



THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

50¢

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VVAW Marches in DC

BREEZY BRZESKI

Tens of thousands of anti-war demonstrators converged on Washington DC March 17, to participate in a peace rally protesting the Iraq war. In spite of a big snowstorm that converged over the Northeast on Friday and closed roads across the pass and airports,

the march was well attended. Although not as many people attended this march as last January's the message to stop the war was heard loud and clear. Anti-war activist Cindy Sheehan was joined by a number of other activists who spoke at the end of the rally near

the Pentagon. This rally was organized to commemorate the 1967 march on the Pentagon to protest the war in Vietnam as well as the 4th anniversary of the beginning of the Iraq war.

VVAW was well represented by several chapters from around

the country. These dedicated people braved 20 mph winds and temperatures in the 20's. The Kentuckiana VVAW was represented by Carol and Harold Trainer along with several other members, the VVAW Chicago, Illinois group was spearheaded by Ken Nielsen and many other members, while the Milwaukee, Wisconsin VVAW chapter was led by myself and Ted Kautzman. All the contingents had VVAW banners and marched with them proudly.

The march was led by the Iraq Veterans who attended that day, followed by all other veterans. Carol in her usual way managed to snake her way through the crowd and led the first VVAW contingent in the march right behind the Iraq Vets, followed by the Milwaukee and Chicago groups. The march started off at the Mall and proceeded across the bridge of the



Washington DC, Jan 27, 2007

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A Struggle Continues: VVAW Turns 40

BARRY ROMO

An empire makes a wasteland and calls it peace... and the struggle continues.

This year Vietnam Veterans Against the War is going to celebrate forty years of struggle and triumphs. Quite an achievement considering most of us did not believe we would make it through our tours in Vietnam, through our nightmares, through the fight to stop the war, and through Agent Orange. And yet, here we stand together as a family after 40 years.

No one could predict that when the first group of veterans got together in 1967 to march through the streets of New York in protest of the war in Vietnam that a national organization of over 30,000 members would be fostered. We not only grew, we sustained. Vietnam Veterans Against the War is one of the few organizations founded to oppose the war to survive and continue to thrive.

No one could have guessed that what we called Post Vietnam

Syndrome would become recognized as a service connected disability in 1979 called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Some older veterans mocked PTSD and thought that we were weak and that was why we could not "win" our war. After all their war was, according to them, worse than what we had seen. Yet today the VA and army are admitting that one third of service men and women coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan will suffer from PTSD.

We led the protests against the use of Agent Orange because we had seen its results in deformed Vietnamese infants. Little did we know that our own government was killing us as well. When we brought this up, traditional veterans organizations accused us of perpetuating communist lies about chemical weapons. Yet we did not give up the fight. We continue to focus on the effects of Agent Orange. The same judge that gave us a settlement against the chemical

companies for these deadly defoliants has refused to recognize that the Vietnamese living in it for more than forty years deserve compensation also. The Vietnamese Agent Orange Campaign is one way we are working to help.

After the Winter Soldier Investigations exposed war crimes...

After Dewey Canyon III and throwing our medals back...

After overruling the Supreme Court...

After our continued use of guerilla theater...

After fighting to normalize relations with the people of Vietnam and Cambodia...

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From the National Office

BARRY ROMO

This issue of *The Veteran* is the largest paper VVAW has ever put out, filled with reports from new chapters and about events and demos. Because of the increased level of activity, we decided to add extra pages and an extra section.

We really want to thank Lisa Boucher for her years of editing *The Veteran*, helping to make it more professional. We wish her only the best.

Some thoughts on current events. We watch the media portray the murders of 32 students in Virginia in great depth, treating them as if they were human. Why won't they cover each soldier killed in Iraq the same way? Why is it considered normal to hide the deaths of Marines and GIs, or insensitive to cover them? If all the Iraqi dead and wounded were treated in detail there would not even be time on the 24-hour news to cover them all. Why can't the media live up to its potential which we certainly saw around the Virginia Tech massacre?

In Iraq, the US military has determined that one gun is enough

to defend a household. In Texas the average number of guns per person is 6, and they have the Texas Rangers to defend them. Why isn't the NRA defending the rights of people of Iraq to have more than one automatic weapon per household? In a war zone, where there are no banks, almost no use of credit cards, you have to keep all your money at home, but having more than one automatic weapon is used as an excuse for taking men to detention to be tortured.

