agent Orange poisoning are closely watching all the steps taken by our brothers who were exposed to radiation; every precedent set in their struggle is one which will we use in the future.

Studies, While Nam Vets Suffer AGENT ORANGE HEARINGS

Despite growing thousands of Agent Orange claims, the VA ponderously and erratically continues to study the problem--and lord, how they study! The VA admits that their Agent Orange registry (now over 68,000) is generally ineffective because of "coding problems." In other words, not only do they not know reliably when, where and how much Agent Orange was sprayed on the South Vietnamese countryside; but they also don't know when and where the American units were in relation to those areas sprayed.

Public Law 96-151 (enacted in December of 1979) established an Agent Orange Working Group under the lead of the Dept. of Health and Human Services to bring federal departments and agencies together, and assigned to the VA the critical task of completing an epidemiological study. VA bureaucrats formed into a Policy Coordinating Committee on Agent Orange responsible for carrying out the study. The working group and VA Policy Committee meet outside of public view as do similar committees springing up in other federal departments.

How then can concerned citizens follow this study? How may vets exposed to Agent Orange gauge whether there is any headway being made on their behalf? The one visible opening, outside of Congressional hearings, is the public, quarterly meetings of the VA Advisory Committee on Health-Related Effects of Herbicides (ACHREH) which met for the 10th time on November 19th, 1981 at the VA Central Office in Washington, DC.

The ACHREH panel includes, besides VA bureaucrats, scientists from several other agencies (Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, EPA, etc) and representatives of the traditional veterans organizations (American Legion, VFW, DAV). Jon Furst, Chairman of the National Veterans Task Force on Agent Orange was included on the Committee in August, 1981.

Foremost in importance in the ACHREH meetings is the progress of the epidemiological study which still lacks a design protocol for its coordination--lack of progress would be a more accurate

description. This design protocol had been contracted out by the VA to a UCLA team headed by Dr. Gary Spivey, a man whose bias against the plight of Agent Orange victims was clearly displayed in legislative testimony in California where he stated that the goal of an Agent Orange study was to "alleviate veterans' fears" over Agent Orange exposure. Members of the Veterans Coalition (some of them hunger strikers

for the VA to study the revisions and decide whether the contract has been fulfilled. Despite warnings, the VA stumbled on to certain failure and now gives Spivey and his UCLA team a 65-day make-up exam.

Why does the VA find interminable study of the Agent Orange problem so attractive and testing, treatment and compensating the victims so frightening? Money is the clear answer: money!

If the Reagan administration



at the Wadsworth VA Hospital) and other witnesses in California, had, early on, pointed out this conflict between Dr Spivey's attitude and his contractual assignment. At the August meeting of ACHREH, Jon Furst, an observer from the National Veterans Law Center and a committee guest from the California state government all expressed concern that Dr Spivey's attitude could taint the effectiveness of his design protocol.

Now (surprise!) Dr. Spivey's protocol has been rejected by the VA and must be redone. Vernon Houk, of the Center for Disease Control, was quoted in the Washington Post as stating that Dr Spivey's design "had such insufficient information that we did not even classify this as a protocol."

Backing and filling, Dr Barclay Shepard, Chairman of the ACHREH and Special Assistant to the Chief Medical Director of the VA, announced at the Nov 19th meeting that the protocol was being sent back to Dr Spivey's team with a 35-day deadline for revisions. A further 30 days would then be necessary

has to treat and compensate sick vets of the last war, it might not be able to build the B-1 bomber, develop the Neutron bomb, deploy the MX and draft our youth for the next one. VA Administrator Robert P. Nimmo admitted his fear of the cost should widespread harm from Agent Orange be found. He testified to the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee on November 18th, that: "We would be looking at hundreds of millions of dollars per years, going into the middle of next century." Ron Simon of the National Veterans Law Center concluded that, "The VA is simply not competent to do this study."

A VVAW observer attended the last two meetings and found the most recent to be particularly depressing. Coming on the heels of the VA rejection of Spivey's design protocol, there were many smokescreens and excuses. It was a sad contrast to the meeting in August when the Committee added the representative from the National AO Task Force; received reports on state legislation or pending legislation from Texas, New York, California and New Jersey; and

of course was still anticipating approval of the protocol. Morbidity and mortality were the watchwords of the November meeting. Despite problems and delays, all seemed to agree only that studies of morbidity and mortality could go forward.

The Department of Defense records on unit locations and movements are a mess. Occupying 40,000 shelf feet of space, unindexed and unsorted, they are of no immediate value to correlate with the incomplete HERBS tapes (not to mention undocumented spraying, emergency dumping, etc). The Privacy Act restricts the release of information to individual veterans. Lumped together, these "mechanical problems" were an excuse for Spivey and a vexing shadow on the future of an effective epidemiological study.

The Air Force continues to make its Ranch Hand Study a halfway (or half-assed) project with dangerous presumptions in its technique. A cohort (or control) study will take the Ranch Hand crews who sprayed herbicides from 1962-1970 (totaling 1200 men) and compare them with a "cohort" of other Air Force personnel who served in Vietnam and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. This study is to be a 20-year health follow-up and a mortality study with periodic reports beginning in the spring of 1982. Air Force investigators are presuming: 1) that the non-Ranch Hands would have "low to no" Agent Orange exposure; 2) that the control group, in any event, would have had a far less dangerous "acute" exposure as opposed to the "chronic" exposure experienced by the Ranch Hands, and 3) no age-equivalent non-Air Force or non-Vietnam vets are being used as a control group. Why doesn't the Air Force get it right the first time?

Biopsy and autopsy material from approximately 400 persons had been tested by the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology for a report to the ACHREH in November. The pathologies of these samples had been listed and examined for clustering (unusual numbers of certain conditions) and for unique incidence (conditions which are not age-appropriate). It was noted that this is a small number of samples and not limited to veterans with in-country Vietnam service--it included, for example, two infant children. The findings from this as yet preliminary report on a small number of sam-



A Limited Incursion into Congress 'Land' **OPERATION DEWEY CANYON IV** **Wed. thru Sat., 12th thru 15th May**



Letters of Support

I wholeheartedly support the efforts of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War to alert those in Washington that they are not giving up their fight against Agent Orange. It is a tribute to the Vietnam vets who doggedly pursue this cause.

This reflects a continued unwillingness to try and comprehend the uniqueness of the Vietnam veteran. In many ways, it is a generational problem. The Vietnam veteran did not fight in a war with clearly identified goals, where good and evil were easily distinguishable.

Your goals, on the other hand, are clearly identifiable and laudable.

I wish you the best of luck in your "Counterattack."

Tom Loftus
Majority Leader
Wisconsin State
Assembly

I am pleased to announce that the National Association of Concerned Veterans Board has voted to endorse Dewey Canyon IV.

It is NACV opinion that any peaceful attempts to keep the plight of America's veterans visible to the citizens and politicians of this country are worth while and deserve the support of all who say they represent veterans.

I wish to invite the entire VVAW membership to join with us at our 15th annual convention in New Haven, CT, June 17-20, 1982. Both VVAW and NACV share common interests, goals, and memberships.

I look forward to continuing the long-held friendship enjoyed by our two groups in the years gone by.

Sincerely,
Thomas Hoiles
President, NACV

I would like to say that on behalf of my members and myself, we, The Virginia Vietnam Veterans Corps gladly endorse and support "Operation Dewey Canyon IV." Furthermore, we pledge to VVAW our help in spreading the message and literature about "DC IV" to all concerned persons in our locale.

Publicity materials such as posters, flyers and newsletters are needed....

Very truly yours,
Wes Caton
Acting Commander

Virginia Vietnam Veteran Corps

Dear VVAW:

President Winpisinger has assigned me to work with you in a cooperative effort to offer whatever assistance we might be capable of toward endorsing your activities and demonstrations in Washington, DC on May 12 through 16, 1982.

Either I or someone from my department intend to be at your National Planning Meeting to be held in Chicago on February 13 and 14, 1982, to become more familiar with your program.

If you need an official letter of endorsement from President Winpisinger, please let me know as soon as possible.

Fraternally,
George J Robinson
Director, Occupational Safety & Health and Community Services

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

Dear VVAW,

Best wishes for "Operation Dewey Canyon IV." The enclosed check will help get someone to the big event.

Sincerely,
C. Julstrom
Macomb, IL

Dear VVAW:

Thank you for your letter and accompanying material on the upcoming activities scheduled for the week of May 12. We shall mark it on our calendar and send a delegate if we possibly can. ...

Let me indicate that we do support your organization and its efforts for the Vietnam Veterans.

We extend our best wishes for every success in this endeavor.

Most Sincerely,
Rev Willie Barrow
National Director and Special Assistant to the President,
Operation PUSH

Dear VVAW:

I am pleased to write to say that the Peace Center Board of Directors fully endorses the May, 1982, activities, and that the Center will publicize DC IV in the newsletter. In fact, we are planning a special issue on veterans in April or May, so please keep us informed.

Enclosed is a donation to cover your expenses for mailings and such to us at the Center. Keep up the good work.

In Peace,
Elise Fisher
Washington Peace Center

Dear Friends,

Mike Sutton, the VVAW person in Washington, asked if we would be interested in endorsing the DC IV activities, and if we were, to write and let you know. We are, and we did. Consider this, then, an endorsement by the Community for Creative Non-Violence, for what little it may be worth.

Thanks for your good work and for your ongoing commitment to the struggle. Keep us

up to date on developments, if you can.

Peace to y'all,
Mitch Snyder
Community for Creative Non-Violence

DC IV Permits FLASH

In early February, two representatives of the VVAW National Office and the Washington, DC coordinator for VVAW met with 12 police representatives in Washington DC. The police represented various Washington police agencies including the Capitol Police, the DC Police, the Park Police, the Secret Service, and the Department of the Interior Police. The meeting was arranged in order to finalize permits for Dewey Canyon IV.

