Reagan’s War Budget Proposal

VA SYSTEM THREATENED

PTSD BILL TO AID VETS

On the first day of the 95th Congress, Rep Robert Kastenmeier (D-WI) introduced H.R. 362 renewing his battle to create a presumption of service-connection for Vietnam vets claiming VA disability benefits for post-traumatic stress disorders. The proposed legislation would shift the burden of proof from the veteran to the VA unless the VA could establish that stress was worse than Vietnam service might have caused the vet’s PTSD.

Kastenmeier distinguished himself during the last session of Congress when he introduced H.R. 4711, the first substantive federal legislation dealing with compensation for Vietnam vets suffering from PTSD. Forty members of Congress joined Kastenmeier in co-sponsoring the bill which was a respectable and en-

It is a rare veteran who has not had some bad experience with the VA. Let’s check under the GI Bill, endless red tape in getting almost any of the benefits we promised, disability pensions suddenly cut, or lines that seem to go on forever. In a VA hospital. With all the problems, however, veterans have always known that, in case of need, the VA had the medical facilities to take care of the country’s veterans.

But today, with the rush to preserve military spending at the cost of every other program, the Reagan Administration is preparing to dismantle or, at least, dismember some of the vital features of the VA system. As is often the case, veterans will be sacrificed for something or other which politicians decide is more important.

The attack on the VA is coming from several directions once. The Reagan Administration has already floated out a trial balloon to bounce from VA care any veteran who is receiving treatment for non-service-connected disabilities. At present, under a 1971 law, veterans over the age of 65 will receive free VA hospital care on a bed-available basis. Other veterans with problems not directly service-connected may receive care if it is available—a service-connected problem will be dealt with first—if they say they haven’t the necessary funds to pay for private care.

Only about 30% of present VA patients are being treated for conditions which are service-connected. Removing all other patients would mean the end of the VA system; as one VA official was quoted as saying, “There would be a lot of hospitals going up for sale cheap.” The Reagan Administration has long favored the report of the Grace Commission which advocates dismantling the VA system in favor of private healthcare facilities. That report suggests that the number of patients treated by the VA be cut drastically, and the few remaining patients then be placed

Bill to Fund Guerillas Allied with Kymer Rouge

VIETNAM WAR REPLAY

Congress has decided to celebrate the anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War by re-invoking the U.S. in that war-scared land.

While farms are being stolen by the banks, nutrition programs for children are ended and aid to veterans is cut, Congress is taking up a $5 million aid package for Kampuchea (Cambodian) guerillas opposed to the Vietnamese-backed People’s Republic of Kampuchea.

Civil war has raged since 1978 when Vietnamese forces drove out Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge. Since then, forces allied with Pol Pot, Prince Sihanouk or former Prime Minister Lon Nol have fought the Vietnamese from base areas in Thailand. While humanitarian aid has been scant, military aid, especially to Pol Pot forces has been plentiful.

Cambodia, more than any other country in Indochina, has suffered though one holocaust after another. First came the murderous mass B-52 bombings by the U.S., followed by the murderous excesses of the Pol Pot regime and now a continuous guerilla war kept alive by Chinese and U.S. aid.

Today, this hapless land, where almost half the populace has been destroyed through war and starvation is again being eyed by the U.S. as a pawn in the great power game. Voices in Congress are calling for support to “bleed Vietnam white” through support for the

turn to page 11

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

VOL. 15 No. 1 & 2  SPRING 1985

ADDRESS CORRECTION
REQUESTED
Well, the Inauguration is over and now we've got the Bonzo in for another four years—that is if he doesn't get us all mixed up. So, how did it happen? How did this guy who talks asleep in his own Cabinet meetings get re-elected to run a country? More probably it was the Jonesey syndrome. People want to commit mass suicide.

All the political writers came up with their theories as to how this happened. I think that most of them were talking a shot in the dark trying to figure it out, but I read about one guy who compared the U.S. presidency to the way the British run the government. There they have one person running the government with another as head of state. So, while Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher starts a war with Argentina, Queen Elizabeth attends the opening of the Holly Festival and everyone is happy. Here in this country, the President has both jobs. He has to run the government and be head of state. And that's this guy's theory—just even though Reagan doesn't know how to run the government, he's a pretty good head of state.

Maybe that's true. People voted for Reagan as a guy who had a handsome smile and could look tough and strong even though he couldn't answer simple questions at news conferences. Compare this guy with previous presidents: before him you had the guy who smiled like the cat in Alice in Wonderland and gave speeches where the networks could have sold commercial time between paragraphs. And before that you had the guy who kept bumping into doors and hitting his head on planes. And before that you had the sneaky guy with devious eyes. They didn't look like heads of State, and Mondale seemed to be just like them. Reagan looks different. He could do a good job at the opening of the Hollywood Bowl Festival...

And then there were the plans for the Presidential Inauguration which sounded more like a coronation. The Pentagon had assigned 12,000 personnel to act as sides, color guards, chauffeurs, ushers and to shovel snow, direct traffic and provide security. The plans called for a major production, sort of like the Hollywood awards ceremony or the Academy Awards. Just think: Inauguration Day cost the taxpayers over $2 million and was supposed to involve 12,000 personnel, a guy probably thinking of himself as King Ronald. And he has his own palace guards just in case the masses rise up against him when he has to make policy, and all of this spilled out by a little child we gave up in our TV spectacular for our tax $.

Lots of people are talking about reinstating the draft. They say that it will be necessary by the 1980's in order to keep us ready for the use of the sophisticated equipment that will be used by the military of the future. I understand their needs. Heaven knows, they take 12,000 personnel to conduct one fool's re-up ceremony, then we'll need a lot more personnel to take one to college because you know, of course, how cunning and devious they are.

And we wait for the day when they restore the draft, do not worry. Be comforted in the thought that your Selective Service System is not standing idly by. They are remaining very vigilant for that glorious day when they can again get to work drafting young men to serve and sacrifice to preserve American business interests.

The Selective Service is keeping in practice by keeping a roll of potential draftees who are supposed to register for the draft. They send out cards to young men whose eighteenth birthday is approaching to remind them that they must register. They even sent out a card to Johnny Klomberg in Pueblo, Colorado, to remind him to register.

The only problem is that Johnny Klomberg doesn't even exist. You see, seven years ago two eleven-year-old kids by the names of Greg and Eric Hentzel signed up for a birthday club at the local ice cream parlor which was then part of a chain owned by the Marriott Corporation. These kids got the great idea to invent Johnny Klomberg and sign him up so that when his birthday came around they could use his name to collect extra goodies from the ice cream parlor.

The Hentzel kids used their own address when they registered in the phone name. They forgot it until seven years later when a notice to register for the draft came to Johnny Klomberg at their address. Obviously what happened is that the Marriott Corp. turned over their ice cream parlor birthday lists to the ever-vigilant Selective Service who wanted to make sure no Johnny Klombergs escaped their grasp.

Now some people may be appalled to think that the Selective Service would go to such lengths to invade our privacy to hunt down a 11 year old. Others may think this kind of activity on the part of the Selective Service is laughable. I imagine that when they Klomberg is real, I suspect that he does exist and is a mole—a Soviet spy—planted in this country by the Soviets as an eleven-year-old boy. And I am thankful that Big Brother is out there searching the ice cream parlors, video game rooms and Ronald McDonaldland to find these Russian mole.

