



# THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

25¢

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SPECIAL DEMONSTRATION ISSUE

April-May 1982

## OPERATION DEWEY CANYON IV

# VETS MARCH ON WASH.

Operation Dewey Canyon IV will take place in Washington DC on the 12th through the 15th of May. Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Bonus March by World War I vets in 1932, and the 11th anniversary of Operation Dewey Canyon III (when Vietnam vets threw away their medals on the Capitol steps in protest against the war still raging in Vietnam), DC IV will be a peaceful and forceful veterans counterattack to the many threats to veterans coming from the Reagan administration.

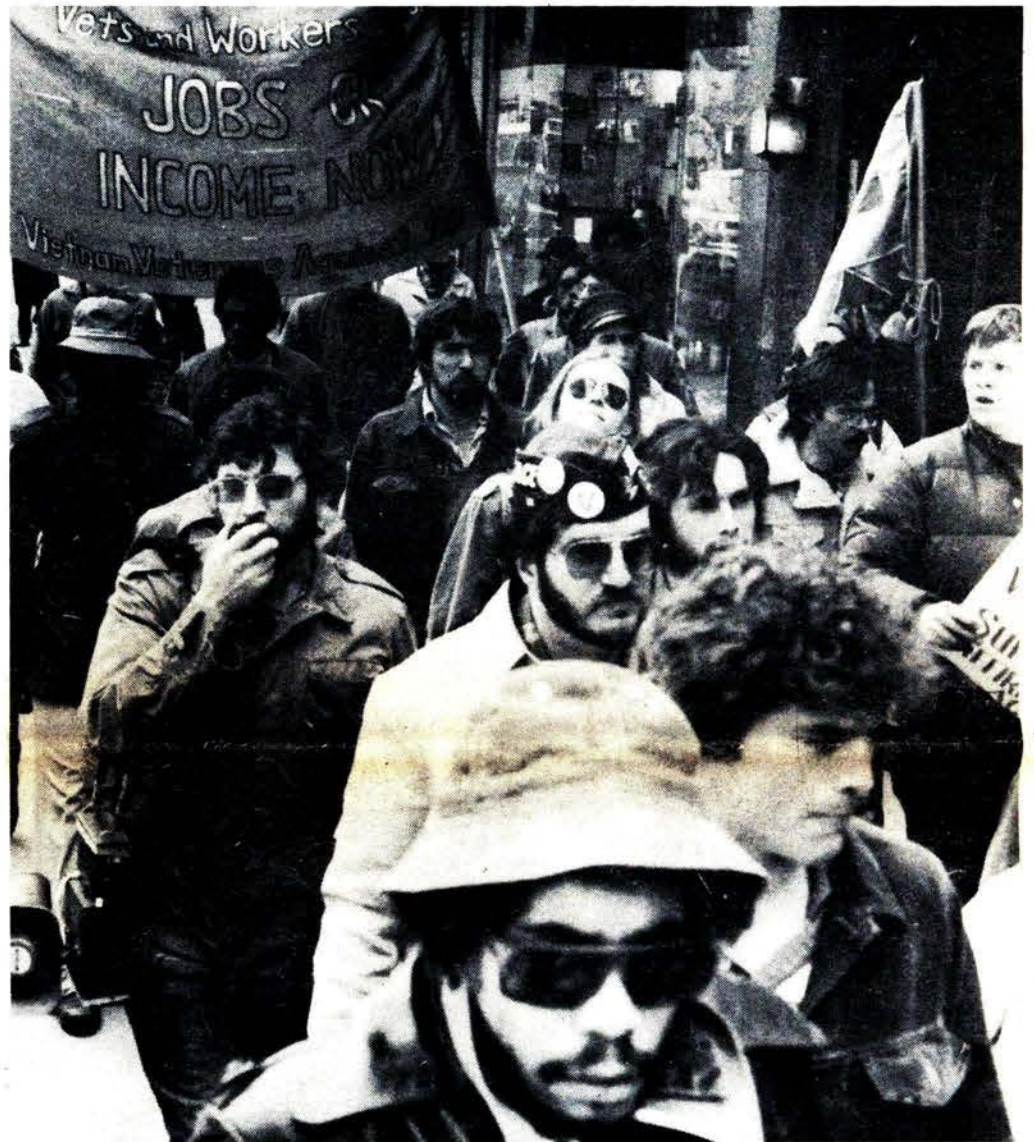
Few veterans want to get out their fatigues or their boots and hit the streets again; many of us thought that our war was over. And we wouldn't do it if we thought there was any choice. But even though a high percentage of the American people are sympathetic to the problems faced by Vietnam vets, little or nothing has happened on a number of programs which might help solve some of these problems.

Faced with children affected

by our exposure to Agent Orange, faced with the problems we now suffer because of Agent Orange exposure, we expect our government--which was so ready to send us off to fight--to help with testing, treatment and compensation for Agent Orange victims--but they won't. Yet they seem all too ready to send our children off to fight another war in El Salvador.

Hundreds of thousands of Vietnam and Vietnam-era vets are laid off or can't find jobs. Yet the government cuts back on programs which could help. Tens of thousands of Vietnam vets in prison get nothing. And the widows and orphans of Vietnam vets face more cutbacks. What we're offered is a "Vietnam Veterans Memorial" with a "Follow-Me" statue--follow me right into another Vietnam!

DC IV will focus the opinion of vets and supporters around the country. Give us what we need--however wrong it was, we did what we were asked to do. And we've got to get what we need ourselves, since no one will do it for us!



## DECENT BENEFITS FOR ALL VETS!

# NO VA CUTS

"The government says cut back/ Vets say Fight Back!" You name the vets program and Reagan will show you how it can be cut back--this has been the history of vets in the past couple of years.

Out campaigning Reagan was clear that vets benefits were among his untouchables as far as the budget was concerned. Once in office the story has been entirely different. In the midst of cutbacks in almost

every useful social program, vets benefits have also seen the Stockman axe. A cutback in hospital beds. A cutback in burial benefits, to the point that 14 bodies were stacked up at the VA in Los Angeles because there wasn't the money to bury them (a local Vietnam vet businessman finally provided the necessary funds).

And perhaps even worse than the programs being cutback are the programs not being started. Scared to death that an influx of World War II vets, now ap-

proaching the age of 65, will flood VA hospitals, the VA is working out ways to avoid having to deal with them. Millions of dollars could be spent treating victims of radiation, so the VA drags its feet on that. More money will have to be spent on Agent Orange victims, so the government tries to pretend it's a non-existent problem.

The newest budget calls for only a few cuts in vets benefits like eliminating disability payments to the families of vets who are 40% or 50% disabled. But that's one more step. Unless vets say STOP, the cuts will continue.

No vet went off to Vietnam, to Korea, or to World War II asking to have his body blown apart, his mind disturbed, or

himself and his family exposed to the lethal effects of radiation, Agent Orange, or whatever other atrocity the U.S. government may come up with next. These same vets do ask--and more than ask, demand--that these problems now be dealt with.

### Your Tax Dollars At Work



Robert P. Nimmo, Reagan-appointed director of the V.A., and advocate of cutbacks to help make the president's economic plan "work," ordered \$10,000 worth of security measures (locks, etc.) when he discovered a janitor using his private restroom to make an "unauthorized elimination."

PRESIDENT RONALD W. REAGAN

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# FRAGGIN'

Sp 5 Willy(Ret.)

Did you see where some fellow by the name of Duggan wrote this biography of LBJ? Now you may or may not care to read about LBJ, but there was one chapter in there about LBJ's religion and religious experiences.

Now that seems interesting because Duggan reveals that LBJ asked this ambassador if he thought that God, in the form of the Holy Ghost, was making visitations to the earth.

The ambassador said no, he didn't think so, but LBJ quickly straightened him out. LBJ told him that the Holy Ghost had been visiting him in the White House in the early morning hours when he received his war reports from Vietnam.

I knew it all the time! God was on our side. He was helping LBJ in strategy sessions every morning.

Now, I've heard some non-believers saying that the Holy Ghost really didn't appear to LBJ to talk about the war. They say that what probably happened was that LBJ was having a few hangovers and he imagined it. Some even go so far as to say that Lady Bird was putting PCP in LBJ's morning coffee. They just don't believe.

I must confess that secretly I'm a bit of a doubting Thomas. Because if that did happen, then something must be wrong with God. They tell us that God is supposed to know everything, right? Well, if God knows everything, and He was discussing the war with LBJ, how come LBJ's intelligence reports were so screwed up?

I know that Westmoreland sent back reports that there were half as many NVA troops as there really were. He might have misled LBJ, but could he have pulled the wool over the eyes of the Holy Ghost too?

For all its faults, the CIA sent back better intelligence about Vietnam. That doesn't say much for the Holy Ghost because the CIA has been wrong quite often.

Then there's the other question. Did God really want that war? Kill off all them yellow people, the Buddhists, Taoists, Maoists, women and children? Is that the advice he gave to LBJ?

Maybe he didn't really talk with the Holy Ghost. Maybe the pressures of the job were getting to him. Or maybe it was a conspiracy between Lynda Bird and Luci. Maybe there were dropping acid and decided to put some in the old man's scrambled eggs.

\* \* \*

Maybe God and the federal government can't work together. Take the VA and its handling of the case of Chaplain Ronald Gunton at the VA Medical Center in Bath, NY.

Milton Salmon, director of the Center, wrote to Corbin Cherry, the VA's chief of chaplains, asking him to find a way to remove Gunton. It seems Gunton, who was the chief negotiator and steward for the VA employees, had made the bosses mad. They were angry because of Gunton's "strong defense of employee's rights and robust debate on behalf of the union." In other words the VA wished to treat its employees as bad as it treats the vets who go there to use their services. Gunton got in their way so they wanted to get rid of him.