VVAW got almost everything we asked for! Permits for all the marches, demonstrations, picket lines and rallies are now cleared; we have permits to use the Mall and put up three large tents, plus permission for 50 people to stay there 24 hours a day. Negotiations are still going on for the right to sleep on the Mall; other negotiations are continuing for alternative housing.

VVAW representatives also met with three members of Congress—Cardiss Collins of Illinois, Ron Dellums of California, and Henry Reuss of Wisconsin, all of whom are writing letters to the Mayor of Washington urging that the City of Washington allow VVAW to use a school near the Mall for housing.

DEWEY CANYON IV, WASHINGTON, MAY 12-15, 1982
JOIN US!!!



Veterans' Counterattack

Test, Treat & Compensate Agent Orange Victims!
Decent Benefits for All Vets, Widows, Orphans!
Stop All V.A. Cuts! Single-Type Discharge!
Jobs or Income! Support Incarcerated Vets!
No Intervention in El Salvador, No More Vietnams!



DELAYED-STRESS

NAM VET ON TRIAL



DC IV Support West Coast Action

Members of the San Bernardino VVAW Chapter and others in the Southern California area are planning a demonstration in Southern California to correspond with Dewey Canyon IV which will be taking place at the same time in Washington, DC.

Faced with the same problems as vets everywhere--particularly lack of money--vets decided that they wanted to take part in Operation Dewey Canyon IV even though they could not afford the lengthy trip to Washington. So they came up with the idea of a DC IV, Southern California version so that veterans who could not afford either the money or the time to go to Washington could still take part.

Plans for the exact activities are still being worked out. For further information contact Lee Lubinsky, 24818 Redlands Blvd, San Bernardino, CA 92408.

Endorsers (Partial List) DEWEY CANYON IV-Wash. DC

Vietnam Veterans Against the War; National Association of Black Veterans; National Association of Concerned Veterans; Retired Hunger Strikers; Vets Coalition of Southern California; Vets Crisis Hotline of Los Angeles; Black Veterans for Social Justice of Brooklyn, NY; Country Joe MacDonald; Al Santoli, author of Everything We Had; Pete Seeger; Tad Foster, creator of "The Vietnam Funny Book"; President William Winpisinger of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers; Tom Loftus, Majority Leader, Wisconsin State Assembly; Center for Creative Non-Violence of Washington, DC; Washington Peace Center; Bob Chenoweth, ex Vietnam POW; United Professionals of Wisconsin; Idaho Vietnam Vets Association; Vietnam Veterans Corps of Virginia; O'Hare Local, American Postal Workers Union; Local 423, District 48, AFSCME; Operation PUSH; Agent Orange Victims of New Jersey; Monmouth County (NJ) Peace and Equal Rights Committee; Veterans of the Vietnam War, Salt Lake City; Swords Into Plowshares of San Francisco; Bill Davis, Chairman, Illinois Vietnam Veterans Civic Council; Vets for Peace; Jack Gladden, Student Body President, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; Incarcerated Veterans Project of San Francisco.

Building DC IV in Local Unions

The Milwaukee VVAW Chapter launched its campaign to build Dewey Canyon IV with outreach to local unions and local posts of veterans' organizations. In Wisconsin many VVAW members are public employees and belong to AFSCME. We approached union locals for endorsements and money and, in Milwaukee, Local 423 of District Council 48 of AFSCME has already endorsed Dewey Canyon IV. In addition to local unions, outreach has also begun to groups like the American Legion and VFW, despite not-so-close relations over the years. But at a presentation to one local post at the end of November, we presented information on Agent Orange, veterans' cutbacks and Dewey Canyon IV and, to our surprise, they loved it and will consider giving money in April. The moral of the story is start the outreach now!

Milwaukee VVAW

Efforts to publicize the case of Jearl "Lucky" Wood are continuing as the start of the Chicago trial in early March approaches. Jearl is the 31-year old Black Vietnam vet who is facing charges of attempted murder, armed violence and two counts of aggravated battery for shooting a racist supervisor who had harassed him beyond his ability to stand it (for details, see the Nov/Dec issue of THE VETERAN). Jearl's defense is based on delayed stress.

In recent weeks, supporters have presented the case to members of USWA Local 1010 and local 65. At local 65, an article appeared in the local newspaper and an invitation has been extended to Jearl and his lawyer, Peter Erlinder, to address the next membership meeting. In addition, attempts are being made to reach out to other unions, vets organizations, Black, womens and anti-war groups.

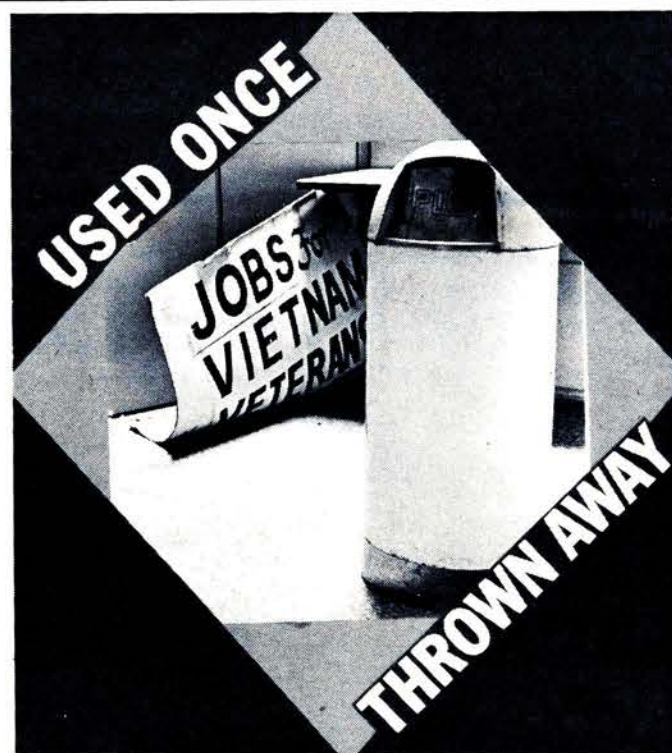
The Chicago chapter of VVAW has formed a committee to participate in Jearl's defense. We have decided that the best way

for us to help is to reach out to other vets' groups for support and to bring the case to our unions where possible.

Expenses for the trial are expected to be several thousand dollars. Hundreds are needed just to bring Charles Figley and John Wilson, two nationally recognized authorities on delayed stress, in to testify.

In order to raise a big chunk of what's needed, a fund-raising event is being held on Sunday, Feb 28th, at the Hitching post Lounge, 2975 W 159th St, Markham, IL, from 4:30 until 1 AM. Live music, a cash bar, food and a chance to win a 19" portable color TV will be available. Tickets, which include a chance on the TV are \$5. If you are in the Chicago area, plan on dropping by and helping out a fellow vet.

Requests for information, letters of support, and any contributions should be sent to: Jearl Wood Defense Com.
15803 Paulina St
Harvey, IL 60426



Labor Department figures put out at the beginning of 1982 show a total of 616,000 veterans unemployed. While earlier figures showed a large unemployment rate among young vets--those who were just getting out of the service--the latest figures show that some 450,000 unemployed vets are thirty and over.

Clearly it's no fun facing unemployment in the weeks and months after discharge from the military. But for vets over 30, many with families to support and with GI Bill benefits having run out, unemployment can well be a catastrophe.

Of course there's the govern-

ment that was so willing to send us off to fight their war in Southeast Asia--and will gladly scarf us up again to fight their next war wherever they decide to fight it. Under Reaganomics, unemployment is a necessary evil, which is fine for the politicians (and for Reagan's well-heeled buddies) who don't have to try to feed a family on nothing. And so training programs have been cut along with almost everything else that would keep the poor alive. According to the government, the solution is to wait until Reagan's benefits to the wealthy trickle down to the rest of us. Our solution is to fight!

Incarcerated Vets

VIETNAM BEHIND BARS

"Kilo, kilo, kilo. Any kilo station this net. If anybody can hear me, I'm coming out. Say again, I'm coming out!"

This radioman did come out. Alone. He left his commanding officer lying in the rice paddies --shot between the eyes. He left his best friend lying with his guts spilling from a massive hole in his chest--dead. All of his squad members remained at the ambush site--dead.

The above statement is not unusual if you hear it coming from a Vietnam combat veteran. The same statement is repeated daily in the minds of many of this nation's forgotten warriors.

In this case, however, the statement was made by a veteran as he walked down the steel and concrete halls of Marion Correctional Institution in Marion, Ohio. A prison. The man, an ex-marine who served in Vietnam, was experiencing a flashback. When he finally came out of his altered state of mind and began to realize where he really was, he was terrified. He ran toward another Vietnam veteran, begging him to stop the authorities from taking him to the institutional hospital. The veteran knew they would lock him in a room. He knew they would make fun of him. He knew they would say he was crazy....

Post traumatic stress disorder (ptsd) is only one of the many problems suffered by incarcerated Vietnam veterans. Many of these veterans suffer a wide variety of physical disorders, lack of vocational training and education, and deficiencies in self-worth. A number of these vets are afraid that they have been exposed to the chemical defoliant Agent Orange, and that the dioxin is killing them slowly. They worry that they have passed on the poison to their families.

These incarcerated veterans

realize that they are in dire need of help. Unlike free society, they can't traverse the streets to find those persons who care enough to assist them. Simply put, incarcerated veterans haven't any place or person to take their troubles to. The Veterans Administration doesn't send representatives to the prisons anymore. Concerned persons and friends from the numerous veterans' organizations are not permitted to visit the veterans, or when they are, they are forced through searches that leave normal people totally embarrassed. The Vietnam veterans inside know that the government took away their educational and vocational benefits. They do not know why. They are bitter and extremely hurt. "It wasn't in our contract that our benefits would be cut if we ended up in prison" is heard daily.