* * * * * * *

If I am wrong and Johnny Klomberg is not a Russian mole but really is a non-existent American, I imagine that when they draft him, they'll put him in a non-existent company such as the 160th Task Force of the 901st Airborne out of Fort Campbell, Kentucky. The Knight-Ridder newspapers reported that this secret company lost 16 members in accidents in 1983. I suppose all of these accidents had nothing to do with their mission of flying helicopters around certain Central American countries at night while wearing civilian clothes. According to the reports of the company, the men purchased their own weapons and carried around bride money to be used to buy their equipment. And if they didn't, they were shot down. Sounds like the ideal job for Johnny Klomberg. Since he doesn't exist, Reagan wouldn't be lying when he says our troops are not involved in direct fighting in Nicaragua and El Salvador, and that's important because this country's President must keep the proper image and follow the tradition of George Washington and never lie.

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Another value to having Johnny Klombergs as part of your military personnel is that he would help improve diplomatic relations with Australia. The current problem with Australia is that the Australians are worried about American sailors who are lasting after Australian women.

It seems that this whole thing came up when Australian Foreign Minister Bill Hayden met with U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz. Hayden complained to Schultz about magazines circulating abroad U.S. navy ships. The magazines talk about the availability of U.S. women, which Hayden, the Prime Minister of Australia, thought was inappropriate.

So, Foreign Minister Hay- den registered an official complaint against the magazines. The Australian government responded by registering the presence of American sailors.

**FRAGGIN'**

Sp 5 Willy (Ret.)

---Bill Shunas, aks
3PM Willy

---GRENADA OF THE MONTH---
Fired for Helping Agent Orange Victims

MAUDE DEVICTOR

In the process of trying to help Owens' widow, Maude called and wrote to any and everyone she could think of to gather information about chemicals used in Southeast Asia.

The Air Force finally admitted the use of chemical defoliants in Vietnam. She had the proof and Mrs. Owens ended up getting survivor's benefits as a result of the death of her husband.

Maude did not give up with one victory but continued to talk to Vietnam vets, compile information and challenge the VA position that there was no real proof of a connection between Agent Orange and life-threatening health problems.

In early 1978, CBS-TV aired the documentary "Agent Orange: Vietnam's Deadly Fog," a program which later won an Emmy. The program showed the link between Agent Orange and cancer, birth defects and a host of other health problems. Maude helped to provide the information on which the program was based.

Rather than commend Maude for her diligence in helping Vietnam vets, the VA went after her. She was transferred from one position to another. "I've had many battles about Agent Orange inside the VA hierarchy. It's changed my life completely. Just to show you--the fellows who are dying call me--but the VA suggested I get an unlisted number so I wouldn't be bothered with those numerous calls," Maude said in an interview with THE VETERAN at that time. VA harassment continued, and included a reduction in her grade by VA management.

Maude had to file grievances with the union, the VA's protection system, and the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity to protect her job.

In September of 1983 the VA finally moved, firing her for (among other things) being AWOL from her assignment. This is the reward for a VA worker with 20 years of service, and a conscience. Maude has continued to fight for her job through union arbitration. VVAW has continued to fight by her side, holding picket lines at the VA to publicize her case.

Vietnam veterans owe Maude! She was there first before many of us had even heard of Agent Orange. She put her job and career on the line, refusing to be a paper-shuffling VA bureaucrat.

A lot of veteran groups and individuals are running around claiming to have started the ball rolling about Agent Orange, but Maude is the one, and Vietnam vets must now support her.

VVAW will be holding picket lines and demonstrations at the Chicago VA offices in the future for Maude, and we hope that others will be there too.

An Apology

WHY WE ARE LATE

This issue of THE VETERAN is late--very late. We apologize, particularly to those of you who keep close track of when the paper comes out. We appreciate hearing from many of you, even though you were complaining, and rightly so. As you can see from the contents of this paper, the time since the last issue was filled with activities by and of interest to Vietnam vets and our other readers. We believe in both the importance of these activities and of THE VETERAN's reporting of them.

Here's what happened.

VVAW has no paid staff or officers; we all have full-time jobs, not particularly connected to veterans' affairs; we have families and other interests in addition to VVAW. And we sometimes wear out.

In the past series of events outside our VVAW work--deaths, births, changes in address, other activities which have made it difficult or impossible to get out a newspaper. We doubt that such a collection of events will happen again: we plan to come out on a better schedule in the future because we believe what the paper says and reports is important.

For those of you who have missed an issue, we will extend your subscription. For those of you who have asked about the paper, thanks for your interest. A lot of your letters have yet gotten answered either.

Finally, there is a way you can help avoid this kind of problem in the future. We have used this space as an essay to help keep the paper and the organization alive; we still welcome contributions (tax deductible), but we also need contributions of articles. "Recollections" always needs your remembrances of Vietnam or other experiences. And all the time there are local events or activities which would be of interest to the readers of THE VETERAN. Please write them for us. In this issue, the book review by Rick Tingling-Clemmons, and the article about the Westmoreland trial by Danny Friedman are contributions from readers of THE VETERAN. Please think about what you write for us and send it in--we'll use it if we can, perhaps with a little editing. And we'll put your name on it.

So, we're sorry we're so late. We'll do better in the future. And please help.

--The VVAW National Office

With exceptional candor, compassion and a deep-felt concern for and sense of history, Terry visited 112 publishers and spent over a decade trying to spark interest in those who either disagreed with his manuscript or who honestly felt that enough had been said about Vietnam. Finally he sold 3,000 copies to Random House who held him to Droll McDonald--and at long last, *Bloods* was produced. Nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, acclaimed by a long list of distinguished persons, *Bloods* captures the waste, horror, corruption, futility and heroism of the Vietnam War more graphically than anything else I have read.

"The Bloods were there and they make excellent reporters," said one reviewer. Terry's book says it all. An anthem of eyewitness accounts of 20 Black Vietnam veterans, the book shows perspectives that cross the gamut of viewpoints within American society. During the peak of the civil rights movement, these men were in the paradoxical situation of defending the valor of a nation not willing to absorb them into its mainstream. As a Vietnam veteran I was struck by the beauty of Terry's unique exploration into some of the psychological torture to which these veterans were exposed upon their arrival home after the war. "I used to think that I wasn't affected by Vietnam. But I been livin' with Vietnam ever since I left. You just can't get rid of it. It's like that painting of what Dali did of melting clocks. It's a persistent memory," said FJC Reginald "Malik" Edwards in *Bloods*.

*Bloods* also covers the thoughts, feelings and actions of members of a group whose rate of attrition in Vietnam ranged from 23% to 14% (although only 11% of the population); who were disproportionately unemployed at home; who faced racism and Confederate flags often supported and sanctioned by the military and/or its officers; while knowing that they were fighting, dying and being maimed 15,000 miles from home to (in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King) "guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they have not found in Southwest Georgia and East Harlem." The need for such a book as *Bloods* has its basis in a system which has historically denied the tremendous contribution made by Blacks, both in building this nation and in defending it. In a recent television interview, Terry responded to the contention that *Bloods* might have been superfluous, that books about Vietnam were "old hat." Terry countered, "The story of Vietnam has not fully been told... when you look at today's atmosphere, with its emphasis on military readiness, when you look at the disproportionate numbers of blacks dying in Lebanon, the US aggressive posture in Central America, in Nicaragua...you know that the story has not been told, the lessons not learned. Blacks not only died uniquely, but were decorated—and came home." We came home all right—but disproportionate unemployment, incorporation, harassment, drug addiction and benign neglect.

However one feels about *Bloods* of Vietnam, it is certainly important reading. For it provides an excellent forum to talk about a period in history that laid bare the problems inherent in interfering in the internal affairs of other nations, a situation that is not only illegal and unethical, but serves to confuse us, drawing our attention from problems that exist unresolved here in the good old USA. The apparent contradiction of the centuries of oppression faced in this country by Blacks and their fierce loyalty and patriotism—proven in every war this country has ever participated in—must also be addressed and questioned. In explaining why he wrote *Bloods,* Terry recounted just one more story of tragic human waste: "Did you know that the youngest American to die in Vietnam was a 16-year-old Black kid from Bedford-Stuyvesant? His family was very poor and he lied about his age and joined the Marines when he was only 15 so that he could help out his family—and he lasted six weeks in Vietnam before he got wasted.