The VA heads sent malicious letters to the American Baptist Church trying to get Gunton fired. It didn't work, and the Federal Labor Relations Authority found the VA officials guilty of smearing the hospital chaplain.

Maybe the VA was just mad because they had heard how the Holy Ghost had given LBJ bad intelligence, so they tried to take it out on a Baptist minister. In any case, Gunton is back at work and the VA again has mud on its face. Another true believer is in the White House. And the Holy Ghost is being drafted for duty in Central America!

## SINGLE-TYPE DISCHARGE! BAD PAPER VETERANS

Hundreds of thousands of Vietnam veterans came home from that war with "bad paper" --discharges in the several categories called by the military "less than honorable." Vietnam vets had a hard enough time getting a job when we came home; a bad discharge made it almost impossible. And the option open to other vets--school on the GI Bill--was not open to "bad paper" vets since almost all vets benefits were automatically cancelled for those with a less-than-honorable discharge. In short a person could spend his two or three years in the military, have spent a tour in Vietnam, have gone through all the rest of the nonsense that all GI's went through, have gotten a bad discharge toward the end of his time, and ended up with absolutely nothing--he couldn't even join the American Legion!

The military has long used its discharge system as a mighty club over the heads of its troops. When troops, individually or collectively, refuse to go along with whatever the latest idiocy the military comes up with there's always some officer around to threaten a bad discharge. And since the military in Vietnam had more than its normal share of idiotic plans, there were more troops who resisted them and more vets with bad discharges.

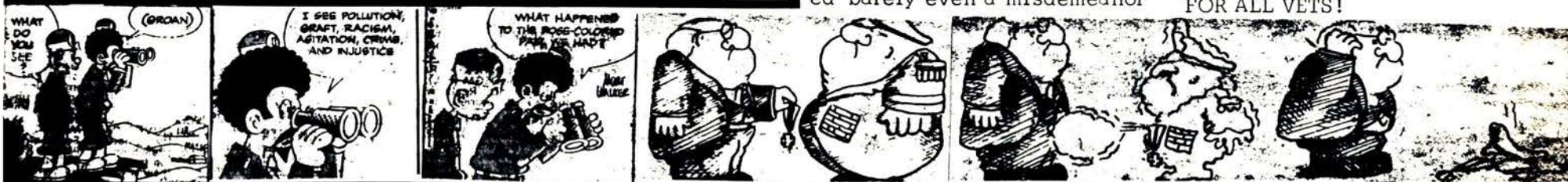
Of course there were crimes committed by members of the military--crimes under normal civilian law. No one wants a bunch of murderers or rapists running around in uniform or out. But during the years after Vietnam VVAW heard similar stories again and again: the Black GI with a racist company commander finally got rid of him with a bad discharge for some kind of insubordination. Or the GI who wanted more than anything else to get out of the military and was finally offered the option of a bad discharge--and never told what some of the consequences might be. Or the thousands of GIs who got a bad discharge for drug use--something which would be considered barely even a misdemeanor

in many states under civilian law.

Vets with bad discharges along with civilian war resisters were the focus of a large-scale amnesty movement both during and after the Vietnam war. In homes and storefronts around the country, volunteers worked with vets trying to get their discharges upgraded, a long and tedious process clogged with red tape and paperwork. And large demonstrations demanded amnesty. President Ford, having already granted the most unpopular of amnesties (that which he gave to Nixon) tried to balance that act with an amnesty for some categories of civilian war resisters. More government concessions followed including automatic discharge upgrading for some categories of bad discharges.

But throughout this period VVAW continued to press for its demand of a single-type discharge for all vets. Take away from the military the power to judge a person's life and decree that a particular individual will suffer under a bad discharge for the rest of his life. Give all vets something like a certificate of service saying nothing more than that the individual was in the military. More than that, make the certificate retroactive so that veterans who now have only a bad discharge to show for their years of service will have the same opportunities--such as they are--that other vets have.

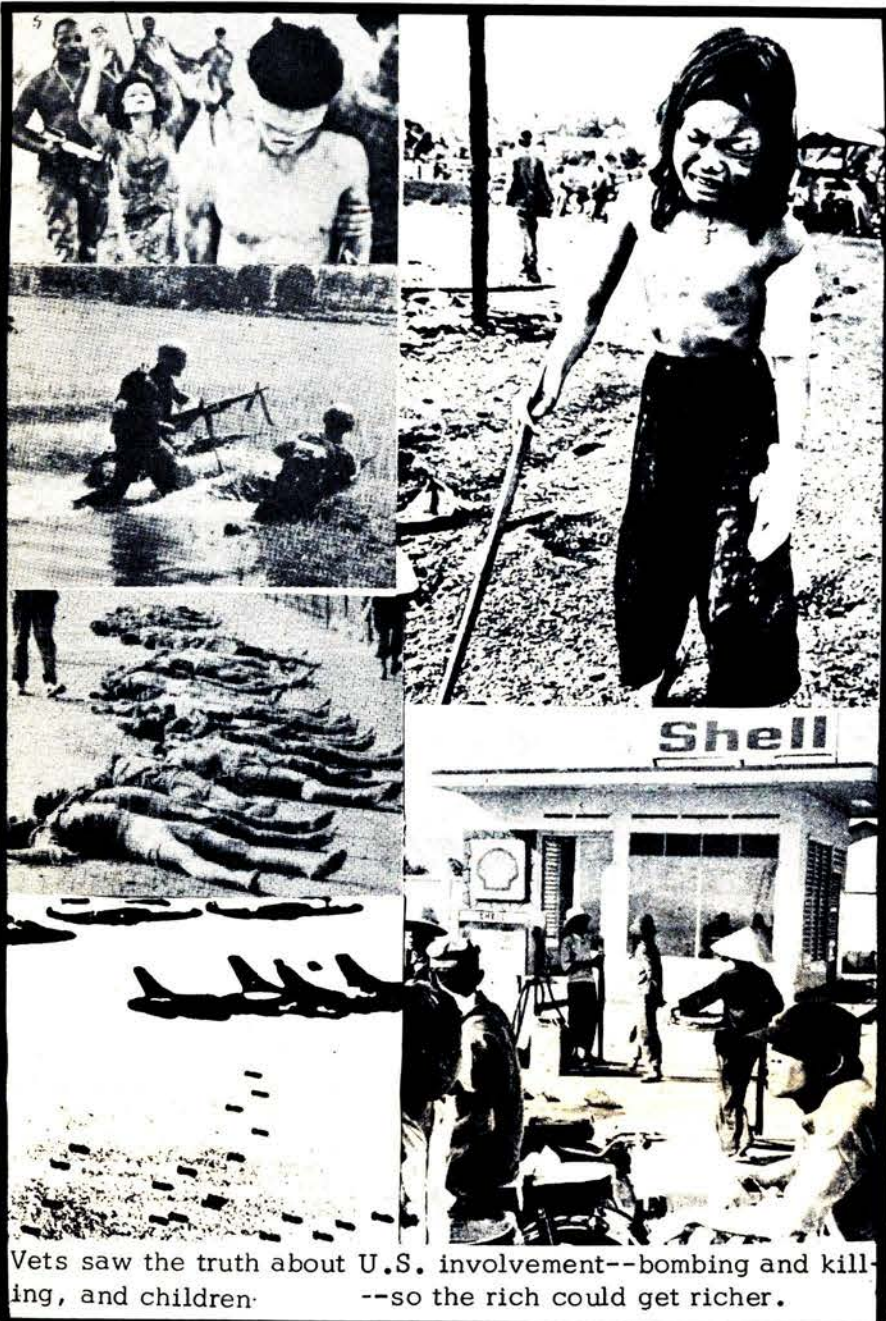
We've been in the military and seen what the military "justice" system is used for--and we say enough of that. VVAW has always welcomed vets regardless of discharge--Agent Orange didn't chose vets with one kind of discharge to contaminate, the prisons are full of vets with all kinds of discharges, jobs are a problem for all vets, and the experience that makes us oppose intervention in El Salvador and say No More Vietnams is common to vets with honorable and less-than-honorable discharges. Get rid of the system: SINGLE TYPE DISCHARGE FOR ALL VETS!





## The War in Context

# THE VIETNAM ORDEAL



Vets saw the truth about U.S. involvement--bombing and killing, and children--so the rich could get richer.

The Reagan Administration has been saying that America must get over its "Vietnam Syndrome" and join the fight in Central America. Vietnam was one hell of a "syndrome": 55,000 dead American troops, 300,000 disabled, and one of the major causes of our present economic disaster. What was Vietnam? A mistake, a "noble cause," or foreign aggression? In fact it was all of these, depending on where you happened to stand.

The real U.S. involvement in Vietnam started during the Second World War. The OSS (the group that later became the CIA) sent agents to make contact with anti-Japanese guerillas in Southeast Asia. (The French who had controlled the area were "Vichy" French who, with their Nazi leanings, supported the Japanese.) Of the different Vietnamese nationalists, only the Viet Minh under Ho Chi Minh had a national network of underground organizations and guerillas fighting.

Ho Chi Minh met with the

U.S. operative Major Patti and they agreed on anti-Japanese actions. The U.S. dropped supplies behind the lines to Ho and the Viet Minh helped Americans downed behind Japanese lines. The first American advisors helped train, equip and arm the Viet Minh. In 1945 the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was formed in Vietnam with Ho Chi Minh as its president. American planes flew over Hanoi in celebration of the founding. The Vietnamese Declaration of Independence was modeled on the American version and Ho asked the Americans to honor their commitment to independence, citing the Atlantic Charter and the United Nations Charter on self-determination.