Psychiatric care? Funny. One or two psychiatrists/psychologists to service the mental needs of hundreds of inmates. Medical care? Forget it! Put in your request this week, see the doctor one or two weeks later. Most medical problems are "treated" by inmates. Drug problem? Uh-uh! No funds to support such a program. Take the problem back into society when you are paroled.

Incarcerated veterans have severe parole planning and employment problems, major factors for a successful transition into the world of reality. Incarcerated veterans have no way of knowing what is available to them once they are released. How could they? Source information is kept on the "outside."

Incarcerated Vietnam veterans are expected to exercise their postal service rights in order to put together their entire lives. How does my radio operator friend ever begin to explain what goes through his mind in a



letter? How can he ever tell someone that he is visualizing his Vietnam war experiences in flashbacks and horrendous dreams? How can he begin to explain to this unseen person that he only uses hard drugs in order to escape the reality of what he presently is going through? My friend has never talked about what happened to him in Vietnam. He can't relate his drug problem--the prison authorities would haunt him day and night.

My friend remembers his radio codes and terminology very well. Maybe he could write out his message to a seemingly un-

caring world: HOTEL-ECHO-LIMA-POPPA. No; it is doubtful anyone would understand.

There are over 30,000 Vietnam veterans serving time in federal and state prisons across the nation. Many of these veterans are serving their third or fourth prison sentences. Ninety-five % of these veterans have never seen, nor spoken with, a Veterans Administration representative. Psychiatrists and psychologists within penal facilities who understand the unique problems of Vietnam combat veterans are totally nonexistent. The few counselors that service the needs of inmates are too busy to care. The incarcerated Vietnam veteran has no means of assistance to help him gain control of his life.

From the death scenes of a cruel and unjust war to the steel and concrete warehouses of mankind: for 30,000 Vietnam veterans the transition has been one hell of a price to pay for serving their country when they were needed most.

It is time that the American people begin to recognize the need to reach "inside" to the incarcerated Vietnam veteran and help to bring him home... "Any Kilo station on this net, I'm coming out!"

Stephen Gregory
Ex-Corporal,
USMC

Looking For a Nam Friend G.I. SEARCH

Looking for someone you served with in 'Nam? Agent Orange Victims of NJ (Box 233, Englishtown, NJ 07726) is acting as a clearinghouse for this information. Send them names, dates of service, unit and location in 'Nam and they'll try to match up people. **Please Include a Donation to Cover Costs**

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without
hassles**

- free, direct services
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We know the problems Vietnam era veterans face, and we're here to help you get the help you need . . . without the hassles.

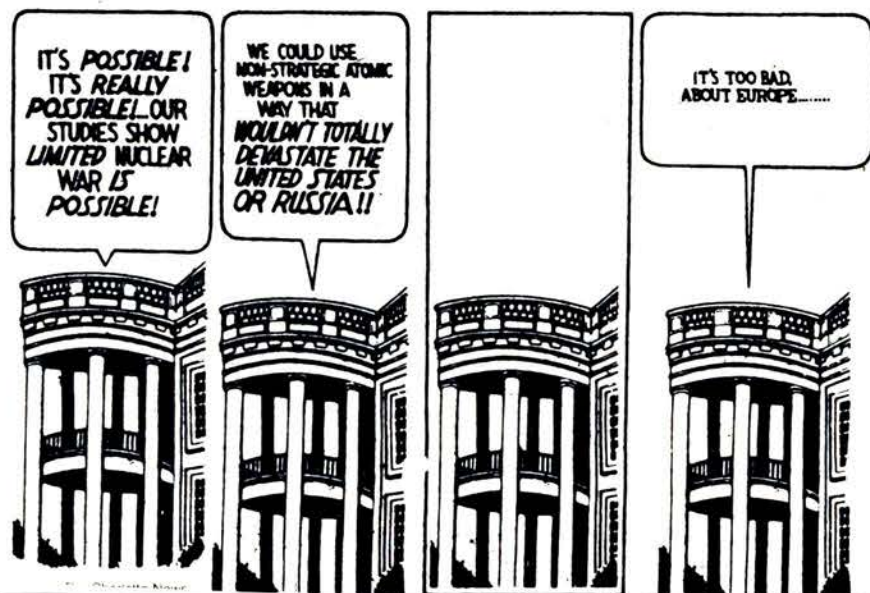
Stop by or call

**Vet
Center**

Consult phone directory in your area.

BROUGHT BY THE MAN FROM "DEATH VALLEY DAYS"

NUCLEAR WAR



Wheelchair-Bound Nam Vet CROSS COUNTRY

On a bitter, windy November morning, Max Inglett, a wheelchair-bound Vietnam vet, waited together with supporters, for a press conference to begin on the steps of the U.S. Capitol building. Max was culminating a cross-country trek, begun in Los Angeles on October 3, to call for legislation designed to prevent another Vietnam-type American military intervention. Specifically, he wants to make sure that U.S. combat troops never again be sent "into an undeclared war, to intervene in another country's internal conflict," and further, that the functions of a military advisor be clearly defined and re-evaluated, and that the number of advisors be limited by law. Such legislation, Max points out, is long overdue: "It is wrong to ask America's young men to intervene in someone

else's war--we should have learned that lesson from Korea," he stressed.

Max hitch-hiked his way across the country, speaking to numerous groups and making over media contacts. His message was that it is patriotic to work for a reasonable, peaceful American foreign policy. He wants Americans to realize, he said, "that patriotism does not begin or end around a military tour." It is appropriate, he pointed out, "for veterans to take the lead to prevent another Vietnam by educating the people.... Our lead must be joined by all citizens." Looking to the work ahead, Max observed, "the only way we are going to win this struggle is to replace apathy with activity and to create unity."

A combat medic with the 1st

Admiral Rickover left the Navy with a parting barage, barely picked up in the press. But the "Father of the Nuclear Navy" said he hoped the two superpowers wouldn't blow up the world, but that they probably would.

In fact the question of nuclear war is more real today than at any time in the past. The main reason is the shift in strategic concepts around fighting a nuclear war. In the past the U.S. based its strategy on "MAD"--mutual assured destruction (their words, not mine); recently it has moved to limited nuclear warfare. As bad as it was in the past, MAD meant one did not use nuclear weapons and that firing one meant firing all of them. But Reagan, Haig, Bush, etc believe we can win a

nuclear war and that there has been too much fear in the past. There is, however, the problem that Breshnyev still thinks that firing one means going all out.

This needs to be combined with the present moves by Reagan & Co to achieve a first-strike capability. There's been an increase in land-based missiles; these are more offensive than defensive since they possess the capability of pinpoint accuracy which is needed to destroy the enemy on the ground. Subs are more a defensive weapon since they can hide and though they are not as accurate as bombers or land-based missiles; they do present a deterrent. At the moment the U.S. has enough subs to destroy the world; again, according to Admiral Rickover, "When you have a hundred that can destroy everything, why do you need 200?"

And then there's the neutron bomb. This menace has been touted as a defensive weapon to be used only against invading tanks. But what if, instead of pure defense, a country wanted to invade? The neutron bomb could destroy enemy units without destroying bridges or roads that are needed to advance--in fact in the past defense has meant destroying such things to prevent an enemy advance. Now we can leave them intact. And there are oil fields: the good old neutron bomb could be used to get rid of the bad guys and save the refinery.

According to Reagan & Co things like the Neutron bomb and Pershing missiles are meant to keep the potential nuclear war "limited." And that's why Europe is in such a turmoil; they are afraid that Reagan is willing to fight the Russians to the last drop of German or French or Dutch blood. The problem is how "limited" will such a war remain should one side begin to lose. And the Reagan Administration is the one which believes we can survive a general nuclear war.

What we're left with is the faith that our leaders won't use the bomb. But remember that only one country has ever used nuclear weapons. And one more interesting point of history, recently revealed: when Dien Bien Phu was about to fall in 1954, it was the U.S. Secretary of State Dulles who volunteered to "lend one or two bombs" to the French in order to save them.

Mike Sutton
Washington, DC
VVAW



Retired Army Staff Sgt. **Bob McCloud** (left), a member of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, helped former Marine Lance Cpl. **Jim Moore**, cut the ribbon Tuesday to officially open the Lincoln Vet Center at 1420 N. 10th St. Moore lost both arms in the Vietnam War.

NEW VET CENTER

VVAW was at the opening of the Lincoln, Nebraska, Vet Center with our displays and ended up cutting the ribbon. They asked me to recite the "Pledge of Allegiance" but the team leader got nervous when I asked him

to go over the words with me since it had been so long I'd forgotten exactly what they were. He got so nervous he completely forgot the pledge and stuck me somewhere safe away from the microphone because a lot of dingbat dignitaries were there. Result: VVAW makes the front page of a 300,000 circulation paper. Along with me in cutting the ribbon is Jim Moore who lost his arms in Vietnam. He has a lawsuit against the VA, but I told them I wouldn't cut the ribbon without him.

Bob McCloud
Lincoln VVAW

Barry Romo
VVAW National
Office

Operation Dewey Canyon III, April 19-23, 1971, was a "limited incursion" into Washington DC by Vietnam veterans to end the war in Vietnam and bring our brothers home. We hoped, among other things, to support legislation to end the funding of the war machine.

"Limited incursions" were part of U.S. policy in the war in Southeast Asia. Operation Dewey Canyon I was a 3rd Marine Division assault in the A Shau Valley area with elements of the 9th Marine Regiment going into Laos in February of 1969. Operation Dewey Canyon II (or Long Son 716) was an ARVN invasion (with U.S. support) of Laos in February 1971 to cut the Ho Chi Minh trail. The U.S. government was, at the same time, vehemently denying any widening of the war outside the borders of South Vietnam.

Since as vets we had such extensive training in "limited incursions" by our government, we decided to put our skill to work at home. VVAW was a growing national organization at the time and recent free ads in *Playboy* swelled our ranks. A call went out nationwide for veterans to come to DC and put an end to the war.