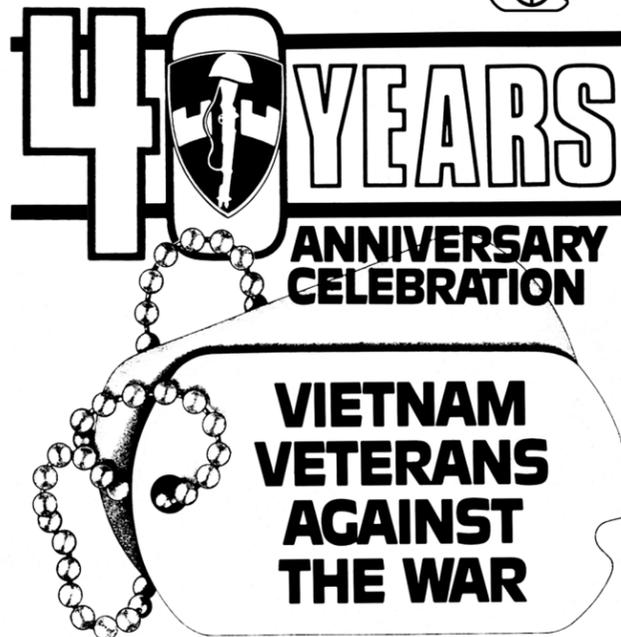
If I lived in that situation I would want one for the front door, one for the back and maybe one on the roof in case you had to defend yourself from there. The NRA is in the same position with Iraq as they were with the Black Panther Party; supporting ownership of guns for people who don't really need them while denying them to people who really are in situations that actually call for home self-defense weapons

And why aren't those trigger happy gun owning youth of the NRA youth group in the military? I'm sure after the 15th month of the

3rd tour of duty they will have a better appreciation of the kinds of things they are calling for.

The 40th anniversary of VVAW is coming up. Don't forget it is first come first serve. The best spots go to the first reservations. Also, pre-registration will tell us

if we need to rent more space, buy supplies, etc. We really want to see you there. We aren't getting any younger. For some of us it may be the last chance we get to see each other in person. We want to make it a success.



www.vvaw.org/events/40th

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|-----------------|--------------|
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Thanks to Jeff Danziger, Vietnam veteran and political cartoonist, for his generous contributions to this issue. Thanks also to Billy Curmano for *Oxy, the Smart Bomb*, and to Monique Frugier, Sandy Fulton, Dayl Wise, Aaron Davis, Marty Webster, Bill Perry, Ward Reilly, Bob Gronko, Amy Meyers, Bill Branson, Claudia Lennhoff, Breezy Brzeski, John Zutz, and others for contributing photos.

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Fraggin'

BILL SHUNAS

Back in 1973, eight members of VVAW went on trial in Gainesville, Florida, charged with conspiracy to disrupt the Republican Convention in Miami in 1972. They became known as the Gainesville Eight. This was one of a series of trials the government pursued in a weak attempt to disrupt the Vietnam anti-war movement.

I went to Gainesville to work with what we called the Gainesville Eight News Bureau. Our purpose was to put out the VVAW position on the events before, during and after the trial - a trial which lasted about a month. Each day that court was in session we would attend court and then hurry back to our office to prepare a press release about the testimony we had heard that day in court. After about a half an hour, the dozen or more reporters covering the trial would drift over to our office. We'd pass out the press release and answer their questions. Everything was cool, and we were all friendly.

This was a period of time when the Watergate scandal was growing bigger and bigger on the national scene. There was evidence (suppressed by the judge) that the same people involved in the Watergate break-in were also involved in framing the VVAW members in Gainesville. This made us allies with much of the press who were in sympathy with pursuing the Watergate story and hounding Nixon. They were amiable toward us to the point where on more than one occasion I saw a couple of paragraphs I had written for our Gainesville Eight press re-

lease appear in the *New York Times* the next day. I was amused by the whole thing, considering how the press so often misses things we think of as important.

So, if the right wingers were bashing the media about their pursuit of Watergate and their persecution of Nixon back in 1973, they would have been correct. Which is not to say that the media was wrong for doing so. Of course, we on the left know that is not the normal situation. The American media normally has its problems either in ignoring stories of importance or propagandizing for actions harmful to the American people. There are numerous examples of the former. One thinks of the Iran-Contra scandal, a story which was broken by a Lebanese newspaper. Or, remember how the killer disease AIDS was ignored until ACT UP started holding sit-ins in TV newsrooms. On international events like the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, you can expect a higher quality of news from foreign sources.

