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THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

50¢

Vol. 17 No. 1

Winter 1986-87

From the Men Who Brought You Beirut & Sky Wars

IRANSCAM~CONTRAGATE

As everyone knows, in the recent months a tremendous scandal has broken out over Iran/Contragate. Former National Security Council arranged, with the knowledge and approval of Pres-

ident Reagan, to sell U.S. arms to Iran. The President claims this was done to gain support of "moderate" elements in the Iranian government in anticipation of the

passing of the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Few believe this explanation. Most people assume Reagan was trying to buy the freedom of U.S. hostages being held in Lebanon in time for the mid-term elections. Reagan was beginning to look like a wimp because of his inability to free these hostages. What followed was an open bribe to the Iranians, a bribe that former Iran specialist for President Carter, Gary Sick, estimates at about 5000 tons of weapons worth about \$500 to \$1000 million over two years.

There are a couple of points here. First, after screaming for years that the Iranians are maniacs, evil terrorists, and that on

Please Turn To page



Chicago chapter of VVAW marches in the October 25 actions for Peace, Jobs and Justice. Photo by Mahmood Nadia.

MIA Found in Australia

'NAM VET SURFACES

A Vietnam veteran, not heard from for the last 17 years, has surfaced in the New South Wales state in Australia. Douglas Beane, a cook in the U.S. Marine Corps in Vietnam, was discovered when he applied at the U.S. Embassy for a visa to visit his father in the U.S. Beane had left the Marines in Vietnam when he escaped from a prison hospital where he was awaiting court martial for desertion.

According to The Sun-Herald, a New South Wales newspaper, Beane has a total of 9 children in Australia; he recently married the mother of two of the children. Several years ago he informed Australian emmigration authorities about his status, but the government did not inform U.S. officials. Recently Beane had been granted residency status in Australia. That, plus the passage of 17 years, had made him believe he could safely apply for a visa from U.S. authorities; instead they promptly sought him out and had him arrested. He is now out on bail.

Beane's story is a better adventure than Rambo ever approached. He landed

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THE SANCTUARY CHALLENGE

By contributing so, we hope in some small way to remember Pastor Andre' Trocme' of La Chambon, France, who shielded and saved hundreds of Jewish children, strangers to his village, from the Vichy authorities and the occupying Germans in the early 1940's....

--From a March 1984 letter

to the author, at the time director of Casa Oscar Romero in San Benito, TX.

To remember, to put together the jagged, incomplete pieces of an obscured reality and have it mean something, has today become a subversive activity in America. By remembering, we

rekindle ideals we once thought were lost. We are challenged by the examples of people who confronted inhumanity with their compassionate action. By acknowledging the choices made by men and women nearly half a century ago, we gain a clearer perspective of the choices that people active in the sanctuary movement are making today.

In Tucson, Arizona, men and women, found guilty by a jury on 18 counts of transporting illegal immigrants, conspiracy, and related charges, face sentencing. Their six-month trial generated heated arguments in the courtroom and wide debate throughout the country.

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**Vietnam Veterans
Against the War
National Office**
P.O. Box 408594
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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

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(312) 386-1413

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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.

Make checks payable to Vietnam Veterans Against the War

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ARE YOU INTERESTED IN ATTENDING VVAW'S 20th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

We are looking for old-time VVAW members, for friends of the organization, for people interested in supporting what VVAW has done (and is still doing) for the last 20 years. Our 20th anniversary celebration will take place in Chicago; the high point will be a dinner on Saturday, June 13th, 1987.

To help us make plans as well as possible we need a sense of how many people might be interested. If you think you might to come for the dinner or the weekend, please take the time to fill out the form below and send it to the VVAW National Office P.O. Box 408594, Chicago, IL 60640. This is not a reservation, just an expression of interest. We'll be in touch later.

I am interested in coming to VVAW's 20th anniversary.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I can't come, but I'd like to contribute to help pay for someone who can come.

Comments, or names and addresses of people who might be interested. _____

BY-LAWS OF VVAW

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) and to non-veterans interested in joining together to build a veterans movement. While VVAW is made up primarily of Vietnam and Vietnam-era veterans and their families, the organization also welcomes veterans from other eras and non-veterans.
3. Membership requirements include filling out a membership form, 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 from 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 a year. They are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the organization, for speaking on behalf of the national organization, and for the publication and content of THE VETERAN and "The Guidon."
7. Regional coordinators, as needed will be elected at national meetings to serve 1 year terms; regional coordinators will facilitate and coordinate regional activities, aid the building of local chapters, and provide input from chapters into the national office.
8. Policies, programs and positions of VVAW nationally will, as much as possible, be decided at national meetings. If that is not possible, such decisions will be made by the National Steering Committee or, in emergencies, by the National Office.

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THE SANCTUARY CHALLENGE

State Department, Border Patrol, and Immigration and Naturalization Service officials have intentionally blurred the distinction between economic migrants and refugees, blanketing all undocumented persons with the "illegal alien" label and charging that the sanctuary movement in fact exploits refugees and "hides them away from the benefits of our laws and uses their suffering in a domestic political debate" (As Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, put it.) As misdirected as these charges may be, they have been remarkably successful in intimidating people in general and church bodies in particular. In some circles, the word "sanctuary" has become a loaded term, the way "justice" has in El Salvador: it's simply not mentioned because of its anti-establishment connotation.

What is it about the sanctuary movement that causes it to be perceived by the government as such a threat?

For one thing, it frustrates the attempts by the Executive Branch for "consensus" on our foreign policy in Central America. In a speech in April Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, James Michel noted, "There are, of course, still some who deny that positive, worthwhile change is occurring in El Salvador, Honduras or Guatemala or who assert that the U.S. is supporting repressive oligarchies in those countries and is so obsessed with anticommunism that it focuses only on military solutions." Michel can only be accused of understatement here. And yet he touches on a primary feature of the debate about sanctuary: Who shall define Central American reality? When refugees from the countries Michel mentions come to us bearing scars and sharing their histories they open a window through which we are able to view the often obscured realities of their homelands. When what they tell us is corroborated by non-governmental human rights groups, comite's of relatives of the disappeared, international human rights organizations, and, at times, even our own embassy staffs, we become duly skeptical of the official line--that "Central America engages our strategic and moral interests" (in that order) and that the Administration's policies, such

as the Caribbean Basin Initiative, will continue to promote stability and progress in the region. The men and women of the sanctuary movement seek to help refugees fleeing persecution and to keep open that window on Central America. It is this

testimonies of those who have stayed behind to struggle, hope, disappear, and die.

And so now the President's entire vision of Central America is being



Sandinista soldiers discover the body of a Nicaraguan Energy Institute worker, Francisco Borge, killed by contras outside Nueva Guinea.

insistence on drawing a connection between the large numbers of Central Americans in our country and the cauldrons of state-sponsored violence from which they've fled that disturbs the architects of our policy in the region. Consensus is simply not possible when the Administration's airbrushed portrait of life in Central America clashes so persistently with the disturbing montage of images brought to us by refugees and by the

questioned. Do we really expect that more military aid to the Nicaraguan Contras, for example, will hasten the advent of stability in Central America? As this preposterous, deadly vision is being questioned, something else, a second critical feature of sanctuary, is taking place.

Communities of faith are looking at their traditions and themselves and are asking fundamental questions. This process continues, in fact, flourishes, in spite of the indictment, prosecution and conviction of church workers because the sanctuary movement is not a political movement but a response to deep injustice and chilling violence. Not to respond to the compelling trauma unfolding today in Central America becomes itself too terrible a burden.

So the faith communities come to grips with the age-

less universal mandate to offer special solace and protection to children, widows, and the strangers in our land.

As these communities of faith (mainly Protestant congregations, but including synagogues, Catholic parishes, and Quaker meetings) learn more about both the suffering and hope that co-exist in Central America and the role our country has played--"episodes of intense U.S. involvement interspersed with periods of U.S. neglect," says James Michel in fine historical shorthand--some will eventually vote to declare themselves a sanctuary for Central American refugees. Whether or not they reach that point may not be as important as whether they at least grapple with the moral issues inherent in the concept of sanctuary. Jim Corbett, recently acquitted in the Tucson trial, writes, "Whenever a congregation that proclaims the prophetic faith abandons the poor and persecuted to organized oppression, its unfaithfulness darkens the way for all humankind. And when it stands as a community's bulwark against state violations of human rights, it lights the way." This seems straightforward enough. But the need to go from an awareness of injustice to a collective, compassionate response is a transformation that must torment many people even as it finds realization in comparably few. The challenge of sanctuary falls squarely at the feet of our communities of faith. Should these communities be resentful--or thankful--to Central Americans and to the sanctuary movement for the challenge "to light the way"?

Today we are confronted by a malefic vision in Central America. "Low intensity warfare" there is designed to impose our political, economic, and military will in the region with a minimum of outrage from the folks here at home. It's designed to build consensus. But some people have not lost their capacity to remember. Their courage goes beyond saying "never again" to the violent excesses of the past generation. They recognize that there is no single season for people to open their eyes and to make moral choices. In this sense, the sanctuary movement has only begun. The personal and collective transformation it calls us to is essentially beyond the reach of federal indictments and propaganda campaigns. By becoming faithful to the best of our moral and civic traditions we reject the idolatry of our day that calls for a consensus for the destruction of Central America. And by standing fast by these traditions we honor Pastor Andre' Trocme' and others whose own steadfastness still lights our way.

--Jack Elder
San Antonio
VVAV

FRAGGIN'

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY YEARS THE COLUMN "FRAGGIN'S" DOES NOT APPEAR IN THIS ISSUE OF THE VETERAN. SP4 WILLIE, AKA BILL SHUNAS GOT MARRIED IN THE PAST MONTH. TO HIM AND ELLIE MATTERN

SHUNAS, THE STAFF OF THE VETERAN SENDS OUR BEST WISHES FOR THE HAPPIEST OF MARRIAGES. WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE RETURN OF "FRAGGIN'S" IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE VETERAN.

Tallahassee

Veterans Day, 1986, was the fourth day of a high eighties heat wave; a small but spirited contingent of Vietnam, Vietnam-era and World War II veterans marched behind the slogan, "Be All You Can Be--Work For Peace" through the streets of Tallahassee, Florida.

The marchers were well received by the 5000 spectators. An information table was set up at the Florida Vietnam Memorial. Materials were handed out and lively discussions followed.

Also in the parade were tanks, helicopter flyovers, ROTC cadets, Reservists, National Guard Units and innumerable Cub Scouts and Brownies.

Tom Baxter
VVAW Tallahassee

San Antonio

VVAW in San Antonio participated in the traditional Veterans Day events which this year included a dedication of a Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Setting up a table, chapter members camped out prior to the day, getting new members and making ties to some of the traditional groups.

On Vets Day, one of the VVAW members approached ex-general William Westmoreland, but when "Westy" saw the VVAW button, his eyes widened and he ran away even quicker than he did from his CBS suit or from the truth in Vietnam!

Milwaukee

On November 7th VVAW in Milwaukee made some long-awaited connections with the rest of the peace movement in the area. The chapter gave up trying to have input into traditional Vets Day ceremonies several years ago. Now the chapter participates, but has begun its own tradition: a Vets Day concert. This year it was co-sponsored by CASC and CARC (Central American Resource Center).

Country Joe McDonald, Jim Wachtendonk and Rick Duvall presented VVAW's perspectives through music. They are all vets as well as excellent musicians so they were ready with some superbly presented music. The concert was well attended (about 350 people) and the crowd was from many organizations in town. Except for a few glitches, the concert was smooth and the sponsors made \$. But most important the music made some real connections with people and VVAW is looking forward to working in coalition with these groups again.

On Veterans Day, November 11th, Milwaukee VVAW did our annual pilgrimage to the Capitol rotunda in Madison where VVAW holds its ceremony. Madison VVAW does an excellent job of hosting the event.

--Ann Bailey
VVAW Milwaukee



(The following article is from The Norse Star from Stoughton High School in Madison, WI, and was written by Sandy Angell, Megan Moriarty, and Terri Shager.)

LIGHTING OF A SINGLE CANDLE

"War is Hell." That common statement has been pushed to the back of our minds along with the millions that died in foreign wars.

On Tuesday, Nov. 11



Photos by Carolyn Pflasterer

VETERANS

(Veterans Day) approximately 100 people gathers in the Capitol Rotunda to pay tribute to veterans--in particular Vietnam veterans.

As we walked into the capitol and found our way to where the ceremony was to take place, what we saw was not the expected band of middle-aged hippies, but a group of people ranging from young kids to very old people: teenagers, toddlers, families, and other veterans--very few middle-aged hippies. Each one of them was there for their own personal reasons, yet for the same topic--war.

"The Vietnam War was one of the most unpopular wars this country ever fought, but today hardly a word is said about it in our country's classrooms, and kids today are growing up seeing Vietnam through John Rambo's eyes which means they are seeing an illusion and not reality." This statement comes from Dennis Kroll, a man who has faced the overpowering "reality" of pain, suffering and death.

A Vietnam veteran himself, he started his speech with some statistics about World War II and others wars that shocked us. He continued talking about the "wrongness" of war. "We are told World War II was a 'good' war. How the word 'good' can be used to modify the word 'war' is something I shall never understand." The mood was anything but bright and cheery. It was solemn, somber, and sad. The people weren't here to celebrate, but rather to grieve in remembrance of the time a friend, a father, a daughter--someone loved. They were here to pray and work for an end to all war.

"It has always been the veterans of our wars who have had to remind our government and the American people of their responsibility to their veterans--that veteran benefits are a cost of war--a cost which continues to accrue long after each war ends."

Kroll told us, "Years ago in my youth and my innocence my father gave to me the purple heart and only told me it was from World War II....When I was a 20 year old I went to Vietnam with my youth and innocence and my thoughts of John Wayne and glory. I came back with a purple heart of my own. I later gave my purple heart to my two sons and simply told them I got it in Vietnam....When I finally understood my anger about Vietnam and war, I talked to my sons. Now they know it takes more courage and it truly more patriotic to ask "Why?" than to blindly say "Yes" when one is asked to support a war or to participate in a war."

Kroll ended his speech with the lighting of a single candle. "And as we remember and reflect and honor tonight, I light this candle to symbolize the hopes which I have shared with you tonight will come to be for

our sake and the sake of our children."

We saw many faces staring blankly at the candle. As "Taps" became heard, the people went silent. Looking down we could see in the sea of faces, a woman seated in a wheelchair. She pulled from her lap a white handkerchief and wiped the tears from her face, tears we all felt but could not express.

As "Taps" ended we began to bring up our flowers to place upon a casket where the flag laid, covering it. Watching people's faces we saw tears in their eyes as they joined in the song "Where Have All The Flowers Gone."

"Where have all the flowers gone, to young girls everyone..."

Where have all the young girls gone, to young men, everyone...

Where have all the young men gone to soldiers everyone...

Where have all the soldiers gone to graveyards everyone...

When will they ever learn...."

A song is the most popular way to express these opinions, hopes and sorrows. Singers past, present, and future have and will continue to write songs about them until the horrors end.

"I want to know who the men in the shadows are, I want to hear somebody asking them why they can be counted on to tell us who our enemies are, but they are never the ones to fight or to die."

--Jackson Browne, "Lives in the Balance."

"We came in spastic, like tameless horses, we left in plastic, as numbered corpses...who was wrong, who was right, it didn't matter in the thick of the fight."

--Billy Joel, "Goodbye Saigon"

"How can I save my little boy from Oppenheimer's deadly toy? There is no monopoly of common sense on either side of the political fence--We share the same biology, regardless of ideology. What might save us, me and you, is if the Russians love their children too."

--Sting, "Russians"

"Daddy's flown across the ocean, Leaving just a memory, A snapshot in the family album, Daddy what else did you leave for me? Daddy what else d'ya leave behind for me? All in all it was just another brick in the wall, All in all it was just bricks in the wall."

--Pink Floyd, "Another Brick in the Wall, Part I"

The ceremony was over, and as we slowly made our way back out of the capitol, there was a certain feeling that stayed with us for the rest of the night. For we knew that the ceremony would never completely be over.

DAY



(This talk was a part of the Madison, Wisconsin, Veterans Day commemoration.)

Years ago in my youth and my innocence my father gave to me this purple heart and only told me it was from World War II when he was a prisoner of war. He didn't tell me any more than that and to this day he has never talked to me about World War II or being a prisoner of war. He never talked to me about war in general and I was raised on John Wayne, the way so many young people today are being raised on Sylvester Stallone and Rambo.

I would later find out from my grandmother that my father went to war as a teenager in his youth and his innocence and was a private barely out of his teens when he was captured by the Germans. He was one of 16,353,659 Americans who served in the Armed Forces during World War II. Four hundred seven thousand, three hundred sixteen of those Americans died and another 670,846 were wounded. Tens of millions of soldiers and civilians of other nations were killed or wounded during that war. We are told World War II was a "good" war. How the word "good" can be used to modify war is something I shall never understand.