He's one of the reasons I came to write *Bloods.*"

My own personal assessment was expressed quite well by Black abolitionist Thomas Van Rensselaer in 1841, who wrote: "Let it be understood from one end of the country to another that we will never again take up arms in defense of this country unless all of the instigations are thrown open to us on equal terms. Because, for me, the true struggle for justice, for equality, for democracy—like charity—begins at home. You can start by buying and reading *Bloods.* From one Blood to another, thank you, Wallace Terry.

—Rick Tingling-Clemmons

**NY/NJ VAW/Marine Corps**

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**N.Y. Tribute Honors GI Resister ALFRED GRIFFIN**

On Sunday, October 27th, a reception was held in honor of Cpl Alfred A. Griffin for his heroic act of courage in refusing to participate in the invasion of Grenada and the occupation of Lebanon. At the time of the ceremony, Cpl Griffin had been recently released from the Camp Lejeune brig after four months of confinement.

It was a moving ceremony that was both inspiring and a source of pride. Solidarity was expressed by members of the labor movement, veteran's movement and by various politicians. Cpl Griffin was presented with various tokens for his courageous stand. The veteran's contingent presented Cpl Griffin with a medal for heroism. Telegrams were read from all over the country. VAW, New York/New Jersey was proud to be a part of the ceremony to honor this brave marine.

Cpl Griffin is still officially in the Marine Corps but continues to speak out against unjust U.S. military adventures around the world, although he has been warned to remain silent. It was heartwarming to hear this brother speak in support of Third World struggles, and be an example of resistance to young people who also will find themselves facing orders to Central America or similar places around the world.

VAW salutes and supports Cpl Griffin and all who say, "Hell no! We won't go!"

—Clarence Fitch

**NY/NJ VAW**
Continued from Page 1

VA Cuts

Build a Fighting Veterans Movement!

In private nursing homes or hospitals.

The immediate cause for much of the concern about the future of the VA system in the release of a report entitled "Caring for the Older Patient" was that VA care had been circumscribed inside the VA for some time, but has recently escaped to the outside world. It appears that what should have been obvious some years ago: since VA care for the older veteran is more expensive (more older veterans need VA care and also need more of it), and since the age of World War II veterans is well into the sixties (even a vet who was 20 at the end of the war in 1945 will be 60 this year, and many World II troops were considerably older than 20.) By 1990, six of every ten American men over the age of 65 will be veterans since, unlike Vietnam, World War II was fought by a large cross-section of the American population.

Forecasts say that in 15 years there will be a 70% increase in VA staff, 22 new geriatric centers, and a doubling of the VA budget to $18 billion. The Reagan Administration fails by no part of this kind of build-up and, to the contrary, wants to slash away at what VA care still remains.

Faced with a clear situation a few years down the road, with a large population which cannot afford private healthcare and which will increasingly need that some healthcare, the Reagan Administration does what it always does with groups not among the particular Reagan cronies: it says bite the bullet. We will send you to private healthcare facilities where the VA will quit paying the bill after 6 months, then you can rot. Whatever promises made to you years earlier, well, they are gone.

One cost-cutting concept being pushed by some inside the government is what is called "mainstreaming." This idea would provide the veteran with vouchers which could be used in the private sector on used for contract services outside VA. Such a program, vigorously opposed by traditional veterans groups, points directly toward the end of the VA as a medical care system. It would, on the other hand, be a great shot in the arm for private doctors and hospitals who have disregarded the VA with some suspicion.

According to Dr Donald Curtis, one-time medical director of the VA and now medical director for the Paralyzed Veterans of America, he "wouldn't be surprised by consideration given to vouchering for veterans' care. No matter how you look at it, the VA simply can't expect the resources that it's going to take to accommodate the huge numbers of aging Vietnam vets that are just a few years ahead."

For the immediate future the veteran with a non-service connected disability will be the brunt of the attack. More and more we will hear that in this period of great budget deficits, the government cannot afford to treat veterans whose ailments cannot be proved to be directly caused by military service (like Agent Orange exposure?). The government can, of course, afford MX's.

And one more attack: putting up with disability pensions is yet another step the government can afford. "More and more vets need the VA, when cuts in Medicaid and Medicare will make the VA more and more essential. Medical services will be taken apart and handed over to powerful private interests. A major battle awaits us; we must stop cuts wherever they occur in the smallest local program. We have to let our communities know that we are a part of these programs and not just some group. Fight the cuts; make the government and the VA live up to the promises to veterans."

The VA -- Peaceful veterans showdown

Chicago Bureaucrats Cut Program

Freelance Hatchet Job

Public Relations

VA bureaucrats in Chicago have decided to do a little freelance hatchet job on Vietnam veterans. Since the Department's national program of VA cuts, the locals have decided to throw Vietnam vets out of an extremely popular counseling program.

The subcontractors are professional psychiatrists, psychologists and social welfare counselors who treat Vietnam vets with service-connected problems related to post-traumatic, delayed stress. Unlike the local vets centers, the subcontractors gave mostly individual counseling. They also helped vets in their homes counselled on weekends or at night or in the mornings in order to fit into the work schedule of the veteran. They met with wives and with children, tried to hold families together.

Because of their ability to deal with vets on an individual basis, they filled an important gap for those who did not want or could not respond to the group counseling approach of the vets centers, or for those who needed professional help instead of semiprofessional counseling.

The Family Reintegration Consortium had branches on the north, south and west sides of Chicago, (as well as serving the suburbs) thus providing help to as diverse a group of vets as possible. They were paid on the basis of the number of vets they counseled, not for just sitting in an office waiting for vets to call. The number of patients had begun to grow primarily on the basis of word of mouth from vet to vet.

Clearly, they were providing a service needed since they were not allowed to publicize themselves as are other VA programs.

So what do the local VA bureaucrats do? In response to a relatively small national cut by Uncle Ron, they totally cut the program. Without an explanation to the vets involved; without a letter or phone call; without a public evaluation or study of Vietnam vets in the program. Once again, the bureaucrats leave the vets and their families abandoned.

Part of the problem seems to stem from unnecessary competition which some of the Vet Centers feel toward the sub-contractors. Some personnel at the Vet Centers act as if a successful private program is a threat rather than a complement to their own programs. There is a game of body count played concerning how many vets are served. Getting the name of a vet on the Center's serviced list enables them to prove their worth. Unfortunately, there is a big difference between helping a vet with a civil service problem at work and dealing with the problems of delayed stress the numbers do not equal out.

It was getting so bad that when Vietnam vets would go to the Centers to be referred to the subcontractors for individual counseling they would be hijacked and directed into Center programs. Unfortunately for the vets, almost all had dropped out by the second session.

Considering that the Vet Centers use TV and radio ads, are in the phone book and have extensive drop-in centers while the subcontractors are forced to work almost clandestinely one wonders about the type of job being performed by the Centers. We have no idea what such a program are coming from.

And remember the VA bureaucrats in Long Beach, CA a couple of years ago who abused vets to the point that one committed suicide and others camped out on the VA property to protest. The tragedy of ending such a program is that it will only come to the attention of the public after some dismissed veteran committed suicide without help, and makes the kind of headlines for which Vietnam vets have become famous. Only then—after it's too late—will people ask how could such a program have been ended.
An old laborer with the City of Milwaukee once said to me, "A lawyer can steal more money than an armed robber."

"Why's that?" I said.

"He can get more money with a trick than an armed robber can get with a gun."