As far as the use of media for propaganda, the whole build-up for this Iraq War is an example. With the *New York Times* in the lead in print media and *FOX* and *CNN* in the broadcast sector, they took the word of the Bush administration and Iraqi wannabe leaders and led the chorus to bring us to war for such dubious reasons as WMDs and a connection between Saddam and Al Qaeda. War is devastation, and when it is unnecessary - to go there is criminal, and this one was aided and abetted by our media.

Now that public opinion has turned against the war as well as many in the business class who know how bad the war is for business, the *New York Times* and all the rest have easily turned against the war.

So now the right-wingers can bash the media as being too liberal (which means that they are now slanting the news against the war). And we on the left will continue to find many faults with both American print media and TV news. This results in defenders of the media haughtily declaring, "See. The right is blasting us, and the left is blasting us. Therefore we're doing good because that means we're in the middle which means we're objective." The logic in this reasoning is absent, but it is a good cover.

I would suggest to you that the problem with this country's media is not that they have bias one way or the other, although they do which is a problem. It is a problem because Watergate times are the exception, and usually their bias is towards the interests of the wealthy people who own them and who pay their bills in the form of advertising revenue. No. Their worst sin is that they don't do their job. Inept. Fickle. Limited. Bought off. These are some of the words you might use to describe their current state.

As a result of this servility and ineptitude, often there is a kind of non-specific, yet general consensus on the part of all mainstream media pertaining to various issues. It's like nobody wants to question the given assumptions.

Call it mainstream thought. This is promoted by editorial boards and publishers and no doubt rewarded and encouraged by what we used to call "The Establishment." This so-called democracy is in need of media which brings attention to problems and issues. Instead we get wimpy.

We've gotten ourselves into a war in Iraq with the help of the media. Now a war looms in Iran. Is there mainstream political opposition? There are presidential hopefuls tripping over themselves trying to explain what their position on Iraq really was. And they think it necessary to be tough on the Iran question which they'll have to explain five years from now just like they're trying to explain Iraq today.

My guess is that there are many planners in the military and maybe even some people in the Bush Administration who see a disaster if we get involved in Iran. It would be nice to get those ideas out into the realm of public opinion. Our leading Democratic politicians don't do it. Theoretically our media should do it. Absent that we may muddle down the slippery slope to another unnecessary war. This time in Iran, or if not there, somewhere else. Good media isn't the only answer to preventing an Iran war. It isn't the answer to everything, but too often the nation has to look back and say, "If only we had known."



BILL SHUNAS IS A VIETNAM VETERAN, AUTHOR AND VVAW MEMBER.

Notes from the Boonies

PAUL WISOVATY

This column is going to speak to racial and ethnic stereotyping, which of course is a component - I suppose a precondition - for racism. The immediate subject is "Chief Illiniwek," the departed and far-too-lamented mascot of the University of Illinois.

The University Trustees recently retired him, citing NCAA pressure, and in the process ducking what most of us would call the real moral issue. This is my take only, but I've always thought that if the white man wants to dress up someone to dance at halftime, he should pick a white guy and leave the red man the hell alone. It's more than a little hypocritical - and as I see it quite cruel - to pretend to

honor Native Americans when we've spent the last 400 years keeping them down.

Throw in the probability that 90% of the fans at UI halftime ceremonies don't know, or care, anything about Native American culture, and you may understand what I'm trying to say. Unfortunately, if you read the letters to the editor in the Champaign paper, and certainly if you belly up to the bar at the Tuscola Moose Lodge, you will conclude that I don't know what the hell I'm talking about.

I often don't, although I'm pretty comfortable with my position on this one. But back to stereotyping. I should go on record at this point to state that I have never

taken a course in anthropology or sociology, which means that there is no danger than I will let the facts get in my way. But here's my concern. If you line up every single "Chief" supporter, which means a clear majority of alumni and current students, and you hook them up to a polygraph, I am confident that I know what would happen. The question would be, "Should anyone find 'Chief Illiniwek' to be offensive to Native Americans?"

"They would all answer 'No,' and the line wouldn't move. And I'm not just referring to my buddies at the Moose Lodge, who really believe that Ronald Reagan was decorated at the Battle of the Bulge. A lot of really intelligent

and educated people are appalled that a few of us liberal do-gooders - they do not tire of reminding us of our minority status - just don't Get It. And there's a kicker. I have had multiple conversations with these folks, and most of them are really nice people. As the prophet J. Buf-fet once observed, "Some things are still a mystery to me, while others are much too clear."