Years later as a 20-year old I went to Vietnam with my youth and my innocence and my thoughts of John Wayne and glory. I came back to the U.S. with a purple heart of my own. I

later gave my purple heart to my two sons and simply told them nothing more than I got it in Vietnam. What I did not tell them then and would not tell them for years was that I was one of 8,744,000 Americans who served during the Vietnam War and one of the over 2.8 million who put in their

time in Vietnam itself. That of those who went to Vietnam, 58,132 died during the war and 303,678 were wounded and I was one of those wounded. As a 20-year-old airborne sergeant, a mortar shattered my hands and my shoulder. Between 1972 and 1981. I went through over a dozen operations to rebuild my hands. Millions of Vietnamese soldiers and civilians were also killed and wounded during the Vietnam War. The Vietnam War was the most unpopular war this country ever fought, but today hardly a word is said about it in our country's classrooms and kids today are growing up seeing Vietnam through John Rambo's eyes which means they are seeing an illusion and not reality. Those who sent to Vietnam--my generation's war--came back to a country which could not separate an unpopular war from those who served when our country asked them to serve. In rejecting the war, the veterans of the war were also rejected and left with inadequate health care to deal with their wounds, post traumatic stress disorders and the ravages of Agent Orange which affects not only them, but their children as well. They were left without adequate educational benefits and employment opportunities. History was repeating itself. Veterans of World War I, a war the American public supported, came back suffering from shell shock and mustard gas poisoning and found limited benefits awaiting them. They marched on Washington, DC in 1932 to demand what they had earned through their sacrifices and they were driven from the nation's capital by U.S. Army troops. It has always been the veterans to our wars who have had to remind our government and the American people of their responsibility to their veterans--that veteran benefits are a cost of war--a cost which continues to accrue long after each war ends. Our government and the American public don't like to be reminded of that, regardless of how popular or unpopular a war happens to be.

And when I thought about that, I got in touch with some of my anger about Vietnam and about war and I finally understood why my father didn't and couldn't talk to me about World War II and being a prisoner of war, and why I didn't and couldn't talk to my sons about Vietnam and what it did to my body and my mind. And once I gained that insight, I talked to my sons with the hope they could learn from me what I had not learned about war from my father.

Because of that, my sons in their youth and their innocence see no glory in war and they see the obscenity of those who attempt to glorify war.

So tonight we come together to remember--to honor--



Mayor Washington, top; Tim Andruss, middle; Tony Wright and Manuel Martinez burn the South African flag.

Chicago

On a cold, sunny Veterans Day, 70 VVAW members and friends gathered at 11 AM at the Vietnam Veteran Memorial Fountain in Chicago to honor the dead and reaffirm our fight for the living.

Mayor Washington of Chicago praised VVAW for its almost 20 years of work for veterans, peace and justice saying, "You've never received the recognition and praise you've deserved."

Among our speakers were Tim Andruss (a Grenada vet) and Manuel Martinez, a Navy vet during the Iranian crisis.

Prior to the mayor's address, Chicago aldermanic candidate Ron Sable, Vietnam veteran and long-time VVAW member, spoke of people's right to self-determination.

Following the mayor's address, Barry Romo, VVAW National Officer, spoke against the oppressive regime in South Africa, and while Manuel and Tony Wright held the South African flag, Ray Parrish and a young man who rushed forward from the audience ignited the flag. As the flag lay in flames, the young man, expressing the emotions of all of us, stomped it into the pavement. Zippo the Botha regime.

As usual our closing gave all the participants--World War II, Korean, Vietnam, and post-Vietnam veterans--an opportunity to honor their dead comrades and loved ones by casting a flower into the waters of the fountain.

Many thanks to our speakers, to Dave Curry who coordinated the program, to Annie who got the flowers, to Tony, Manuel and Ray and the unknown young man for their assistance.

--Virg McFadden
VVAW Chicago

and to hope.

To remember our sons and daughters and to hope they will never have purple hearts to give to their children.

To remember Charles Liteky--who was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in Vietnam--George Mizo, Brian Willson and Duncan Murphy: three Vietnam veterans and a World War II veteran who completed a 47-day water-only fast last month to bring attention to U.S. military policy in Central America and its parallels to our country's failed military policy in Vietnam and to hope that those who make this nation's military policy listened to what these four veterans said and what roughly two-thirds of the American public are saying: put an end to the evolving tragic and immoral U.S. intervention in Central America before the tragedy and immorality escalate even further.

To remember Javier Carazo, a one and a half year old Nicaraguan who was adopted by the Madison VVAW

Chapter after he was wounded in both legs in a Contra attack which left him an orphan, and to hope that as his legs heal, he will be able to walk through his country in peace.

To remember the 37 Wisconsin men who are still MIA's or POW's of the Vietnam war and to hope that not another family will ever have to suffer through the ordeal of knowing a loved one is missing in action or is a prisoner of war.

To remember all of our nation's veterans and especially those who while serving lost their lives or pieces of their bodies and minds forever and to hope the day may come when no one from any country will die in war and to hope the day may come when there may be no more veterans because there are no more wars forever.

And as we remember and reflect and honor tonight, I light this candle to symbolize the hope that the hopes which I have shared with you tonight will come to be for our sake and the sake of our children.

--Dennis Kroll

Noted Author of "... And A Hard Rain Fell"

"HELL NO, MY WIFE WON'T GO!"

I am nearing the age of forty. I have a career, a family, a mortgage, and a car payment. Our two children are heading off to school. Their mother, after nine years of full-time mothering, is looking forward to five hours each day with which she can turn her attentions to things she put off in favor of dirty diapers or trips to the park. After nine years she is estranged from her profession, nursing. She doesn't miss the shift rotations, the over-crowded wards, the tension of life-and-death situations. She wants to read, to sew, to bake, and perhaps, to go back to school. We are products of the sixties. We can recall the draft card burnings, and marchers chanting, "Hell no, we won't go." I did not know her when I was in Vietnam, and we have dealt with the aftermath of my experience together. We find it incredible, at this stage in our lives, to be confronted with the draft, again!

A number of Congressmen, hawks and doves, Republicans and Democrats, are working feverishly to institute a draft registration requirement for "all medical personnel," male or female, ages 18 to 46. In June, H.R. 4346 was defeated in the House Armed Services Committee by the vote of 28 to 17. It was opposed by the American Medical Association and the American Nurses Association. The issue is expected to resurface before the year's end, tacked on to other legislation.

Our lawmakers are concerned that there may not be sufficient medical personnel in our armed forces to properly care for our men, and women, in uniform. While no one wants to see our military denied medical care, knee jerk reactions can create far-reaching problems. The budget for those "Be All That Your Can Be" television commercials runs into the tens of millions of dollars, and I have yet to see them appeal for help to solve a medical emergency. We have an "all-volunteer" military, and recruiting has supposedly been going well in recent years. If the Services cannot attract sufficient numbers of medical personnel away from the private sector, perhaps it is time to restructure pay grades and make military medicine more palatable to today's professionals. In the aftermath of the Vietnam trauma, after a great deal of study and thought, we crafted a military that would, and could, compete in the free-enterprise system. If the conditions altered, the wisdom and the will of the people remains clear. Soldiers who have been drafted against their will don't perform as well as volunteers. So the emphasis must be on attracting medical volunteers.

America cannot boast a surplus of medical personnel. Our system of supply and demand has dictated the enormous costs of modern medical care. Our infant mortality rates still languish far behind much of the world's. Medical insurance has become a very expensive luxury, a luxury millions of Americans cannot afford. This "medical draft" would certainly affect attendance at medical schools. Our country has never drafted by profession, and it is likely that a number of our brighter high school graduates might choose law or business over medicine if they knew that Selective Service awaited them at graduation. The critical shortage of medical professionals could not be alleviated by drafting doctors, nurses, lab technicians, veterinarians, or dentists.

This would also mark the first time America has drafted women. The Feminism of the sixties has come full circle. But we must not forget that the inequities of the Vietnam-era draft were supposedly addressed by the lottery system, and additional frustration and failure led to the "all volunteer Army" we know today. It can be argued that the Vietnam war continued in spite of the protests until the institution of the lottery system brought the horrible costs of the war home to middle-class America. The poor send a minority of students to medical school, and the middle class will probably not abide another blizzard of body bags. America is not ready to see its daughters drafted! This was the issue which doomed the Equal Rights Amendment, and there is not sign of a

liberal-feminist wave on the political horizon.

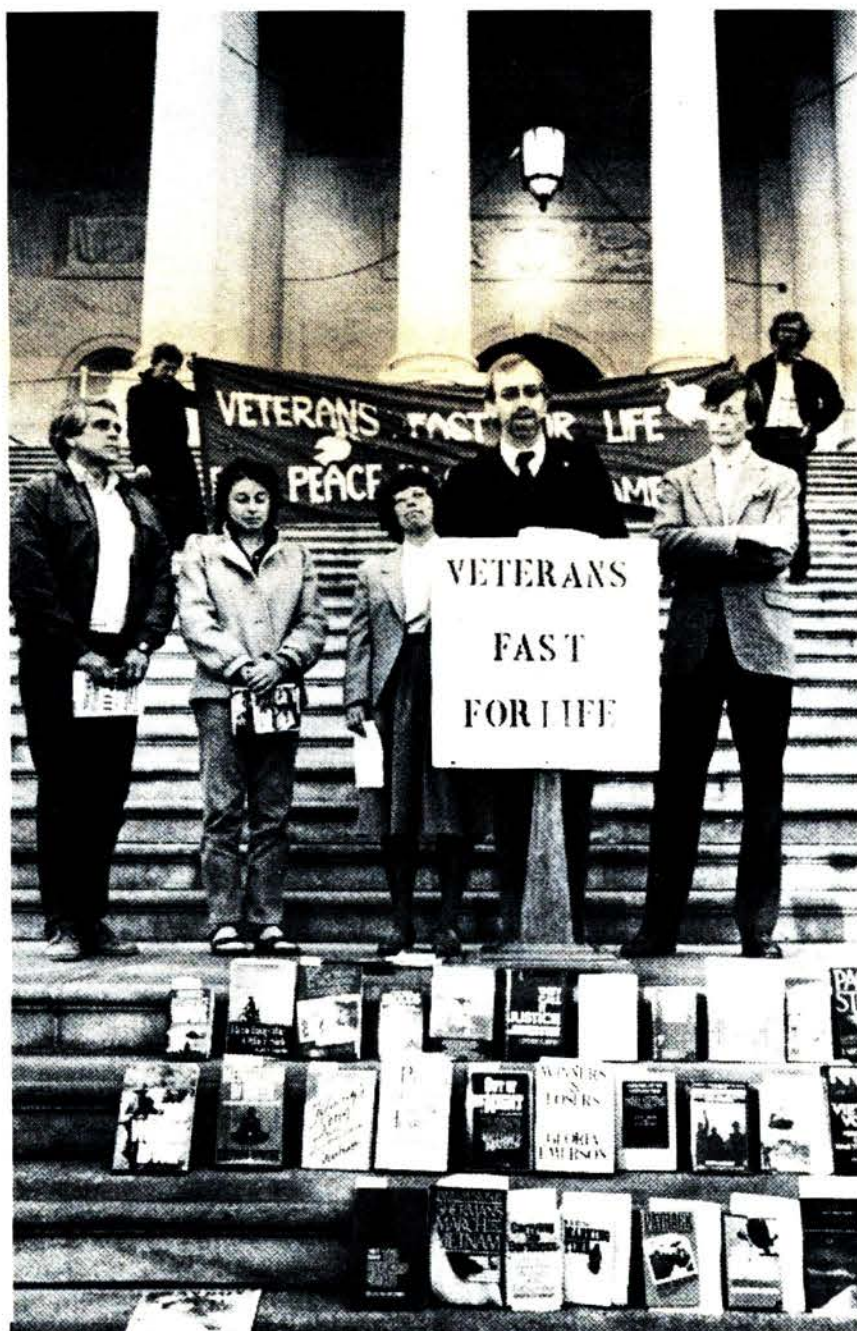
The media tells us that "patriotism" is rampant in America. Are medical personnel selectively unpatriotic? The authors of H.R. 4346 surely wondered. Failure to register, presumably by a 46-year-old female, would be subject to a non-negotiable fine of \$250,000 and five years in prison! This is far beyond the penalties for an 18-year-old male who fails to honor today's Selective Service requirement. Why? Although doctors are stereotypically wealthy, nurses and lab technicians could not address such a financial burden, especially after the inevitable legal fees that would result. Again, one foresees declining enrollments in medical schools, and shortages of medical personnel in our communities.

And so I sit, at age 38, once again confronted by the dilemma of military conscription. If they take my wife, who will look after my children? Day care? Over my dead body! Will employers allow fathers additional time off as a patriotic gesture? I have my doubts. What of our friends, who are nurses and single parents? Will we return to a system of selective deferments? Might I have to divorce my wife in order to keep her? I would feel much more comfortable if more medical personnel were aware of this impending nightmare. My family doctor, dentist and veterinarian were unaware. Their voices were not being raised in the American ritual of representative government. They are now, and

I only hope the system works.

When I was 18, in 1966, I said "Hell no, I won't go." The draft was one of the great traumas of my life, and in 1967 I went. Vietnam was the greatest trauma of my life, and I pray my wife and children will never see anything like it. I know the powerless feeling of trying to avoid the Selective Service system. I'm older and more established now, and have the added responsibilities of children and career, mortgage and payment books. A great deal of my 60's idealism has gone to seed, but it will return in full bloom if I have to march carrying a sign that says, "Hell no, my wife won't go!"

--John Ketwig



Vietnam Authors Join Veterans' Vigil

FORTY-THREE AUTHORS and journalists who wrote about the Vietnam War have joined the Veterans Fast for Life in citing unmistakable parallels between the Vietnam War and U.S. involvement in Nicaragua. Five authors recently joined the ongoing vigil on the east steps of the U.S. Capitol, and another 38 authors sent their books and written statements. Pictured above are (left to right) K. Bruce Galloway, Laura Jackson, Bonnie McKeown, John Ketwig, and C.D.B. Bryan. Other authors included David Halberstam, Daniel Ellsberg, and James Reston Jr. Gloria Emerson, whose book *Winners and Losers* won a National Book Award, said, "Nicaragua's history is not Vietnam's history, but what is so similar are the actions and duplicity of our own government, whose foreign policy is so shameful. But we are not a helpless people. We have the power to protest. It is up to us now."

Sojourners

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Vet Report from Nicaragua

NO SAFE HAVEN

(The following interview was done by Isthmus magazine with Ron Arm, a member of VVAW in Madison, who was part of the VVAW delegation to Nicaragua in April of 1986.)

We wanted to go down as veterans to see for ourselves what the situation was in Nicaragua, to see whether we're getting another line of bull from our country. That's definitely what we found--we're getting another line of bull.

If you go by what you hear from the administration and through the press, you'd expect to find a totalitarian regime in Nicaragua and people being oppressed--and that's not what we found.

There's a lot of strong support for the Sandinistas, and there are also people who aren't all that supportive of the Sandinistas. As a matter of fact, there are



Unarmed civilian worker, brutally murdered by U.S.-backed contra terrorists in Nicaragua, November 1984.

Andrew Ritchie

Mother and children murdered by contras at Palo de Arco, Río San Juan, May 1984.



several opposition parties in Nicaragua, and we didn't see any restrictions on their ability to speak out and call for what they wanted.

One thing you learn when you talk to people in Nicaragua about the government--even people who say they are not real happy with the way the Sandinistas are doing things--is that they know one thing for sure: They don't want the Contras in power. They don't support the Contras.

One good example of the people's support for the current system is the fact that the Contras do not have a popular base from which they can operate within Nicaragua. The Contras are based in Honduras and Costa Rica. They haven't been able to establish what is called an 'internal front'--a base of operation within Nicaragua. There are no safe havens for the Contras within Nicaragua.

To the Nicaraguan people, the Contras represent a return to the National Guard of Somoza, the army bought, paid for and trained by the U.S.--a lot of them at the School of the Americas in Panama, where a lot of our own Special Forces go for

training.

The Contras don't engage the Nicaraguan army in battle. What the Contras are doing is, basically, terror-

ism. They make strikes across the border, and their targets are civilians. Their targets are villages, schools, and orphanages. The Contras are terrorizing the people.

The Contras are not a military threat to the Nicaraguan military forces. The Nicaraguan forces can handle the Contras. The Contras cannot overthrow the Nicaraguan government.

That's why so many Nicaraguans are afraid of a U.S. invasion. They feel its imminent. The signs are there.

We didn't get into Honduras, but we talked to an ABC television crew that had just come through there, and they said they were amazed at the 'thousands of military personnel' stationed there and the 'tons of military hardware' they saw. Basically, they said Honduras is like a U.S.-occupied military encampment.

My personal opinion is that if we invade Nicaragua, we will encounter the same thing we encountered in Vietnam--a war of attrition. Our soldiers aren't going to have a sense of purpose. They aren't going to have the full backing of their country, and they are going to try to defeat people who are defending their own country--people who will fight to the very last, and who, if it comes down to fighting with sticks, will fight with sticks. It's not a matter of weapons or technology. It's a matter of a 'cause.' We don't have a 'cause' to be down there. The Nicaraguans are determined to be free--of us and anyone else.

The Nicaraguan government gave arms to its people to fight the contras. Those arms will be used against any invader. And let me say that if the Sandinistas were afraid of dissent among their own people, if they were afraid those arms would be used to oust them, the last thing they would do is arm the people. But that's what they have done. So there are no safe havens for the contras. There will be no safe havens for U.S. forces either.

VETERANS PEACE COALITION FORMED BY 12 GROUPS

Representatives from 12 veterans' groups met in Chicago in August with the intention of creating unified activities in the cause of peace. Hosted by VVAW, the group discussed the need for coordinated activities in the face of an increased prospect of war in Central America.

An important discussion arose around the nature of the group: would we be a coalition, a new membership organization, or a combination of both.

We agreed that we already had organizations in place, each with a history, a constituency and programs in place; a new organization was not what was needed. Likewise, trying to be both a coalition of existing groups and a membership organization would mean a lot of duplication of work already going on. So we finally decided on forming a coalition which would coordinate activities and disseminate information among the groups.

Each group joining would have to pay an initiation fee of \$100. Each group will have one vote regardless of the size of the group, and one voting member of a board which will elect a coordinator. The board would decide by vote who could join the group in the future.

Some activities voted on included endorsement of the Fast For Life, and a march on the Western White House in March of 1987.