U.S. relations with the Vietnamese turned sour. President Truman refused to answer any of Ho's cables or letters. Truman was trying to bring France into economic and diplomatic ties with the U.S. The result was that France got Vietnam--and all her former colonies) in

return for close ties with the U.S.

The French return to their former colony was not easy; first, they had to arm and use former Japanese POW's to establish a new foothold. They were able to retake the towns but not the countryside. In 1950 General Giap launched a general offensive against the French which, though it was premature, resulted in 6,000 French killed or captured. What the French government described as a "victory" was portrayed by commentator Bernard Fall as France's "greatest colonial defeat since Montcalm died at Quebec." France turned to the U.S. for aid--at first it was \$10 million a year but grew to \$1 billion by 1954 so that by the time of the final French defeat at Dien Bien Phu the U.S. was footing 80% of the bill for the war.

With the French out the U.S. moved in. According to international agreement Vietnam was to be temporally divided into north and south, with free elections to take place nationwide in 1956.

Ngo Dinh Diem, a Vietnamese Catholic living in Boston was chosen Premier of South Vietnam which was 95% Buddhist. The U.S. set up MAAG (Military Assistance and Advisory Group) to train a "nationalistic" Vietnamese force of a quarter of a million men. This force was largely made up of Vietnamese who had fought for the French. In 1956 the U.S. refused to go along with the elections because, in the words of President Eisenhower, "Ho Chi Minh would win 80 % of the vote in a free election." U.S. involvement continued and so did U.S. money and men. American presence rose to 500 under Eisenhower and grew to 15,000 under Kennedy.

At the same time Diem was in trouble; former Viet Minh helped to support a number of groups to oppose Diem and France's successor, the U.S. Buddhist unrest rose in the cities and Diem's cronies in the countryside were killed. The U.S. decided to back a coup of Vietnamese generals to topple Diem. Not only did they get rid of Diem and assassinate him, but proceeded to kill off each other monthly and even weekly.

The situation was desperate and more and more American troops were put in to replace

Saigon troops who could not or would not fight.

The Saigon government had no real base other than the aid it got from the U.S. and the U.S. got what it paid for: pimps, prostitutes, cowards and gangsters masquerading as a government and a military.

Coupled with this was an incredible arrogance on the part of the U.S. government and military leaders. They simply could not believe that Asians could stand up to the might and technology of the U.S. As the war progressed we went from one stage to another with no real change in the general situation. Strategic hamlets, search and destroy, Vietnamization--all these programs were tried by the French in the past but the U.S. somehow thought they could be pulled off.

The American people were not being told of the plans or policies of the government. To the contrary--Lyndon Johnson ran as a peace candidate in 1964 saying, "I won't send American boys to do the fighting for Asian troops." Americans were told that Vietnam was two countries (overlooking some 2000 years of history) and that the North was invading the South. All of this didn't do much to answer the question of the 19-year old American fighting the South Vietnamese guerillas. Saigon leaders were portrayed as the Vietnamese version of "Jefferson and Lincoln"--never mind the drug pushing, black marketeering and torture cells.

In fact in order to save Vietnam we had to destroy it. We bombed hospitals to save orphans, sprayed Agent Orange in order to save crops, burned hamlets to save villages, and turned Vietnam into one huge whore house to save Vietnamese culture from Communism.

As GI's in Vietnam we saw the often stark realities of Vietnam and could compare them to the "truth" the American people were being told. We saw the corrupt Saigon generals making money hand over fist while their armies would not fight. We saw the hate in the eyes of the local villagers who never welcomed us with flowers as liberators; the only Vietnamese who seemed to want us there only wanted greenbacks in exchange for drugs, booze or woman. We

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Vietnam vets have won a worldwide breakthrough with a ruling that a veteran is entitled to compensation because of exposure to defoliants during his war service.

In a landmark ruling, the Australian repatriation service granted a war widow's pension to Mrs Lorraine Simpson whose husband died of malignant lymphoma last year. The decision was important because it:

\*Conceded a claim on grounds of exposure to toxic chemicals.

\*Is based, in part on evidence which the federal government has refused to release because "it would represent a biased view to the community."

\*Concluded that veterans would be affected even without direct exposure to chemicals because of water and food contamination from spraying.

\*Implicated other chemicals as well as Agent Orange.

The National President of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, Mr Phil Thompson, said, "The decision marked the first time a government has taken liability for a direct link between chemicals and the death of a serviceman."

Mr Peter Morgan, New South Wales Branch President of VVAA says, "The ruling cleared the way for claims by 1,200 other Vietnam veterans who had also put in claims as a result of illness allegedly caused by use of chemicals in Vietnam."

#### Vets Centers

After nearly two years of stalling on the part of the Australian Veterans' Affairs Department, the first Vietnam veterans counselling service center opened in late January in Adelaide, Australia, with a number of others following thereafter.

The major stumbling block was the VA's unwillingness to work with or accept the assistance of the VVAA, the organization representing Aussie Vietnam vets and their problems concerning defoliant poisoning and delayed stress.

After the Government refused to fund the VVAA, a compromise was reached modeling the Aussie centers after the U.S. "Operation Outreach" centers in the U.S., creating a less "bureaucratic and stuffy" air about the centers.

The latest unemployment figures say that unemployment among Vietnam-era veterans is now 719,000. And that's a hell of a lot of unemployed vets.

But the facts behind the figures are even worse. Over 200 thousand of these unemployed vets are between the ages of 35 and 39--hardly a period in life when people are just starting out and expecting to be laid off. Another 250 thousand plus are between 30 and 35. Among the 35-39 year old group, vet unemployment is 25% higher than among non-vets of the same age.

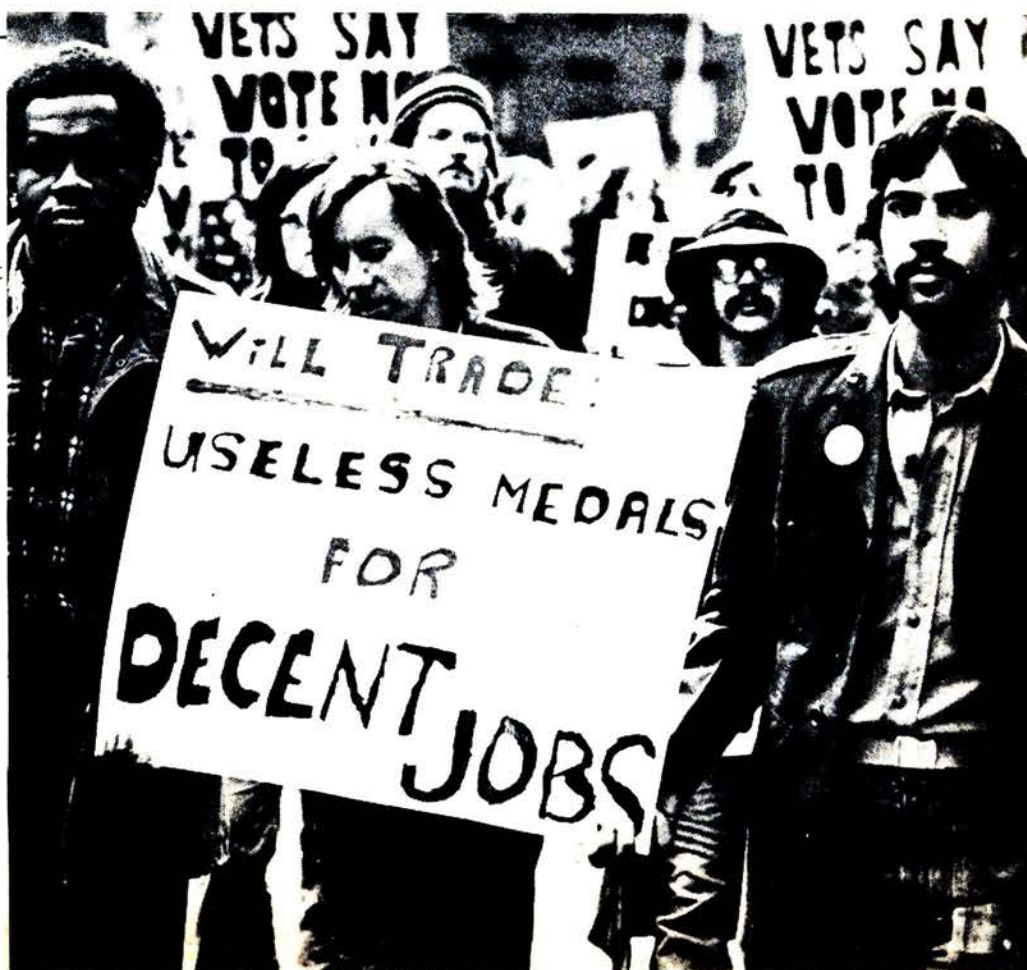
As the national unemployment figures edge up toward an official 10% (and probably, figuring in people who have given up on looking for a job, young people who aren't yet on the federal roles, etc much higher than the government figures show), vets are being hit even harder than others. It's not too hard to figure out; as industry after industry gets clobbered by Reagan's economic plans, they lay off people with the least seniority and vets, who lost a couple of years of seniority while in the military end up getting laid off before others of the same age.

And what is the government doing for the vets who served their country and now are suffering for that time? The answer is the usual: not one thing!

In the years immediately following the Vietnam war, there was the chance for vets to go to school; the GI Bill was not enough to live on, in many cases, and it was often messed up by VA bureaucrats with late payments and red-tape hassles, but at least it was there. But that expired for most Vietnam-era vets after 10 years. Various government training programs which either supported vets in training or gave significant tax breaks to companies which would train Vietnam vets, all of these programs have stopped. Vets are on their own, and often that means they're also out in the cold.