As you may have noticed, I'm kind of mystified by stereotyping, and with intolerance in general. But of course I'm as guilty of it as the next person. I'm 6'2", and I have never been real comfortable with people five feet tall, and less

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My View - On Walter Reed

JOHN ZUTZ

There are a couple of things that trouble me about the recent news stories about crappy conditions at the country's premier Army hospital, Walter Reed.

First, all the blathering led the general public to believe this was "news."

Certainly, mice insects and mold are bad, but focusing on Walter Reed masks the full story. Here at VVAW we like to take a wider view.

I recall shortly after the war began there were stories from Ft. Stewart, Georgia about wounded troops being warehoused in old barracks without heat, and without seeing doctors for months. Later, there were similar stories from

Ft. Knox, Kentucky, Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, and Ft. Lewis, Washington. Other stories from Ft. Bragg, North Carolina and Ft. Carson, Colorado told of untreated mental health problems.

More recently, I've read of soldiers being denied physical and mental health care. Even worse, some troops diagnosed with PTSD and others physically unable to perform have been re-deployed to Iraq.

These are just instances I can recall, without even doing any research. So, this "news story" has been steadily unfolding for four years. And it's not an isolated problem – it's systemic.

The other thing that bothers

me is how few reporters understand that the military hospital system, and the VA are separate entities. Sure, they do similar jobs, and they even work together occasionally, but they are not connected.

Looked at dispassionately, I can understand why the VA has problems. Their administrators have to ask for more money each year – more veterans are being created and health costs are rising everywhere – but they are employed by an administration that wants to cut taxes. So the VA ends up chronically under-funded.

The military, however, doesn't have that excuse. It seems to me they go to Congress, get

what they ask for, and waste it on systems that don't work. Then they go back to Congress to get "supplemental" funding. So, the Army had plenty of money to maintain Walter Reed, they just chose to spend it elsewhere.

Oh, and let's not forget one other story. We're closing Bethesda, the premier Navy hospital, so we'll only be left with Walter Reed. If I were a Marine or a swabbie I'd be pissed.



JOHN ZUTZ IS A VVAW NATIONAL COORDINATOR AND A MEMBER OF THE MILWAUKEE CHAPTER.



Notes from the Boonies

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so with people 6'6". As a White Sox fan, I have an immediate distrust of Cubs fans. I drive a 1992 Pontiac, and distrust anyone who feels the need to buy a new car every two years. If I felt the need to buy a new car every two years, I am confident that I would dislike people who continue to drive 15-year-old cars. Does this make any sense? Well, either it makes no sense at all, or else it makes perfect sense. Please refer to the prophet Buffet.

As long as I'm suggesting that my hands are not clean, I'll mea culpa a little further. During my

tour in Nam, I doubt that I ever once referred to the indigenous population as "Vietnamese." If you served, you know what I'm saying. I suppose that was explainable, if not justifiable: if we didn't think of them as real people, it made it a lot easier to kill them. Nothing beats great memories of Vietnam, right, guys?

With regard to the "Chief," I have to admit that, during my college days at Illinois, I was among his biggest supporters. I would have echoed every single "Chief" apologist today. I guess I'd like to think that the difference is that I've

finally grown up. I just wish that my alma mater, and my fellow alums, would do the same.

Finally, I'd suggest that if you'd said, twenty or thirty years ago, that "Chief Illiniwek" was offensive to Native Americans and should be put out to pasture, you'd have been laughed at. Actually, you'd have been fortunate to have received that response. Those who took that position in earlier years were often subjected to serious derision, and that's probably putting a good face on it. But it's 2007, and he's gone, which leaves us with the bad news and the good news. The bad news is that way too many really nice people don't un-

derstand that people, and cultures, are not put on Earth just to make our lives more entertaining. The good news is that that message is finally getting through, and that maybe, ten or fifteen years from now, most people will begin to understand that.

If I'd had the humanity to have understood it forty years ago, I would have called them Vietnamese.



PAUL WISOVATY IS A MEMBER OF VVAW. HE LIVES IN TUSCOLA, ILLINOIS, WHERE HE WORKS AS A PROBATION OFFICER. HE WAS IN VIETNAM WITH THE US ARMY 9TH DIVISION IN 1968.

The Struggle Continues

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It must be recognized that we not only challenged the political establishment but we challenged the culture of war that our nation is rooted in.