Well, that's what happens to Vietnam vets and their families. We've ripped off by the "Management Committee," a group of lawyers who took control 3/4's of the way through the Agent Orange suit from Victor Yannaccone, and then sold us down the river.

There is an example of the type of bull shit the lawyers are still telling us. They deny that the children were excluded from the settlement. In fact, in a letter from lawyer Gregory Stayatak, he said, "Judge Weinstein has never held, to my knowledge, that children of veterans will not receive compensation under the fund. Indeed, he already authorized the payment of $75,000 to each of the Dillen to study birth defects."

We don't need studies from a group that refused contact with veterans and their children in Madison and in New Jersey because Agent Orange was too political! As it stands, our children are dying and the lawyers know it.

It is also our understanding that the last day to sign up for the suit was Feb 1, 1985. We fought against the inclusion of any cut-off date. If anyone has any questions, contact the Court Computer Center at Agent Orange Computer Center, P.O.Box 10, Smithtown, NY 11787.

The process of dividing up the settlement proves that the veterans were right when we said it was a rip-off. Over 200,000 veterans or survivors signed up to be members of the class action. The special master, Kenneth Feinburg, announced only about 7,000 veterans would be compensated. A veteran with a long-term disability might get $25,000. A veteran who has died might leave his survivors $5,000.

We will all sleep a lot more soundly at night knowing that the lawyers split up $6 million. Out of that sum, we were told, Steven Scrogg of Chicago gets $6 million. So, after all of this what does the government plan for us? Reagan and Stockman want to cut big on the VA this year.

As far as we can tell Reagan's vision for the VA is health care for service-connected and dying veterans. Agent Orange and radiations are not service-connected except for a few diseases.

So, was our struggle for testing, treatment and compensation for Agent Orange victims a waste of time? We say no because our six-year battle took a lot of time and pain and energy but it had to be done. And there were victories. Like Agent Orange and dioxin are now household words. We have raised the American consciousness about chemical politics and the war in Vietnam.

The chemical companies said we'd never get to court and wouldn't get one thin dime. As it went on, it almost kicked their ass. If we had not been betrayed before the trial they would have been convicted, and America would have been a different country. America and the world will remember Agent Orange, the Love Canal, Times Beach and Bhopal, India.

We also met thousands of veterans and their families around the country. We fought America for too many years, and have been drawn closer because of our experiences.

Tuesday, March 5th is the date of formal acceptance of the plan for the administration of the fund. We will speak against it formally. There has been talk about appeasing the whole settlement.

The battle on testing, treatment and compensation has not been won yet. It is not over. In order to continue to fight for treatment and compensation that we need, we must stop the dismantling of the VA. Get active locally in stopping Rea-

The battle on testing, treatment and compensation has not been won yet. It is not over. In order to continue to fight for treatment and compensation that we need, we must stop the dismantling of the VA. Get active locally in stopping Rea-

### Coffeepots, or the Case of the Complicated Device

Looking back on 1984, a word or two should be said about the Pentagon and their spare parts contractors. While budget cuts for Army, Navy, and Air Force in the New Year Resolution list, the Pentagon and their spare parts contractors are riding high on clouds of green dollars and $3,046 coffee pots. But while most people know about these extravagant purchases, not many people have heard of coffee pot officials defend their products. This month's Reaganesque Award goes to one such official: Ken Blakey, general manager of Grimes Manufacturing in Delray Beach, Florida, for his impassioned defense of his coffee pots. Blakey said of his coffee pots, "It's a very complicated device." He added, "It doesn't have much resemblance to what you can buy at the local store. . . . There are some people who would rather go down to the supermarket and buy these items for an airplane, " he continued, "but I wouldn't particularly want to be on that airplane."

Send Mr. Blakey to any supermercet to buy a coffee pot and he's apt to come back with a washing machine. But Mr. Blakey's shining moment came when he said, "It's not a hot beverage unit" and had to undergo extensive tests to meet rigid standards for durability without being affected by vibration, shock, crashes, temperature, altitude and electromagnetic interference.

These problems are awesome, I'm sure. Electromagne-tic interference has ruined more than one cup of coffee. And after a plane crash, the first thing I would see myself doing is sitting amid the debris sipping that hot cup of freshly brewed coffee wondering why this particular plane wasn't as durable as this magnificent crash-proof hot beverage unit.

Congratulations, Mr. Blakey. This month's Reaganesque Award goes to you and will be presented to you by Mrs. Olsen.

--Ed Damato
New York VAWAV P.O.Box 25592
Chicago IL 60625

Applications for "Agent Orange Dossier" has just come off the presses in Milwaukee. A collection of material which is not brought together anywhere else, the "Dossier" provides a wealth of information which both answers many questions about Agent Orange and will give the reader a lot more questions to think about. The "Dossier" costs $4; send for your copy from Milwaukee VAWAV (address above) or the VAWAV National Office, P.O.Box 25592, Chicago, IL 60625; rates for 3 or more copies can be discussed.
The Westmoreland Case
THE GENERAL & THE VETERAN

My wife called up to me last Sunday afternoon: "Puppy, I heard on TV—it's about the Westmoreland trial." I was astounded by what I saw and heard. General William Westmoreland had withdrawn his libel suit against CBS and declared victory. He had not received one penny of the $120 million he had sued for, nor had he gotten a retraction or an apology, but he declared victory. Amazing! Then it struck me: Combat had ended just like the Vietnam War. Dan Bui was flying the helicopter with Westy hanging from the skid screaming, "We won!" I had a little more of a stake in this than the average Vietnam vet. I had been the only member of a listed man to testify in the eighteen weeks that the trial lasted, up until Westy's self-proclaimed victory just three days before the case was to go to the jury.

It was at a Brooklyn Chamber meeting of Vietnam Veterans of America last summer that I first heard that CBS attorneys were looking to talk to Vietnam vets who were in country before and during Tet. I thought, what the heck—there were only about 5000 of us: I'd better give them a call. Besides, I didn't want them talking to Saigon Cowboys.

I spoke to one of CBS's lawyers, Randy Mastorow, who asked me some questions about my experiences in Vietnam and we agreed to meet for lunch (his treat, of course). It had to be Westmoreland's statement that I had read in the newspaper, about the reason why he eliminated the Self-Defense and Secret Self-Defense Forces from the order of battle because they were just old men, women and children and that they constituted no military threat. I was inflamed. It was an insult to myself and everyone else who pounded the paddies and jungles of Vietnam. It was especially insulting to my brothers whose names were freshly etched into a wall of black stone less than two years ago. It was the mines, booby traps and sniper fire from these forces that accounted for more than 59% of our casualties with 34th Inf., 17th Armored Cavalry, 199th Light Infantry and with many other units according to just about every other Vietnam vet I spoke to.

This trial was becoming inundated with statistics and semantics. Someone had to tell the story of what it was like to be there. If this was to be the only accounting of the war that changed so many of our lives, then the ground soldier had to be heard from. Circumstances dictated that it was to be me.

I hope I did a good job, guys, it was for all of you.

As stated, Westmoreland's lawyer tried to stop me from testifying. He argued before the judge (away from the jury):

"I just think to have a witness just talk at some length as to the cause of his injuries and that you were injured by mines and booby traps in Vietnam and essentially irrelevant and distorts the war, much less than the case.

The judge ruled:

"...It has been a sub-

be hardened by centuries of war. These people had been fighting for longer than most of us have been alive.

After my testimony, Westmoreland came up to me outside the courtroom. He said hello, shook my hand, introduced my wife to me and put his hand on my shoulder.

"Now that you're finished in there we can just talk as veterans."

I thought that was very democratic of him. Not too long ago I couldn't even shit how many of my brothers were on that wall that he was so proud of because of his turning his back on us while playing his numbers game. It wouldn't have done any good to tell him that. He was in his own world just traveling around the country shaking hands with Vietnam veterans. Maybe he was trying to sell some books.