One of the demands of the Bonus Army of 1932 was for unemployment compensation which did not exist at that time. In fact their efforts were successful; though the system of unemployment compensation did not come immediately, the vets' efforts were important for the eventual winning of unemployment compensation. The idea then--and now--was to provide a cushion for those whose jobs were lost through no fault of their own. But in the kind of

# Vets Unemployment Up JOBS OR INCOME



recession that Reaganomics has plunged us into, and given the many attempts by the Reagan Administration to change rules and cut off as many people as possible the whole system of unemployment compensation no longer can fill the needs that were hoped for and fought for--by vets as well as other workers.

But the Reagan attack on the unemployed don't stop there. Reagan can go on TV, complain about the media interviewing the unemployed worker from "South Succotash," and talk about how he finds pages full of help wanted ads in the local papers. In different terms Reagan is putting out his view (and that of his Republican backers) that anyone who isn't working is clearly a worthless bum not worth further consideration--a strong point of view from someone whose last honest job was as a baseball commentator in the 1930's.

Yes, there are jobs in the help-wanted columns; some of them require skills or background that few have. Some--like the favorite suggestion for vets as a security guard--are jobs with little present and no future. There are few jobs open for one

whose particular skill has been learned over the last ten years and which has, up till now, provided a sound basis for building a family and some economic security. For vets it's the old story--from the front lines on the battlefield to the front lines in unemployment offices.

At present there is no program sponsored by the government which will do anything to help the vets out of work. Such programs are possible--on the job training with a guarantee that the job will last (unlike earlier programs where corporations could get tax breaks for training a vet for 6 months and then let them go and start the process again with a new vet). But as long as Reagan and his cronies figure we need all the money for the military, and that anyone who loses a job does so because he or she somehow wants to (or that people are poor because that's what they want) neither vets nor anyone else who isn't working will get much help.

During DC IV Vietnam vets and others will be demonstrating that there are thousands upon thousands who want to work--and we'll be demanding JOBS OR INCOME!



# AGENT ORANGE and V.A. COMMITTEE

## SECRECY vs PUBLIC RIGHT TO KNOW

(The following article is a report from the VVAW representative to the VA's oversight committee studying the effects of Agent Orange. It gives a vivid picture of how quickly the government works when it wants to do nothing--in this, the 11th quarterly meeting, the oversight committee was given a censored copy of a protocol--a plan for a study on the effects of Agent Orange. There's one hell of a long ways to go!)

At long last the scientific protocol for the VA's epidemiological study has been accepted from the team headed by Dr. Gary Spivey of the UCLA School of Medicine and paid for, under a VA contract, with taxpayer funds. The VA was assigned responsibility for this study under Public Law 96-151 (Dec,

1979) while the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) was authorized to establish an Agent Orange Working group to oversee and coordinate all scientific and governmental efforts pertaining to the herbicide problem. Yet, lest we celebrate this tardy arrival of the scientific protocol, brothers and sisters: let it be understood that certain critical portions of this document have been classified--withheld from the public and the Vietnam vets who were exposed to Agent Orange (76,316 of whom have now been examined for the VA's Agent Orange registry as of the end of 1981).

Perhaps the VA is conforming with the Reagan Administration's increasing passion for classification. Those portions of the protocol which have been class-

ified are the physical examination procedures and the personal questionnaire. Citing an overriding need to control scientific data together with unspecified legal considerations, the VA accepted Spivey's recommendation to classify and shared the entire protocol only with the Science Panel of the Agent Orange working group (HHS) and the Office of Technological Assessment. The VA's own Advisory Committee on the Health-Related Effects of Herbicides (ACHREH)--which, outside of Congressional hearings, is the only public window open to observe the Agent Orange studies--received the edited version of the protocol at its eleventh quarterly meeting on Feb 25, 1982.

Dr Spivey would understandably opt for secrecy since he displayed his bias last year in

legislative testimony in California, that the goal of an Agent Orange study was to "alleviate veterans' fears" over Agent Orange exposure.

Defending the classification issue, early in the Feb 25th meeting, Mr Maurice LeVois, the new Director of the VA's Agent Orange Research and Education Office, argued that those portions which were classified were excessively lengthy and time was needed for their revision. He then stretched credulity by stating, as an example, that the questionnaire had "four pages of questions on wax in the ears." If that is the case--how much more nonsense was paid for by the taxpayer in this "edited" protocol?

Having been presented with this edited version of the protocol, the ACHREH committee members representing the American Legion and the VFW commented on the wisdom of classification and upon the VA's failure to consult with this committee prior to classification. They pointed out that classified questionnaires would quickly become public once they began to be administered; that classification of any materials had the potential for undermining veterans' confidence in the epidemiological study, and that the VA erred by not seeking prior advice from ACHREH before classifying. Thomas J. Fitzgerald, MD, observed that, "as long as you go to secrecy, you are bound to raise doubts." He further pointed out that, "if, indeed, you have an Advisory Panel that is not sharing in the total protocol, then the validity of this Panel has to be raised."

Mr LeVois, at the conclusion of this Committee meeting, reflected upon the matter of confidentiality by asking the Committee members to "consider the damage that can be done by biasing a study versus the damage that can be done by the bad will that could be generated by the apparent aura of secrecy...because I don't want to jeopardize the study on the basis of good science but bad politics."

Atta boy, Mr LeVois; you shouldn't be allowed to stand alone behind that belated reflection. On May 13th, at 8:30 AM at the VA Central Office in Washington, the ACHREH holds its next meeting. Since that meeting coincides with Dewey Canyon IV, concerned vets will be there to support openness and oppose secrecy.

--Mike Sutton  
Washington DC  
VVAW

## STOP THE DRAFT BEFORE IT STOPS YOU!! NO REGISTRATION

When Reagan was running for the presidency, he was against registration for the draft, but then again he was for a balanced budget. Not a man to be held to campaign promises, Reagan and his administration have moved ahead on registration and is now planning prosecution of non-registrants.

The Administration is talking about law, defense and the Russian threat, but all this is getting a little old. Since when have draftees fought the Russians? America did invade the Soviet Union after World War I but that was 60 years ago.

Quite simply, registration (and the draft) is a way to get the U.S. involved in wars like Vietnam without really consulting the American people. Draftees can fill the ranks of the infantry as in 'Nam without calling up the Reserves of National Guard, or moving units out of Korea or Germany. They provide the President with a means of escalation (again as in Vietnam) of placing troops in the Mid-East or Central America.

Reagan keeps telling us to trust him. He won't start a draft or get us into El Salvador. He just wants to show the Russians that we're serious. Well, recent history hasn't exactly



San Fernando Valley billboard.

made us convinced of the trustworthiness of American presidents, and the way that Ronnie has dealt with campaign promises doesn't hold out much hope for an improvement in that sorry record.

"Ronald Reagan, he's no good, Send him back to Hollywood. If he'd been in Nam back then, He'd never made it home again. Sound off, 1,2...."

On Saturday, March 6th, a large anti-draft rally was held at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. VVAW contributed one of the four speakers, and 150 people attended. We talked about how vets were fooled into enlisting for Vietnam and that people this time around

were less naive. Already 900 thousand people have resisted registration, three times higher than during the Vietnam War.

We talked about how serious the threat of the draft is. In papers given us by active duty contacts, we were told of an exercise for March 20, 1982 to test draft call-up. Called "Exercise Grand Payload." One thousand USAR personnel would be "called up" and processed through Armed Forces Entrance Enlistment Stations. Selective Service, the Army Reserve and the Military Enlistment Command are doing this out of boredom; they are playing for keeps.

John Lindquist  
VVAW National Office



# A Limited Incursion into Congress' Land'

## OPERATION DEWEY CANYON IV

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

**Organization on the Mall:** Plans call for the Mall area to be organized by geographical regions--the West, the Midwest & South, and the East. Because we are looking for the best possible way to establish democracy within the Mall site, we are planning for regional leadership so that complaints, suggestions, ideas or plans can be passed along as quickly as possible. We all know that during a march or demonstration, we follow what leadership says--and complain later: we believe that leaders within each region will give the best means of getting the input as quickly and efficiently as possible.

**Literature, etc:** Because a number of different groups have already asked about selling their literature, T-shirts, bumper stickers or whatever during the Demonstration, and because we do not want to turn either the Mall or the marches into shopping bazaars, we have set up an area in the administration tent where anyone may have their material for sale. Beyond this one area we expect no selling of material during the demonstration.

**Money:** We will be asking for a \$15 registration fee when people come in to the Mall. This will include meals from Wed. evening through Saturday morning. Arrangements have been made for parking at the Armory Parking Lot near the RFK Stadium; the cost is \$2 per car per day, and \$6 per bus. It's an easy subway ride from there to the Mall. VVAW is planning on serving two meals per day--for lunchtime you will be on your own. Any money that can be contributed in advance (for things like renting a stage or port-o-sans or trucks or the many other things needed for this kind of demonstration) is badly needed.

**Security:** A recruiting booth for more members of the security team will be near the registration table. We learned the meaning of discipline in the past and enjoy using what the military taught us about the value of working as a unit. The security team will have both internal functions and external functions--in short, we plan to police ourselves. To quote from the statement of the security team leader during the planning meeting, "The ways we used to respond to guarding an officer's club or banana plantation will be out of the question here. Those funny cigarettes used to make the boredom much easier to take, but when our friends and families are at stake, there is no boredom. Whether it's night guard, running extra miles or whatever, we will do it because this is what we thought we were fighting for in Vietnam in the first place."

**Do's and Don'ts:** Do write your Congressman to say you'll be in to see him; get in touch with other vets you know and bring them along; bring raingear and sleeping gear (but not more than you can carry); bring a heavy-duty flashlight; bring fatigues and comfortable shoes. If you have medical problems or young children, do let us know ahead of time.