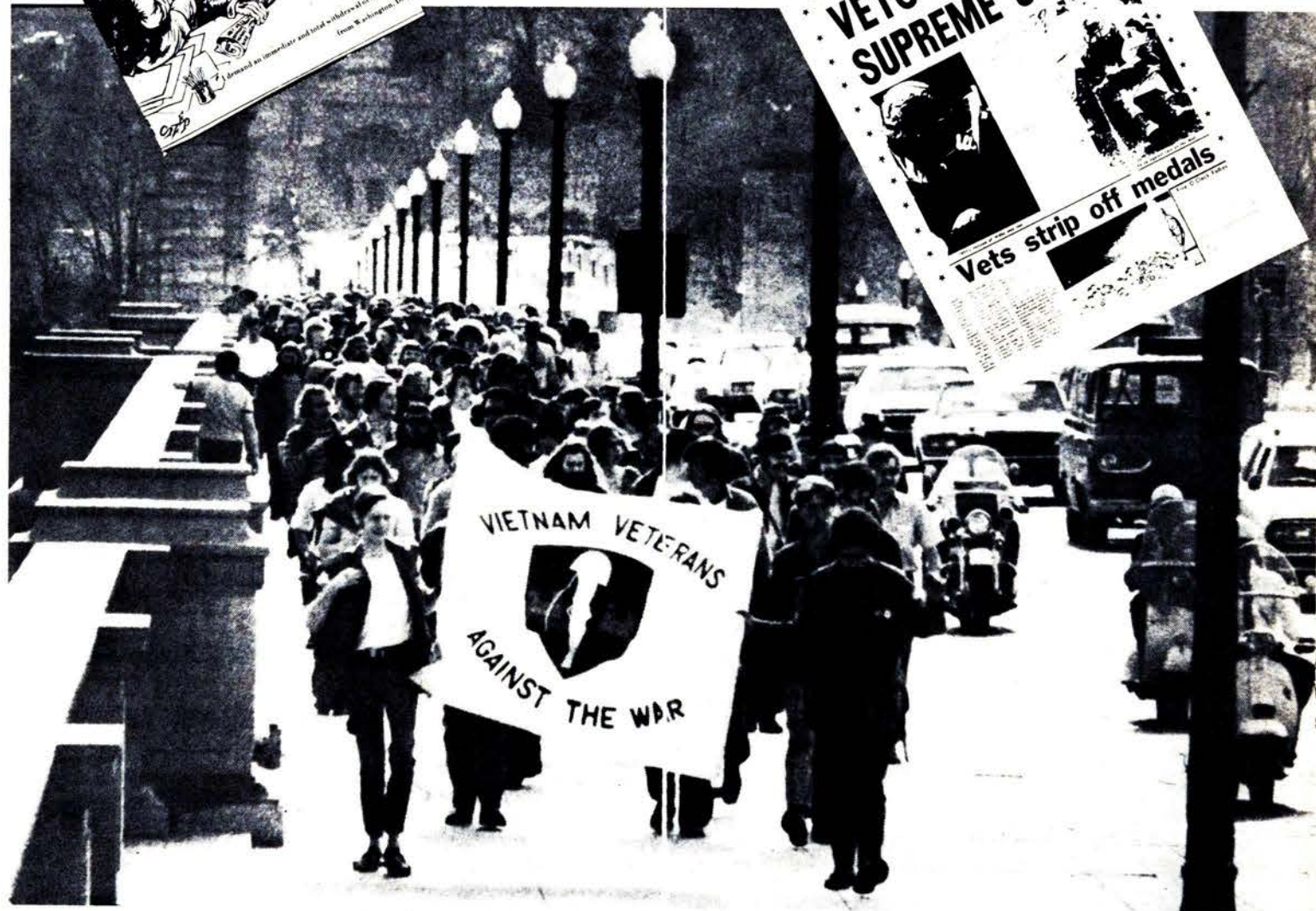
I awoke on a cold, foggy morning on the banks of the Potomac, surrounded by 900 other veterans. Our first action was to march to Arlington where we were locked out. We marched down Pennsylvania Avenue past the White House to the steps of the Capitol for our first meeting. Learning some quick lessons in mass democracy, we voted to occupy a one-block area of the Mall on 3rd and Madison, two blocks from the U.S. Capitol.

For five days the veterans defied the President, the Supreme Court and slept on the ground at night, holding actions during the day. Beside lobbying Congress, we held demonstrations, sit-in's, did guerilla theatre, testified in Congressional hearings and ended with a dramatic rally where we returned our medals and decorations. Never in the history of the U.S. had veterans come home to protest a war, especially while it was still raging.

Early on in the action we learned some valuable lessons that we should look back on. Number one is that our president and country will deny we exist, even with a Purple Heart and no arms. President Nixon freaked out about anti-war veterans on his Mall. We were not really

Vietnam Veteran History

DEWEY CANYON III



veterans, his press agents said, and our Purple Hearts were bought in stores. We were ordered off the Mall. We refused to move. If we were good enough to be drafted or to enlist, we were good enough to sleep on the Mall. Already we realized we faced many serious problems: bad discharges with secret spin codes, unemployment, drug addiction, post-Vietnam syndrome, and the VA bureaucracy--and we didn't even know, yet, about Agent Orange.

Another lesson we learned early was what to expect from lobbying Congress. We went in with a naive idea that we could stop the war by supporting a Bill to cut funds for the war. They had to believe us; we were Vietnam veterans with medals to prove it.

We soon found out that some Congressmen and women say one thing to your face and do another behind your back. After

a day and a half of lobbying we stopped and took all our actions into the streets. A thousand vets in green swarmed all over Congress, maps in hand, pictures neatly laid out in albums; we even shed a few tears. But to no avail: Congress still voted to continue the war. We wanted them to bring our brothers home and they said no.

Our experiences in Washington taught us another valuable lesson, the same lesson we learned from Charley: you have to have patience, the patience of the Vietnamese. You have to build a strong vets movement from the ground up, working out levels of unity to unite the largest number of veterans and their families and supporters.

We have a long struggle ahead. For many, the fight has gone on since 1970. Many battles have been won over the years: recognition of delayed stress, elimination of spin codes on discharges;

we even helped to kick Nixon out. Our past and present struggles will have to sustain us. Just like in 'Nam we have to rely on ourselves, stick together, and dig in for the long haul.

The effects of Dewey Canyon III are still alive today. Maybe only a thousand vets came, but thousands more were effected. Dewey Canyon IV can and will be the same way. That same spirit of unity and excitement I felt 11 years ago I feel again today. Vets from all over the country have responded to the call for Dewey Canyon IV. The economic situation in May of 1982 will be worse, not better, and none of the problems faced by vets will have gone away. Now is your chance: if you didn't make Dewey Canyon III--or if you did--don't miss Dewey Canyon IV.

John Lindquist
VVAW National
Office

VETERANS' DAY

San Antonio

VVAW was denied participation in the "official" activities by the Greater San Antonio Area Veteran's Association which oversaw the wreath-laying ceremonies at the National Cemetery and the parade that took place later in the day.

After seeing the parade from our vantage spot across from the Alamo, it was clear to us that to be a part of that buffoon-filled, mile-long demonstration of America's military might would only have us soon forgotten by those who took time off from work to witness what seemed like 10,000 JROTC kids, M-16's, and erotic displays of young female flesh riding floats under the auspices of Miss Fort Sam and the like. Instead, standing in a post-military formation with signs of "Why Aren't Vietnam Vets part of Vet's Day?" and "Test, Treat and Compensate Agent Orange Victims," we soon became the main spectacle of the day, not soon to be forgotten. It seemed like we were the event and the parade marched by us to have them see what is in their future.

By the reactions on the faces of the marchers and some of the vets' groups who moved by us, it was clear that they offered support. Many units threw offers at us to have us join them. But our spot was there standing firm to the decision that we weren't allowed to participate. It became clear to the people who said "NO" to us that their decision had backfired. We held the media's attention.

The press conference preceding the parade was as expected: held with good media response. The message was loud: "Veterans continue to be besieged by problems resulting from our service; on this day set aside for veterans we get only a deaf ear." Naming the problems one by one, the news relayed a series of reports which, though not quite accurate, summed it up, and spelled out that we are here and we are not going away.

San Antonio VVAW

Stevens Point

November 9-12 were "Agent Orange Information days" in Stevens Point, WI; in response to an invitation from the Environmental Council, members of VVAW from Milwaukee and Madison appearing on TV and radio and talking with vets and others.

A November 9th radio call-in show turned into an all-VVAW event when Dow refused to appear and the VA would only con-

San Antonio VVAW Vets' Day Press Conference

tribute a taped interview.

A literature table at the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point gave VVAW members a chance to talk with students; this was followed by TV interviews and tapings. As the visiting VVAW members left, David Tesch was installed as the new Chapter Coordinator of the Stevens Point VVAW Chapter.

Ron Rutkowski

Chicago

Historically, the "traditional" ceremony has been tightly controlled by the American Legion, so VVAW and Vietnam vets in general have been excluded from what has also been an extremely boring and lackluster performance by the traditional vets groups.

This year a VVAW sponsored "Memorial to the Living" Vets Day program brought together a number of speakers from other vets groups including Vets for Peace, the Veterans Leadership Conference, Illinois Vietnam Veterans Civic Council and a Vietnam vet American Legion post commander. The brief program, held at the site of Chicago's "Eternal Flame" was somewhat larger than programs in past years cut to the increasing attacks on vets benefits and programs by the Reagan Administration. The alternative Veterans Day completely overshadowed the Legion-run event both in media coverage and in numbers of Vietnam vets. Few if any 'Nam vets turned out for the "traditional" red, white and blind tap dance.