But the struggle continued. The Reagan era was not a restful era for us. While fighting for decent benefits for all veterans, we had to oppose death squads, contras, and torture training camps in Central and Latin America. The history books may act like these were small "wars" or "conflicts" but who knows how big they may have been if we did not keep Reagan's feet to the fire.

Has anyone really figured out why we had to invade Panama? In that invasion we made tens of thousands homeless, wounded thousands, and killed hundreds? Was Noriega a real threat to our national security or were there other interests? As for the first Gulf War, don't forget how the peace movement and VVAW protested against Saddam Hussein throughout the eighties and early nineties as the

United States backed Saddam's ruthless activities.

After the first Gulf War, we fought the embargo and demanded normalized relations with the Iraqi people. We started our homeless stand-downs ... feeding homeless veterans. We celebrated the victories in Africa over colonialism, racism, and apartheid.

But the struggle continues. We may be older but these last six years have been one heavy roller coaster ride and we're still here. We've seen a lot of old-timers come back and a lot of new people come forward to protest the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Not because any of us has any illusion about the Baath Party or the Taliban but because we know the lies our government is capable of.

Approximately 300,000 young men and women will be faced with the nightmares, guilt, anger, loss of family ties, loss of significant others, and the likes, due to the current wars. There are

not enough facilities or personnel to treat them and we must demand decent benefits for this younger generation.

In 1975 when the Vietnam War came to an end we vowed to rise up to stop such types of war from ever happening again, and so we fight the current wars. Unfortunately, no one could control the neo-conservative draft-dodging right-wing pseudo-intellectuals that actually believed they could "right" all the supposed liberal wrongs which "lost Vietnam." Naïve and with no experience of combat they thought it would be a cakewalk in Iraq and Afghanistan but we knew better. So we struggle.

These conflicts are worse than Vietnam simply because we went through Vietnam. We know the truth yet we find ourselves in a strikingly familiar situation. Has America not learned? This administration is doing precisely what they did in Vietnam. Destroying people, culture, and land, in the hell of war. From the effects of Agent Orange to depleted uranium the lies are the same. We are told if

we pull out of "the war on terror," terrorism will be on our front door just as communism will take over the world. Lies. All lies.

Vietnam was our nations' longest war but there is a good chance Iraq will top that. So we struggle.

We welcome participation and recognition of our younger counterparts in Iraq Veterans Against the War. Vietnam Veterans Against the War's 40th anniversary is not just a chance to celebrate the last 40 years ... it is a time to rededicate ourselves to the fight for peace, justice, humanity, and veterans rights. We are ready for forty more years of struggle if needed.

Register to attend the 40th Anniversary celebration as soon as possible! We need an estimate of how many folks to expect.



BARRY ROMO IS A VVAW NATIONAL COORDINATOR AND A MEMBER OF THE CHICAGO CHAPTER.