Don't bring drugs, or alcohol--there will be none of either on the Mall. No firearms or pets; this is a peaceful, non-violent demonstration. Don't expect a vacation, but do expect to have the kind of good time which comes from a lot of people working for the same thing, together!

## OUR UNITY IS OUR STRENGTH

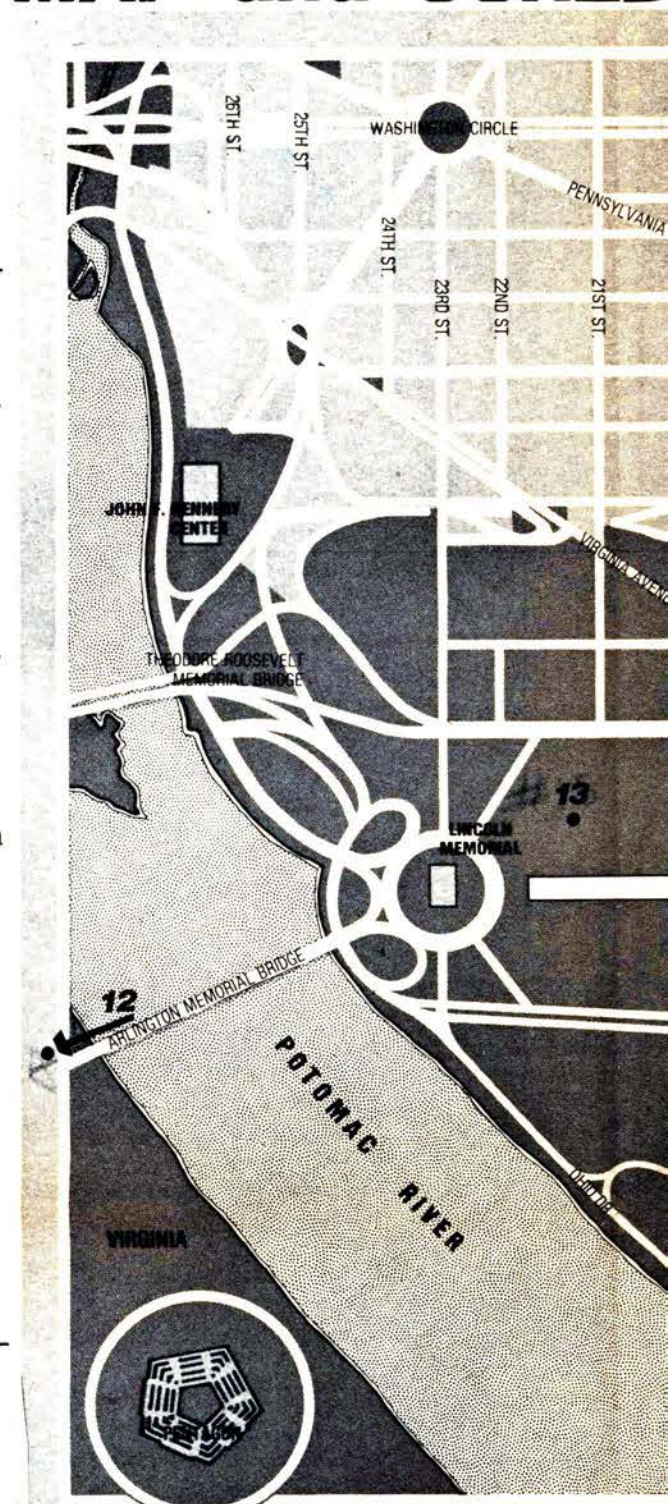
### Endorsers (Partial List)

Organized by Vietnam Veterans Against the War;

Endorsers: 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, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers; Tom Loftus, Majority Leader of the Wisconsin State Assembly; Center for Creative Non-Violence of Washington, DC; Washington Peace Center; Bob Chenowith, ex-Vietnam POW; Ann Pine, Gold Star Mother; United Professionals of Wisconsin; Idaho Vietnam Veterans Association; Vietnam Veterans Corps of Virginia; O'Hare Local, American Postal Workers Union; Local 423, District 48, AFSCME; Local 241, Amalgamated

Transit Union of Chicago; Operation PUSH; Agent Orange Victims of New Jersey; Veterans of the Vietnam War, Salt Lake City; Swords into Plowshares; Bill Davis, Chairman, Illinois Vietnam Veterans Civic Council; Veterans for Peace; Incarcerated Veterans Project of San Francisco; District Council 48, AFSCME; Local 701, National Alliance of Federal and Postal Employees; Wisconsin Association of Concerned Veterans Organizations; U.S. Student Association; Clergy and Laity Concerned, Washington, DC; Vets House, Madison, WI; Coalition Against Registration and the Draft; National Office, Incarcerated Veterans Project, Milwaukee; Grass Roots Organizing Workshop, Columbia, SC; Prince George County, MD Gray Panthers; Gray Panthers of Montgomery County, MD; Vietnam Era Veterans Association, Jacksonville, FL; Veterans of Southeastern Massachusetts University; Incarcerated Vietnam Veterans, Marion, OH; Veterans Leadership Conference

## MAP and SCHED



### Number Key:

- #1 RFK Stadium parking lot
- #2 subway stop closest to The Mall
- #3 VVAW staging area
- #4 White House

### Wednesday, May 12, 1982:

- 5:30AM - 10:30PM parking at RFK Stadium to The Mall, (#2) area, (#3), for registration and breakfast, (#3)
- 8:00AM - 9:00AM opening press conference
- 10:00AM (approx) registration and Five O'Clock Follies
- Continuing all day dinner, (#3)
- 5:00PM greetings from Veterans
- 6:00 PM silent, candlelight
- 7:00PM begin to transport at registration),
- dusk
- 11:00PM

### Thursday, May 13, 1982:

- 7:00AM reveille and police
- 8:00 AM breakfast, (#3)
- 9:00 AM march to the site
- 9:45AM continue march to rally at Capital
- 1:00PM - 2:00PM lobbying, (#8 & #9)
- all afternoon Five O'Clock Follies
- 5:00PM dinner, (#3)
- 6:00PM workshops, (#3)
- 7:00PM - 11:00PM begin transport to "Razor", (#14)
- 11:00PM

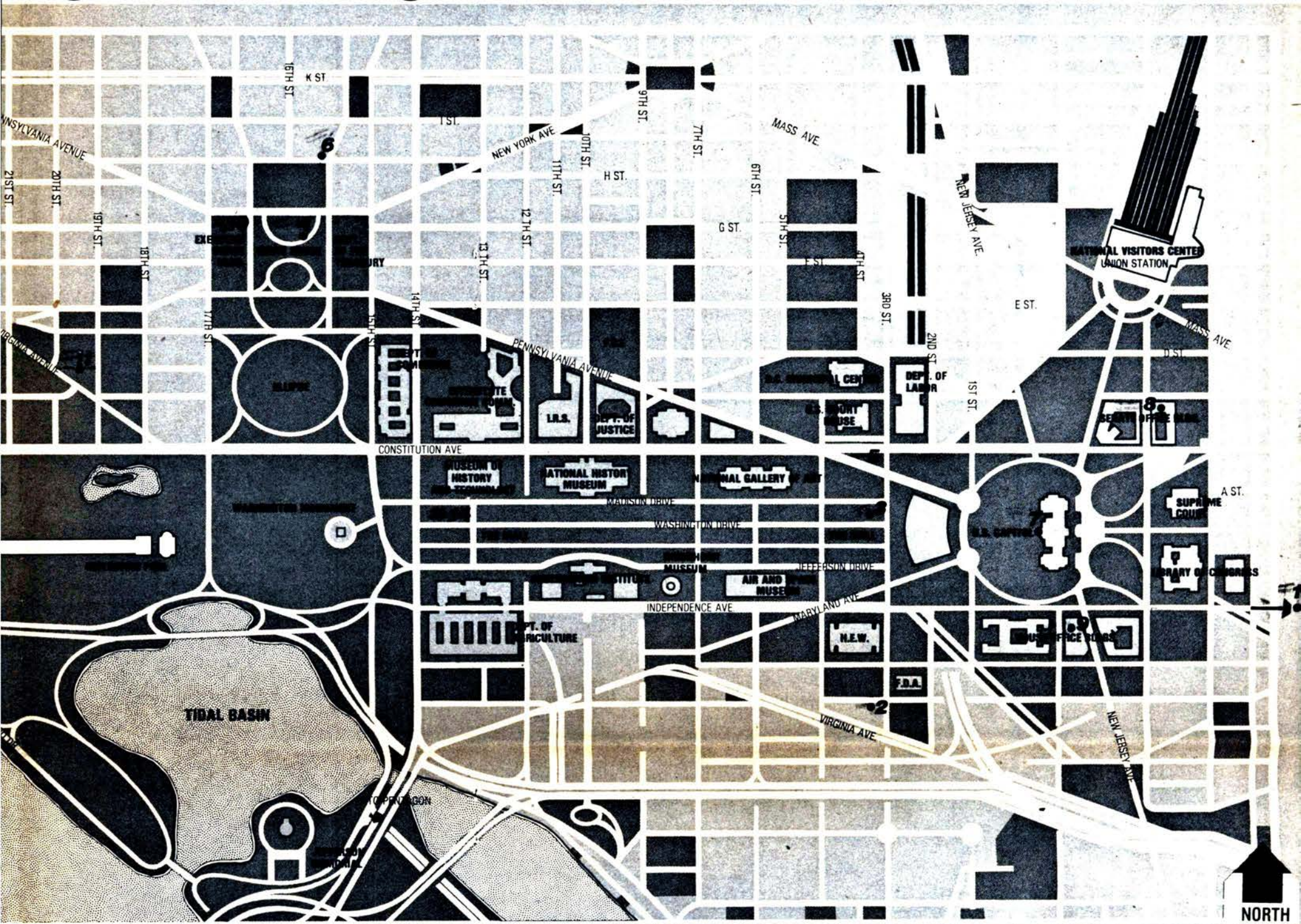
## Veterans' Counterattack

**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!**





# SCHEDULE of EVENTS



#5	Bonus Army memorial site	#10	Office of Management and Budget
#6	VA Central Office	#11	Department of the Interior
#7	Capital steps	#12	Arlington National Cemetery
#8	Senate offices	#13	Vietnam Veterans Memorial site
#9	Congressional offices	#14	Proposed site of "Firebase Razor", (permit applied for)