Chicago VVAW

Birmingham

The Vets Day action went pretty well. It was not as outrageous as I would have liked but we did have a presence at the thing. We had three times

as many people this year as we did last year. And, we were joined by some Benedictine nuns who held up a large sign containing the quote from Pope Paul VI, "No More War, Never Again War." In fact, the Secretary of the Army didn't seem too pleased to have us there either. One bastard from the Chamber of Commerce walked by and said, "I would like to take a gun and shoot everyone of them."

The most disgusting part of their Veterans Day parade was all the National Guard and Reserve punks parading in their uniforms and playing the great protector of "freedom." I doubt any of them know the first thing about real freedom. These are the guys who didn't have the guts to go to Canada or the nerve to join us in 'Nam.

Sterling Lynn
Birmingham, AL
VVAW

Milwaukee

Veterans Day marked the 3rd year in a row that VVAW was included in the local Veterans Day parade. This was a far cry from 1974, 75, and 76 when we were barred entry and kept on the sidewalk by 50 police. Well, times change!

Twenty-two veterans and family members marched behind the VVAW colors plus a banner demanding "Testing, Treatment and Compensation for Agent Orange victims." The 2 1/2 mile parade included Marines, Army Reserve troops, tanks and other tools of the trade. VVAW was a striking difference with our cadences on Agent Orange, VA cutbacks, and no way to the draft. We were met by mostly cheers.

Milwaukee
VVAW



Gold Star Mothers and veterans are barred at Arlington.



Veterans march from Arlington to the Capitol steps.



John Kerry testifies before Senate Foreign Relations Committee.



Police arrest veterans at Supreme Court.



Veteran hurling medal on the steps of Congress.



Veterans and onlookers after tree planting.

NICARAGUA AND US INTERVENTION

Esteli, Somoto, Condega, Jinotega, Chinandega--the names of northern Nicaraguan cities torn apart in 1979 by the vicious air assaults of Anastacio Somoza's National Guard--now stand ready for another, potentially more destructive attack. The aggressor will again be the Guard, this time accompanied morally and materially by the "gringo," the American soldier. Let's examine how such a disastrous strategy is born.

Havana, Cuba; January, 1959: Fidel Castro marches triumphantly into the capital after six years of guerilla struggle. A billion dollars worth of U.S. investment on the island is threatened. Castro is more interested in pushing ahead with the construction of a socialist state than in continuing to have Cuba bled dry by U.S. capitalists. The differences between Castro and corporate America have never been reconciled.

Santiago, Chile; September, 1973: Salvador Allende, democratically elected Marxist president of South America's premier constitutional republic, is machine-gunned to death in La Moneda, the presidential office, and Chile's experiment in social justice, already sabotaged by CIA intervention and multinational conspiracies, is crushed under the jackboot of General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte and his fellow fascists.

The U.S. was not prepared for Castro's wily maneuverings in Cuba following Batista's overthrow. Opinion in Latin America was that the Cuban Revolution was an anomaly and that it would not be repeated. The U.S. would be ready the next time.

In Chile, the left argued that Allende confided too much in the non-intervention pledges made by the Chilean generals. Allende disarmed the country before the revolution was consolidated, they complained. So darkness overtook Allende and his dreams of an economically independent Chile.

Nicaragua is acutely conscious of the dissimilar histories of her two Latin America sister nations. A popular insurrection, culminating in July, 1979, led to the defeat of the Guard and the exile of Somoza. The FSLN (Frente Sandinista de Li-

beracion Nacional) inherited a country heavily in debt. Nicaragua's industrial capacity was smashed, its farms were neglected. The Nicaraguan people were exhilarated by the removal of the feudal yoke imposed by the Somoza family since 1932, but they were tired too, and unsure how reconstruction was to proceed.

The year following the establishment of a Sandinista Junta was decreed the "Year of Literacy." Thousands of teachers, students, and office workers formed literacy brigades and spent long months in the countryside teaching the fundamentals of reading, writing and revolution to the 70% of the population which was illiterate. No longer would the city dwellers look down at their humble country cousins. From this encounter, repeated countless times all over rural Nicaragua, there emerged a determination that a free Nicaragua would be created. But no revolution is without its counter-revolutionary elements. Threats from "gusanos" (literally, "worms"), Cuban counter-revolutionaries are still a serious matter for Castro. The fascists in Chile, under the banner "Fatherland and Liberty" sowed the seed which destroyed Allende and his dream.

In Nicaragua today, the danger that the reconstruction process will be slowed or even halted is very real. "Somocistas," followers of Somoza (who was assassinated--"adjudged" say the Sandinistas--in Paraguay last year), including many exiled ex-guardias, long to return to Nicaragua which for so many years was their personal fiefdom. Honduras, Nicaragua's neighbor to the north, is infested with ex-guardias. The military governments of El Salvador and Guatemala, and the nominally civilian government of Honduras all look upon Nicaragua as a threat to their own repressive rule. And now, enter Uncle Sam, pushing aside the hard-earned lessons of Vietnam and picking up the Big Stick.

In this atmosphere it was natural and justifiable that the theme for the second year of the Sandinista government would be defending the revolution--"The Year of the Militia." The threats to Nicaragua are real and the response has also been genuine. Throughout the coun-



"THINK OF US AS 'MILITARY ADVISERS!'"

try, military training is preparing tens of thousands of Nicaraguans to fight against any aggressor who would seek to again enslave Nicaragua. These militia groups are especially active in northern Nicaragua where teachers and community workers have been killed by counter-revolutionaries operating from Honduras. So, yes, the country is arming itself. It aims to defend a revolution that was won at the cost of over 50,000 lives.

Since Somoza's overthrow the Nicaraguan government has not been able to open a constructive dialogue with Washington, mostly because of our leaders' paranoia regarding Soviet intervention in this hemisphere and a refusal to look clearly at the underlying social and economic issues which fuel popular movements in half a dozen Latin American countries.

The lesson for us is clear--a deadly combination of ignorance and misplaced machismo is leading us again to intervene in the internal affairs of a country that not only doesn't want

our intervention, but which is prepared to fight us.

As veterans whose minds are clearer than those now shaping our foreign policy, the time has come for us to say that no one will benefit from our intervention in Nicaragua except perhaps the board of directors and the stockholders of a few U.S. corporations and their Somocista lackeys. The Nicaraguan people are determined, as were the Vietnamese, that no imperialist power shall rule their country; it is unconscionable that we should threaten Nicaragua with any intervention, economic or military, with the pretense that our national security, "way of life," GNP, Chase Manhattan Bank, or whatever else is itself threatened. NO NEW WAR IN NICARAGUA!

John B Elder

(The author is a Vietnam vet and member of the San Antonio VVAW Chapter; he also spent two years in Latin America as a member of the Peace Corps.)



Salvadoran soldiers arrive Jan. 9 at Pope Air Force base in North Carolina. The soldiers began arriving last week to begin training at Ft. Bragg, N.C.

NO MORE VIETNAMS EL SALVADOR

U.S. involvement in El Salvador has been kept real quiet for the past six months or so. But that's a long ways from meaning that it has stopped or even slowed down.

A careful reader of the newspapers might have picked up a paragraph here and there. Such a reader would have learned that 200 protesters (including VVAW) demonstrated outside Ft Bragg, NC when the first group of a thousand Salvadorian soldiers began basic training under the watchful eye of the U.S. Army, and that 600 officers arrived at Ft Benning, GA for 16 weeks of training (all at a cost of \$15 million U.S. tax dollars).

Or perhaps that the members

slicing away at needed domestic programs) El Salvador began to hit the front pages.

So let us lay it out as clearly as possible: the Reagan Administration is moving the U.S. rapidly into a repeat of Vietnam with its growing involvement in El Salvador. Even the propaganda is the same with an Under Secretary of State testifying in Congress that with this additional push of bucks from the U.S. the Duarte government will regain the offensive and be able to hold off the "communist hordes." Even the rhetoric of the "domino theory" where Nicaragua falls first to the communists followed by El Salvador (if the U.S. doesn't pay up)

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN TOTALITARIAN
AND AUTHORITARIAN?

WELL, A TOTALITARIAN
GOVERNMENT ARRESTS,
TORTURES AND MURDERS

AN AUTHORITARIAN
GOVERNMENT, ON THE
OTHER HAND...

LEAVES MANY OF THESE
FUNCTIONS TO THE
PRIVATE SECTOR



of the National Guard who killed 4 U.S. nuns a year or so ago were captured but then released.

Or that a deserter from the Salvadorian military reported U.S. advisors present at one of the torture training classes (though not at the subsequent execution of the subjects of the class) where an El Salvadorian officer told the troops that watching "will make you feel more like a man."

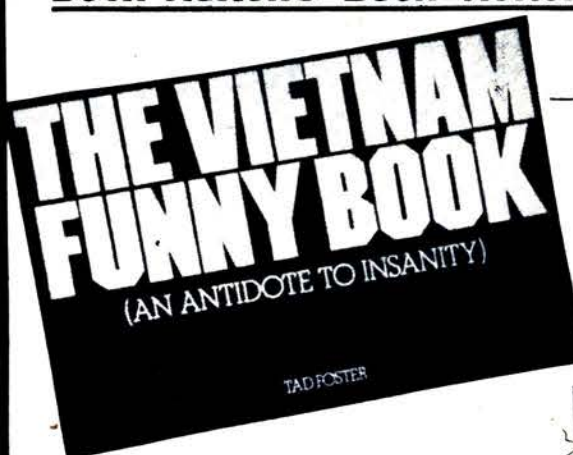
But when the troops of U.S. sponsored and sanctioned President Duarte massacred 200 people in the northern part of El Salvador, or the same troops dragged people out of their homes, raped young girls and shot them (as suspected guerillas or guerilla sympathizers), the news began to creep toward the front pages. And when the Reagan Administration certified that "substantial progress has been made in the area of human rights in El Salvador," the event made more news. And when it became clear that the Duarte government was in big trouble and the Reagan Administration provided an extra \$55 million in aid and asked Congress to authorize still another \$100 million (while still

and then the rest of Latin America is nothing more than a repeat of the early justification for U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

Of course the Reagan Administration, learning all the wrong lessons from Vietnam, is convinced that they can "win" in El Salvador--which is exactly what their predecessors thought about Vietnam. And like their predecessors, Reagan and Co have no understanding of how and why a people who have been forced to live in brutal poverty for years might join together to try to throw off the yoke of their oppressive government.