Malcolm X 1926-1965

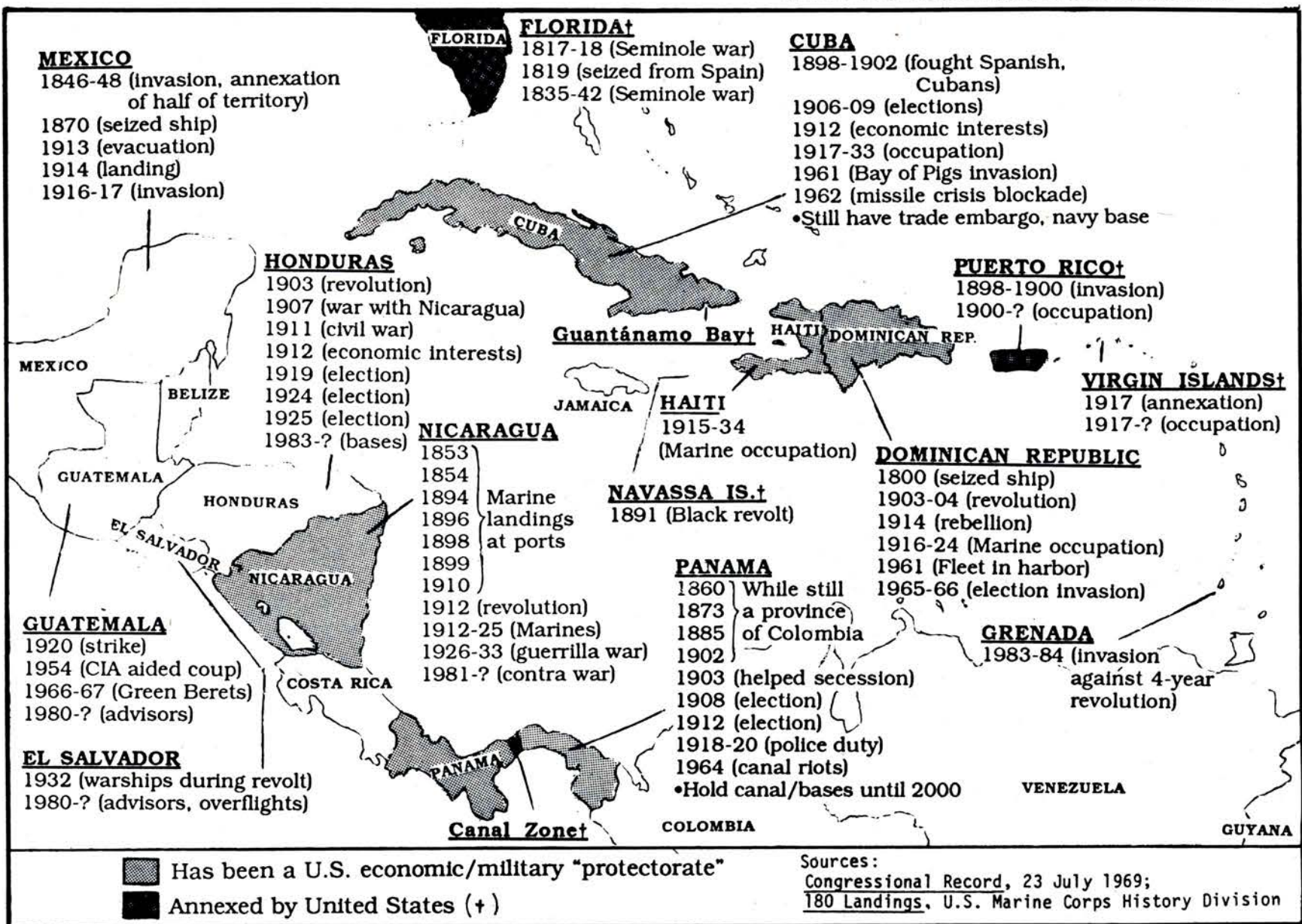
We see where the problem of Vietnam is the problem of the oppressed and the oppressor. The problem in the Congo is the problem of the oppressed and the oppressor. The problem in Mississippi and Alabama and New York is the problem of the oppressed and the oppressor. The oppressed people all over the world have the same problems and it is only now that they're becoming sufficiently sophisticated to see that all they have to do to get the oppressor off their backs is to unite and realize that it is one problem -- that our problems are inseparable. And then our action will be inseparable. Our action will be one of unity and in the unity of oppressed people is actually the strength, and the best strength, of the oppressed people.

Malcolm X, January 1965

February 25

HISTORY OF U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN

MAP BY ZOLTAN GROSSMAN/NORTHERN SUN NEWS



VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR



20TH. ANNIVERSARY



*Fighting for Veterans,
Peace and Justice
since 1967*

The year 1987 marks the 20th anniversary of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. To celebrate this event we intend to hold a party which will be both joyful and meaningful. The celebration will note our history as the oldest of continuing groups of primarily Vietnam veterans, a history and position of which we are proud.

At our 30 National Meeting in Athens, GA, we decided to mark the occasion with a dinner/demonstration/social event in Chicago on the weekend of the 13th and 14th of June. We will celebrate some of the early members of VVAW, honor past struggles and victories, and look ahead to future battles and programs for which we must prepare.

There will be photo displays, memorabilia, and personalities from VVAW's 20 years of history.

We want to invite old as well as new or future members of VVAW to join us in this celebration. If you have items of historical interest, we'd like to display them during the weekend--please let us know or send them to us for the occasion. Write down your recollections, experiences, anecdotes of VVAW's past. Join us in seeing friends you may not have seen for years.

Of course your donations to help all of this take place are, as always, both tax deductible and most welcome. Ad's in a special anniversary issue of THE VETERAN will be available; write for details.

And JOIN US JUNE 13!

Exclusive for THE VETERAN

VIETNAM VETERANS AND PRISON

The car broke down and the bills began to pile up. For the time I had spent writing, I got four rejections. What did the desperate man do? I can tell you that I was arrested in January 1981, charged with smuggling marijuana into the country. In August 1981, I was found guilty of possession and sentenced to five years at a minimum security prison. No one is more

shocked than I." (From parole, I will even speculate that this event, life-defining for most human beings, will be omitted from the forthcoming movie version of Robert Mason's *Chickenhawk*.)

This paragraph is tucked away at the very end of Robert Mason's powerful and revealing account of his life before, after, and during his tour as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam. Still, as I shared a table on Vietnam veterans issues at the Operation PUSH annual convention with an officer of the Vietnam Veterans Parade Committee, I remains unnoted by most who learned that not everyone and accomplishments. Since has forgotten Mason's one he's successfully completed mark of disgrace. Without

volunteering any information about my own history, I asked the parade officer why he had refused Mason's offer to raise funds for the Parade at his publisher's expense. The parade officer's first response focused on the large number of veterans who had tried to "make a buck off" the parade. When I said that that wasn't what I had understood to be the nature of Mason's offer, he confided--in that tone which sets the mood for the bottom line communication between all reasonable persons--that Mason had just been released from prison. "No, no," he continued, "we don't need any part of that kind of guy. For all I know, he would have taken off with part of the gate after the Parade."

WELCOME HOME STAN VERKETIS



Stan Verketis receiving the Purple Heart from General Westmoreland. One went on to a big retirement, the other to trial.

In April of 1968, Stan Verketis was assigned to Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion of the 503rd Parachute Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade. He joined his company as LZ English, a forward-area landing zone outside the rural village of Bong Son and an area of South Vietnam known, in military jargon, as II Corps (pronounced "two-core"). The Army didn't take much notice of him. He was a good soldier, he followed orders and stayed out of trouble. The Vietnamese didn't pay much attention. He was just another soldier in a war that had gone on for generations. With luck, he might live. Without luck, "X'in Loi" as the locals said (roughly, "Sorry about that"). Vietnam was a fairyland of picturebook rice farms and exotic animals in National Geographic jungles, but this tale held

a thousand bitter twists. The fairy tale had been rewritten and this time the three bears ate Goldilocks. Stan learned the skills necessary to his survival here. He learned to drop at the sound of gunfire, to tell the difference between incoming and outgoing fire (even in his sleep), and to listen to everything, especially at night. One of the most important skills was the ability to forget what he saw so that he could sleep. Those who couldn't forget had to find other ways, other refuges. Alcohol and other drugs; were plentiful, and were consumed openly in large quantities. On September 24, Stan learned something else. He learned firsthand exactly how it felt to step on a 105mm round booby trap with two good legs, and to hit the ground moments later with none. He was picked up

by MedEvac helicopter and was taken to Company B (Medical) of the 173rd, back in LZ English. He looked into the faces of the medics and doctors in the underground bunker treatment area and he knew. A doctor ran a spurlike instrument up and down what was left of his feet trying to find evidence of intact nerves. It was no good. He would lose his legs. He felt nothing, nothing but the pain. It was getting worse all the time. Give him something for the pain. I was there somewhere. I was another staring nineteen-year-old face in that bunker. I probably helped as Stan was loaded on to another chopper and taken to a hospital in Da Nang. From there he went to Tokyo, and from Tokyo to Letterman Hospital in San Francisco. I don't remember Stan. I

Parades and monuments of the Reagan Administration have replaced the underfunded and often misdirected programs of the Carter years. Vietnam vet spokesmen--those preferred by the media--have repeatedly emphasized that most Vietnam vets are "winners," and that only a few are the psychologically disturbed and economically deprived "losers" typified by the incarcerated veteran. In this autobiographical, social scientific and political article I hope to address the situation of those Vietnam veterans who are under the supervision of federal or state governments. I'll explore the connection between service in Vietnam and official criminal processing. From the perspective of personal observation, I'll examine the experience of some Vietnam veterans in prison settings with special focus on the ways that veterans draw personal and organizing strength from their common bonds and resources.

Bob Mason serves as a useful beginning. The psychological damage of his war experience brought him simultaneously to poverty and creativity. His ineffectiveness as a criminal brought him felony status only moments before his literary genius earned him celebrity status. As my conversation with the Parade official shows, his labeling as a criminal creates a problem for some of those who claim to want to lift our stigma as Vietnam vets.

In 1979, a Presidential Review Memorandum noted an alarming number of Vietnam veterans in various stages of legal difficulty--including 29,000 in state and federal prisons, 37,500 on parole, 250,000 under probation supervision, and 87,000 awaiting trial. Josefina

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Vets and Prison

Card (*Lives After Vietnam: the Personal Impact of Military Service*) found that Vietnam veterans in her sample of U.S. high school class of 1963 were significantly more likely than their non-Vietnam veteran and non-veteran peers to have been in some trouble with the law by 1980. According to Joel Osler Brende and Erwin Randolph Parson (*Vietnam Veterans: The Road to Recovery*), "If these men (Vietnam veterans) survived the first 10 years, they were often found within the confines of police, prisons, probation officers, or parole counselors."

In his *Khaki-Collar Crimes: Deviant Behavior in the Military Context*, Clifton Bryant notes that "Military life is the scene of a wide variety of deviant behavior ranging from excessive use of alcohol and narcotic addiction, to sex crimes, theft, and even mass murder. Much of this behavior may perhaps be attributed to the opportunity structure of the military system and the sociocultural and geographical settings in which the military normally operates, the informal pressures and strains inherent in military culture, as well as the structured subversion of organizational goals frequently component to the military enterprise." John Helmer (*Bringing the War Home: The American Soldier in Vietnam and After*) outlined the socially important role that alcohol and drug use played in day-to-day military life in Vietnam. Bill Shunas in his unpublished manuscript, *The Poker Game* describes well the ways in which the economic crimes associated with U.S. and Vietnamese corruption were a ubiquitous feature of daily life in the urbanized areas of Vietnam during the war. As Bryant notes, "American troops often violate currency and exchange laws of the country involved, inasmuch as this is one of the few economic crimes of which the commission is encouraged and facilitated by their occupational circumstances." Looking at the place of crime in the whole of human history of warfare forces Bryant to propose that, "My Lai, the entire Vietnam War, and the endemic crimes against Vietnamese civilians who were theoretically the allies of the U.S. military were all unusual occurrences of war (emphasis added)." For even the proudly conservative Bryant, the wartime experiences of the Vietnam veteran remain historically unique.

While few returning veterans of previous wars were subject to military-related criminal charges upon returning to the U.S. from a war zone, my own research (*Sunshine Patriots: Punishment and the Vietnam Offender*) has shown that perhaps as many as a quarter of all those individuals who received less-than-honorable discharges as a re-



Veterans and friends from Tallahassee, Florida—including members of VVAW's newest chapter—gathered at the city's new Vietnam Veterans Memorial on October 18 as part of a national protest against the U.S. government's aid to the "Contras" in Nicaragua. The peace activists met in support of the fast in Washing-

ton, DC.

Joe Ryan, a Vietnam veteran, returned eight medals he had received for Vietnam service. In the letter accompanying the medals he said, "In retrospect, my decision at 19 to offer my life in the name of peace, justice and for future generations was a naive one. Two decades later our government, representing the

greatest, most powerful country in the world has violated the Constitution ..."

Jerry Gates, Republican candidate for state comptroller attended the rally and said he fully supports the protest. "They went through a war that should never have occurred," he said, "and we are trying to prevent it again."

sult of military absence offenses were Vietnam veterans who went AWOL after returning to the U.S. from completing a tour in Vietnam. For these twenty thousand plus veterans, the end of the war brought a losing brush with the military justice system. In one study (Figley and Leventman, *Strangers at Home: Vietnam Veterans Since the War*), Vietnam veterans were compared to the Greek veteran of the Trojan War, Odysseus, who upon returning to his homeland has his eyes clouded by Athena so that nothing that had been familiar was recognizable. The comparison is even more appropriate in terms of the legal system that represented all things right during childhood, but had been turned on its head in the context of Vietnam and never quite regained its footing upon our return.

The story of the government and professional psychology's coming to recognize Post-Traumatic stress disorder as an official mental ailment is described by Myra McPherson (*Long Time Passing: Vietnam and the Haunted Generation*) as in part a trail of losing court battles on behalf of afflicted Vietnam veterans who in most cases went on to become convicted felons.

In his highly acclaimed *Bloods: An Oral History of the Vietnam War* by Black Veterans, Wallace Terry introduced Specialist 4 Haywood T. Kirkland. The three Vietnam veterans involved in the Haywood Kirkland mail robbery each contributed \$10,000 to the needy in their Washington DC community before they were arrested and began their lives as Vietnam veteran convicts.

It isn't surprising, therefore, that Kirkland eventually became active on behalf of other Vietnam vets in prison. One of the founders of the Incarcerated Veterans Assistance Organization at Lorton Reformatory in Virginia, Kirkland testified before Congress and met President Jimmy Carter. Office space, donated office equipment, and VA recognition were all gained through the efforts of Kirkland and other prisoners during those years.

My own place in the history of incarcerated Vietnam veterans came through the Reagan Administration's general assault on the VA Vet Center Program. McPherson describes the planting of three undercover agents in the Alabama Veterans Services community-based organization and Alabama Vet Centers, in an effort to uncover a suspected gun- and drug-running ring of anti-war Vietnam veterans. By means of a number of lies and machinations, I was one of three vets convicted of distributing small amounts of drugs at no profit. In fact I was convicted of conspiring, distributing, and using the phone to facilitate the distribution of 5.6 grams of cocaine. For this Judge Brevard Hand (known for his efforts to mandate the return of organized prayers in Alabama's public schools) sentenced me to 15 years for conspiracy, 15 years for distribution, and 4 years for using the phone, all to run consecutively. By sentencing me and my co-defendant under a federal law that required him to review the sentence after 90 days of incarceration, Judge Hand gained the best of all possible worlds. My sup-

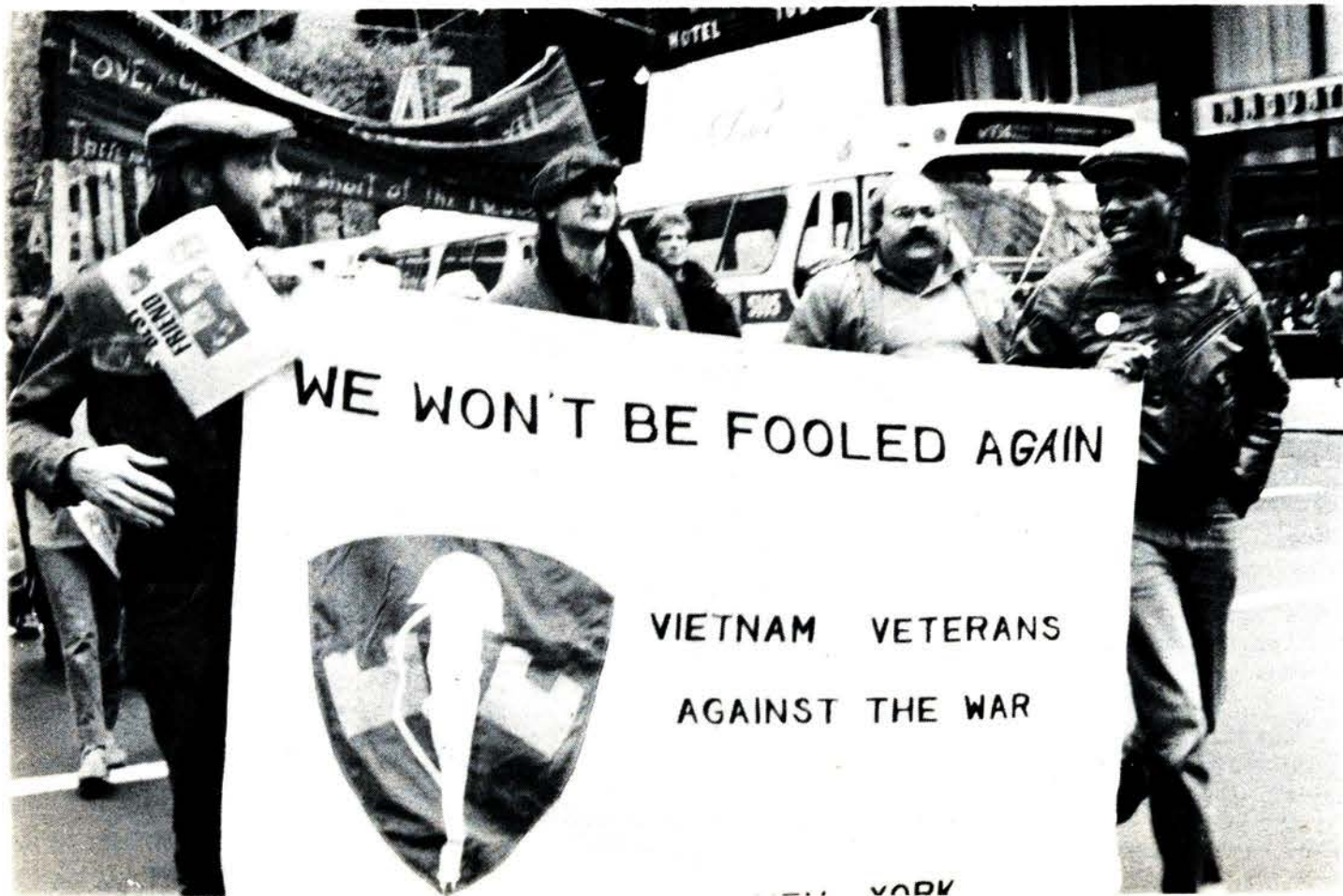
porters among the decent citizenry of Alabama "knew" that he would reduce the sentence after 90 days. The right wing in Alabama saw that the judge was tough on crime. And he sent me behind bars carrying a three-month to thirty-four year sentence. For prison officials and for other inmates for those three months, I was always identified by that enormous sentence.