RFK Stadium, (#1), and a short subway ride  
(#2), then a short walk to the staging  
for registration  
(#3)  
press conference, (#3)  
and staging area set-up (#3)  
Five O'Clock Follies (press briefing), (#3)  
from VVAW, introduction of co-ordinators, (#3)  
delight march to the White House, (#4)  
transport people to housing sites (to be determined  
ion), or to "Firebase Razor", (#14)

police call  
(#3)  
the site of the memorial to the Bonus Army, (#5)  
march to VA Central Office, (#6)  
Capital steps, (#7)  
8 & #9)  
Five O'Clock Follies, (#3)  
(#3)  
transport to housing sites, or move to "Firebase  
Razor", (#14)

## Friday, May 14, 1982:

7:00AM  
8:00AM  
9:00AM  
10:00 - 11:00AM  
11:00AM - Noon  
1:00PM - 2:00PM  
all afternoon  
5:00PM  
6:00PM  
7:00PM  
8:00PM

11:00PM

## Saturday, May 15, 1982:

7:00AM  
8:00AM  
10:00AM  
12:30PM  
1:30PM - 4:00PM  
6:00PM  
4:00PM - 10:30PM

reveille and police call  
breakfast, (#3)  
marshall for march to OMB and Dep't. of Interior, (#3)  
picket line at OMB, (#10)  
picket line at Dep't. of the Interior, (#11)  
rally at the Capital Steps, (#7)  
lobbying, (#8 & #9)  
Five O'Clock Follies, (#3)  
dinner, (#3)  
meeting to establish a national communications net, (#3)  
social event (not open to the public), featuring Country  
Joe MacDonald and other musicians from the veteran  
community, (#3)  
begin transport to housing sites, or "Firebase Razor", (#14)

reveille and police call  
breakfast, (#3)  
move to subway, (#2) and go to Arlington National Cemetery  
(#12)  
rally at the site of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, (#13)  
final rally at the Capital steps, (#7)  
permit for staging area ends  
pick up vehicles at RFK Stadium parking, (#1)



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 war-like 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  
P.O. Box 25592, Chicago, IL 60625

**NATIONAL  
COORDINATORS**

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(312) 463-2127

**Barry Romo**  
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**THE VETERAN**  
Vietnam Veterans Against the War

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# Membership Form

P.O. Box 25592 Chicago, IL 60625

DATE.....

NAME..... TELEPHONE.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY..... STATE..... ZIP.....

DATES OF SERVICE..... BRANCH..... UNIT.....

OVERSEAS DUTY..... DATES.....

MILITARY OCCUPATION..... RANK.....

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

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

Signature

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# Spanish for Vietnam ELECTIONS & EL SALVADOR

To hear the network news teams explain the March 28th elections, the American people should now believe that El Salvador has been turned into a democracy and that there was a clear rebuff to the guerilla movement. But there is more going on than meets the tube.

Elections to represent some common and real expression of a peoples' will must be free: free of taxes, free of choice and free of the threat of violence if you vote for the loser. El Salvador can only claim no poll tax. Every part was not allowed on the ballot: the Revolutionary Action Party was ruled off the ballot on a technicality. For any of the guerilla groups or their fronts to run in the election, they first had to disarm and then present a list of backers with addresses to the government. This would have been simple and straight-out suicide.

Right-wing parties did not have to disarm. The leader of the far-right ARENA Party, d'Aubuisson, was described by the U.S. Ambassador (before the elections) as the "Idi Amin of Central America." He also

at the head of the "Death Squads" responsible, among other atrocities, for the assassination of Archbishop Romero. If the Death Squads didn't swoop down on the "disarmed" guerillas, then the government, (responsible, along with the far-right, for 90% of the killings in El Salvador, according to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops) certainly would have. In either case the election requirements the guerillas would have had to meet effectively ruled them out of the elections.

A big deal was made of the election turnout and it seems clear that a large number of Salvadorians did vote. Salvadorians, however, are required to carry ID cards; these cards were stamped when you voted, in order to insure that people did not vote more than once, according to the U.S. State Department. According to people on the spot, however, an unstamped ID card was enough to admit to being a friend of the guerillas. Further, government employees were not paid prior to the election with the understanding that, in order to pick

up the paycheck, a stamped ID card would be required. The same process was used by the banks and a number of other businesses to "insure" a good turnout.

Apparently the government was not content to rest with coercing as many votes as possible. According to a communique on the elections put out by the major parties representing the guerillas (the FDR and FMLN) after 24 hours the government reported 376 thousand valid votes; 12 hours later the figure had jumped to 747 thousand valid ballots. And in the days after the election, the El Salvadorian Ambassador to Washington reported 1 million, 200 thousand votes, even though there were only 800 thousand ballots printed!

And who got the votes? An armed fascist underground is a fairly good incentive to vote for the above-ground ARENA party. After all, if they can kill Catholic Bishops, assassinate American AID personnel, torture missionaries, then keep their guns and run in an election, what is there to prevent their doing in a peasant voter later on?

This is hardly the first election designed to give a credibility to a government. Rhodesia is one of the more recent examples. An election was held there one year before the guerilla movement took power; Bishop Muzorewa, the Black candidate backed by the West and by South Africa won 70% of the vote with a record

number of 2 million votes cast. According to the press at the time, the guerilla movement was clearly repulsed. But when an election was held less than a year later--an election supervised by the U.S. and Great Britain--the guerilla forces won a stunning victory; Muzorewa got a total of 8% of the vote.

And almost any Vietnam vet who was in Vietnam during one of their elections has the vivid memory of government troops herding people into the polling places to make sure that the U.S. backed government got its desired margins of victory. Immediately afterwards the U.S. government, slightly sensitive to the issue since it was the U.S. which had prevented the first Vietnam-wide election in fear that Ho Chi Minh would win, trumpeted the victory as another great step on the road to democracy in South Vietnam.

In El Salvador, the simple fact is that the military and the death squads will not stop murdering their opponents just because of an election. Discontent among the people will not subside as a result of the victory of the far right; if anything, it will increase. And as the U.S. government (which has already begun to backtrack on anything bad it ever said about d'Aubuisson, continues its involvement, the American people will be watching a spectacle right straight along the lines of U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

## Continued from page 3 VIETNAM WAR

saw the enemy fight and had to admire his bravery and tenacity in taking on U.S. tanks and planes and helicopters with grenades and rifles. We supposedly valued human life while the enemy did not; yet we paid \$600 per rubber tree damaged to Michelin and no more than \$120 to the family of a Vietnamese child we had killed by mistake. We fought up hills, winning "victories" with "light casualties" according to the press, but we saw half our friends die so that the company body count could go up (and enhance the career of some officer)--and then we'd give up the hill. The war was not something to be won or lost by the grunt, but 365 days to be survived.

The U.S. tried everything to win. We dropped more than 3 times the total tonnage of bombs dropped by both sides in World

War II. We conducted "Operation Phoenix" when the CIA and Saigon government killed up to 200,000 suspected members of the Viet Cong. We defoliated 10% of the land permanently. We bombed, bribed, shot, killed and burned for more than 10 years at a cost of \$140 billion--and lost!

Nixon did not pull out because the U.S. was winning but because the Vietnamese were. Some generals today are saying we lost the war but never lost a battle--but what did we "win" at Ky Sanh or in the Iron Triangle or in Laos and Cambodia besides having some holes punched in some career officer's promotion card?

The simple fact is that neither the American people nor the American GI's fighting in Vietnam thought that the goals--real or imagined--were worth the lives and the money being squandered. The war was lost on the battlefield in Vietnam and in the hearts and minds of the American people.

During the war VVAW led 10's of thousands of Vietnam vets in demonstrations against that war. No comparable group of Vietnam vets ever rose to challenge VVAW or our goals. In fact when VVAW brought 1500 Vietnam vets to protest Nixon's renomination, the Republican Party could only come up with 6 vets to support the war (and some of these didn't even support Nixon). Vietnam vets knew firsthand about the real war--and opposed it.

Today the Reagan Administration is trying to get us involved again, this time in Central America. Our allies in this new venture are even more corrupt and more brutal than their counterparts in Vietnam like Diem or Thieu or Ky. Vietnam was not a mistake and neither will be Central American except for the GI's who buy the government lies. Vietnam was not a noble cause except for those who fought to Bring Our Brothers Home after they had made the mistake of going. As for foreign aggression, hear the words of General Smedley But-

ler, one-time commandant of the Marine Corps and twice winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor:

"War is conducted for the benefit of the very few at the expense of the masses. Out of war a few people make huge fortunes...How many millionaires ever shoulder a rifle?"

"For a great many years as a soldier, I had the suspicion that war was a racket; not until I retired did I fully realize it."

"Yes, they are getting ready for another war. Why shouldn't they? It pays high dividends. But what does it profit the masses who are killed? (They) were made to regard murder as the order of the day....Then, suddenly, we discharged them and told them to do their own readjusting."