Without constant and increasing pressure from the American people to say that we don't want another Vietnam War, the U.S. will get sucked further and further into the swamp which is El Salvador. Vietnam vets have a special role based on our experience of trying to defeat an enemy fighting for the freedom and liberation of their own country--a war that most of us know we could never win. U.S. out of El Salvador! No aid to the Duarte government! No more U.S. intervention!

Book Reviews - Book Reviews - Book Reviews -



The Vietnam Funny Book is a whole lot of Vietnam and not so much "funny." Any vet who humped the boonies will see the situations he was in; looking back, some of them were outrageously funny but there's the gnawing suspicion that, at the time, they weren't funny at all. While the war may have been a big game to the brass and the politicians, it was damn serious on the ground. Foster understands that and his cartoons show it, but they also demonstrate that time does make a difference.

The cartoons were done while Foster was a member of the 3rd Marines. His "Prelude" to the book explains:

"Survival forced its dues and EVERYONE paid. Callousness spread along with guts and laughter was a lonely cry in the overcast of stay alive."

"The Vietnam Funny Book was drawn from the cry deep in the throat. It was the monster truth, swallowed, acknowledged, and laughed back up. It was humor, the guardian of the mind. It was an antidote to insanity."

Just one cartoon: the grubby grunt in a foxhole, bullets flying overhead, reading the cigarette pack which says, "Warning: Smoking may be hazardous to your health." What scene could better catch the absurdity of being snatched 10,000 miles from home and put through all kinds of hell while life at home continued absolutely as usual. The divorce between GI's and country couldn't be clearer.

If you're a Vietnam vet, especially a combat vet, you'll chuckle at some of the cartoons; some of them will make you laugh outloud. Some of them will trigger memories you might prefer to forget. If you are not a Vietnam vet you should read the book with someone who is, because the kernel of the book is the simple fact that the



CAUTION: CIGARETTE SMOKING MAY
BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH.

cartoons are so true that they hurt.

Distribution is spastic at best; the safest way to get the book is to write to Presidio Press, 31 Pamaron Way, Novato, CA 94947. Or write VVAW --we have some copies. But get it somewhere. It costs \$6.95 but is more valuable than that. These pictures are worth a thousand words, and they may help you, someday, explain what happened in Vietnam to someone else.

Pete Zastrow
VVAW National
Office

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.

Review: "In Pursuit of Liberty," a play written and directed by Jonathan Polansky and performed by Veterans' Ensemble Theatre Company, American Theatre of Actors, in New York City.

The review was written by Sharon Bray and appeared in WIN Magazine; for more information or to subscribe contact WIN Magazine, 326 Livingston St, Brooklyn, NY 11217.

On December 24, 1971, 16 Vietnam veterans occupied the Statue of Liberty in order to protest American involvement in Indochina. This action, sponsored by Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW), is the event from which Jonathan Polansky wrote and directed In Pursuit of Liberty, performed in New York City by the Veterans' Ensemble Theatre Company (VETco).

There are five characters--representing more personality types than accurately portraying the men who were involved in that action. Polansky used the action as a springboard to explore the ways different soldiers view and are learning to cope with their experiences in Nam.

They take the last tour boat to the island, linking up inside the Statue. Michael (Leonard DiSesa) is the self-appointed leader of the group, very much the ex-commander type, giving out orders and expecting obedience. He is the most determined to take a public stand on U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and he was the only member of the group to testify at the Winter Soldier Investigation of 1971 in Detroit. "We are living, breathing proof of what was going on," he says, practicing to his friends the statement he will deliver to the press. "Vets can't forget it (American complicity in Vietnam)...this act is a symbolic act for those choosing not to kill." The final statement was to hoist the American flag upside down.

The unity of the group is shattered by Jack (Ray Robertson) who apparently "crashed" their action. (The original VVAW group was very well-organized and had spent time getting to know each other and planning each move.) Angry, bitter and extremely unstable, Jack comes prepared to fight the police with a grenade, handgun and rifle, convinced that the authorities will try to kill them before dawn so as not to be humiliated before the American public. Micci (Alex Signorello)--between tales of scoring pot for him and his friends in Nam--seems swayed a bit by

Veteran Ensemble Theatre Company "IN PURSUIT OF LIBERTY"

Jack's extreme paranoia and desperate words. Tom (Thomas Jenkins) is the least defined character; he challenges Jack on several occasions, but doesn't share much of his personal self. Skip (Richard Milanesi) is the most solid character, and also the most convincing. Having returned only seven months ago from Nam, he is just starting to face what happened there, and understand his feelings. Still finding it difficult to express himself, he talks about the "unfocused rage" he feels toward those who "manipulated our lives...We were nursed on honor and duty...then spit on."

And so they rehash the pressures that led them into the war (Tom's father was a soldier in World War II and wanted his son to be a soldier too.), comparing recurring nightmares (Jack has a vivid dream about a black buddy (Shubert Edwards) who he's playing cards with, and who steps on a mine when he goes to refill his canteen), recalling buddies who died, and picturing faces--staring at them, pleading with them to explain why they died, for what purpose. "I'm sick and tired of remembering Nam...they're (the government, older generation) crucifying me for doing what they told me to do." Then they go to sleep anticipating the arrival of the press that next morning.

The press and police hear the veterans' statement and the five are packing up to leave when Jack produces a grenade and pulls the pin. Threatening to blow them up, he cries out in pain and frustration that it's time for him to die, and he'll take them all with him. The four plead that they want to live, and to die now would be to deny young men of the chance to learn by their experiences, and thereby produce another generation of soldiers. They finally convince Jack to let them replace the pin. They continue packing, and suddenly Jack recites: "Yea though I walk through the valley/of death I shall fear no evil.../for the valleys are gone/And only death awaits/And I am the evil." And with that he draws a knife and stabs himself in the heart.

The play is powerful, emotional, important in its portrayal



Fifteen VVAW members seize the Statue of Liberty in December, 1971, to protest the bombing of Haiphong Harbor; in June, 1976, we did it again to protest GI Bill cutoffs.

al of the destruction of human souls in war, and the need to confront the experience in order to be able to live with oneself.

There are, however, serious problems with the play. The characters are not well-developed. They are either very one-sided or extremely fuzzy. Also, the play doesn't go beyond the individuals to show the political context of the actual takeover. If it was meant to represent the actual takeover, it failed to bring out the strength of those veterans who were involved in the action, and made no mention of the support they received from VVAW groups nationwide. If it wasn't, then perhaps a different setting might have been more appropriate.

An important sidebar to the performance was a panel discussion with several people actively involved in VVAW from its early days--one of whom was involved in the takeover. An important issue was raised by one of the panelists, a vet and a psychologist who works with vets in San Francisco, who felt that Jack's death was unnecessary, and would have been stronger had it shown Jack surviving, despite the odds. He felt too much of the mass media capitalizes on the suicides, and doesn't credit the far greater number of vets who are succeeding, through mustering the strength to come to grips with themselves.

VETco was established three years ago as a means "of exploring, reflecting upon and evaluating the American experience in Vietnam" as well as going beyond that experience to other humanitarian and moral concerns. It is supported by several grants

public funds and contributions.

I feel VETco, and this kind of theatre, provides a valuable opportunity for bringing together veterans and non-veterans, and opening a communication link that has been wrought with suspicion, fear and misunderstanding. Several Vietnam-veteran theater groups have been formed inspired by VETco.

The Vietnam veteran is just beginning to reach out after years of isolation, and I think it's time for people in the peace and veterans community to start working together. They will always be the "living proof" of why we cannot afford another Vietnam.



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News from Australia Up From Down Under

Robert Nimmo--that's the head of the VA, not the captain in Moby Dick--is considering eliminating free medical care to all veterans over the age of 65. When he heard that some veterans' groups protested, he complained that all that veterans want is "More, more, more." Well, that's true. When you don't have much, you tend to want more--especially when it was promised to you for serving your country.

Captain Nimmo is worried about the cost since so many vets from World War II are about to turn 65. Maybe then can save some money so they can buy tablecloths for the White House. That's a big worry for Muffie Brandon, the social secretary for Ron and Nancy. Muffie is concerned because they only have six changes of linen on hand, and that's "hard when you have a state visitor each month." Muffie is a brave one. She says, "We can do it, but you have to be very imaginative."

Once she had to take out a needle and thread to sew up a tablecloth just before Nancy's luncheon guests arrived. Imagine! Another time, "one set of tablecloths, to my complete and utter horror, went out to the dry cleaner and shrunk."

It's too bad Muffie couldn't get some of that million plus that was donated for remodeling the White House, but the money was already spent--Nancy got new china with a red border, her favorite color. But good soldier that she is, Muffie makes the best of a bad situation. She varies the look of the table as much as possible with candles, centerpieces and overlays in contrasting colors. Carry on, Muffie. We're glad you have something to put on the table. That's more than we can say for a lot of veterans after your boss gets through cutting our benefits.

MILITARY ANIMALS

Animals have always played a role in the military. Mostly it has been horses for the cavalry and transport. Nowadays,

they're using dogs and dolphins. Do you have a German shepherd between the ages of 1 and 3 who's looking for fun, travel and adventure? Sign him up for the Army. With no jobs to be had in the civilian economy there are enough human recruits for the all-volunteer Army, but there's a shortage of dogs.