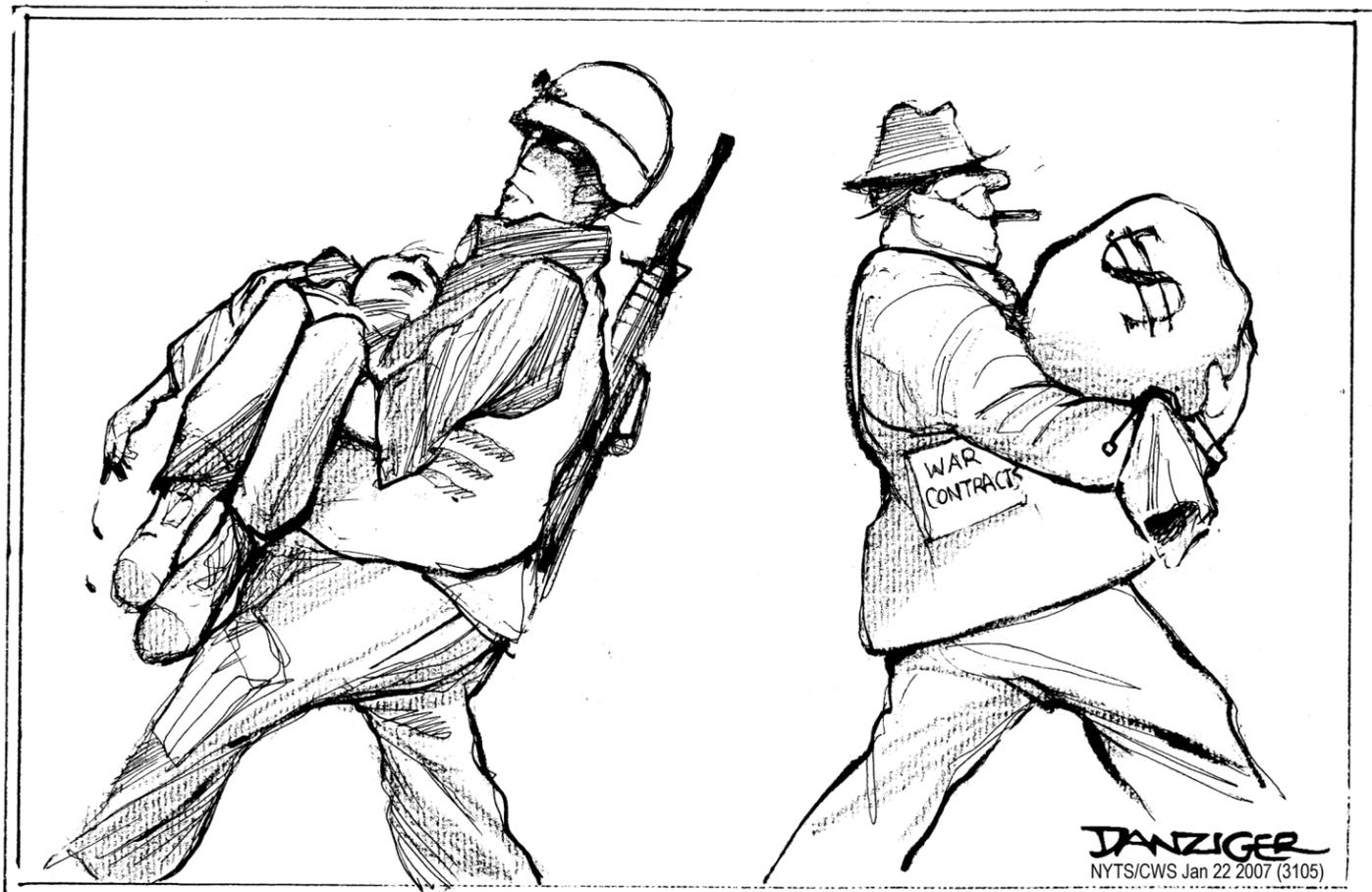
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Building the Antiwar Movement: From Vietnam to Iraq

BRIAN GRYZLAK

Iowa City, Iowa

In February 2003, millions across the world rallied against the impending US-led invasion of Iraq. The US-led "coalition of the willing" dismissed global public opinion. Most of the US population and indeed the majority of globe were then, and are now, calling for an end to the war on, and occupation of Iraq.

Four years later the occupation of Iraq continues. Many in the antiwar movement are revisiting tactics and clarifying messages in order to build the movement into something that ruling elites can not ignore.

Barry Romo and Aaron Hughes came to Iowa City, Iowa in February to discuss the positions, strategies, and tactics of the antiwar movement. Aaron is a former sergeant with the 1244th Transportation Company, Illinois National Guard, and was in Iraq for a total of 15 months. Romo is a former Vietnam War army infantry lieutenant and a national coordinator of VVAW.

The event was organized by the University of Iowa Antiwar Committee and sponsored by six other local organizations. Roughly 100 people came out to the Iowa City Public Library to hear them speak.

Early on, Aaron addressed the main tenet for the US-led invasion: "I always knew that there weren't any weapons of mass destruction because one of my army manuals said that."

Both Aaron and Barry were asked to share how they came to oppose the respective wars they fought in. Both discussed the difficulties of transitioning to civilian life and the deep and complex personal issues that accompanied

their realization that the reasons for going to war turned out to be lies. Barry shared the issues that he faced during his deployment to Vietnam, and the process of channeling his antiwar sentiment into action: "I got to Vietnam and within two weeks I knew that it was not what I thought it was going to be. . . The people didn't want us there." He added that one of the most difficult things for him was to attend his first antiwar demonstration.

Aaron noted, "It took me a long time to join IVAW [Iraq Veterans Against the War]. When I got back I felt like I didn't have the right to say anything. Everyone told me I'm a hero. Everyone said 'Thank you for your service,' and how do you counter that? How do you say 'Don't thank me for that crap. I'm not a hero. I'm guilty. I'm part of this messed up thing.' "

Aaron explained, "As long as we're there, no matter what government is established, it's always going to be underneath our rifle, and as long as that happens, the Iraqi people aren't going to accept it." He continued, "Stopping the funding [for the war] is the one way...one tactic that we as the people need to use and need to make our Congressmen and women use to stop the war."