My first period of incarceration was at Tallahassee Federal Correctional Institution in Florida. Tallahassee has gun towers and a high barbed wire fence. The cellhouse where I spent my first night is reminiscent of cellblocks the world over—humanly noisy and mechanically automated. The dormitories that I called home for the next months are enormous rooms where 80 to 100 men are collectively locked down for most hours of the day. Tallahassee had its minor share of beatings, rapes, and even one attempted murder while I was there. Perhaps most importantly, there were more drugs per square foot in Tallahassee than any place that I have ever been including Vietnam.

Every other Friday night one or two outsiders would forsake the quiet of their homes to enter the world of F.C.I. The most consistent of these visitors was Michael Hahn, soon to become the Advisor on Veterans' Affairs to the governor of Florida. An infantryman in Vietnam, Hahn felt and lived a special concern for the veterans behind the barbed wire at F.C.I. Even though he spent innumerable hours awaiting the remaking of his volunteer's entrance badge:

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30TH NATIONAL VVAW MEETING REPORT



New York/New Jersey Chapter of VVAW marching in the Oct. 25 demonstration in New York City.

We want to thank Athens, GA VVAW for hosting a most productive National Steering Committee Meeting, the 30th such meeting since VVAW's beginnings almost 20 years ago. Twenty-six people from Athens and Atlanta, Georgia, from Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, New York City and Bellaire, Ohio attended the meeting. Although members of the San Antonio chapter could not attend, a brief view of their activities was given by the VVAW National Office.

The first thing we discussed was the need for people to send money and/or pay debts owed to the national office. Pay for those copies of THE VETERAN. Go out and get subscriptions--get your local library to subscribe. Pay dues. Write articles for the newspaper and especially put down your Vietnam or military experiences for use as part of "Recollections."

Barry Romo gave a report on the state of the organization. We might be tired, but VVAW is still growing. An August meeting of 13 veterans peace groups was held in Chicago in order to coordinate efforts of vets in fighting growing U.S. involvement in Central America. VVAW received several ovations during the meeting, one of which was based on our staying power. Our 20th anniversary is coming up next year, and preparations are beginning for a 20th anniversary reunion in Chicago in June of

1987. Some preliminary details appear elsewhere in this issue of THE VETERAN.

All chapters present at the NSCM gave yearly reports on their activities. Some of the highlights were active counter-recruitment or pre-enlistment counseling in schools, especially in Chicago, New York City and Madison. Work around Central America is taking place in every chapter including new chapters in Burlington, VT, and Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where they are trying to keep Iowa National Guard members out of Honduras. Veterans from Tallahassee, Florida, were also at the meeting; this is an area where VVAW has been absent for ten years, and where vets are doing good things and are now working on becoming a VVAW Chapter.

We had a good discussion about VVAW and war; the situation in the world and our response. First was Central America. In El Salvador, where the U.S. press has put the war on the back burner, war is heavier than ever after 7 years and \$2 billion. At this time without the draft, the U.S. will use National Guard and Reserve units to fight if necessary. Already there are 7000 American troops in Honduras; the breakdown of the culture has begun (as in Vietnam 20 years ago) with young girls turning to prostitution, little kids selling drugs, and some young boys coming down with AIDS, all in a country which had not seen such problems before

Besides going into detail on Contra war against Nicaragua, we talked about South Africa and the importance of tying these struggles together. There are major changes going on in the world today, and these are two of the most important.

During these discussions, we also talked about how the U.S. establishment will attempt to rewrite the history of the Vietnam War for a new generation. It is important for VVAW to make our voices heard. Vietnam vets have a duty to expose the war for what it was, and as people learn more about the U.S. involvement in Nicaragua, they will also better understand the nature of the Vietnam War.

We had a good talk about counter-recruitment work going on around the nation. The NY/NJ VVAW publication, "Military Service: Choice or Chance" is in the process of being updated giving the organization another tool to use in combatting the lures of the military. All in all, our work in talking about Vietnam to the young is one of the organization's strengths.

For those who do work in the VA hospitals, be prepared for more of the effects of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings or cuts in services at the VA as well as cuts in benefits and even worse hospital conditions. Wherever possible, join with local traditional veterans' organizations to fight to keep

the VA hospital system intact. This was the tone of the meeting leading up to the discussion of Veterans Day, 1986. Everyone at the meeting was urged to be active on Vets Day, and don't forget the veterans in the VA hospitals (reports on the activities of VVAW chapters on Veterans Day are elsewhere in the paper).

One of the highpoints of the meeting was the announcement that VVAW will be able to send a delegation to Vietnam in the spring of 1987. This will be our first trip back to Vietnam since December or 1972. The delegation would, among other things, be discussing topics such as the differences between the U.S. and Vietnam concerning MIAs, the common problems of Agent Orange, the situation in Cambodia, normalizing relations with Vietnam. Contributions will be needed to help send the delegation: for more information, please contact the VVAW National Office.

VVAW's involvement in the Veterans Peace Coalition, a grouping of a number of veteran's peace groups was discussed. The VPC's first major action was the "Fast For Life." Also planned at the first Coalition meeting in Chicago in August, was a march on the Western White House in March of 1987. VVAW members would be taking a bus or train from the midwest--more on that later.

Discussion of the "Fast for Life," which, since that time, ended after 46 days, showed VVAW was 100% behind the fasters, but with the hope that they would really "fast for life" since we needed their contributions to the struggle in the future. The fasters wanted a greater commitment from people; they got it, so the fast was, at least in that respect, a success.

The meeting ended with the re-election of National Officers. This cannot go on forever! We go through burn-out at times; together, the 4 members of the National Office have 40 years service in the National Office. New blood is needed. It was especially good to see new chapters this year: a change may be coming. It's amazing that we have been around as long as we have, a testament to the ideas that VVAW has been putting in front of the public for 20 years. As we go into that 20th year, I am proud to be a member of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. When I think of the over 200,000 veterans who have been in and out of VVAW since 1967, I know we have had a positive effect on them; they are still all around us. I'm looking forward to the 20th year in 1987.

--John Lindquist
VVAW National
Office

The address was given by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., at the Riverside Church, New York City, April 4, 1967, sponsored by Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam. It has been slightly condensed.

Over the past two years, as I have moved to break the betrayal of my own silences and to speak from the burnings of my own heart, as I have called for radical departures from the destruction of Vietnam, many persons have questioned me about the wisdom of my path. At the heart of their concerns this query has often loomed large and loud: Why are you speaking about the war, Dr. King? Why are you joining the voices of dissent? Peace and civil rights don't mix, they say. Aren't you hurting the cause of your people, they ask. And when I hear them, though I often understand the source of their concern, I am nevertheless greatly saddened, for such questions mean that the inquirers have not really known me, my commitment or my calling. Indeed, their questions suggest that they do not know the world in which they live.

In the light of such tragic misunderstanding, I deem it of signal importance to try to state clearly why I believe that the path from Dexter Avenue Baptist Church—the church in Montgomery, Alabama, where I began my pastorage—leads clearly to this sanctuary tonight.

I come to this platform to make a passionate plea to my beloved nation. This speech is not addressed to Hanoi or to the National Liberation Front. It is not addressed to China or to Russia.

Nor is it an attempt to overlook the ambiguity of the total situation and the need for a collective solution to the tragedy of Vietnam. Neither is it an attempt to make North Vietnam or the National Liberation Front paragons of virtue, nor to overlook the role they can play in a successful resolution of the problem. While they both may have justifiable reasons to be suspicious of the good-faith of the United States, life and history give eloquent testimony to the fact that conflicts are never resolved without trustful give and take on both sides.

Tonight, however, I wish not to speak with Hanoi and the NLF, but rather to my fellow Americans who, with me, bear the greatest responsibility in ending a conflict that has exacted a heavy price on both continents.

Since I am a preacher by trade, I suppose it is not surprising that I have seven major reasons for bringing Vietnam into the field of my moral vision. There is at the outset a very obvious and almost facile connection between the war in Vietnam and the struggle I, and others, have been waging in America. A few years ago there was a shining moment in that struggle. It seemed as if there was a real promise of hope for the poor—both black and white—through the Poverty Program. Then came the build-up in Vietnam, and I watched the program broken and eviscerated as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war, and I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic, destructive suction tube. So I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such.

Perhaps the more tragic recognition of reality took place when it became clear to me that the war was doing far more than devastating the hopes of the poor at home. It was sending their sons and their brothers and their husbands to fight and to die in extraordinarily high proportions relative to the rest of the population. We were taking the young black men who had been crippled by our society and sending them 8000 miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in Southwest Georgia and East Harlem. So we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools. So we watch them in brutal solidarity burning the huts of a poor village, but we realize that they would never live on the same block in Detroit. I could not be silent in the face of such cruel manipulation of the poor.

My third reason grows out of my experience in the ghettos of the North over the last three years—especially the last three summers. As I have walked among the desperate, rejected and angry young men, I have told them that Molotov cocktails and rifles would not solve their problems. I have tried to offer them my deepest compassion while maintaining my conviction that social change comes most meaningfully through non-violent action. But, they asked, what about Vietnam? They asked if our own nation wasn't using massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted. Their questions hit home, and I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today—my own government.

For those who ask the question, "Aren't you a Civil Rights leader?" and thereby mean to exclude me from the movement for peace, I have this further answer. In 1957 when a group of us formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, we chose as our motto: "To save the soul of America." We were convinced that we could not limit our vision to certain rights for black people, but instead affirmed the conviction that America would never be free or saved from itself unless the descendants of its slaves were loosed from the shackles they still wear.

Now, it should be incandescently clear that no one who has any concern for the integrity and life of America today can ignore the present war. If America's soul becomes totally poisoned, part of the autopsy must read "Vietnam." It can never be saved so long as it destroys the deepest hopes of men the world over.

As if the weight of such a commitment to the life and health of America were not enough, another burden of responsibility was placed upon me in 1964; and I cannot forget that the Nobel Prize for Peace was also a commission—a commission to work harder than I had ever worked before for the "brotherhood of man." This is a calling that takes me beyond national allegiances, but even if it were not present I would yet have to live with the meaning of my commitment to the ministry of Jesus Christ. To me the relationship of this ministry to the making of peace is so obvious that I sometimes marvel at those who ask me why I am speaking against the war.

DECLARATION OF FROM THE WAR

Could it be that they do not know that the good news was meant for all men—for communist and capitalist, for their children and ours, for black and white, for revolutionary and conservative? Have they forgotten that my ministry is in obedience to the One who loved His enemies so fully that He died for them? What then can I say to the Viet Cong or to Castro or to Mao as a faithful minister of this One? Can I threaten them with death, or must I not share with them my life?

And as I ponder the madness of Vietnam, my mind goes constantly to the people of that peninsula. I speak now not of the soldiers of each side, not of the junta in Saigon, but simply of the people who have been living under the curse of war for almost three continuous decades. I think of them, too, because it is clear to me that there will be no meaningful solution there until some attempt is made to know them and their broken cries.

They must see Americans as strange liberators. The Vietnamese proclaimed their own independence in 1945 after a combined French and Japanese occupation and before the communist revolution in China. Even though they quoted the American Declaration of Independence in their own document of freedom, we refused to recognize them. Instead, we decided to support France in its re-conquest of her former colony.

Our government felt then that the Vietnamese people were not "ready" for independence, and we again fell victim to the deadly Western arrogance that has poisoned the international atmosphere for so long. With that tragic decision, we rejected a revolutionary government seeking self-determination, and a government that had been established not by China (for whom the Vietnamese have no great love) but by clearly indigenous forces that included some communists. For the peasants, this new government meant real land reform, one of the most important needs in their lives.

For nine years following 1945 we denied the people of Vietnam the right of independence. For nine years we vigorously supported the French in their abortive effort to re-colonize Vietnam.

Before the end of the war we were meeting 80 per cent of the French war costs. Even before the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu, they began to despair of their reckless action, but we did not. We encouraged them with our huge financial and military supplies to continue the war even after they had lost the will to do so.

After the French were defeated it looked as if independence and land reform would come again through the Geneva agreements. But instead there came the United States, determined that Ho should not unify the temporarily divided nation, and the peasants watched again as we supported one of the most vicious modern dictators—our chosen man, Premier Diem. The peasants watched and cringed as Diem ruthlessly routed out all opposition, supported their extortionist landlords and refused even to discuss reunification with the North. The peasants watched as all this was presided over by U.S. influence and then by increasing numbers of U.S. troops who came to help quell the insurgency that Diem's methods had aroused. When Diem was overthrown they may have been happy, but the long line of military dictatorships seemed to offer no real change—especially in terms of their need for land and peace.

The only change came from America as we increased our troop commitments in support of governments which were singularly corrupt, inept and without popular support. All the while, the people read our leaflets and received regular promises of peace and democracy—and land reform. Now they languish under our bombs and consider us—not their fellow Vietnamese—the real enemy. They move sadly and apathetically as we herd them off the land of their fathers into concentration camps where minimal social needs are rarely met. They know they must move or be destroyed by our bombs. So they go.

They watch as we poison their water, as we kill a million acres of their crops. They must weep as the bulldozers destroy their precious trees. They wander into the hospitals, with at least 20 casualties from American firepower for each Viet Cong-inflicted injury. So far we may have killed a million of them—mostly children.

What do the peasants think as we ally ourselves with the landlords and as we refuse to put any action into our many words concerning land reform? What do they think as we test out our latest weapons on them, just as the Germans tested out new medicine and new tortures in the concentration camps of Europe? Where are the roots of the independent Vietnam we claim to be building?

Now there is little left to build on—save bitterness. Soon the only solid physical foundations remaining will be found at our military bases and in the concrete of the concentration camps we call "fortified hamlets." The peasants may well wonder if we plan to build our new Vietnam on such grounds as these. Could we blame them for such thoughts? We must speak for them and raise the questions they cannot raise. These too are our brothers.

Perhaps the more difficult but no less necessary task is to speak for those who have been designated as our enemies. What of the NLF—that strangely anonymous group we call VC or communists? What must they think of us in America when they realize that we permitted the repression and cruelty of Diem which helped to bring them into being as a resistance group in the South? How can they believe in our integrity when now we speak of "aggression from the North" as if there were nothing more essential to the war? How can they trust us when now we charge them with vio-



"... The Western arrogance has everything to teach. What we learn from them is not of values will lay hands and say of war: 'This differences is not just.' burning human beings our nation's homes with of injecting poisonous veins of peoples normal men home from dark physically handicapped deranged, cannot be re justice, and love. A nation after year to spend more defense than on progress approaching spiritual c

lence after the murderous reign of Diem while we pour new weapons of death in

How do they judge us when our offer less than 25 per cent communist and y name? What must they be thinking wh their control of major sections of Vie allow national elections in which this government will have no part? They a tions when the Saigon press is censo junta. And they are surely right to w we plan to help form without them—t peasants. They question our political g peace settlement from which they wil frighteningly relevant.

Here is the true meaning and value when it helps us to see the enemy's po know his assessment of ourselves. For the basic weaknesses of our own cond learn and grow and profit from the wis the opposition.

So, too, with Hanoi. In the North, land, and our mines endanger the wa understandable mistrust. In Hanoi are pendence against the Japanese and the bership in the French commonwealth of Paris and the willfulness of the col second struggle against French domin were persuaded at Geneva to give up they controlled between the 13th ar watched us conspire with Diem to p surely brought Ho Chi Minh to pow realized they had been betrayed again.

When we ask why they do not lea remembered. Also, it must be clear t the presence of American troops in s been the initial military breach of t

INDEPENDENCE IN VIETNAM

Martin Luther King, Jr.



In Remembrance of
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foreign troops, and they remind us that they did not begin to send in any large number of supplies or men until American forces had moved into the tens of thousands.

Hanoi remembers how our leaders refused to tell us the truth about the earlier North Vietnamese overtures for peace, how the President claimed that none existed when they had clearly been made. Ho Chi Minh has watched as America has spoken of peace and built up its forces, and now he has surely heard the increasing international rumors of American plans for an invasion of the North. Perhaps only his sense of humor and irony can save him when he hears the most powerful nation of the world speaking of aggression as it drops thousands of bombs on a poor, weak nation more than 8000 miles from its shores.