Recruiters are looking for a few good--dogs to learn to sniff out drugs and explosives. They're promised three squares a day and job training. But, warning: they must pass the physical and temperament tests. If they do, they then can have the privilege of serving their country. They'll probably find it best to sign up for life since it's been said that VA care isn't fit for dogs!

The Navy might be looking for a few good dolphins. They used them in Vietnam to eliminate enemy frogmen on sabotage missions. They detected them with their built-in sonar and stabbed them with a hypodermic needle filled with carbon dioxide. Killed about 60 frogmen that way! Maybe we can use them against the El Salvadorians threatening Miami.

There are many possibilities for the animal kingdom. Maybe we can train monkeys to man (or at least monkey around with) the M-1 tanks. The General Accounting Office has discovered that a soldier can't get through the hatch of the M-1 in winter gear. That means we can only fight the Russians during the summer or along the Riviera. With monkey tank commanders, we can fight them anytime, anywhere.

Or, maybe, we can get some of those laboratory guinea pigs they train to count. We'd supply one to every commander so they could properly count the enemy. Of course, we'd have to have honest pigs who wouldn't send false information to the folks back home.



A Senate Inquiry into the effects of Agent Orange and particularly how it effects Australian Vietnam vet was held on the 8th and 9th of December. Vets there hope the hearing will be a step toward a Judicial inquiry that they have been asking for for the past three years.

* * * * *

The Australian program to open Vet Outreach Centers in that country (similar to the Operation Outreach Program in the U.S.) has yet to open one center. The government has targetted one center in each of the Australian State capitals. Members of the Victoria chapter of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia (VVA) met with General Morrison who is in charge of opening the vet's centers across Australia.

According to the General, the program is having difficulty finding qualified people to staff the centers. Members of VVA expressed no surprise at this since the most qualified people--Vietnam vets--are having serious medical problems which hamper their ability to work.

While vets in Australia are upset by the Vet's Centers still not opening and what appears to be governmental stalling on the issue, they also want to be sure that the program is set up correctly; if the vet's centers bomb, vets know that nothing will be set up in the future for Australian vets. In the words of one vet, "If the veterans here smell a fish, if the centers are not set up in an informal manner to serve the vets, if it is to be nothing more than a public relations exercise on the part of the (government's) Veterans Affairs, I believe the guys will burn the bloody things down."

* * * * *

Of the 41,000 Australian

veterans who served in Vietnam, 18,000 have applied for pensions (disability benefits). Of these 18,000, 6,000 have been accepted. VVA spokesmen expressed shock that so few have been accepted, knowing that the 2,449 who were wounded in Vietnam automatically get benefits. Confronting VA representatives, VVA spokesmen stated that the government should recontact those 12,000 they "knocked back," and re-evaluate them immediately. The VA agreed, knowing that, in all probability, they will be unable to locate many of these people. A 100% disability in Australia pays in the vicinity of \$45 (Australian) per week!

Australian vets who are active in the battle around Agent Orange have been experiencing harassment in the form of phone taps lately. Vets there think that they are being targeted because of their determination to set the issue of Agent Orange straight. While individuals have been bothered slightly, vets feel that vets organizations such as VVA are the main target. Some months ago Australian vets stated they had evidence that the major portion of U.S. intelligence activity in Australia has been aimed at Vietnam vets there who are Agent Orange activists.

Letter

Dear VVAW,

I enclose \$100 to sponsor a vet (one from the west or 1 1/2 from the midwest!) Wish I could sponsor an army to fight the alarming increase in greed and militarism in our government today. How scary--but how reassuring that we have an (I hope increasing) army of protesters once again.

Best Wishes,
Larchmont, NY

Underlining the fact that even as President he's a bad actor, Ronald Reagan decided that his promise to end draft registration wasn't worth the breath he had taken to utter it. Registration stays, with a short period of "grace" for those who have not rushed to register. The official reason for this change of mind is that abolishing draft registration would "send the wrong message to the Russians." Perhaps they would think that all the bluster going on in the State Department and elsewhere in the government is just "bluster."

Over the past several months the military has been able to say that they have finally reached their quotas; with unemployment over 9 million it's hardly surprising that the "economic draft" has been hard at work and that faced with the choice between joining the military and being on welfare (which is about to be cut off), many young men and women opt for the military.

Despite an increase in enlistments, however, all is not well with the U.S. military. Skilled enlisted people are still bailing out after their first enlistment term despite huge bonuses being offered to stay in. The fact that there is still no real GI Bill and that the government's track record in dealing with vets is horrible does not inspire young people with some of the qualifications that the military wants to join up. And military planning for the next war suggests that there may be a need for large

Continued from page 1

Westmoreland

Westmoreland--there were, based on his lying figures, a total of 24,000 enemy left in Vietnam. And, in part as a result of the figures that he fed to President Johnson, the war kept going for another 5 years and another 27,000 U.S. deaths and the wounded and the Agent Orange victims and the post-traumatic stress victims, and on and on.

And this same slimy ex-officer, having built his career on misleading his commander and his troops went on, after 4 years as Army's Chief of Staff in Washington, to talk about how he was "stabbed in the back" by the politicians and the media. It's clear that there was a whole lot of stabbing going on--and it's now clear exactly who was doing the stabbing.

Westmoreland was interviewed at length on the program, even admitting some of the figures which he falsified at the

REAGAN'S WORD ON REGISTRATION



numbers of troops fed into the machine very quickly.

So American 18-year-olds are still faced with registering for a draft which is sure to come as the military tries to use all the funds now being channelled into it. Hundreds of thousands of 18-year olds refused the last registration, seeing no reason to put their bodies on the line for the profits of corporations or the fumings of a few politicians. There's no reason to believe that more will sign up this time around.

NO DRAFT--NO WAR!

time. Several days after the program, when it must have finally sunk in that the facts presented indicted him as the murderer of 27,000 American troops, he popped up in a press conference to protest his innocence and say that he just didn't have his papers in order for the interview (though he didn't explain why he granted the interview under those circumstances). Well, it's clear that he lied once and there's no reason to think he won't lie as often as he thinks necessary.

As a beginning the military should put Westmoreland on trial. VVAW promises to produce Gold Star Mothers whose sons died because of Westmoreland's career plans and plenty of vets who would never have been in Vietnam, would have all their limbs, their jobs, their health if not for him.

Letter To VVAW On the Draft

(The following statement was written by Ron Newell, a draft-age youth from Polo, Illinois where he works with a local anti-draft and anti-registration group.)

The U.S. has never in its history had registration without a draft, nor a draft without war. We are once again witnessing the unfolding of a peacetime draft which, in all probability will bring the U.S. into another war. There is more proof than just historical background to this evaluation. The organizing of local draft boards, and the constant statements by different governmental departments and officials of a "future large-scale conventional war overseas" are good indications of what the future holds.

We, the youth of this country, have no obligation to participate in the draft system, nor in any war. The draft system requires having the youth of this country sacrifice their freedom; and war represents the foreign policy failures of the government and the interests of multi-national corporations.

Most of the youth around the world are just ordinary and beautiful individuals with whom we have no quarrels (in fact have ultimately never even met before). The youth of the U.S. should refuse registration for the draft as a symbol. First, we find the draft system unfair; and secondly, the common people of the world have no quarrels, only the governments can be blamed for such ignorance.

Another New Problem VIETNAM DISEASE

Think that just because you don't have a collection of Agent Orange symptoms you made it out of Vietnam with your health intact? Well, think again. Medical researchers have now come up with melioidosis, a chronic Southeast Asian disease with symptoms that don't appear for a decade or longer after exposure. As many as 250,000 Vietnam vets may be carrying the germ of this disease which has been diagnosed in autopsies.

When discovered in time it can be treated with antibiotics. But the symptoms can be mistaken for pneumonia, arthritis or heart ailments, and the disease is then improperly treated. Untreated, it can attack internal organs through internal abscesses or lesions.

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LETTERS TO VVAW

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

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

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

Dear VVAW

I hope you watched CBS Reports on January 23. It was Mike Wallace's "The Uncounted Enemy" showing how Westmoreland and the CIA lied to us....I cried and was sick for two days. I feel we should be doing something about this Hitler Westmoreland of the U.S. Army. Justice must be served. Fragging is too good for him, he must be made to suffer for murders, treasons, over-running of our vets in 'Nam by the NVA.

We Gold Star Mothers should demand this murderer of our sons and daughters be put on a long trial, tried by us, and made to suffer as we parents who lost our sons, vets, MIA's, POW's, amputees and Agent Orange victims are suffering. I am ready.

Every vet can stand proud after this expose. Hoping to hear from you....

Peace,
Ann Pine

Dear Friends,

Contribution enclosed for your fine efforts. Allocate as follows:

\$60.00 to send a midwestern vet to Dewey Canyon IV.

\$5.00 to send me a subscription to THE VETERAN.

I wish you well. I may try to get to Washington May 12-15.

Peace
Jim Anderson
E. Lansing,
Michigan

Dear VVAW,

I am a working vet. I did not think too much about going to war for my country when I was drafted, but after going to Vietnam two times and having been home for 13 years, then someone tells me I have something that has no answer--I want to find out all I can about chloracne or a liver condition or any other thing nobody on this earth has enough of an answer to accept. We are dying without answers. They say, "Try not to be alarmed by hearsay; go to your VA hospital." They have only a physical exam to give some time after the first of the year.

I have been going to a doctor for 2 years and now I find I may have been exposed to Agent Orange in Bien Hoa, (1964-5) or Komtom (1967-8). If you have any information that could help me, thanks. I am going to the Vet Center and talking to whom-ever will hear me.

Thanks for hearing some more problems. I would like to make the May 12-15 in '82--would like more info.

Thanks,
Indianapolis, IN

Dear Friends,

I am giving what I can for your Operation Dewey Canyon IV. Wish I could go with you but I am an elderly widow in not too good health. You may remember me as the prison visitor at Sandstone for CCCD and the CO men there. How I love all of you! I am putting the poster (the Dewey Canyon IV poster) in my house for all to see.