In the end, Westmoreland won, again. We can rest easy, my fellow vets, for now we know me for the first time it wasn't us who lost that war. The deck was stacked against us from the get and our leaders were too busy playing word games to see what was really going on.

FS:

If someone would have told me way back when that would be hugging a CIA man at a victory party for a corporate giant at "Regenes," I'd have thought him crazy. If war and politics make strange bedfellows, then truth makes even stranger ones. And if in war truth is the first casualty, then in peace it must be a first resurrection.

I thank Sam Adams and Gaines Hawkins for their courage and their truth.

-- Danny Friedman
WWV New York

Info Wanted

A research study is being conducted at Cleveland State University for women who served in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War in any capacity (as officers, nurses, administrators, civilians, etc.).

This is an extension of research and information that has been collected by others since the early 1980s. By means of a questionnaire, researcher Margaret Gigowski wants to learn more about women's experiences in Southeast Asia and how they feel this has influenced their lives today.

This could lead to possible networking for women Vietnam Veterans and other women who served in Southeast Asia.

In order for this study to be representative of the many women who were there during that time, your help is needed. If you would like to participate in this study, or want more information contact Margerat A Gigowski

Dept of Psychology
Stillwell Hall, Cleveland State University
1960 E. 24th St
Cleveland, OH 44115

Ms. Gigowski's research is being conducted under the supervision of John Wilson, author of The Forgotten Warrior Project. All replies will be confidential.
Ten Years Doesn’t Make
THE VIETNAM WAR

In April 1985, Vietnam is ten years ago. Ten years since the last American troops and diplomats left the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. For those who were part of the war 10 years may have dimmed the memories, but in few cases has the experience been forgotten. There are, however, lessons left to learn, and 10 years is plenty of time to have learned at least some of them.

Vietnam was an ordeal for a generation of Americans who were caught up in it as well as those who stayed at home. Yet administrations since 1975 have tried to par-ticularize the war. They have forgotten the history of getting involved again somewhere else. Vietnam meant 1,200,000 American troops disabled. The deficit that hangs over the American economy can be traced to the Vietnam War. So, what was Vietnam? A mistake? A “noble cause”? Foreign aggression? A case of U.S. troops with their hands tied by politicians? The debates have not ended after 10 years. U.S. involvement in Vietnam began during World War II. The OSS (the forerunner of the CIA) sent agents to make contact with anti-Japanese guerrillas in Southeast Asia. Among a number of different Vietnamese nationalistic groups, only the Viet Minh under their leader, Ho Chi Minh, had the national network of underground organizations and guerrillas necessary.

Ho Chi Minh met with the U.S. operative Major Archimedes Patti and they agreed on anti-Japanese actions. The U.S. dropped supplies behind the lines to Ho, and the Viet Minh helped Americans downded 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 Americans to honor their commitment to independence.

The U.S. government, meanwhile, was trying to improve relations with France, and the French price was the return of former colonies. U.S. relations with Vietnam turned sour. President Truman refused to allow the French to retake their former territories. By 1950, Vietnamese General Giap launched a general offensive against the French which, though premature, still resulted in 6000 per of a million men. It turned out to be mostly Vietnamese who had fought for the French and were not from popular. In 1956 the U.S. refused to go along with promised elections because, in the words of President Eisenhower, “Ho Chi Minh would win 90% of the vote in a free election.” U.S. involvement grew as did U.S. money and manpower. American troops rose to 500 under Eisenhower, 15,000 under Kennedy.

Diem was in trouble despite American support; former Viet Minh helped to support a number of groups opposing Diem and the U.S. Buddhist unrest rose in the cities; in the countryside Diem cronies were killed. In its paranoid view of the situation, the U.S. government could not understand people who were nationalists or Buddhists or 3rd force supporters who were neither Communists nor were for Diem and the tutes, cowards and gangsters, masquerading as a government and a military.

The situation was bad enough. But, it was coupled with incredible arrogance on the part of the U.S. government and military leaders. They could not believe that Asians could stand up to the might and technolo-gy. The U.S. threw into the war. The U.S. war plan progressed from one stage to another with little change: we tried strategic hamlets, vacinization, search and destroy, pacification. All of these programs had been tried by the French without success. They didn’t work for the French and they don’t work any better for the Americans.

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 (skipping over 2000 years of history) and that the North was invading the South. All of this did not do much to answer the questions of the 19-year-old Americans fighting the guerrillas in South Vietnam. Somehow, in order to save Viet- nam we had to destroy it. We
Take It Any More Glorious

WAR AS HISTORY

but what we saw was that half our friends were killed to enhance the career of a lifetime military officer who wanted a high body count. And then we would leave the hill, only to return a week or month later to fight for it all again. The war was not something to be won or lost, not by the gun or the ground; it was 365 days to be survived.

The U.S. tried everything to win the war. We dropped more than three times the total tonnage of bombs dropped by both sides during World War II. We conducted "Operation Phoenix" during which the CIA and Saigon government killed up to 200,000 suspected Viet Cong. We defoliated 10% of the land, much of it permanently. We bombed, shot, killed, and burned for more than 10 years at a cost of $140 billion (with more still to come). And we still lost.

The U.S. did not pull out of Vietnam because we were winning, but because the Vietnamese were. Some generals today are saying that we lost the war but never lost a battle--but what the hell did we "win" at Khe Sanh or in the Iron Triangle or in Laos or Cambodia besides having some officer's career card punched in the right places?

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

During the war VNAW led tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans demonstrating against that war. No comparable group of Vietnam vets ever rose to challenge VNAW or our goals. In fact when VNAW brought 1500 vets to protest Nixon's renomination the Republican Party could only come up with 6 vets to support the war and not even all these supported Nixon). Vietnam vets knew firsthand about the real war--and opposed it.

Today the Reagan Administration seems determined to see us involved again. In a place like El Salvador U.S. allies are at least as corrupt as Diem or Thieu in South Vietnam. Vietnam was not just a mistake; neither will be a U.S. venture in some other part of the globe except for the GI's who buy the government's 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. Foreign aggression?

Each time the U.S. government condemns the USSR in Afghanistan or the Vietnamese in Cambodia it lists the actions taken by the U.S. government during the Vietnam War. The Vietnam War was simply foreign aggression which the U.S. government could not win.

The war was never in the interests of the vast majority of those who fought it. That war was in the interest of the majority of the Vietnamese who fought against us, The Freedom and Independence for which they fought are still worthy goals today.

As GI's in Vietnam we often the stark realities of thetry and could compare them to the "truths" the American public were hearing. We saw Saigon generals stuffing pockets while neither they nor their armies would fight. We hate in the eyes of the villagers who never welcomed us "liberators" with bouquets and aprons. The only Vietnamese seemed to want us there was our local guide in charge of the rubber and rice, and the rest of us. We supposedly did human life while the came not. Yet, we paid $600 each rubber tree we blew up the owners of the Michelin plantation a top price of in compensation to the of a child killed during a U.S. bombing.

We fought up hills, winning the press called "victories.\n
The sheet of nature turned violet above
After the rain, gold transition
In the vision of the eye
The universe now off the muddy clothes
Her thousand miles
The landscape appears not
Like a beautiful brocade

Light breaks
She is flowers
High in the trees
Amidst the sparkling leaves
All the world singing at once
People and animals rise up reeds
What should be seen next?

After morning, after joy.

DIRK WELTMAN
by 10 o'clover
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 is a national veterans organization that was founded in 1971 by veterans who were opposed to the Vietnam War. The organization's primary goals are to educate the public about the war, to organize local chapters, and to support veterans who are opposed to the war.