Aaron talked about art as an historically powerful way of making sense out of the experience of war: "I think art historically has been a space...to challenge the cultural norms. The Dada artists after World War I, they got up there and said, 'You know what, WWI made no fucking sense at all,' and the only way to express the traumas of this war is to have nonsensical poetry, to stand up and just yell and scream, and make noises that made no utter sense

but that was the best chance they had at expressing what they went through, and the insanity of fighting people that lived across...an imaginary line."

Barry made an appeal to approach the antiwar struggle as part of broader struggles towards betterment of society through challenging sexism, racism, and homophobia. "You can't allow the prejudices that exist among us to stop us from having a society where we're all accepted as human beings, and where we all have the basic rights and privileges," he said.

Barry drew from his experiences of years of organizing in addressing the frustration that those in the antiwar movement sometimes face: "Sometimes we can think we aren't winning people over; and we never know where the struggle is going to go anymore than the people who get us into wars know where the struggle is going to go. But the

only way we're going to beat them is by constantly talking to our neighbors...by constantly bringing new people forward. You can never be satisfied with the number of people you have"

The event was a huge success, as judged by attendance as well as the many comments from folks who attended. Indeed, the main message of the forum was that veterans speaking out against the war are a powerful part of the antiwar movement, and that providing such space is clearly part of the answer to the question of what needs to be done.



BRIAN GRYZLAK IS A RESEARCH ASSISTANT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA (IOWA CITY, IOWA) AND A MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA ANTIWAR COMMITTEE.



Barry Romo speaking in Iowa City

Retiring from Wage Work/Ramping Up Real Work

HANNAH FRISCH

Sometimes people think the graying of our organization means a lessening of energy and activism. They aren't looking at the silver lining (pun intended). We actually have an opportunity for an activist renaissance as more of our members reach retirement age.

We are already benefiting from retirements. A number of

our most active leaders are retired or on disability. Retired members head our two new chapters. One of these individuals, Marty Webster, said, "I realized I was getting older and there was a void in my life. I wanted to play a bigger role. It has been exciting and gratifying. I also feel an obligation not to abandon the next generation of veterans the

way we were abandoned by older vets. It's giving me a purpose in life. It's real."

If retired and about-to-retire members want to compare notes, one opportunity to do this face-to-face would be at the 40th Anniversary. If you are interested in such a small group discussion—probably on Sunday

morning—make a note on your registration form. Please also contact me at hf52@aol.com.



HANNAH FRISCH IS A MEMBER OF VVAW'S NATIONAL STAFF.

Warriors for Peace in the Classroom

AARON DAVIS

Vietnam Vet Rick Miller brings his experience as a company commander of B Company 4/39th Infantry Brigade, 9th Infantry Division in the Delta, and his peace activism as a member of VVAW and Veterans For Peace into college classrooms. Rick and fellow vets for peace Dr. Robert Littlehale (Patrobas) and Larry Chadwick have spoken on the human costs of war 25 times in the past two years in history, human development, humanities and psychology classes at Salt Lake City Community College and Utah Valley State College

Miller got to Vietnam in December 1967, just before Tet. "After our first major action, we dug up a grave with half a body in it, and the sight and smell of it are with me today," he exclaimed. He has documented his experiences in a book called *Vietnam Screaming in My Head*. His writing, speaking and working as a peace activist and Buddhist practitioner have helped him heal the pain of PTSD and alcohol addiction. "Hardly a day goes by without some recall of the war. Flashbacks occur frequently. At times they are cued by sights or sounds or smells. Vietnam is just

there. It is in my head, forever," he concluded.

Rick carries a picture of a young Vietcong he killed on an ambush in his wallet. "I want to expose to others the horrific mental and physical stress that war is to the people who fight it. I want to share all of these thoughts, and I am tired of holding them inside me. I have forgotten 90% of my experiences, but it comes back in my sleep" he concluded. Miller came back to Pomona, California, tried to be normal, and was admitted to USC medical school, until his PTSD hit full force in 1970. His PTSD has led to his 100% disability and peace activism.