Love,
Beryl Sederberg
Elk River, MN

Dear Fellow Vets,

Please send us many copies of the flier calling for "Opera-

tion Dewey Canyon IV." We have many vets in this area interested in combatting the atrocities of the Reagan Administration.

See you in Washington!

Laura Strehlow
Vets for Peace
Kalamazoo, MI

Continued from page 3

AGENT ORANGE

ples could neither prove or disprove the connection of certain pathologies to Agent Orange exposure. The VA was apologetic for the small number and imperfectly classified samples presented to the pathologists, admitting (again) that the VA hospitals still had no procedure for "tagging" those veterans with in-country Vietnam service.

Most disturbing was a report given by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to the November 19th meeting of ACHREH. The EPA had run some tests on the presence of 2,4,5-T herbicide and 2,3,7,8-TCDD (dioxin) in samples of rice (from Arkansas and Louisiana), soil (from the same rice fields), gas and ash from burned refuse, and human urine and fat. Although

some types of samples (notably the urine samples) showed no incidence, in general they found it!

If the EPA involvement means that the stateside use of these substances and their effects on health are to be more closely examined, well and good; we didn't leave our concern for their danger behind with our discharge papers. The activities of Dewey Canyon IV have been expanded to protest, at the Department of the Interior, the continued use of chlorinated phenoxyns in the U.S. But, for the goal of testing, treatment and compensation for Agent Orange victims, this could be the most noxious smokescreen of all. Stateside phenoxyn contamination might be cited as an excuse to deny service-related

exposure claims. And, by the time the VA resorts to the dodges of Dapson and drugs (and probably lousy "C" rations as well), you may be left wondering if it was safer in Vietnam than in the 2,4,5-T sprayed fields of Arkansas and Louisiana.

Take heart. With all of the false starts, stumbling-blocks and smokescreens which are exposed at the ACHREH meetings, this noble committee seems agreed on one depressing point: the mortality and morbidity studies can continue. So you know what to do to keep these tissue samples coming in! And, in case you are run over by a tank truck filled with 2,4,5-T, it would be wise to have a note tattooed on your forehead that you were an in-country Vietnam veteran--to help out the VA with their "tagging" problem.

Mike Sutton
Washington,
DC

Agent Orange Pamphlets



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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



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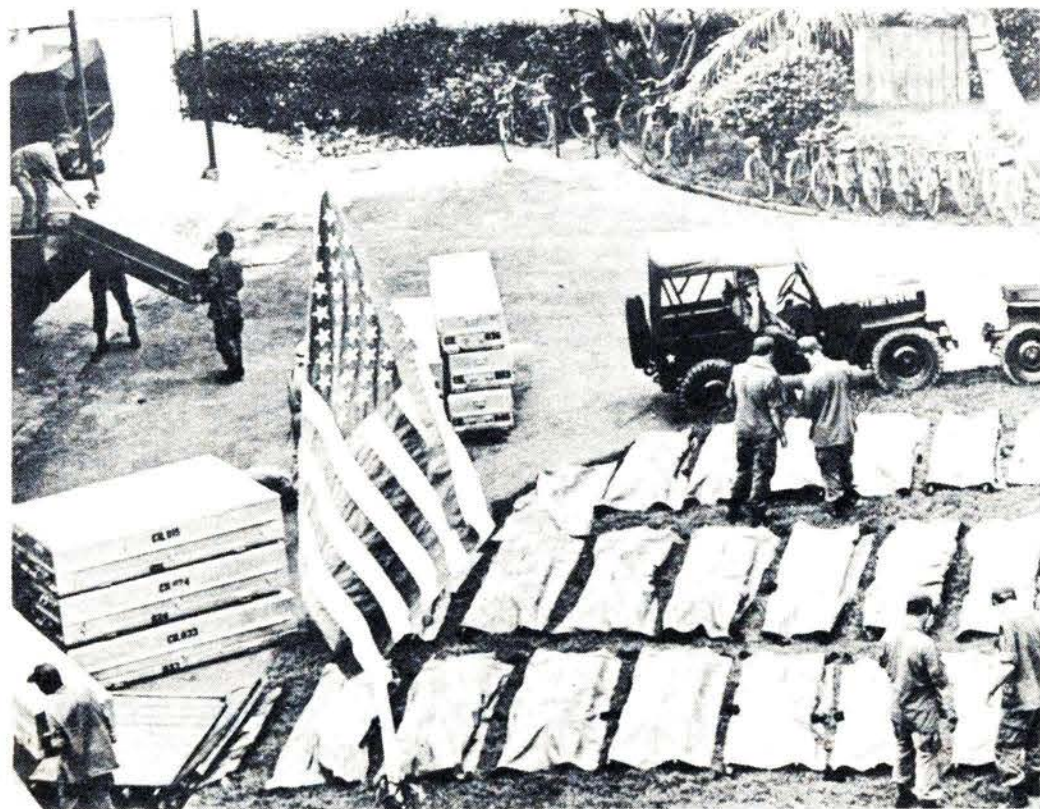
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RECOLLECTIONS

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

Until I Finally Believed It "BETTER HIM THAN ME"



Two weeks can pass very quickly when things get routine. We had been out of the field and back in battalion headquarters for a week. The company was on "sparrow-hawk" or stand-by alert. This meant we were to be ready to move out to the field with a five-minute notice if another unit was having contact with the enemy.

I was in the middle of my noon meal when the bell went off.

"Sparrow-hawk; saddle up!" shouted the gunnery sergeant. "You've got four minutes to move your asses out of here and three of them are already gone."

The trucks were parked outside our hootches before we could get our packs on. As soon as we were all saddled-up and loaded into the trucks, the platoon sergeant took a head count and the trucks were off. The convoy pulled out onto the runway where four huge Chinook helicopters were waiting to receive us. Olive-green with ramps down in the rear and the fronts raised, they resembled

enormous grasshoppers. The door-gunner was outside of the chopper motioning us off the trucks and into the rear hatch of the helicopter. He moved like a third-base coach directing his runners to home plate. The gunner followed the last Marine, jumping in over the half-closed ramp. He positioned himself behind an M-60 machinegun pointed to the ground. He looked us over for a hot second, then gave the co-pilot the thumbs up. The co-pilot did the same to the pilot and with a sudden burst of speed we were in the air on our way.

We headed south along the coast until we reached an old bombed-out village. As soon as the chopper touched down in a dried rice paddy we were directed out. The ground team told us to take up positions on a rise just outside the village and face west toward the mountains. After we positioned ourselves, Oklahoma and I began to dig a foxhole large enough for the two of us to jump in if a mortar attack should happen. Soon the whole unit was dug in around what was left of the small village.

"Hotel" company was to be a blocking force for "F" company, which had made contact somewhere in the hills west of our position. "F" company was sweeping a VC squad our way so we could block access to the coast where the population was centered.

The rest of the afternoon was quiet. I even had a chance to go down to the stream in back of our position to fill our canteens. Oklahoma had been unusually quiet all afternoon. He didn't even have that shit-eating grin he constantly wore. I wrote it off to the excitement of the day.

It was one of those rare moments when the sun came out long enough to eat. A quiet peace settled over us as we watched it make a spectacle of itself, splashing pink, red and blue all over the countryside. It was as if war had no business there.

Both of us had taken our helmets off to enjoy some C-ration hot chocolate and cookies. Suddenly to the rear of our position it sounded like the Fourth of July. Tracer rounds flew everywhere. I grabbed for my helmet and rifle, staying as low as I could in the hole but still allowing myself a wide field of vision. The noise was deafening. I heard shouting but I couldn't make out what was being said. Out of the corner of my eye I saw Oklahoma's helmet fly off and his body go into convulsions. I was afraid to look. I knew what had happened. The firing stopped after what seemed like hours. Marines were shouting:

"Corpsman up! Corpsman up! We need a doc over here!"

The squad leader crawled over to my position.

"I saw what happened," he said, as he handed me his poncho; "Cover him up and hold your position. We have to get the wounded out first. I'll get back as soon as I can."

I forced myself to look. I didn't recognize his face. It was a mess. His lifeless body lay twisted, one leg bent awkwardly under the other. I felt numb, almost as though I should have expected this. I threw the poncho over him and I turned my back.

"Better him than me," I said over and over again until I finally believed it.

LETTER TO ARMY ON WESTMORELAND

(After watching the "CBS Reports" program on William Westmoreland, VVAW wrote the following letter to the Judge Advocate General of the Army.)
Dear Sir:

On behalf of the membership of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, I am writing to ask what you, as the U.S. Army's chief law enforcement officer are doing with regard to the criminal activities of Ex-General William Westmoreland as revealed, with substantial evidence, on CBS Special Reports on the 23rd of January. It is an insult to the memory of our friends who died as well as to every Vietnam vet that Mr Westmoreland should not only remain free but should be drawing a military retirement which we as taxpayers are helping to pay.

From the evidence presented on the program, it is clear that then-general Westmoreland knowingly falsified figures on enemy troop strength in South Vietnam in order to be able to fall in line with the political expediency advocated by then-President Johnson. Such falsification could well have led to continuation of the war with 27,000 additional American deaths, hundreds of thousands of non-fatal casualties, to say nothing of cases of Agent Orange poisoning and post-traumatic stress disorders. There's no way to tell how many U.S. troops were killed or wounded during the NLF Tet Offensive in 1968 because they were given falsified intelligence figures. For all of this Mr Westmoreland is responsible.

None of us who served in Vietnam expected 100% accurate intelligence reports, nor did we seriously blame any commander who made an honest error in judgment even though we were the ones most likely to suffer as a result. Westmoreland's criminal coverup, however, does not fall into that category.

Vietnam veterans, and particularly the survivors of those who died in Vietnam await with great interest information on your investigation and your plans for prosecution.

Peter H. Zastrow
VVAW National Office