"I was," said Butler of his own role in Central American intervention, "nothing more than a gangster for Wall Street."

--Barry Romo  
VVAW National  
Office



## Recollections

When we ain't there, the VC own it, and we run down it, they kick the hell out of us."

"Yeah, this is some war we got here, huh, Roy?"

"The only one we have, buddy," he said, and we both laughed.

We talked about home for hours, then he said he had to go. The truck was leaving soon back to the Army compound. I walked with him out to the truck.

When we got there he stopped and kinda kicked some sand around with his toe. Looking at me he said, "I wish to God I'd never come here, Bill."

"Yeah, me too, Roy. This war sucks."

He nodded.

"Listen, Roy, I got to go too. Keep you ass covered, OK?"

"Yeah, see you back in the world."

I watched the truck roll out. Roy waved once.

VUNG TAU ARMY AIRFIELD  
VIETNAM, OCTOBER, 1968

I stopped by the mailroom and picked up whatever was there. One item was the regular letter from grandpa. He clipped the local papers for me

--who got married, who died, who won the local football games.

I sorted through the clippings. Becky Harvey got married--too bad. One had a picture of some GI; I unfolded it. "Oh, goddamn no!" Private Roy Jenkins was killed in the service of his country (bullshit) in August, 1968. "On that fucking truck convoy out of Cam Ranh--the next day. Oh, goddamn, no!"

I went back to my locker, cracked a fifth of scotch and proceeded to drink and think.

Roy wasn't the first I knew to die, but there were so many. I was the last person from Doddridge County to see Roy alive. Goddamn it! That means something, doesn't it?

Roy and the other buys bought it and I didn't really know why. I knew there was no good reason for it.

Monk Underwood knew all along, but we wouldn't have listened. He didn't have a way with words, like the rich bastards who promoted and profited from the war.

Bill Davis

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

# Psychological Problems & Vietnam Vets DELAYED STRESS

The concept that Vietnam was a different war than wars in the past and that the problems of Vietnam vets are different than those for other veterans has slowly seeped into the American consciousness. With the media backing off the "madman" syndrome that was so often the picture of the vet in the '70's, a new and more sympathetic image is coming forward--a song like Charlie Daniel's "Still in Saigon" portraying a sympathetic look at the real problems of post-traumatic stress disorder.

As a group within society we veterans know about the problems the war cause for vets--almost from the day we stepped off the plane. VVAW was one of the groups that set up rap groups for what we then called Post-Vietnam Syndrome; we weren't psychologists or anything else other than vets who suffered from the same problems of adjusting to life in the world only a few days after being in the middle of a Southeast Asian jungle. We learned quickly that while we probably couldn't solve the problems, giving vets the chance to talk out the problems with other vets was a big step in the right direction.

Ten years later the VA put out their first circular on how to deal with the same thing, now called post traumatic stress disorder (ptsd). The VA set up an elaborate set of definitions and regulations which added up to the fact that a vet had to prove, through his military records, that he was in a life-threatening situation and that his life, since that time, has been effected by that event.

To date the VA record on ptsd has been questionable at best. When questioned about hard figures on the number of vets who have applied for ptsd disability, VA officials have been evasive. When asked about percentages who have had disabilities approved, the VA is even more unclear. For a program which was given a large amount of publicity, it seems strange that the VA can't even compile figures.

The mystery is easily solved, however. A smokescreen has been manufactured by the VA that makes the question more complex than it actually is.

Post-traumatic stress has been acknowledged by the medical community for years, but the VA is unable to communicate



the symptoms to its own administrators. Like the Agent Orange Registry program, Agent Orange medical problems, or many other modern medical procedures, introduction into the VA bureaucracy in damn near impossible. VA administrators and medical chiefs in many locations simply do not cotton to these new-fangled procedures. Moreover, they resent the pressure put upon them from Vietnam vets groups to implement procedures and programs in areas that they aren't even aware of since they either cannot or will not read the circulars and continuous wave of paper flooding their desks. Many of the "old guard" have never liked Vietnam vets anyhow and wish we would go away. They treat us like dirt and act like we're trying to steal something from them instead of getting the benefits we were guaranteed when we joined up.

When ptsd was introduced as a disability, the battle for vets' was just beginning to develop. It seems a relatively simple procedure has been turned into something highly complex that we are somehow expected to solve ourselves--and we may have to.

The VA does indeed work in mysterious ways. A Chicago vet with a history of flashbacks brought on by stress--and caused by inability to find a job to support himself and his family--is living a new nightmare at the hands of the VA. In and out of VA hospitals, diagnosed for a variety of mental problems,

drugged to the max by a ton of different drugs--this vet finally hoped to reach a resolution of his ptsd disability. After seeing a VA doctor for months--one who correctly diagnosed his problems--he went before the VA board to get his disability. Unfortunately, as part of the official procedure, he had to see another psychiatrist who made the determination that the vet was not affected by ptsd--in fact, this quack hadn't the slightest idea what ptsd was!

At the vet's first hearing he was denied the ptsd disability since the doctor he had been seeing for treatment and counselling for months was not allowed to introduce his records. Unless the necessary pressure by vets groups and politicians can be exerted, the case will probably go down the drain, but even more important is the large number of similar cases being similarly mistreated by the VA bureaucracy.

After years of struggle to obtain this disability and have it recognized, Vietnam vets are now faced with the fight to insure that the VA will live up to its responsibility. The VA finally began this program for ptsd and should now release the figures. Once ptsd was recognized as a service-connected disability the VA must live up to its promises or face the charge that their whole program was nothing more than window-dressing to divert attention from the Agent Orange issue about which they are still doing not a damn thing.



# LETTERS TO VVAW

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

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

Fellow Veterans:

I'm going back to a year ago when the President was shot to draw an analogy about the reasoning power of our President. Reagan stated that he heard and looked in the direction of the shots. He also stated that he felt a terrifying pain, but at first did not realize what had happened to him. Myself and thousands of other Americans, and millions of people around the world had no problem realizing what had happened to us in similar situations. I think we should all ask the question that Arlo Guthrie asks in the song "Presidential Rag." The question is, "If you didn't know about that one, well then what else don't you know."

Coming up in time to the Presidential address to Congress on April 28, 1981. In his address the President said: "Sick societies don't produce men like the two who recently returned from outer space...." Maybe some day he'll also return. He continued, "Sick societies don't produce men like Secret Service agent Tim McCarthy who place his body between mine and the man with the gun simply because he felt that's what his duty called for him to do...." The President spoke for 20 minutes and exited, while our esteemed elected representatives gave him a prolonged, standing ovation.

As I listened to our President, I was sickened, saddened, and scared that our President when speaking about our society, apparently forgot that this same healthy society also produces hundreds of thousands of young men who will, in a given situation, kill any number of other human beings in close combat. He also forgot to mention that this same healthy society actually runs institutions of education to produce people who will fly at supersonic speeds, miles in the sky with the singular purpose of dispensing explosive and fiery death on areas populated with civilians whose only desire is to live off the land they live on.

What makes this madness even worse is that America not only develops these obscenities but exports them.

Our leaders have chosen in El Salvador, the poorest country in the America's, where people die from complications of lack of food, to hand these tools of death and the knowledge to use them to a military regime that has no objections to using this weaponry on unarmed men, women and children.

Every day for months there are articles all through the media about El Salvador, with the statements from our government becoming more militant. As one of the remnants from America's last involvement in someone else's civil war, I consider it to be not only my right but my duty to offer my view of the situation. And here it is.

The government is lying to us about El Salvador. Some of the very same people who brought us the sacrilege known as the Vietnam war are back in our faces with the usual, "Communists in the basement, you're all going to die tomorrow" song and dance. Please think about it!

We have people telling us to be scared of communists who have only faced communists over tea and biscuits. I don't even wanna hear about the arisen military messiah Secretary of State's war record. Excluding COL Herbert and a very few others, a LT COL in Vietnam is a joke to me (and to anyone else who was in Vietnam except for a few other LT COL's and above and their succulents. I never saw them in the field. I know they weren't on my gun team or in my platoon. I'll tell you what I did see!

What I saw was a lot of kids being used as bait so some high-ranking REMF could in the very same day dictate a letter to your parents about what a good soldier you were and now you're dead in the truest, most glorious tradition of defending America's democracy, and here's an AR-COM with "V" to bury with you. And on the very same day, within hours, dictate another letter awarding himself a Silver Star or better for some purely fabricated act of heroism that came to him the night before as you lay bleeding to death in the dioxin-saturated water of some bomb crater...and he was having visions of sugarplums dancing in his head. You'll find very

few officers, particularly senior officers, without Silver Stars or better from the Vietnam war. In the combat arms, the percent with these once sacred and now almost meaningless awards must be 100%. Dig into your memories, you people who were there.

Our President is another fine example of heroism and what it means to bleed for America. He spent World War II as a liaison to the pitched battles of Hollywood, the siege of San Diego and the invasion and scorched-earth policy of Bakersfield. His eldest followed in his father's proud tradition. Michael Reagan is 37 and spent the sixties dropping in and out of colleges and is proud that he won a speedboat race on Lake Tahoe in 1967, a year when many fine Americans died for no reason thousands of miles from their homes. While 9 million of us found our way into uniform, Reagan's sportsman son has not one day of military service in his miserable, candy-coated life!

The people of El Salvador are fighting because they are tired of being dragged out of their homes and shot like vermin for no other reason than asking their government for education, health care and the right to realize the fruits of their labor. The myth that our certifiable leadership puts out is that the people of El Salvador would quietly and happily starve to death if it wasn't for the communist influence of Nicaragua or Cuba or, heaven forbid, "The Soviets," or is it the Chinese--I can never remember whose turn it is. What they want us to believe is that without this infamous communist intervention the Salvadorians would be in perfect understanding and agreement why they must die, uneducated, from inadequate health care and malnutrition, while their military and friends think about dieting and vacations in Las Vegas.