At this point, I should make it clear that while I have tried here to give a voice to the voiceless of Vietnam and to understand the arguments of those who are called enemy, I am as deeply concerned about our own troops there as anything else. For it occurs to me that what we are submitting them to in Vietnam is not simply the brutalizing process that goes on in any war where armies face each other and seek to destroy. We are adding cynicism to the process of death, for our troops must know after a short period there that none of the things we claim to be fighting for are really involved. Before long they must know that their government has sent them into a struggle among Vietnamese, and the more sophisticated surely realize that we are on the side of the wealthy and the secure while we create a hell for the poor.

Somehow this madness must cease. I speak as a child of God and brother to the suffering poor of Vietnam and the poor of America who are paying the double price of smashed hopes at home and death and corruption in Vietnam. I speak as a citizen of the world, for the world as it stands aghast at the path we have taken. I speak as an American to the leaders of my own nation. The great initiative in this war is ours. The initiative to stop must be ours.

This is the message of the great Buddhist leaders of Vietnam. Recently, one of them wrote these words: "Each day the war goes on the hatred increases in the hearts of the Vietnamese and in the hearts of those of humanitarian instinct. The Americans are forcing even their friends into becoming their enemies. It is curious that the Americans, who calculate so carefully on the possibilities of military victory, do not realize that in the process they are incurring deep psychological and political defeat. The image of America will never again be the image of revolution, freedom and democracy, but the image of violence and militarism."

If we continue, there will be no doubt in my mind and in the mind of the world that we have no honorable intentions in Vietnam. It will become clear that our minimal expectation is to occupy it as an American colony, and men will not refrain from thinking that our maximum hope is to goad China into a war so that we may bomb her nuclear installations.

The world now demands a maturity of America that we may not be able to achieve. It demands that we admit that we have been wrong from the beginning of our adventure in Vietnam, that we have been detrimental to the life of her people.

In order to atone for our sins and errors in Vietnam, we should take the initiative in bringing the war to a halt. I would like to suggest five concrete things that our government should do immediately to begin the long and difficult process of extricating ourselves from this nightmare:

1. End all bombing in North and South Vietnam.
2. Declare a unilateral cease-fire in the hope that such action will create the atmosphere for negotiation.
3. Take immediate steps to prevent other battlegrounds in Southeast Asia by curtailing our military build-up in Thailand and our interference in Laos.
4. Realistically accept the fact that the National Liberation Front has substantial support in South Vietnam and must thereby play a role in any meaningful negotiations and in any future Vietnam government.
5. Set a date on which we will remove all foreign troops from Vietnam in accordance with the 1954 Geneva Agreement.

Part of our ongoing commitment might well express itself in an offer to grant asylum to any Vietnamese who fears for his life under a new regime which included the NLF. Then we must make what reparations we can for the damage we have done. We must provide the medical aid that is badly needed, in this country if necessary.

Meanwhile, we in the churches and synagogues have a continuing task while we urge our government to disengage itself from a disgraceful commitment. We must be prepared to match actions with words by seeking out every creative means of protest possible.

As we counsel young men concerning military service we must clarify for them our nation's role in Vietnam and challenge them with the alternative of conscientious objection. I am pleased to say that this is the path now being chosen by more than 70 students at my own Alma Mater, Morehouse College, and I recommend it to all who find the American course in Vietnam a dishonorable and unjust one. Moreover, I would encourage all ministers of draft age to give up their ministerial exemptions and seek status as conscientious objectors. Every man of humane convictions must decide on the protest that best suits his convictions, but we must all protest.

There is something seductively tempting about stopping there and send-

ing us all off on what in some circles has become a popular crusade against the war in Vietnam. I say we must enter that struggle, but I wish to go on now to say something even more disturbing. The war in Vietnam is but a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit, and if we ignore this sobering reality we will find ourselves organizing clergy- and laymen-concerned committees for the next generation. We will be marching and attending rallies without end unless there is a significant and profound change in American life and policy.

In 1957 a sensitive American official overseas said that it seemed to him that our nation was on the wrong side of a world revolution. During the past ten years we have seen emerge a pattern of suppression which now has justified the presence of U.S. military "advisors" in Venezuela. The need to maintain social stability for our investments accounts for the counterrevolutionary action of American forces in Guatemala. It tells why American helicopters are being used against guerrillas in Colombia and why American napalm and green beret forces have already been active against rebels in Peru. With such activity in mind, the words of John F. Kennedy come back to haunt us. Five years ago he said, "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable."

Increasingly, by choice or by accident, this is the role our nation has taken—by refusing to give up the privileges and the pleasures that come from the immense profits of overseas investment.

I am convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. When machines and computers, profit and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.

A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it is not haphazard and superficial. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs re-structuring. A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth. With righteous indignation, it will look across the seas and see individual capitalists of the West investing huge sums of money in Asia, Africa and South America, only to take the profits out with no concern for the social betterment of the countries, and say: "This is not just."

It will look at our alliance with the landed gentry of Latin America and say: "This is not just." The Western arrogance of feeling that it has everything to teach others and nothing to learn from them is not just. A true revolution of values will lay hands on the world order and say of war: "This way of settling differences is not just." This business of burning human beings with napalm, of filling our nation's homes with orphans and widows, of injecting poisonous drugs of hate into the veins of peoples normally humane, of sending men home from dark and bloody battlefields physically handicapped and psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice, and love. A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.

America, the richest and most powerful nation in the world, can well lead the way in this revolution of values. There is nothing, except a tragic death wish, to prevent us from re-ordering our priorities, so that the pursuit of peace will take precedence over the pursuit of war. There is nothing to keep us from molding a recalcitrant status quo until we have fashioned it into a brotherhood.

This kind of positive revolution of values is our best defense against communism. War is not the answer. Communism will never be defeated by the use of atomic bombs or nuclear weapons. Let us not join those who shout war and through their misguided passions urge the United States to relinquish its participation in the United Nations. These are days which demand wise restraint and calm reasonableness. We must not call everyone a communist or an appeaser who advocates the seating of Red China in the United Nations and who recognizes that hate and hysteria are not the final answers to the problems of these turbulent days. We must not engage in a negative anti-communism, but rather in a positive thrust for democracy, realizing that our greatest defense against communism is to take offensive action in behalf of justice. We must with positive action seek to remove those conditions of poverty, insecurity and injustice which are the fertile soil in which the seed of communism grows and develops.

These are revolutionary times. All over the globe men are revolting against old systems of exploitation and oppression, and out of the wombs of a frail world, new systems of justice and equality are being born. The shirtless and barefoot people of the land are rising up as never before. "The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light." We in the West must support these revolutions. It is a sad fact that, because of comfort, complacency, a morbid fear of communism, and our proneness to adjust to injustice, the Western nations that initiated so much of the revolutionary spirit of the modern world have now become the arch anti-revolutionaries. This has driven many to feel that only Marxism has the revolutionary spirit. Therefore, communism is a judgment against our failure to make democracy real and follow through on the revolutions that we initiated. Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism.

We must move past indecision to action. We must find new ways to speak for peace in Vietnam and justice throughout the developing world—a world that borders on our doors. If we do not act we shall surely be dragged down the long, dark and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality, and strength without sight.

Now let us begin. Now let us re-dedicate ourselves to the long and bitter—but beautiful—struggle for a new world. This is the calling of the sons of God, and our brothers wait eagerly for our response. Shall we say the odds are too great? Shall we tell them the struggle is too hard? Will our message be that the forces of American life militate against their arrival as full men, and we send our deepest regrets? Or will there be another message, of longing, of hope, of solidarity with their yearnings, of commitment to their cause, whatever the cost? The choice is ours, and though we might prefer it otherwise we must choose in this crucial moment of human history.

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Pirate & Propaganda Radio in Vietnam

REQUEST FOR AUDIO TAPES AND INFORMATION

Interlock Media Associates, a non-profit media collaborative in Cambridge, MA is currently producing "Vietnam: Radio First Termer," a series for public radio exploring entertainment, propaganda and underground radio of the Vietnam War.

We want to talk to Vietnam vets who:

**Worked for AFVN or AFRTS.

**Have recordings of radio transmissions heard during their time in-country. This includes tapes ranging from Radio Hanoi to the AFVN and "pirate" broadcasts.

**Took part in psychological operations in Vietnam, especially units which utilized radio broadcasts directed at the enemy.

**May wish to relate through correspondence or in a recorded interview how radio listening was a part of their experience in Vietnam.

**Know of or took part in any unauthorized use of radio equipment for broadcasting or know anything about the underground "pirate" radio series "Radio First Termer" and host DJ "Dave Rabbit."

**Possess audio tapes illustrative of the use of radio in today's war-torn arenas such as Central America and the Middle East.

The program will also explore historical antecedents of Vietnam radio. Thus, we are also interested in obtaining archival recordings of war time radio from the last 60 years including Tokyo Rose and Lord Haw Haw.

Please contact Alexis Muellner @

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Special-VETERAN Anniversary Issue

VVAW will be publishing a special issue of THE VETERAN to commemorate our 20th anniversary. We invite you to advertise in this issue to show your support for the causes for which VVAW has fought for 20 years.

VVAW: THE BOOK

Veteran activist William F. Crandell, Director of Information for the New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs has announced plans to write a history of Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

Crandell, who holds a doctorate in 20th century American History from Ohio State University, served as Regional Coordinator in VVAW from 1968 through 1973. He was the senior historian on the staff of the Winter Soldier Investigation, the first oral history project on the Vietnam War.

"I don't want this to be a personal memoir," Crandell commented. "VVAW was a major organization in one of the most turbulent times in American history. This will be the history of that organization, not of one member."

The book will chronicle the development of VVAW from a handful of veterans in 1967 through the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, showing how the group evolved from a primary focus on saving the lives of American service-people--a focus it never lost--to a broad view that sought successfully to shape American foreign and domestic policy. It will cover major activities ranging from participation in the 1968 elections to the 1974 March on Washington, with specific chapters on Operation RAW (1970), Winter Soldier (1970-1971) and Dewey Canyon III (1971).

VVAW was not simply a self-contained organization of anti-war veterans, Crandell points out. It was part of a network that included the GI Movement, the draft resistance, the Black Panthers, and the Society of Friends. It was the first Vietnam Veterans organization, and it pioneered the treatment programs that are now fixtures of services to Vietnam vets: the rap groups, the PTSD studies, and the vet centers. It was the only organization in the antiwar movement that had a congressional liaison at the same time that it described itself as revolutionary. It was a major support for writers of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction, and many of its activists are still politically active.

Crandell is eager to hear from VVAW members to want to contribute information to the book. "The old VVAW had a broad range of members and chapters," he notes. "I don't want to do just the story of the national headquarters."

Correspondence should be sent to:

VVAW Book Project
c/o Bill Crandell
67 S. Ferry St
Albany, NY 12202

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Information

With the great help of hundreds of vets I've interviewed, I've sold three books on the Vietnam War. I'm starting a fourth proposed book involving: a) the actions 29 March - 1 April 1970 when 2/7th Cav was attacked in their LZ, 2/8th Cav was overrun at LZ Illingworth, and the CG, 199th Inf Bde was killed; b) the 1 May-30 June 1970

incursion into Cambodia by elements of the 4th, 9th, and 25th Inf Divs, the 1st Air Cav, 101st Abn Div, 11th Armored Cav Regt, and the 199th Inf Bde. Veterans please call or write anytime to arrange an interview: Keith William Nolan, 220 Kingsville Ct, Webster Groves, MO 63119 (314) 961-7577.

What are GRAND JURIES and why should you worry about them?

These days the federal government is using grand juries to harass, intimidate, and gather information about people working for social justice. The best defense against grand jury abuse is knowing how they work. Until You Talk: Activists and Grand Jury Abuse is available from the American Friends Service Committee. 25 cents for two sample copies, or \$3 for bundles of fifty. Free to prisoners. AFSC, 2161 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02140.

'Nam Vets Wanted for Film Documentary SOLDIERS OF PEACE

"Soldiers of Peace," a half-hour documentary about Vietnam veterans in opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America is currently under production. The documentary will chronicle veterans, both men and women, who served in Vietnam and became convinced that the war was wrong and are now speaking out against what they see as a second Viet-

nam now developing in Central America. We are currently seeking Vietnam veterans, both men and women, interested in telling their own personal stories of Vietnam to be used in the documentary "Soldiers of Peace." All those interested please call Paul Kulak at Ashley Productions (202) 342-6689. The address is 2706 Olive St, NW, Washington, DC 20007.



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

AUSTRALIA

in the Marines when a judge, over a minor offence, gave him a choice of the Marines or jail. Naturally he ended up in Vietnam; the next stop was Laos where Beane went AWOL for several months living in a local village. From the stockade he escaped to live under-ground in Saigon where he was eventually picked up in one of the military sweeps of the area. Back in the stockade, he ate nails and was transferred to a hospital. It was from there he escaped, overpowering his guards and stealing a uniform which had an R&R pass in the pocket.

In Australia he was welcomed by the anti Vietnam War movement. Friends helped him get the necessary identity papers (in fact his first job in Australia was with a U.S. firm which demanded a security clearance) and it was only fear of pursuit by the U.S. authorities which led Beane to move to NSW where he worked as a cook and a laborer. Along the way he had time for four women to bear his children (the paper calls them "de facto" wives). The paper reports on "dozens, perhaps hundreds of Vietnam veterans from both the U.S. and Australia ...living hermit existences in the deep, hidden valleys of the Tweed River (in NSW)." Where an American was once a rarity in the area, according to one local, they "are now all over the place here." The local population seems sympathetic. Among the Ameri-

cans is ex-Colonel David Hackworth who left the U.S. to better attack the Pentagon over nuclear war plans. Hackworth inspired the character played by Marlon Brando in "Apocalypse Now."

So, what to do if your MIA/POW bracelet has the name of Douglas Beane on it?

First, of course, be glad that the man is alive and well, that his name is not one of those whose name will end up being moved from the Pentagon's MIA/POW ledger to the Vietnam Memorial Wall.

And then it's time to get mad as hell at a government which continues to push the idea that there are still POW's in Vietnam. Of course families of those who are not accounted for in Vietnam want to hope their son, husband or father is still alive--that is only natural. Most of those who demand the return of "prisoners" in Vietnam are sincere in their beliefs. Others, less sincere, use the POW issue as one more means to justify the Vietnam war, and to justify the U.S. refusal to abide by the terms of the Paris Peace Accords. Just as during the war the U.S. military had to portray the Vietnamese as less than human, as "gooks" to be killed off, still today the U.S. government finds it useful to show the Vietnamese as sub-human creeps who will hide away brave American soldiers and keep them from their loving families. The "insidious oriental mind" is at work torturing American GI's.

For those convinced that there are still Americans being held against

their will in Vietnam--convinced for either emotional or political reasons--there is nothing we can say which will change their minds. For others, however, here are a couple of observations.

There is no conceivable reason for the Vietnamese to hold American prisoners; it's expensive, among other things, and the economy has sufficient strains without any more. If, according to the argument, the Vietnamese are holding prisoners in order to get something from the U.S. (like, for instance, the U.S. agreement to abide by the agreement already signed in 1973) then Vietnam would have to let us know that prisoners are there.

Why are not all the MIA's accounted for then? It is not hard to imagine that the Vietnamese have more important things to do than search for American bodies, particularly when some of these bodies are in places not easily accessible (as any vet who humped through the jungles can testify). The Vietnamese have other priorities as we should expect.

What about French troops held "captive" for years after the French defeat in Indochina? We took the time to write to the French embassy to ask; they replied that they knew of no such prisoners.

And what about the thousands of reported "sightings" of Americans in Vietnam? I have little doubt that there are Americans in Vietnam. I believe they stayed behind by choice. Many Vietnam vets

can tell of friends who managed to move into a local village and while still functioning, more or less, as a member of the U.S. military, took up something close to local life. In his bookand a hard rain fell, John Ketwig tells of spending almost a year in Thailand living in the midst of the people, and of the temptation to just fade into the local scene and never return to the U.S. In other words, it is certainly possible for a GI to have become Vietnamese. No doubt some did and are still there with no interest in ever leaving.

And finally there's the story of Douglas Beane: how many GI's have simply slipped through the Pentagon counting procedures, how many found it easier or safer not to be identified or listed? How many Vietnam vets don't care what list they might be on; they simply want to left alone with whatever new life they have created for themselves.

The losers in this elaborate charade are the families of the missing and, perhaps to a greater extent, the Vietnamese. Vietnamese children, suffering from exposure to Agent Orange, are denied medical aid which could come from the U.S. because Vietnam is embargoed, an embargo which the U.S. government can continue in part because Reagan and Co can say there are prisoners still held in Vietnam. As was the case of the Vietnam War itself, only the U.S. government stands to gain.

--Pete Zastrow
VVAW National
Office

20th Anniversary of VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR

see pages 2,8

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Welcome Home....



Ronnie (then Gov. of California) and Nancey wish Stan well. But where are they now.

can't recall his face in my waking hours. I have forgotten much of that bunker and most of those who came to us for help. Occasionally, in my dreams, they still come; and even now I simply can't do enough. There are too many, and I am ignorant. I don't know enough. I don't know what

to do. I wake up, and my wife rubs my shoulders. Once again, I forget.

Stan disappeared. He was swallowed by the VA bureaucracy. I had some sort of naive notion that as long as we got people home alive,

they were OK. Mostly, I just didn't think about it. I was busy trying to heal myself after I got back and I had forgotten. We all had.