1. The name of the organization shall be Vietnam Veterans Against the War.
2. Membership in the organization is open to all veterans (regardless of discharge status) and to non-veterans interested in joining together to build a Vietnam War movement. While VVAW is made up primarily of Vietnam veterans and their families, the organization also welcomes veterans from other wars and non-veterans.

3. Membership requirements include filling out a membership form and paying the $5 initiation fee and $1 monthly dues to the national office. Other requirements, not in conflict with national requirements, may be added by local chapters.

4. Local VVAW chapters will decide on their own chapter structure, by-laws and dues. Chapters will, to the best of their ability, work on the national programs of VVAW plus whatever local campaigns they decide on which are not in opposition to national programs.

5. National meetings of the organization, open to all members, will be held at least once yearly. A National Steering Committee, made up of the National Officers, the regional officers, & an elected representative of each chapter, shall meet as necessary. Such meetings may consist of phone calls to the chapter representatives if necessary.

6. National officers are elected at national meetings for a period of one year. They are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the organization, and they speak on behalf of the national organization, and for the publication and content of THE VETERAN and "The Guardian."

7. Regional coordinators, as needed, will be selected at national meetings to serve one year terms: regional coordinators will facilitate and coordinate regional activities, and the building of local chapters. They will provide input from chapters into the national office.

8. Policies, programs and positions of VVAW nationally will be, as much as possible, decided at national meetings. If that is not possible, such decisions will be made by the National Steering Committee or, in emergency, by the National Office.

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When forming a local organization, chapters decide on local programs and budgets under the general guidelines of the national program. Chapters elect their 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.

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LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS

VFW Member Helps Refugees... VICTORY IN SANCTUARY TRIAL

Jack Elder and Stacey Merkt

Jack Elder, Director of Casa Romero (a halfway house for Central American refugees), Vietnam vet, VFW member, and leader of the sanctuary movement was sentenced to 5 months in a halfway house for aiding illegal immigrants. Elder had refused a judge's offer of probation if he would not speak on behalf of the sanctuary movement and if he would move out of Casa Romero. Elder's refusal to accept this sentence after having been found guilty, surprised the court which immediately imposed a one year prison sentence. After a day's consideration, however, the judge decided on the halfway house sentence, suggesting that the government did not wish to provide the sanctuary movement with another martyr.

With his family Elder has lived and worked in the Casa Oscar Romero shelter for a number of years; the shelter has provided refuge, particularly for Salvadoreans fleeing political persecution in El Salvador. As Elder put it in an earlier statement, "As one of the growing number of Americans who are repulsed by the war we are waging in El Salvador, I am proud to be able to live my life in a way that allows my own alleged illegal actions to illuminate our nation's shameful policies."

An earlier trial had upheld the position of Elder and other members of the sanctuary community, that it was the U.S. government that was acting illegally by trying to send back refugees from El Salvador, and that U.S. law forbade the government from sending them to death for political reasons back home.

Stacey Merkt, a co-worker at Casa Oscar Romero was sentenced to 173 days in jail.

In San Antonio, Texas, the VFW Chapter declared that its members would not act to give sanctuary to refugees from Central America and provide shelter and transportation when requested.

H.R. 362 is without question one of the most significant pieces of Vietnam veteran legislation introduced to date. VFW members have played a crucial role in helping this bill get as far as it has. VFW members need to increase their efforts if hearing are to be held by the House Veterans Affairs Committee this session. What means that H.R. 362 has to have as many co-sponsors as possible. Listed below are the names of the present co-sponsors. If your representative is not on the list, contact him or her to urge co-sponsorship. Thanks to those who have co-sponsored already are also in order.

Rep. Kastenmeier introduced H.R. 362 for elder. He is among all he can have it enacted because he cares about Vietnam vets. The battle for passage of H.R. 362, however, is really ours as Vietnam vets. It is one battle we cannot afford to lose.

--Marv Freedman VFW Madison

Continued

AID

anti-Vietnamese resistance. But though calling for the blood will not do the bleeding themselves. As with the "earlier" war, Congress will be willing to fight to last drop of someone else's blood.

There is no real chance of the guerrilla forces kicking out the Vietnamese: if they could what decent American would really want a return to Pol Pot? Humanitarian aid is needed. That should be through the UN not through the CIA. Negotiation, not military confrontation is needed, not new U.S. intervention. Americans should let their Congressmen know that they oppose any new U.S. involvement.

NO AID! U.S. OUT OF SOUTHEAST ASIA!

--Barry Romo VFW National Office
With the United States, China, and the Soviet Union deadlocked behind the scenes, peace in Cambodia is a distant prospect at best. But until the situation improves, the lives of hundreds of thousands of Cambodian refugees hang in the balance.

From a sidelines view to the Vietnam War, Cambodia became the focus of international attention from 1976-79, when Khmer Rouge atrocities and reports of impending famine were widely publicized. Then, all too quickly, problems of an overwhelming magnitude disappeared from the spotlight. The news from Afghanistan, Iran, Ethiopia — we were easier to understand politically, easier to resolve in humanitarian terms, and less menacing to the consciences of many Americans.

But though forgotten by many, Cambodia's problems have not ended. The land is still occupied by 180,000 Vietnamese soldiers. As of mid-1984, an estimated 135,000 Cambodians were living in refugee camps on the Cambodian side of the Thai-Cambodian border. And last December, during intense attacks in and around Rithisen, the largest refugee camp in Cambodia, killed at least 63 civilians and wounded 78 others.

Cambodian border camps are typical villages, with schools, hospitals, Buddhist temples and markets. They are internationally recognized as civilian population centers. Nevertheless, the civilian camps are unavoidably connected with the political and military groups in the area. Thus, refugees are free victims of attacks which Thai Foreign Ministry officials describe as "cruel, savage and brutal."

Historically, Cambodia and Vietnam have been uneasy neighbors. The Vietnamese were hailed as liberators when they overthrew Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge—a government responsible for the deaths of at least 2 million Cambodians between 1975 and 1978. They have since become oppressors. The government of Heng Samrin, under whose banner the Vietnamese installed and continue to support with troops, is not recognized by the United Nations. Instead, the UN has regularly called for a Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia, and free Cambodian elections.

The UN recognizes a three-party coalition as the legitimate government of Cambodia. The coalition is made up of the anti-Communist Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF), led by former Prime Minister Son Sann; an anti-Communist group loyal to former chief of state Prince Norodom Sihamouk; and Pol Pot's Communist Khmer Rouge.

The coalition government is supported in varying degrees by the Asian Nations (Asean), by most Western governments, and by the United States. Washington has economic ties with Sihanouk and has repeatedly turned down Son Sann's requests for American aid. As for the KPNLF guerrillas, both Singapore and China are said to supply the KPNLF with arms. And China is one of the few nations standing behind the Khmer Rouge as well as non-Communist members of the coalition government.

Fearing that it will with- draw its support from Pol Pot as long as Vietnamese troops remain in Cambodia, the Vietnamese, who are supported by the Soviet Union, say they will be willing to begin serious peace negotiations only if Pol Pot is repudiated.

Following the December Vietnamese attacks on Rithisen, over 60,000 civilian refugees — perhaps as many as 100,000 — fled to Thailand, where they have been given temporary sanctuary. They will be moved back across the border as soon as the Vietnamese retreat, that does not appear to be soon.

Meanwhile at least 45,000 Cambodian refugees have already been moved in holding camps across the Thai border, some for years. However, in the summer of 1984, the Thai government announced an open invitation for repatriation. In fact, Thailand announced on July 29th that Khao-1-Bang, the largest holding camp, would be changed to a processing center and that refugees there who were not already being repatriated by a third country would be placed in a repatriation program. For many, a return to Cambodia under the Vietnamese would mean death. The Thai's estimated that as many as 25,000 to 30,000 refugees would be left unaccepted by third countries and not in process at the end of 1984.