If Cubans and Sandinistas are in El Salvador helping the peasants of El Salvador, it is only to America's shame that it isn't helping the forces standing proud and tall for "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Pat Finnegan  
New York

Gentlemen:

The Gray Panthers of Mont-

gomery County, MD endorses Operation Dewey Canyon IV. The fight of veterans for government recognition of the veterans' legitimate needs, and the financing of necessary programs to undo the damage to them is part of the same fight that older citizens are conducting for their own needs.

Best Wishes,  
Abe Bloom  
Convenor Gray Panthers  
Montgomery Cty

## CHICAGO PEACE MARCH

Nearly 50,000 people marched on April 10th in Chicago behind the banner, End the Arms Race, Save the Human Race.

Marching in the second contingent, a sizeable group of 60 vets and supporters from VVAW, Vets for Peace, the Jearl Wood Defense Committee and the Southeast Welfare Recipients Organization provided a good counterpoint for the first contingent comprised of nearly a thousand children.

The march stretched for a couple of miles from the beginning point on the near North side, down Michigan Avenue to the Federal Plaza in the heart of the Loop area. Organized by the April 10th Coalition the march was timed to coincide with the Easter weekend and historic Easter peace marches past, and with the anniversary of the first splitting of the atom (which eventually developed into the atom bomb) at the University of Chicago.

The organizers had anticipated a march of 10,000 and were amazed at the turn out that came, despite a low temperature and occasional snow showers. Reflecting the national mood favoring a nuclear freeze, the participants ranged from the elderly to the very young, organizations from unions, religious groups, entire church congregations, vets, students and professionals.

The march was just a preview of the June 12th march in New York that is expected to draw over a million participants to coincide with a United Nations Program on Arms Limitations. Organizers predict that the June actions may be the single largest march in the history of the U.S.



# RECOLLECTIONS

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

## 'IT MEANS SOMETHING DOESN'T IT?'

WEST VIRGINIA, SPRING, 1966

Roy Jenkins wasn't a real good friend of mine but in a small West Virginia county like Doddridge, you knew everybody by name and you either got along with them or you didn't. I got along with Roy. He was likeable enough and a damn good guy to have with you in a Saturday-night beer joint brawl.

Doddridge County was poor, really poor; no industry, few jobs except for farm work and the State Road Commission, and a lot of welfare. For young people coming up, there was only one solution--get out. Go to the mills up north or the mines down south or into the military service for a while.

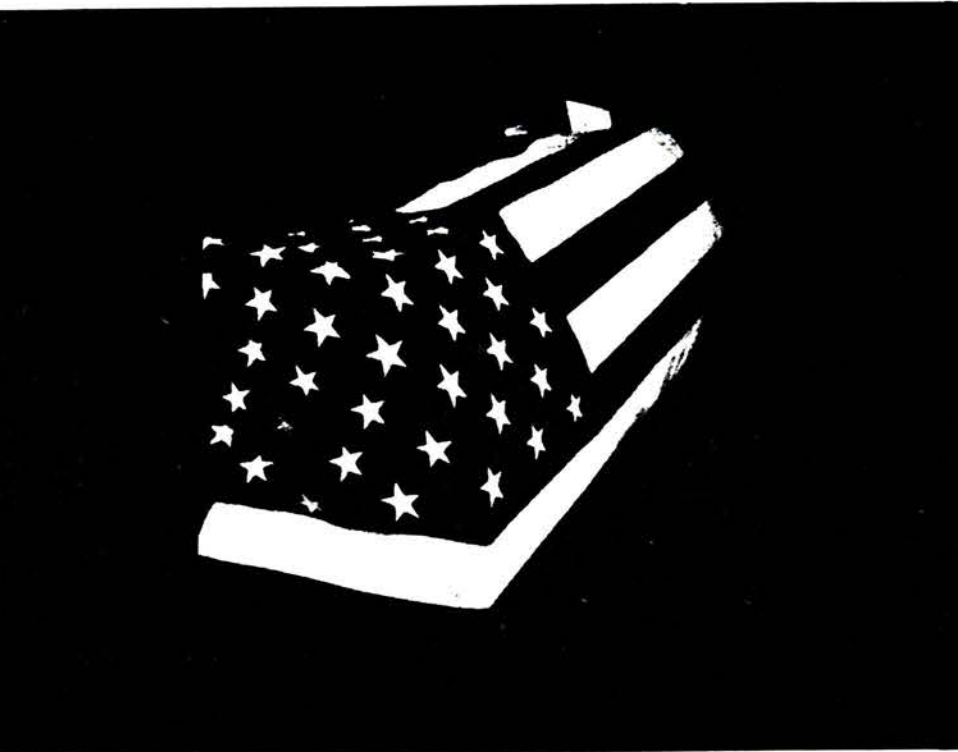
Roy, myself and many of the other guys were going into the service. What with the war in Vietnam and all, the recruiters were thick as flies, buying coffee and beer and hamburgers, making promises and telling jokes--and we were like sheep on the way to the slaughterhouse.

I signed up for the Air Force and passed the tests--I suppose mostly cause they promised job training you could use when you got out. Roy chose the Army--he couldn't pass the test for the Navy or the Air Force and he wanted out of Doddridge as much as the rest of us.

Roy and I had the same date for the Armed Forces test and physical in Fairmont, about 80 miles away. We arranged a ride to Clarksburg with a truckload of men who made the 100-mile round trip to Union Carbide in Clarksburg every day. From there we were going to hitchhike up to Fairmont.

It was a beautiful spring morning in May. The sun hadn't come up yet and the fog still lay in most of the low places and in patches up on the hillsides when I climbed in the back of the pickup truck. Most of the men were trying to catch a few winks so I didn't say much other than hello. We picked up Roy in front of the Red Parrot Inn just outside of Sedalia.

By then it was a little lighter out, and Roy and I could hardly contain our enthusiasm, talking about everything that crossed our minds. Most of the men just eyed us sourly and tried to sleep, except for Monk Under-



wood who sat there staring at us like he didn't know us or something.

After awhile I felt a little uncomfortable, so I turned to Monk and say, "How ya been, Monk?"

"Fair to middlin', Bill" he said; "You boys going in the service, huh?"

"Yeah, today's when we take the final tests," I said. Roy didn't open his mouth, but he didn't talk much, particularly to people he didn't know.

"You young bucks hot to get in the war, I reckon."

Nobody ever put it to me that way before, and I hesitated before I said, "Yeah, I s'pose."

Monk straightened up on the bench, spit some tobacco juice in a can in front of him, leaned forward and rasped, "What the hell you know about war, boy?"

"Not much," I bristled back. "What the hell you know about it, Monk?"

"Damn sure more than you do, boy. I was in Korea."

"Yeah, Monk, but this here's different."

"Bullshit; they all the same. You don't know what you're in for."

"Listen, Monk, I'm going into the Air Force, they don't have to carry guns and the recruiter said I wouldn't have to go overseas."

Monk sat there for a minute, spat into the can again. "Bull-

shit," he grunted, pulled his hat down a little lower and didn't say another word the rest of the ride.

Roy and I jumped out in Clarksburg, grabbed some coffee and rolls, stuck out our thumbs and we were off to Fairmont.

It was a holiday for us: for me, a day out of high school on a spring day, and for Roy a day off from bust-ass work on some farm. A real holiday. I put what Monk had said out of my mind. Vietnam was many thousands of miles away. Roy didn't have the slightest idea of where it was.

CAM RANH BAY, VIETNAM  
AUGUST, 1966

Cam Ranh Bay looked the same from the air as it did on the ground, a stinking sand pit. I cam in country there and was glad to be sent down to Vung Tau, a paradise in comparison.

This trip I was on a scrounge mission to get all the spare parts I could for our junk equipment to fix our junk aircraft. If they turned me loose in the parts room like they usually did, I'd rip off everything that wasn't nailed down to sell or trade to other outfits later on.

My pilfering done, I wandered over to the Air Force EM Club to drink myself into oblivion and see what kind of shit I could get myself into.

The club was a real treat--sand, spilt beer, broken glass, and plenty of fights. The big attraction that night was an overweight, middle-aged woman singing songs about whatever city or state you requested. Whenever she hit on any place there was always a cheer and stomping. Everybody wanted to get home and get out of this goddamn hole.

I got a pitcher of beer and sat down. I drank about half of it without looking up. I leaned back to take in the show--fucking officers get all the good shows--we get this shit.

Looking around for any of the guys I knew in Cam Ranh, I damn near jumped out of my seat. "That guy looks like Roy Jenkins," I thought. A couple of tables away some Army dudes were drinking. "Shit, it is him," I thought again. Jumping up, I practically ran over. "Roy! Roy, you old son of a bitch!"

He jumped up grinning, both of us pumping our hands like crazy.

A million questions went through our minds at once--"How the hell are ya, what outfit you with, where you at in country"--and on and on.

He introduced me to the other guys at the table as his hometown buddy; they nodded and turned their attention back to the show.

We went back to where I was sitting and started talking; Roy looked bad--real bad. Not just the sunburned, red-dust weary look most of the combat troops had, but a nervous, haggard, beat-up look.

"So, how ya been, Roy?"

"No good, Bill; not good."

"How'd ya get here, Roy,"

I asked.

"Ah, we came in a truck convoy from Na Trang. Got the hell kicked out of us. Took a lot of casualties."

"You going back the same way?"

"Yeah, I reckon we are."

"What the hell for?"

"Ah, some bullshit about keeping the highway open."

"Ain't that some shit."

"Yeah, but what the hell.

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