Meanwhile, Stan got out of Letterman. For once, he left a hospital with more than he had had when he entered. He now had a drug habit. He got married and had two daughters. I don't know much about his wife except that she left him. She took their daughters with her. Stan had been involved in a drug rehabilitation program through the VA but found himself drinking instead. She couldn't take any more and she left, probably around the time my first wife left me. We find a lot of parallels when we vets sit down and compare postwar histories.

Somewhere along the line, the counselors stopped being helpful. One went so far as to suggest that jail might be good for him. Stan switched off. He no longer had enough incentive to keep fighting. Something was wrong with him. He couldn't identify it and neither could anyone else. He was defective, useless to society, a disposable. No one knew. No one cared. He was one more of us who satirically labeled ourselves "DCBKVs": Drug-Crazed Baby-Killer Vets, after the media

image of the Vietnam vet at the time. We were aliens, volatile, emotionally and physically dependent, lonely, suicidal. Each of us was sure in his own mind that he was the only one, that everyone else was okay. No one had ever heard of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, so we were creeps, jerks, losers.

Stan felt so alone, so unnecessary, so hopeless that he decided to die. What he couldn't know was that even suicide wouldn't go smoothly for him. Somewhere inside, a tiny part of him still hoped for a better life ahead, and he didn't manage to kill himself. Tragically, a police officer lost his life trying to prevent the suicide, and Stan now faces murder charges in addition to his other problems.

He is something like a monument in my mind, this legless vet. He has lost more than flesh and bone, and there has been very little effort made to restore him to himself. Instead of recognition, or even just the treatment he is owed, he has reaped a grim harvest of neglect and indifference. Where is his parade? Who will welcome him home? Who even cares? I do. I care. It may not sound like much, but welcome home, Stan Verketis. Welcome home, brother.

--Bob Hanson,
Pembine, WI

CONTINUED FROM 10

PRISON

(it was routinely "misplaced" by officials), Hahn, by his persistence and strength of character had helped to make the F.C.I. Veterans Club one of the most viable and powerful in the federal system. In that club with sometimes as many as sixty vets present, we had hard-fought elections and created inmate politics. No where is organizational activity more important for human integrity and development than in the prison system.

In March of 1986, my judge had me moved from Tallahassee at the end of my stay with 25 other prisoners from all around the country, none from Tallahassee. They were bound for Eglin Federal Prison Camp. I was bound for Santa Clara County Jail (?). The folder that the captain of the prison bus was given said only that I had been a vet center counselor and that I was sentenced to 34 years in prison. The captain was very polite but informed me that he would have to chain me for the trip for the protection of his staff and the other prisoners. As usual, I had a very heavy box of math books which I could not carry when chained. A large inmate with a bushy beard offered to carry them for me and told me to stay close. He told me he has had been a Green Beret in 'Nam and that I was obviously "getting screwed." He advised me to "make a break for it" whenever I got a chance. (I incorrectly suspected at the time that the man was a government plant.)

Judge Hand resented me to five years of incarceration, three years of special parole, and five years of probation to run consecutively because, as he correctly surmised, I "do

not support the established norms of my society." He did let me live out my appeal bond in Chicago for fourteen months. When I lost my appeal and was sent to Eglin F.P.C., I once again met the ex Green Beret. He was a head clerk and still helpful and kind. Eglin had no veterans organization, but veterans seemed even more abundant in this minimum security environment than at Tallahassee. On my first inmate job as an unskilled laborer on Eglin Air Force Base, three of my five co-workers were Vietnam combat veterans. Ironically they had never talked about it to each other. Only one day when one of them made an anti-American remark and an argument followed did all three of them realize that they shared so many experiences.

Inmates are responsible for the upkeep of the grounds at Eglin. Bordering a marshland bird sanctuary, the camp is physically beautiful. There are no walls. Many of the inmates have testified against their co-defendants, and anyone else that they can, in order to get assigned to a minimum security facility. Others have spent a great deal of well-behaved time in higher-level prisons in hopes of coming to this "country-club" facility. A few have been convicted of crimes that might have merited no incarceration at all except for their "bad" attitudes such as refusing to cooperate with federal prosecutors. There are more people reporting more information to the staff than the staff can ever need. Many members of the guard staff think the inmates have it too easy and take every opportunity and take every advantage to sub-

ject them to psychological harassment. According to the Superintendent, one out of ten inmates who are assigned to Eglin are shipped to a higher level facility for some kind of infraction during their stay there--usually insubordination or drugs in their urine. Two of the Vietnam veterans in my first job assignment would leave Eglin in chains before I did for infractions. One would stay there after I left due to an uncorrectable misstatement of fact in his presentence investigation report. Fights are almost unheard of. Besides wanting to go home, inmates want second-most to stay at Eglin. Eglin is by rule a place where inmates keep to themselves.

Only Inmate Mason had tried to organize a Vietnam Veterans group when I arrived at Eglin. He was a center of veterans' awareness in the Camp. The guard who checked me into Eglin after giving me my file a first glance told me that Mason as in the Camp. The Camp administration had refused Mason the right to organize Vietnam vets because his book made him a person who made his livelihood as a Vietnam veteran. No inmate is allowed to carry on his livelihood while in federal prison, so Mason couldn't organize vets.

The staff at Eglin--as at Tallahassee--included a number of Vietnam veterans. In January 1984, with the help of two staff members, we held a meeting of Vietnam veterans at Eglin. It was a one-time evening, but crowded into the jammed room, we got to recognize one another and share common experiences. Perhaps if it had been under a previous presidential administration we could have met regularly and dealt with our mutual problems in the solidarity that organization brings. As it is, I doubt that the Vietnam veterans at Eglin

have ever met again.

In conclusion, Vietnam veterans are over-represented in U.S. prisons. I feel that their being there is related to their service in Vietnam. I welcome the research that will be necessary to substantiate or refute these conclusions. Vietnam veteran inmates recognize one another and can draw strength from their common bonds, experiences and skills. Inmate veteran organizations are viable beneficial possibilities for their participants, but for their existence they remain dependent on non-inmate citizens or concerned prison staff. Prisons have gotten more crowded and restrictive since the beginning of the Reagan Administration and will probably continue to get worse.

By 1972, those of us who were still in service in Vietnam were required to produce urine under the scrutiny of a witness upon demand. When I first arrived at Eglin, inmates who failed to meet such a requirement within two hours were ruled to have "refused" the test and so disciplined. This, of course, violated the Bureau of Prisons regulations and came to a slow halt with a little pain and a lot of writing. The mandatory urine samples in the two settings are brought up to make a point. In prison, inmates constantly reassess whom they can trust as if their lives depend upon it (and they do). Social life is recreated again and again in all its power at a very individual level. As Kirkland in *Bloods* says, "We realized that we just had to do it ourselves....In Vietnam and in Lorton I was with men at their darkest hour....we cried together and longed for the World together. War is prison too."

--G. David Curry, PhD
with Suzanne Erfurth

Wayne Felde, Vietnam veteran, remains on death row in prison in Angola, LA. His world after Vietnam, and the other world that the rest of his society lives in, did not fit; as with other vets diagnosed as suffering with post traumatic stress disorder, Felde could not ever quite rejoin the society which had sent him to Vietnam. As often has happened, when that society could not deal with Felde, it sent him away to prison.

Regardless of the problems that resulted in his going to prison, however, Felde did not passively accept the court's decisions. He has fought every step of the way and, with a group of dedicated supporters, carries on that fight still today.

The following information is quoted from a letter to the editor by several of Felde's supporters, with additional information from other members of the Wayne Felde Defense Committee.

Wayne Felde is a victim both of PTSD and of Agent Orange poisoning who is sentenced to die in the Louisiana electric chair.

Wayne was charged with

DEATH ROW VET

first degree murder of a Shreveport police officer who died during a struggle in which the policeman was attempting to stop Wayne from shooting himself. Nationally recognized psychiatrists and psychologists testified at the trial that, because of his illness, Wayne was not in his right mind and had no criminal intent at the time of the incident. Although the prosecutor dismissed these doctors as "quacks," one of them, Dr Charles Figley, was called upon by the President to aid the returning Iranian hostages because of his skill and expertise in dealing with PTSD.

After a stressful trial which lasted several weeks, the jury found Wayne "guilty," making the inexplicable comment that they believed he was suffering from PTSD but did not have it at the time of the crime.

Wayne was shot extensively by police, spending almost four months in the hospital for the wounds he received, losing some major organs and parts of others

as well as crippling his right leg permanently. Badly crippled as a result of police shooting and ill treatment, and living in mental hell, Wayne could not face life in prison. When the jury found him guilty as charged, he asked for death rather than a life sentence.

But Wayne does not want to die. What he wants is justice--recognition that he is a casualty of war and treatment to cure his illness. Wayne is not fighting only for his life but for justice for all Vietnam veterans who have suffered as he without treatment.

Wayne is a symbol of the lack of justice and compassion in our society, our tendency to ignore our problems instead of solving them. We tried to forget the war and, in doing so, we forgot those who went to kill and be killed. We left them to wander our streets as walking time bombs with no understanding of what was wrong with them. We owe it to Wayne and to all veterans in similar trouble, and to

ourselves, to try and restore the human beings we've maimed.

In a long and angry letter to President Reagan, Felde outlined his grievances with the government, especially the VA. In April Felde said he had begun a fast that would last until there was some action or until his death. He survived without food or nourishment for 57 days. His letter to the White House was, of course, totally ignored.

However, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) picked up his case and pledged complete support if he would end his fast. His defense now goes forward with the DAV in his corner, and he is regaining lost strength.

Wayne would appreciate any and all letters of support, especially from other veterans. Send them to Wayne Felde, #100237, D.R., Angola, LA 70712. For more information or to contribute money, contact the Wayne Felde Defense Committee, P.O. Box 3, Grand Cane, LA 71032.

Continued From page 1

IRANSCAM



principle one does not deal with "terrorists," Reagan went and did just that after repeatedly condemning other governments for doing the same thing. And it did this with a government that U.S. officials claim financed the bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks that took over 200 Marine lives in 1983. (Of course those really responsible for those deaths were the U.S. government itself which put the Marines into a war zone and had Marines then proceed to take sides, and on the Marine commander in Beirut who, in a city notorious for its car bombings, put 300 Marines into a virtually undefended building.)

The act of selling arms to Iran also violated U.S. law, a law that the Reagan Administration had proposed to Congress. Another law was violated in that Congressional oversight committees were not informed, apparently on the advice of U.S. Attorney General Meese.

But this was only part of the orgy of law breaking. It turns out that having sold U.S. government property to Iran, LTC North proceeded to divert the profits to the Contra mercenaries fighting to overthrow the elected Sandinista government of Nicaragua. This, besides violating laws against using money from selling government materials, was in direct violation of the Boland Amendment forbidding U.S. government help to the Contras at that time. North also apparently diverted some of this Contra money to finance Congressional campaigns, seeking to defeat some Contra opponents and help Contra supporters.

Even before this, the shooting down of Eugene Hasenfus on a CIA plane supplying the Contras inside Nicaragua left a trail that led directly back to Vice

President George Bush. An initial report of an investigation by Senator Kerry of Massachusetts and the Senate Intelligence Committee was released in October of 1986 that described a vast "interconnecting system of bank accounts, planes, helicopters, semi-clandestine landing strips, pilots, and military bases which are used for drug traffickers, arms smugglers, mercenaries, Nicaraguan Contras and organizations that support them." Kerry reported that this network had been set up by the National Security Agency and connected with the private network of Contra support through Oliver North.

At this point the people involved in this affair had committed so many moral and legal crimes that even the U.S. media and Congress had to take notice. To mention one of the worst of these crimes, there is the selling of arms to Iran at the same time the CIA was giving military intelligence data to Iraq. This only makes sense if the U.S. is trying to prolong and intensify the Iran/Iraq War, a war that has gone on for seven years and has repeatedly threatened to expand and involve other countries in one of the most strategically vital areas of the world. As directly as possible, this is an area well designed to be the flash-point for World War III. It does not take superhuman intelligence to see this is not a fire on which to pour gasoline. In a sane society officials who were acting to prolong this war would be shot.

Under the circumstances it is not surprising that Reagan was finally forced to sack North and Poindexter, and finally allow the appointment of a special prosecutor. Originally Meese wanted to handle it all but since he is one of those who had set up the "private" supply system for the Contras, that plan was just a little too much.

North and Poindexter are now taking the 5th to avoid testifying about what they did or did not do as members of the NSC. LTC North has been particularly stubborn about wearing his medals and uniform as he desperately tries to avoid prison (Allentown is so, so inhuman). Connoisseurs will note that he has a Silver Star, awarded at the time during the Vietnam War when all an officer had to do to get one was to either kiss ass or technically come within range of enemy fire (i.e. their own troops). The fact that the circumstances under which he got his medal are classified makes it almost certain that his "war hero" credentials are as genuine as Ferdinand Marcos'.

In the middle of this spectacle, CIA chief William Casey had half of his brain removed to avoid having to testify any more before Congress. The doctors say it was a malignant tumor, but that would have been the most benign part of his brain.) While he lies comatose in the hospital, the Administration denies that the public has any right to know his condition or that we have any right to expect a replacement. (I personally support the idea of a vegetable running the CIA, but the Administration's treating the question of a replacement as obscene is ludicrous.)

So where does this leave us?

Congress is investigating, of course. With Reagan's popularity down and every Democrat hoping to ride the TV coverage into the Presidency, and all the Republicans hoping that Bush is one of the fall guys, there is not much chance that Reagan will get out of this one. He made an attempt to provoke a war between Honduras and Nicaragua in the hope of distracting attention, and will certainly try again, but the Hondurans have so far refused to play the role properly.

So far the main thrust of the Congressional investigations has focused on "What did the President know and when did he know it?"—as though it is better that

the President had no idea of what was going on in his basement. Personally, I think it is worse if he didn't know. I agree with the Soviets: in the nuclear age it is better that even the "enemy" have intelligent, competent leadership. Instead we have a President with a finger on the button who no longer can even pretend for 60 seconds not to be senile. Adding that to his already well-documented ignorance, laziness and inability to distinguish reality from a movie script, and we have a President totally incapable of controlling a bunch of yahoos who could get us into the (last?) big one at any moment.

The question that the Congressional inquiries will not ask (but should) is what did Congress know and when did it know it? Does Congress really pretend it had no idea until now that Reagan was violating Congressional law on aiding the Contras? The whole world knows that Reagan was violating international law (as proved in the World Court, which found the U.S. guilty of aggression against Nicaragua) and U.S. law in seeking to overthrow a foreign government and in allowing U.S. citizens to carry on this work from within the U.S.

If Reagan has committed countless crimes, then much of Congress, with some honorable exceptions such as Senator Kerry, is accessory to the fact.

An even more fundamental question is why has this scandal hit now? Why didn't one of a thousand other acts or idiocies sink the Reagan Administration before now? There are a number of reasons. First, he who lives by "terrorist bashing" dies by "terrorist bashing." Second, Reagan's policies in Central America are so unpopular that he had to resort to increasingly desperate strategies to keep his Contra mercenaries alive. Inevitably it blew up on him. Third, he took a beating in the Congressional elections and suddenly looks weak; the press, having been held back for years by their publishers and the fear of Reagan's "popularity," suddenly sees the chance to strike (and it would take a particularly degraded being not to take some satisfaction in seeing such an ignorant, lazy, corrupt, demagogic mediocrity as Reagan exposed for what he is!) It satisfies a certain superstitious belief in "justice" that we all have.

And finally, the bill has come due for the Reagan binge. A doubled national debt, a sudden huge foreign debt, a wrecked industry, shattered hopes for the future are all coming home. As previously serious cuts in social programs are replaced by savage ones and the phony prosperity dissipates, people are beginning to catch on to the fraud, just at the moment when Reagan has lost the ability to read his teleprompter.

--Evan Douthitt
VVAW Chicago

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A Non-Profit Tax Deductible National Veterans Organization Established in 1967.

Over the past eight years, I have been the Agent Orange Outreach Coordinator for the Madison, WI Chapter of VVAW. One of the many duties and responsibilities of that position has been the collection and distribution to appropriate parties of data and test studies dealing with health effects of toxic exposure. Over the years I've traveled extensively, testifying at hearings on the local, state and federal level. I have spoken and corresponded with scientists worldwide doing independent research on humans exposed to pesticides and herbicides. I have participated in enacting legislation to help protect my family and friends from re-exposure to toxic chemicals.

I wish to share with you some of the new information available to date, as well as organizations and publications out there which are working on the same issues. Please write to them, use the information as a tool in your area to fight for regulation of pesticides and herbicides. There is help!

First, the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides, quarterly publishes a Journal of Pesticide Reform which includes excellent articles, references and suggestions on how to protect yourselves from re-exposure. These people (some of whom are vets) have their shit together and are kicking ass from the Northwest to DC. You can do it too, with their help. You can subscribe to the Journal (\$12/year) by writing to them at P.O. Box 1393, Eugene, OR, 97440, or calling (503) 344-5044. The latest issue is devoted to children and toxic chemicals and explains, in lay terms, why we are seeing the myriad of health problems in our kids, and how to deal with them. It includes the latest studies on Love Canal children and health effects, an article on "Parenting Chemically Sensitive Children," and "The Immune System and Pesticides."

NCAP also offers various packets, for nominal fees, which are extremely useful. "Planning for Non-Chemical Schoolgrounds," Toolkits, and the new Physician's

CHEMICALS, 2,4-D HERBICIDE INFO



Pesticide Info Packet, which includes data to aid you in educating your physician to understand, diagnose, document and treat pesticide and herbicide exposure problems. They are a non-profit organization that deserves your input and support. All donations are tax deductible, and the organization is very interested in helping and supporting vets. What they

do helps us--Use Their Services.

There is also a new study by the National Cancer Research Institute, linking a six-fold increase in lymphoma in Kansas farmers to direct exposure to 2,4-D. This study is available from Sheila Hoar, MD, National Cancer Research Institute, Landon Bldg. 4016, 900 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20892.