The consequences of 15 years of warfare have been devastating. Disease, population decline, continuity uncertainty about their future and the ongoing fighting that regularly destroys their crops, homes and families have made life nearly impossible for hundreds of thousands of civilians. Efforts to improve the lives of Cambodian civilians at the Thai-Cambodian border are a major concern of the Cambodian Humanitarian Organization of America (CHOA), a Chicago-based group of concerned Cambodians and Americans.

The aims of CHOA are to improve the quality of life among Cambodians in Southeast Asia, to facilitate the protection of human rights for Cambodians and other oppressed peoples throughout the world, to work with international organizations which provide relief for the Cambodian people, to assist any Cambodian associations or projects in the realization of their goals and the meeting of their needs.

Current CHOA fund-raising projects include the production of a Cambodian language tape for English speakers working here or in Thailand with refugees, and a day-long seminar to introduce Americans to Cambodian history, culture and life. The goal of fund-raising projects is to provide direct relief in the form of food, clothing and medicine to refugees on the border. In addition, involvement with other organizations to facilitate reunification procedures is an ongoing effort. Finally, CHOA seeks to keep events in Cambodia in the public eye, knowing that problems and solutions are likely to be resolved when they are recognized.

CHOA encourages everyone who is willing to remember — or cannot forget — to do as much as possible to relieve the incredible suffering of the Cambodian people. Individuals can write to local newspapers and national magazines requesting continued coverage of the Cambodian situation and stressing the humanitarian concerns that are at stake.

Congressional representatives must also be kept informed on the latest developments and of their constituents' concern. Sponsors, advocates and friends of the Cambodian people are needed.

CHOA is an all-volunteer organization that gratefully accepts time, talent, information and (tax deductible) contributions. To join, to help or for more information, contact the Cambodian Humanitarian Organization of America, P.O. Box 408353, Chicago, IL 60640. The phone numbers are (312) 879-7092, or 929-5805.

Marilyn Sutkus for CHOA
The reality of South Africa is grim for the non-white peoples living there; the weight of apartheid is everywhere. Things we take for granted—walking, freedom of movement, the right to association and speech—virtually do not exist. There is no shortage of holding pens, areas of restriction, reservations or jails. Detention for any Black man, woman or child without a charge is a way of life. A long line of Black writers, dissidents, and politicians have faced detention, and many have not emerged alive.

White South Africans who unite with or support anti-apartheid measures have had their lives made unpleasant, and have often been manipulated out of the country, but all too few have stood up for their fellow human beings.

This Christmas-time in South Africa, cities saw a massive police crackdown, forcing Blacks off the streets to allow white shoppers "room" to make last-minute holiday purchases. Christmas is one of the few holidays Black people are allowed by law to travel to their homes and families. Obviously, this is not a positive reform of the creeping type now being advertised so loudly by the Reagan Administration in hopes of keeping alive their whole-hearted support for the South African government.

The wording of the Nobel Peace Prize to Bishop Desmond Tutu, the Black Anglican whose anti-apartheid views are outspoken has once again focused world attention on the brutality of South Africa. In the U.S., Congressmen and women stepped on picket lines to be arrested at the South African Embassy in Washington, and there were demonstrations at South African buildings around the country. Ultra-Conservatives pressured Reagan to make statements condemning apartheid. The statement came grudgingly, weak-kneed and half-stepping, under the title "constructive engagement," a diplomatic trickledown that gives the South African government freedom to continue their policy of brutality, detention and murder without fear of diplomatic or economic sanctions from the U.S. government.

Pointing to the recent reforms such as the ability to purchase land and work by the Black population of South Africa, the Reagan Administration will firmly resist economic sanctions, divestiture, or even cultural boycotts. Not a large number of Black people can buy a house on wages amounting to $25 to $50 an hour. The 300 U.S. corporations who have combined South African assets of $2.3 billion with companies or subsidiaries are not exactly the share-the-wealth boys either. Divestiture of their South African assets is not a considered option. U.S. corporations support apartheid; it's good business. The Reagan Administration will continue to use half-assed studies and facts and figures to paint a rosy picture of racial oppression in South Africa.

Bishop Tutu was asked by the press reveal his views on disarmament. His response was that, "You realize that for me to say to yourselves that I support economic sanctions is an indictment of all of South Africa and, until recently, the penalty was a mandatory minimum sentence of 5 years."

In South Africa no Black person is above the law—Nobel prize winner or freedom fighter.

—Bill Davis
National Office VVAW

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sun tzu

RECON

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Info Wanted

New Hampshire writer would like to interview anyone involved in Operation Phoenix. If interested, call or write Doug Valenite, 114 Public Street, Manchester, NH 03103; phone: (603) 669-7193.
Just the week before I had made a speech at a rally on Central America. I had said Vietnam veterans would not let it happen again. I had said the war would not be Grenada. I talked about an informal group of veterans called the Never Again Club. In both cases I was guessing.

In the intervening days the situation had become tense. Talk of buildups, alerts and preemptive strikes was in the air. I would soon get a chance to discuss my feelings with my brother veterans in Washington as well as get a sense of the feelings of the "other side" during my arranged interview at the Nicaraguan embassy.

"Nicaragua will not be another Grenada," one of my fellow veterans told me on Friday. "It will take five or six years to gain control of the cities and they will have to fight forces in the mountains for another 20 years. We were both painfully aware of the similarity of the situation in Nicaragua and that which we had faced 15 years earlier in Vietnam. We spoke quietly in a meeting room at the embassy. Roberto Vargas was a Vietnam veteran, but he was also the current liaison officer for the Nicaraguan embassy.

Three other veterans joined us. They had just returned from a mission delivering medicine in the combat areas of Nicaragua. Not all Vietnam vets were fighting for the contras. "There are 2,300 Americans in Nicaragua right now, about 1,500 of them are Vietnam veterans," Vargas said. Those 1,500 made CMA's handful of contra supporters pale by comparison.

Vargas and I talked of elections in his country where the Sandinistas polled more than 60 percent of those eligible to vote and elections in my country where Ronald Reagan polled just over 51 percent of those eligible to vote. "It was said government's legitimacy was being questioned, and which government was claiming a mandate?"

Saturday, more than 150 veterans representing various organizations gathered to discuss the role of the Vietnam veterans in the unfolding Central American situation. We agreed declarations of observers, medics, and perhaps even advisors would be in order. We agreed we would respond. We agreed, never again.

Sunday was the real test of our feelings. Thousands of vets representing a general cross section, would be present to hear what was expected to be a call to arms by the President. To be sure there were the usual number of Jane Fonda effigies, but there were more anti-war slogans.

There was more discussion of the new conservatives who equate war with glory. "We ought to drop them in some mosquito-ridden, leech-infested jungle and let 'em see what it's really about," one vet quipped.

Reagan got more catcalls than applause. The reception was cool as the Park Police closed off the Memorial grounds to vets and let it to politicians and generals who did not know the names of anyone on the wall.

Reagan's speech was so low key as to be inaudible. A representative of the VFW was soundly booted as he spoke of the "glory" of Anzio and Normandy. Clearly this was a group that would not sit idly by while we marched headlong through the next bloody page on history.

On the train back a dozen vets sat in the club car talking of our concerns. Isolated individuals from Virginia, Florida, North Carolina, and Georgia agreed we must not let it happen again.

I left with mixed emotions. I returned with mixed emotions: a mixture of pride and hope. Pride in my brothers in arms who do not see Central America as a way to make up for our perceived "failure" in Vietnam and hope that their combined voices will halt any future fiasco.

The Never Again Club was a reality. Its message was clear: patriotism is one thing, foolishness quite another.

--Elton Manzione

Vets Against the War, Inc.
Veterans Day

For Veterans Day in Chicago, the Governor didn't make it; neither did a number of others, but Vietnam vets, their families, and the Chicago media were in attendance. Held in direct competition with the "official" ceremony which was taking place at Daley Plaza in the middle of the city, VAW's ceremony was held at the Vietnam Veterans Monument, a fountain near downtown. In the midst of swirling cold winds, quite unlike anything we could recall from Vietnam.

The hearty group that joined together was treated to the thoughts of veteran, now Father Bob Bosse, a Maryknoll priest, and Chicago peace activist, and the songs of Bright Morning Whose Stirring Music Made Was What Could Have Been a Cold Occasion. Barry Rono of VAW's National Office spoke of his experience of bringing home the body of his nephew from Vietnam as he placed the wreath in front of the Monument.

The ceremony looked to the past and to those who died, but also to the future and to those who should never be put in a position to have to sponsor a similar ceremony in years to come.

Chicago

Each year a Vietnam veteran is asked to lay the wreath, and does so with a special someone in mind. Barry Rono laid the wreath this year to honor his nephew, whose body he escorted home from Vietnam. The vet who was originally asked to lay the wreath was told by his employer that, if he participated in this way, he would lose his job. As a government employee he was denied his right of speech, free assembly, his right as a human being and Vietnam veteran to honor not only all Vietnam veterans but that special someone he wished to honor. This is America, the home of the "free," where a veteran, or anyone for that matter, can have his livelihood threatened, his feelings squashed like a bug, and his rights denied. "Makes me proud to be an American."

Virg McFadden

VAV Chicago

The Few
The Proud
The Disowned

(The following article is taken from the Hartford Courant; the original was written by Ron Winter.)

When Vietnam veterans stream into Washington for the dedication of the new statue, most will gather for reunions or reminisce in hotel hospitality suites. But former Marines will be on their own.

The Marine Corps Association, the organization that usually arranges Marine reunions will not participate. Association officials say the group does not want to be associated with the Vietnam vets they maintain don't fit the traditional spit-shined image the Marine old guard holds sacred.

Retired Brig Gen. George Bartlett, who heads the association, an organization of former Marines and their families, said bitter encounters during 1982 dedication ceremonies for the Vietnam War Memorial soured his organization on dealing with Vietnam-era Marines.

"They were a bunch of goddamn crumbies," Bartlett said.

"I'm not going to encourage them to join.

And the only official Marine participation will be by the Marine Corps Band, Col James L. McNamara, a spokesman for the office of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, confirmed. The band's participation was added at the last minute.

Bartlett said he has heard no official word about the Marine Corps' participation, but "I can...read the tea leaves and see which way the wind is blowing."

Gen Paul X. Kelley, Marine Corps commandant, could not be reached for comment.

The statue--titled "Three Fightingmen"--depicts three young soldiers, one black, one white and one Hispanic, dressed in Vietnam era fighting gear. It was commissioned after complaints that the sunken V-shaped, black granite monument dedicated in 1982 projected an image of shame and disgrace rather than an image of honor.

But Bartlett is critical of the monument's artist. Sculptor Frederick Hart, Bartlett said of the soldiers, depicted, "The uniforms are askew, they're not wearing hats. They don't look like servicemen."

Bartlett said many career servicemen were in their 30s and 40s when they fought in Vietnam. The statue "could have been more representative" of all groups who fought in the war, he said.

In 1982, the Association rented a suite at a Washington Hotel as a reunion center for Vietnam-era Marines and to recruit new association members. Bartlett said more than more than 3,000 former Marines visited the room. "They had beards and mustaches," Bartlett said. "They were dirty jeans with medals (awarded during their Vietnam service) hanging all over them."

"I was amazed at the crud that came two years ago. I fought twice in Vietnam, but we fought, then came home and joined society...They just were not Marines. They didn't respect the Corps. If those are our representatives, I don't want anything to do with them."

McNamara agreed with Bartlett's assessment of the association's efforts at the hospitality suite.

"It was absolutely the grossest error," he said, adding that the Marines who attended were "the great flea-bitten masses."

"Where are the guys who go to work in a coat and tie?" McNamara asked.

Reprinted by THE VETERAN without comment.
On my first trip to the West Coast to organize for Dewey Canyon IV, I had spent some 150+-hour riding on a Greyhound. On my second trip, for only 30 hours on the dog, my back was starting to take on the shape and the smell of a bus seat. After the trip from Portland to L.A., I knew it was time for a little R&R.

The bus had dropped me off at the entrance to Dana Point State Beach Park around 11 PM, and I no more than had my poncho strung up when it started to rain, and continued to rain for days.

I was startled when I peaked out of my hostel the next morning, but not as startled as the other "campers" were to see me. I thought I had seen some big-ass motorhomes before, but these were bigger than big-ass. The occupants were looking out of their rain-streaked patio doors and I was peaking out of the hole in one of my poncho's that kept me moist throughout the night.

Around noon, a much wetter soldier disappeared up and I pulled out my rucksack and dug out some chow. I'd brought along some heat tabs, so I had a lunch of warm Park 'n' Beans. My neighbors pulled out their patio deck, unrolled their awning, and cooked their steaks on a grill they had plugged into the side of the motorhome. By the time I had heated water for a cup of coffee, I thought I was having a flashback. In the distance I could hear the sound of choppers, not just a few, but what sounded like a full-scale Evel Knievel assault.

Six waves of Hueys went over, including gunships and Cobras. Five minutes later came the Chinooks and Flying Cranes.

I walked down to the Ranger Station and found out that there was a joint military operation going on in the desert. So, for a few days, listening to the sound of the rain and choppers, wading the wet ponchos and the heat tabs, my R&R turned into my own personal combat zone.

To kill the time and keep some peace of mind, I wrote

some short stories and poems.

Here's one of them:

LZ 24

How could they know that a war was raging on at Campsite #24.

Their motorhomes and limousines plugged into their own realities.

I, in my poncho hootch, and load a magazine...

Now almost thirteen years later since I was traumatized and abused,

I light my heat and warm my beans.

I bite for having been used.

So why is it still raining, and why wonder why a helicopter disturbs my sleep, I'm not dreaming about weeping drummers buried deep.

--Dennis Rollin Madison VWAV

Info Wanted

Dear VWAV,

As some of your readers know, my first book, Battle for Hue: Tet 1968 (Presidio Press/1983) was based on interviews with 35 Vietnam veterans. For my second book, I had the opportunity to interview 90 vet writers who served in the 1971 invasion of Laos; Presidio Press will be publishing this soon.

So I'm presently starting a third proposed book. I hope to chronicle the activities of the 1st Marine Division and American Division in the area of the Arizona Valley-Que Son Mountain-Huey Dug Valley from July 6-September 1969. This period saw the Marines involved in several routine attacks in the Arizona, then shifted south into the Que Son to assist the Army which was fighting a bloody, bunker-to-bunker action in the Hiey Dug Valley. Units involved included: 2/1, 3/21, 4/31 and 1/46 Infantry; 156th Light Infantry Brigade, American Division; plus the 1/5, 2/5, 1/7, and 2/7 Marines; 1st Reconnaissance Battalion; 1st Tank Battalion; 1st Marine Air Wing; and various smaller units.

I would greatly appreciate hearing from any vets of these operations so we can arrange an interview. No matter how big or small their personal role, each vet's help would be invaluable. Call or write anytime: Keith William Nolan, 220 Kinsville Court, Webster Groves, Missouri 63119 (314) 961-7577.

Thanks for printing my letter in THE VETERAN.

Sincerely,

Keith William Nolan