The Society for Clinical Ecology, and Del Stigler, MD, now has a directory available of physicians throughout the U.S. specializing in treatment of toxic exposure. To obtain it, and info on an ecological physician near you, write to Dr Stigler at Suite 409, 2005 Franklin St, Denver, CO 80205.

* * * *

Since 1984 when the Management Committee settled the Agent Orange Class Action Suit out of court, many vets and family members were disgusted, discouraged and burned out on the whole issue, myself included. Many

of us stopped working and faded into the woodwork feeling once again betrayed. Veteran activism, particularly on Agent Orange, is very hard work; we all know that it takes up all your time, all your money and your sanity. All seemed lost.

However, as the years go on, the evidence mounts against the chemical companies. More people, domestically, are becoming ill from their products--farmers, their own plant workers, chemical applicators, and chemical users. Studies are being published daily on the harmful effects of pesticides and herbicides. Four of the labs doing safety studies on these chemicals--prior to registering them with the EPA--have been cited for the manipulation of test data. Several luminaries in the industry have been heavily fined and are serving hard time in federal prison for poisoning us and others.

The GAO report shows that the EPA cannot protect anyone from hazardous chemicals and never did. The EPA cannot say pesticides and herbicides are safe. They are not. They have not been properly tested--and won't be--until the 21st century!

Congress is finally working on pesticide reform and is realizing the extent of the damage to us all. Our chosen attorney, Victor Yanacone has filed a new motion, based on new studies, to gain justice for vets and families affected by Agent Orange in the way it should have been done in the first place. More Americans are aware and supportive thanks to our years of work.

I urge all of you out there to keep trying, keep working, keep fighting--what other choice to we have? Our children's futures depend on our activism. I know it's difficult--it's a bitch. But don't give up!

--Sukie Wachtendonk
Madison VVAW



In Use~But Not Tested STUDY EXPOSES NEW RISK

According to a recent General Accounting Office Study, requested by the Senate Subcommittee on Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight, most of the 50,000 pesticide and herbicide products registered (licensed) for use today have not been fully tested and evaluated in accordance with current testing requirements. Due to the vast number of toxins on the market and the costs to adequately test them, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates that it will be well into the 21st Century before that task will be completed. In the interim, the general public will continue to be exposed to hazardous pesticides.

In fact, according to approved."

The report, published in April of 1986, "The public is not told about the uncertainties surrounding chronic or long term health risks." It further states that "pesticides manufacturers' advertising sometimes claims that pesticides and herbicides are safe and have low toxicity." "EPA believes that no pesticide can be considered safe and is concerned that such claims discourage users from following label directions cautiously." Professional applicators, such as lawn care companies and pest control companies, for years, have claimed that the pesticides and herbicides they use are safe and harmless and "EPA

The GAO Report states that "not only is the public poorly informed about the risks associated with herbicide and pesticide use, they are not told that they have not been tested for chronic health effects in accordance with current standards." "Moreover, the chemical industry makes safety claims that the EPA considers to be false and misleading."

The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, as amended, authorizes several types of enforcement actions, including civil and criminal penalties, but enforcement action for unacceptable safety claims is a low EPA priority.

Professional applicators, in discussing the safety of pesticides and herbicides, state that they are EPA registered. EPA differentiates between the terms "registered" and "approved." It is, in fact, unlawful for pesticide labels and distributors' promotional materials to state that their chemicals are "EPA approved," as this implies that the EPA endorses or recommends the product. They do not because they are not "safe."

According to the GAO report, "Medical researchers believe that chemical sensitivity causes a wide range of physical and behavioral symptoms in people who do not realize that her-

CHEMICAL WARFARE & YOUR LAWN



We are compelled once again to write this letter with an appeal to Madison residents. To those who chemically treat their lawns please, please consider your neighbors before you spray. Many of us are extremely sensitive to the myriad of herbicides and pesticides you use on your lawns.

Most of the 50,000 pesticides products registered (licensed) for use today have not been fully tested and evaluated in accordance with current testing requirements. Due to the vast number of toxins on the market, and the costs to adequately test them, the EPA estimates that it will be well into the 21st century before that task will be completed. In the interim, the general public will continue to be exposed to hazardous pesticides.

In fact, according to a General Accounting Office (GAO) report published in April 1986, "The public is not told about the uncertainties surrounding chronic or long-term health risks." It further states that "pesticide manufacturers' advertising sometimes claims that pesticides and herbicides are safe and have low toxicity."

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pesticide can be considered safe and is concerned that such claims discourage users from following label directions cautiously." Professional applicators, such as lawn care companies and pest control companies, for years have claimed that the pesticides and herbicides they use are "safe," "harmless," and EPA approved.

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Professional applicators, in discussing the safety of pesticides and herbicides, state that they are EPA registered. EPA differentiates between the terms "registered" and "approved."

ful. We must use this report to enact legislation to protect ourselves, on a local, state and federal level. The process has begun. I urge every member of VVAW to call your alderperson, your Congressman and your Senators. Inform them of the report and demand that these chemicals be taken off the market. We must actively oppose this use of these chemicals. I propose that VVAW members and chapters use the considerable power that we possess to fight this on every level we possible can. I hope you will agree and act now!

(The report is available from the U.S. General Accounting Office, Box 6015, Gaithersburg, MD 20877.

"Non-Agricultural Pesticides -- Risks and Regulations: RCED-86-125; and "Pesticides: EPA's Formidable Task to Assess and Regulate Risks."

bicides, pesticides, or other substances are the source of their illness." "These severe, acute reactions include fatigue, headaches, muscular aches, eye irritation, coughing, dizziness, motor instability, forgetfulness, depression, hyperactivity and irritability in people." "The chronic effects are mutagenic or cause genetic changes in subsequent generations." "They are teratogenic and cause birth defects." "They also cause tumor formations in living tissue."

This report reveals nothing new to Vietnam veterans and their families. For too many years we have suffered from the effects of harmful pesticides and herbicides. What is news is that the EPA admits that these chemicals can be harm-

It is, in fact, unlawful for pesticide labels and distributors' promotional materials to state that their chemicals are EPA approved as this implies that EPA endorses or recommends the product. They do not because they are not safe.

According to the GAO report, "Medical researchers believe that chemical sensitivity causes a wide range of physical and behavioral symptoms in people who do not realize that herbicides, pesticides and other substances are the source of their illness."

"These severe, acute reactions include fatigue, headaches, muscular aches, eye irritation, coughing, dizziness, motor instability, forgetfulness, depression, hyperactivity and irritability in people. The chronic effects are mutagenic or cause genetic changes in subsequent generations. They are teratogenic and cause birth defects. They also cause tumor formations in living tissue."

In 1980 the city sprayed across the street from our home at Warner Park. Our son suffered the classic symptoms of toxic exposure. He also suffered a major seizure. We lost the only home we probably will ever own. The Department of Agriculture and the EPA issued warnings and fines to the city and the applicator.

We worked long and hard for a moratorium to end the usage of 2,4-D on city parks and property. Since that time we have had to continually take action to deal with pesticides and herbicides in the lakes, on school playgrounds and on neighbors' lawns. We've had to move four times to avoid re-exposure which severely affects our family's health.

This past Wednesday, at 8 AM, my children and I were forced, once again, to flee our home. A city-subsidized apartment complex for elderly and disabled persons across our street had hired a commercial applicator and was in the process of defoliating sections of two large city blocks with herbicides.

We are very weary of moving. I hate the feeling in the pit of my stomach when I see a Chemlawn or Tru Green truck parked in my neighborhood. I know that I must frantically gather my children and evacuate my home before your chemical assault begins.

I am weary of battling multinational corporations, agronomists, and bureaucrats who continue to swear to the safety of these products. Please reconsider your decisions to use toxic chemicals on your lawns and gardens--there are other alternatives. Send for the GAO report and educate yourselves. Weigh the benefits and risks of using toxins on your families, your neighbors and our environment!

If you must spray, please post the area (ahead of time if possible) to notify your neighbors that your are using chemicals that quite possibly can be harmful to everyone. Thank you!

--Jim and Sukie

Wachtendonk

(From the Madison, WI, Capital Times.)

Australian Vet Leader Commits Suicide

The suicide death of Phil Thompson, the 42-year-old Vietnam vet and President of Australia's Vietnam Veterans' Association stirred memories of Vietnam and raised questions about the treatment of Australian Vietnam veterans. One of Thompson's hopes was for the establishment of an Australian Vietnam War memorial and, although the planning for such a monument is underway, no memorial yet exists.

Thompson had been the President of the veterans association for six years; he had recently announced his retirement from the position because of bowel cancer, one of the many symptoms often associated with exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam. Many of Thompson's associates said that his suicide was a final protest against the way in which Vietnam vets have been treated in Australia.

The Vietnam Veterans Association is credited with having forced the Australian government to investigate the effects of exposure to Agent Orange on veterans and the set up a series of Vietnam Veteran Counseling services, similar to the vets' centers in the U.S. All the problems of post traumatic stress disorder found in U.S. veterans are also common in Australian Vietnam veterans.

Despite a high incidence of things like broken marriages, alcoholism, drug abuse and other difficulties to adjust, Australian Vietnam veterans did not have some of the causes for PTSD often set forth in the U.S. Australian vets were older than U.S. Vietnam troops (some three and a half years older on the average when they went to Vietnam). They went over as units, fought as units, and returned to Australia as units, unlike U.S. troops who came, fought and went home on an individual basis. Australian Vietnam troops, or at least many of them, still belong to associations of their old units and march together regularly on Anzac Day.

The suicide of Phil Thompson serves to underline that the post-traumatic stress problems do not have a simple cause. Perhaps it can also serve as a warning that the problems of Vietnam vets will surface once again if the U.S. government should get us involved in a war without popular support, without the interests of the participants in mind, or a war against a people (such as the Nicaraguan people) determined to remain free and independent.



On September 1 Charles Liteky, a Vietnam veteran and winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor, and George Mizo, a combat veteran of Vietnam, began a water only fast on the steps of the Capitol building in Washington in protest against the "immoral, illegal and insane" U.S. government war moves in Central America. On September 15 they were joined by WW II veteran Duncan Murphy and Vietnam veteran Brian Willson. The fast continued for 47 days until the veterans felt their action had brought about a significant increase in public awareness and opposition to Reagan Administration policies in Central America.

Charles Liteky, a former priest, received the Medal of Honor for bravery in Vietnam. He received the Medal for rescuing 20 wounded men during a four-hour fire fight despite being wounded himself.

On July 29th, Liteky, co-ordinator for the National Federation of Veterans for Peace returned his Medal of Honor to protest the Reagan Administration's policies in Central America and war on Nicaragua.

On September 1st the fast began triggered by the Senate approval of \$100 million in aid to the "Contras." At the outset of the fast, Liteky and Mizo stated their reasoning: "We're fasting for the lives of the Nicaraguan people who are victims of the U.S.-backed

"Some of us have spent time in Nicaragua. We're in constant contact with people there and we believe that the situation there is nowhere like the Administration is painting it to be. We feel that the Sandinista government has been vilified by the Reagan Administration and the State Department.

"We agree with the World Court that the U.S. is guilty of war crimes related to Nicaragua and we are chagrined over the fact that by executive decision, the U.S. was withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the World Court a court that it respected for at least some 40 odd years.

"So, to demonstrate the depth of our conviction about the immorality and illegality of what the U.S. is doing in Nicaragua, we have chosen to put our lives on the line and have embarked upon this Fast for Life, on water only.

"We will stop fasting when the American people are awakened enough to know what we are doing in Nicaragua to begin to demonstrate, to do civil disobedience if necessary, to possibly come to Washington for a demonstration; to begin also to pray and to fast, because we feel that this is a spiritual problem. We feel that our government is spiritually ill when it can approve of the kind of policies that it is sanctioning in Nicaragua in the name of anti-communism, democracy and our national interest.

"To us this is a pure sham. What the U.S. is interested in maintaining in Central America is the same

PUTTING THEIR LIVES ON THE LINE !



Hunger strikers (from left) George Mizo, Duncan Murphy, Charlie Liteky, Brian Willson:

thing it has maintained for person like Pinochet, under at least 100 years--control, the military dictatorship in Guatemala, formerly under to do is look back at the Somoza, and under the oligarchy and the military in Central America and they'll El Salvador.

discover what we have done to maintain control. This about it? Are we going to go there in a realistic way and speak to the economic problems of those countries, or are we just going to set up "fortress America" and defend ourselves and maintain the disparity. It all depends on how people answer their conscience.

"We are veterans of Vietnam and World War II, we know what war is all about. We are also people who suffered along with our brothers from Vietnam; and we now know, after the declassified documents on Vietnam and the books that are coming out on it now, that Vietnam was born of a lie. The Gulf of Tonkin was a fabricated incident to seduce Congress into appropriating the necessary monies to begin that war down there...."

As media attention began to slowly turn on the seriousness of the fasters' goals, invariably the questions direct at them took on the usual U.S. media skepticism regarding Nicaragua. Charles Liteky spoke clearly to them saying,

"People will say, 'What about the Sandinistas?' Well, I say, What about the Sandinistas? I don't pay taxes in Nicaragua, I am not responsible for what the Sandinistas do.

"And they say, Well aren't you afraid that they could spread Marxism all over Central America and eventually up into Mexico? Well, if Marxism speaks to a solution for those people's problems, then certainly they're going to be a lot better off under Marxism than they would be under a

the CIA has been there for God knows how long, at least since 1979, working in that area, they've built up a tremendous military complex in Honduras that can be used as a military platform all over the country. The handwriting's on the wall for a military invasion. Then we'll be going in to rescue the "Contras" the people most of the American people are not supporting anyway.

"On my trip to Nicaragua, I went up to a mountain village called Venetia that had been relocated from a place about 20 miles away, which the "Contras" had completely destroyed. These 490 people were then relocated to another place, an old coffee plantation that had been abandoned. These people had been there for about a year when we got there and we were the first Americans to come and visit them.

"These people began to tell us the stories about how the "Contras" had raided their villages, taken some of their young men. One lady in particular lost two sons, and she had one remaining son and her husband was also deceased. And she told us to go home to President Reagan and put our hand upon his chest and tell him to "stop killing us." That remains with me until this day. I can see the image of that woman.

"On the other hand, our government has hired Nicaraguan people, the leadership of whom are the former national guard of one of the most brutal regimes in Central American history. We have hired remnants of this national guard to be the leadership of the counter-revolutionaries, known as

Central America is the same

Victims of the Contras VVAW ADOPTS ORPHANS

the "Contras."

"In a way, they are our proxies in Nicaragua, doing our dirty work."

"We're appealing to the American people to wake up, look at what our government is doing with our tax money, make a decision whether or not you think that is right or wrong. And if you think it's wrong, then we have to get people that we put in office, who are voting for policies like aid to the "Contras" out of office."

On September 15, Liteky and Mizo were joined in their fast by Brian Willson, and Air Force Vietnam vet and Duncan Murphy, a World War II vet who was present at the liberation of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany. Murphy stated, "I spent several months in the Belsen concentration camp listening to the stories, working with survivors, hearing of Nazi atrocities."

"Forty years later I went to Nicaragua and I heard the same stories from victims of the "Contras."

Brian Willson added, "One of the reasons we're fasting is to make it clear to the American people what the bottom line of our (U.S.) policy in Nicaragua is--people are suffering and dying and being maimed. People have to understand this is what happens when we send guns and weapons to kill those people."

Murphy summed it up: "Let Congress go down there and fight. Let them kill the children, mothers and fathers."

Vowing to continue their fast to death, unless there were significant change in U.S. policy toward Central America, the four fasters begin receiving deserved attention from different parts of the country in addition to support from vets groups across the nation.

Letters of support began piling up. Congressional support from Tip O'Neil to junior representatives, Senators such as John Kerry from Massachusetts, boosted the fast and placed their statements into the Congressional Record. Kerry stated, "I hope before they are in wheelchairs that

we will somehow reconsider to see whether the olive branch of peace is not worth picking up."

On the Phil Donahue talk show which featured the hunger strikers, one of the most notable members of the audience, actor Martin Sheen, said, "These men have earned the long-standing blessings, 'Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice.' I was in Nicaragua in December of 1984 myself and came back having made the promise to stop the killing."

"Do you, one-on-one, have the courage to blow the head off a 12-year-old girl because she is a Sandinista, Communist or Nicaraguan. If not, how can you ask someone else to do it in your name or in the name of the American people?"

As the fast continued on October 5th, one of "someone elses" that Sheen referred to was the only survivor from an obviously CIA supported air crash in a remote part of Nicaragua. The appearance of the 45-year-old ex-Marine, Eugene Hasenfus, gave the fasting vets yet more leverage in their fast. As they pressed on, numerous appeals from the famous and from common people rolled into Washington to appeal to the vets to end their fast--to live. Children visiting the Capitol building in Washington, on whose steps the vets spent every afternoon, touched the fasters saying, "Please don't die."

As they neared death on the 46th day of their "Fast for Life," the fasters ended their fast.

The impact of their actions, while difficult to measure had definitely affected people across the country; support that continues to grow to this day shows that theirs was not a futile gesture.

On October 17th the four vets and their supporters announced the second phase of their on-going vigil on the Capitol steps. Brian Willson and George Mizo traveled to Nicaragua to begin a vets peace action on the Nicaraguan border with Honduras, while Charles Liteky travels throughout the U.S. to build support for the continuing effort.

Interested individuals or groups may contact the fasters at:

Vets Fast For Life
P.O.Box 53271
Temple Heights Station
Washington, DC 20009

--Bill Davis
VVAW National Office



In January of 1986 two VVAW chapters--Chicago and Madison--voted to adopt orphans of the "Contra" war in Nicaragua.

Since the Reagan Administration insists on waging war on an impoverished country of 3 million people, a war which nearly three quarters of the American people are against, a war that has no support from any other country in the world, a war which is waged in our name and which can only lead to the eventual loss of our children--with all of this chapter members felt that we wanted to extend our concern to some of the real victims of the war, the children.

When we began to research the project we found that there were already 7000 orphans in Nicaragua, a staggering number considering that the entire population of the country is about the same as that of Chicago. The need for godparents was and is great, and growing. By mid-summer we received photos and other information about our godchildren. Javier is about a year and a half old; his brother, Dionisio, is about three.

Here is what is known of their story:

On April 8, 1986, a sixteen-year-old Sandinista soldier stationed in the area of Chantalis Y Zleya Central snatched Javier from the arms of his dead mother, their blood running together as one, and took the wounded baby and his brother to the Rolando Carado CDI (orphanage) in San Marcos about 38 kilometers from Managua. The soldier said that the mother, while fleeing the

"Contra" had been gunned down with Javier in her arms. The father had been dragged off by the "Contra" and no one knows what has happened to him.

Javier will survive his bullet wounds. The "Contra" usually kill children (CIA terror tactics). Although not known for sure, it seems that rapid arrival of Sandinista troops saved Javier and his brother.

Since no relatives could be found the children were given the last name of their area--Carazo.

Javier was adopted by Madison, VVAW, and Dionisio by Chicago's VVAW chapter. The brothers will remain together at Rolando Carado and messages and gifts (only gifts of an educational nature which can be shared by all the children at the Orphanage, please) will be passed on to them by the chapters.

Chicago and Madison VVAW chapters encourage other chapters and individuals and organizations to consider the needs of these children and look into the ERC Godparent Project by contacting:

The Ecumenical Refugee Council, Inc
Concilio Ecumenico para Refugiados, Inc
2510 N. Frederick
Milwaukee, WI 53211
(414) 332-5381.

Work for PEACE--it's the only hope the children of the world have!

--Virg McFadden
Chicago VVAW



"I found (CANU) most useful." Noam Chomsky. "I read it and I like it." Alexander Cockburn. Also recommended by the National Pledge of Resistance, Mobilization for Survival & Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

BIWEEKLY FOREIGN PRESS DIGEST

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Meeting and Guarding

COMMANDANTE DORA



Nicaragua's highest ranking woman, Commandante Dora Maria Tellez, Minister of Health, spoke in Chicago on September 29th and 30th at events sponsored by Central American Medical Aid and co-sponsored by VVAW, CCSNP and others.

VVAW members served as a security escort during her two days here.

Commandante Dos spoke on the current situation in Nicaragua with special emphasis on the changes in health care and on the changing role of women. "Women participated in our Revolution," she said. "Not in the kitchens but as combatants. In the political leadership. This gives us a very different experience."

In an emotional plea she asked for "direct dialogue between the U.S. administration and Nicaragua" and stressed the importance of direct people-to-people dialogue between the people of North America and the people of Nicaragua.



Dora Maria Tellez with VVAW's Mike Terry

(The following is a press release from MACV--Material Assistance Committee--Vermont--concerning their most recent project in support of the people of Central America.)

MACV is pleased and excited to announce our newest, and we think most important, solidarity project: Radio Incoming--radio broadcasts by anti-war U.S. vets from Nicaragua to U.S. enlisted military and National Guard people in Honduras. The broadcasts will feature music, news and commentary about Nicaragua and Central America (as well as U.S. foreign policy in general) and their struggle for self-determination, and live and taped interviews with anti-war U.S. veterans speaking from the heart about their personal experiences in Vietnam and since, with the emphasis on what this repeat of history means for people in Central America as well as for young GIs.

MACV is a support/action group for the Nicaraguan people and their revolution, founded in late 1984 by three U.S. vets (two Vietnam, one era) then living and working in Nicaragua Libre. Since 1984, we have been sending regular care packages directly to the Nicaraguan foot soldiers who are forced daily to defend their people and revolution from U.S. aggression by proxy in the form of the "Contra" mercenaries.

Currently, we have two people living full-time in Nicaragua, developing Radio Incoming and strengthening our older material aid campaigns. We can use your help and support for this project, the purpose of which is to counter the Reagan Administration's indoctrination and disinformation about the nature of the Nicaraguan revolution by offering enlisted personnel ac-

RADIO INCOMING, ASSISTANCE THRU TRUTH

cess to other viewpoints, especially those of anti-war veterans. Our hope is that Radio Incoming will help enlisted people to begin thinking in an independent way about their roles in Central America, and that our effort will plant the seeds which will mature into an anti-war GI movement such as the one which grew in Vietnam. Radio Incoming isn't so much a propaganda program as it is a reflection of our belief that if people, including those in the military and National Guard, are presented with alternative information they will develop, on their own, a critical analysis of Central America and its political context and begin questioning their role in furthering the militarization of the area.

Radio Incoming is, above all, a direct effort to intervene, with our voices, in the process begun in Washington that is leading inevitably to a full-scale war. We believe it is our responsibility as veterans to prevent this by sharing our experience and thought with this new generation of U.S. soldier, before it's too late.

Vets and non-vets alike can participate directly in this program and help sustain it. The following are some suggestions for people wishing to help support MACV and especially Radio Incom-

ing:

1. FINANCIAL SUPPORT is needed now and on an ongoing, dependable basis. MACV is committed to guaranteeing the self-sufficiency of our people in Nicaragua, so that they are never a burden on the already strapped Nicaraguan people. We need your help in meeting expenses, mainly housing and food, but also for material support (tapes, news resources, technical equipment, etc.) If you or your group can make a donation or monthly pledge (however large or small) we will very much appreciate it and you will receive regular updates from us on the project's progress.

2. TAPED INTERVIEWS WITH ANTI-WAR U.S. VETS are needed also on a regular basis and in as large a quantity as possible. Interviews should be done on high-quality cassette tapes, should include the name and hometown of the interviewed vets, and should be 10-20 minutes in length. Vets can talk about their experiences in Vietnam, what they learned from them, what that experience has meant since then in their civilian lives, and what they think about the Reagan Administration's war in Central America. If they've been to Nicaragua or El Salvador, it's great if they can speak about what they saw and learned from the people

there. All vets are welcome, from any war and role, combat or non-combat. Some people are put off by tape-recorders--those folks should know they can write a statement and send it to us for airing in Nicaragua.

3. EXISTING GROUPS OR COMMITTEES CAN SUPPORT RADIO INCOMING AND LEND THE ORGANIZATION NAME AS AN ENDORSEMENT.

There are many ways to support the project. Groups or individuals can send us newspaper clippings about resistance activities. We need many good-quality cassettes of all kinds of music. We need to hear from vets and vets' groups--let them know about Radio Incoming and how to contact us. We need a network of reliable couriers (if you or a friend are traveling to Nicaragua, let us know); most of our communications and material transport is done through courier as the mails are slow and at times interfered with (the U.S. postal service has a habit of "losing" mail and packages bound for Nicaragua).

We look forward to hearing from you.

Gary Sisco, co-coordinator.

MACV's address is:
MACV
231 S. Winooski Avenue
Burlington, VT 05401
PHONE: (802) 863-6757

RECOLLECTIONS

THE VETERAN welcomes contributions to "Recollections"-stories or poems describing the experience of the military, of war or of Vietnam.

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.

THE NAME ON THE WALL
SP4 Fredrick A. Pine
Co C, 2/12, 1st Air Cav
Killed in Action Jan 2, 1968
Que Son Valley, Vietnam

I am the name on the wall who recieved the greeting from Uncle Sam to become cannon fodder for the government, under threat of a jail term. I knew I would die, I told my mother before I left for 'Nam that they would all cry.

I crossed 4 or 5 rivers a day, carried the radio, walked the point, was sprayed with chemicals and bullets, rode the choppers, picked up wounded buddies, met and became friends with our brave nurses, slept in the mud and blood, crawled through tall grass that cut my face and body, watched my best friend get killed. How bad I felt, I couldn't explain though I tried in 24 letters I wrote by flashlight to Mom in 4 months.

Then Westmoreland turned traitor and betrayed me and my family and my buddies. I was ambushed and did my best to hold off the enemy until my wounded friends were loaded on the chopper. When I tried to run for cover, I was killed. Some of my buddies who I saved, died a week later at Chu Lai.

I was awarded the Bronze Star with "V" for Valor. The guys in the hospital wanted me to have the Silver Star for my bravery. Then they wanted to make a big thing of giving the medal to my mother. She refused the ceremony.

I am the name on the wall. I will never walk again or cry. I will never say, "Mom, your good-looking son is home, what's to eat?" when I come home from work. I am glad that some of my friends made it home. You must fight to make Vietnam "the war to end all wars." I am the name on the wall. I will never forget, nor will my mother or brother who suffered with me, when I was listed as an MIA. Then the closed casket was sent home.

I am a name on the wall. Westmoreland put most of the names on the wall.

--Ann Pine

Mother of Fred Pine
Trenton, NJ
December 1986

LET'S

Let's take them out of malt shops
And send them off to war;
Let's spray them all with poison,
And make them sick and sore.
Let's bring them home all broken,
And teach them to feel shame
Let's send them all on guilt trips,
And convince them they're to blame.
Let's call them anti-social,
And claim they love to kill;

Let's tell them they need schooling,
And destroy their GI Bill.
Let's tell them to have children,
And deny that something's wrong.
Let's make believe they're lying,
And pretend their kids are strong.
Let's disclaim Agent Orange
And all the harm its done,
Let's hope their offspring do survive,
And pray that they have sons.
Let's watch them raise their children,
And then start it all once more,
Let's wait until they come of age,
Hello, El Salvador!!!
--Rena Kopystenski

Almost 20 years ago, I was dumped in a strange swamp and told to find my own way out.

I started walking, but with every step I seemed to sink in deeper and deeper.

But I kept on walking, what choice did I have?

If I had stopped, I would have sunk in over my head.

Finally I did make it out and thought
"Thank God, it's over."

But I was to learn, it was only the beginning.

Every time I looked back I could see my footprints.

I wished I hadn't entered in the first place but that didn't make my footprints go away.

My shoes were caked with mud and it wouldn't wash off.

So I tried to forget the shoes, the footprints, the swamp but my numb mind led me right back in.

Yeah, I may be slow, but I learn.

Today I know the footprints will remain, they're mine for the duration.

My shoes aren't new anymore but they still have alot of miles left on them.

So I've taken my post, a sentry at the entrance to the swamp.

There I can help those still stuck inside.

And warn others who approach of the dangers that lie ahead.

dedicated to the
Veterans Fast for
Life
and the
Jersey City Vet
Center

--Dave Cline
NY/NJ VVAW



Interview

Dear VVAW,

To speak of peace?
This much I know about peace:
Before the war, my neighbor, a kind man, a farmer who owned no land, one night fed the honcho's dogs on milk and beef-steak and that night his daughter died of diarrhea. She was three years old. I did not see him again until I went to the mountains.

Another day before the war, I was walking to the coffee fields on a most incredible morning; over the volcano the sun was red as your face and a mist lay in the valley arriba like a new sheet. Then I saw Maria's face, just the skin, peeled like an orange and hanging from a tree beside the trail. I thought then that I would die but that was before I found her body further down the trail.

Periodista, I will tell you something now to bring home to your people. We are tired of watching our land give birth to food for dogs. When your soldiers come they will learn as much about peace as I know. Tell them that. Do not fail.

--Gary Sisco
Burlington VT

I would like information as to how I might be of help in stopping Reagan's rather obvious aims to getting us embroiled in another Vietnam-type fiasco in Central America or elsewhere.

I'm a veteran of the Korean war. I re-enlisted after the armistice for several more years. When I saw what was going on in Southeast Asia, I got out. I felt that what we were doing there was wrong. I realized we were wrong in Korea also, although I couldn't see it at the time.

I've been speaking out against war since then but I sometimes feel that I am but one voice in the wilderness and not very effective. I couldn't even stop my own son from registering for the draft.

I read your ad in The Guardian which I subscribe to and decided to write. I might yet be able to do something against this militaristic, imperialist madness.

Worcester, MA

KNOW THE ENEMY
and know yourself;
in 100 battles
you will never
be imperiled.

sun tzu

RECON

Quarterly newsletter on anti-military affairs: draft counseling, U.S. troops abroad, chemical warfare, military-industrial complex, direct action against the Pentagon, and books for organizers. Subscribe for \$10 to RECON, P.O. Box 14602, Phila., PA 19134.

**20th Anniversary
VVAW
see pages 2, 8 & 14**

In Boonie Toons we'll look at music, musicians and gigs past and present. Upcoming reviews of veteran performers as well as their roots will be included in each column. If you know of someone who belongs in Boonie Toons, write me care of "Boonie Toons," P.O. Box 3472, Madison, WI 53704 and I'll write it up. Boonie Toons wishes to thank those of you who've written and ordered Country Joe's tapes (from the last Boonie Toons)--the letters are appreciated. And now for more Boonie Toons.

Rick Duvall is a singer, song writer and actor from Guernville, CA. I had the pleasure of sharing the singing duties with him on the PBS special, "For Vietnam Veterans And Everyone Else Who Should Care." On it Rick performed his song "Combat Assault," and a cappella tune that opened the show. It's loaded with grunt slang with a view of the ground pounder in the bush--

....And the army said
Don't take it personally,
you are not a person,
You are the infantry
and you are not deservin'
You just kill the enemy,
leave the thinkin' part
to me,
No, you ain't authorized
no conscience...."

Rick Duvall served with the 1st of the 506th Infantry--D Company--of the 101st Airborne. He was in Vietnam in '68-'69. His experiences in Vietnam and with the world have given him much to write and sing about. Rick has been on stages most of his life, from childhood choirs on Sunday morning to recording studios, to the stage, to live theatre and TV work. He believes the important thing is how you approach the people who are

Just Released! **Combat Assault**



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Johnny Rambo
G.I. Bill and many others.
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Guernville, CA 95446
(\$10 includes shipping and handling.)



there to see you. No matter which character he is at the time--balladeer, rocker, angry, sensitive, musical or otherwise--it's apt to be real to the audience whether that audience is a microphone or a solitary engineer. Rick has done concerts for many years in many states trying to tie his songs together in a positive message.

Rick Duvall: "I want to see peace come to this planet, so from college and high school auditoriums to peace concerts and vets programs all over the country I've been attempting to bring a peaceful aura to my listeners. I want folks to leave my shows moved and full of peace...World Peace, National Peace, Local Peace--and most important of all, inner peace. Peace of mind is a rare commodity for most Vietnam vets. We fought for it and we deserve it. My songs seem to reach all kinds of people, however. Peace isn't just for old soldiers who haven't died, it's for all of us."

Boonie Toons: Where did performing start with you, Rick?

Duvall: "I've been writing since before Vietnam. My first song was written about a high school friend who died there when I was a junior. When I came back I wanted to tell everyone the truth about the war, but that just couldn't happen.the truth is hard for America. We swallow more palatable stuff more easily than the truth. Consequently, I suppressed my political writing until I eventually denied my Vietnam experience and began to write apolitical things."

Boonie Toons: Your first cassette album, Rick Duvall, has a strength of its own with no songs about the war on it. It's beautifully done.

Duvall: Yes, you know it has love songs and M.O.R... Nice and easy to hear and available.

Boonie Toons: And what of your latest recording "Combat Assault"?

Duvall: I guess I had to write the new vets album "Combat Assault" cause its in me to do it. Its taken long enough already to come out and the time is now. I'm glad to be connected with you vets out there in a positive way. Music can take the message to the heart like nothing else. That's the idea behind my new tape "Combat Assault." It takes listeners to Vietnam, brings them back to the U.S. with post-traumatic stress, takes them through the fear, anger, bitterness, etc to the victory--the personal triumph of being alive. I hope you like the tape.

Boonie Toons: Tell us about you musical roots, Rick.

Duvall: My musical roots are influenced by folk musicians mainly. I always

loved Hoyt Axton and Pete Seeger, but my all time favorite folk singers were Peter, Paul and Mary--fantastic. I sang in many choirs and choral groups in school and my dad was a great tenor. He was my first real influence. I got a guitar for my graduation from junior high school and I hated it, until my older brother Chip picked it up and began to get pretty good on it. Well, shit, man, I couldn't let him show me up. So I got myself a banjo and got to finger-pickin'.

We played music together for 24 years so far and are still going strong. Chip has had a song of his on each one of my albums so far. He's also a vet. You should write him up in Boonie Toons. I've put together several rock bands to learn about instrumentation and multi-track writing. My real love is the recording studio. I could spend my wholife in there writing and putting it down. I'm sure I'll keep on doing my albums so keep listening. **Boonie Toons:** What's been happening since the PBS show--any action?

Duvall: Since the PBS show in May, I've been writing and touring California for the Thousand Trails Company. I entertain the members in the evenings after dinner. I love the people and I wrote the new Thousand Trails theme song, but the gigging is seasonal. I plan to play lots of veteran shows. I plan to play lots of veteran shows this next year. I'd love to play back



there in Madison WI. **Boonie Toons:** And we enjoyed having you, Partner.

Boonie Toons encourages its readers to pick up Rick's tapes. He has two on the market. His "Combat Assault" is loaded with tunes straight out of 'Nam. His other cassette is called "Rick Duvall." These songs are a wonderful mix of very listenable music. Beautifully produced and mixed very well.

Boonie Toons urges you to check out Rick Duvall's music. His style has a life of its own. His varied use of instrumentation and vocals gives the listener a candid look into the man Rick Duvall. He pours a lot of himself into each song and it shows. To order "Combat Assault" or "Rick Duvall" send \$10 (each) to Rick Duvall, Box 2012, Guernville, CA 95446.

That's it for another Boonie Toons.

--Jim Wachtendonk

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