Rick and second wife Sara have adopted two children and are currently living in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Larry Chadwick was an RTO in the 1st Air Cav in January 1968. "Killing another human being is hard. I hate helicopters, and don't answer the phone. I came home with a \$100 a day heroin addiction, drank, stole and robbed a bank," he emphatically stated. Larry spent time at Rykers Island prison in New York. "I talk in my sleep 'kill 'em all,' get up early and walk the

perimeter in my house," he stated. Larry works at the VARMC Salt Lake City, and is in his second marriage after being in many 12 step programs. "A lady asked me the other day 'Will we ever be safe?' I replied welcome to my world," he concluded.

Dr. Robert Littlehale (Patrobas) served as a medical doctor in Vietnam. He saw first hand the carnage of war in a MASH unit. "I came around a corner, and saw about 20 soldiers on litters mangled and blood soaked just waiting to die. I cried for five hours, and then got drunk. I was a mess," he stated. Although

Patrobas came home "angry," he had a distinguished career as a faculty member of Harvard Medical School. He has been divorced twice, and fought the demons of PTSD with alcohol. "War is futile," he concluded.

Miller, Patrobas and Chadwick are members of the Nikko Schoch Chapter 118 Veterans For Peace in Salt Lake City, Utah.



AARON DAVIS IS A VVAW MEMBER AND MFIC OF CHAPTER 118 VETERANS FOR PEACE. HIS SERVICE OF 18 YEARS INCLUDED MARINE NCO AND ARMY OFFICER.



Vietnam vet and VVAW member Rick Miller makes a point in a psychology of good and evil class while Vietnam vets Larry Chadwick and Dr. Robert Littlehale (Patrobas) await their turn.

Chicago High School Debates Enlistment

JACKSON POTTER

On Wednesday, March 28 at Englewood High School in the Chicago Public Schools, an unusual thing happened. Instructors in the schools ROTC (Army Reserve Officer Training Corps) agreed to debate Vietnam and Iraq war veterans about the benefits and disadvantages of military enlistment. As part of a service project for the Constitutional Rights Foundation on the pros and cons of the draft, Englewood students constructed a debate format for the panelists to argue a myriad of issues pertaining to the War in Iraq. The panelists included; Barry Romo, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Sergeant Maurice Flowers, ROTC instructor, Aaron Hughes, member of Iraq War Vets against the War, Major Harry McEwen, ROTC instructor and a soldier on active duty in Iraq who is against the war who will remain anonymous. Five Englewood students sat by the panelists and fielded a series of questions for the guests to answer. Some of the questions

asked included; "Do you think enlisting in the military is a good idea, why or why not?" and "What do you think about the 3,000 plus soldiers who have died in the war so far?"

The most important exchange occurred after Major McEwen commented that every decision in life involves a calculated risk. He asserted that driving a car was one of the most dangerous things a person can do, and many more die doing that than serving in Iraq. In a passionate and angry response, VVAW's Barry Romo disputed that logic, challenged the Major, "to compare dying in an auto accident to intentionally killing someone for no good reason is a terrible comparison."

Students fixated on this moment and began to ask pointed questions directed at the ROTC instructors in the little time that remained. Senior Andrea Hendricks, heavily recruited by the Navy, asked the Major, "Did you serve in combat like these other men." In a very prosaic

manner, the Major answered "No, I didn't." Questions were then beginning to accumulate as another young woman in the audience followed up with "well don't you think these other men might be right, being that they've seen what actual combat is really like?" By that point, the Major had no choice but to concede the obvious. As a teacher of predominantly low income, African American youth, I can confidently say that on this day we dealt a powerful blow to the

military recruitment machine. More discussions and forums like this one in our public schools would go a long way to counter the war propaganda parceled out daily by ROTC programs across America.



JACKSON POTTER IS A CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS HIGH-SCHOOL TEACHER AND LONG-TIME SUPPORTER OF VVAW.



Here We Grow Again – Camarillo, California

MARTY WEBSTER

It is really a privilege to introduce our newest contact – Steve Crandell from Camarillo, California. After he graduated from Troy High School, Fullerton, California in 1967 he joined the Air Force in 1968. In 1970, Steve volunteered for Vietnam and served as a weapons loader on F-4s at Cam Ranh Bay for two months and then in Danang for ten months.

Steve became an Iraq anti-war supporter when he and his wife Carolyn marched in the January 2003 Los Angeles anti-war rally carrying a banner which read "Been There Done That" and "War is Only a Friend to the Undertaker" – "Vietnam Veteran." During the rally he was singled out and interviewed by KPFK 90.7 radio station. Steve voiced his opinion that we were repeating history, that the administration lied to us then and they are lying to us now.

Since he has become a Southern California contact for VVAW, Steve has become aware of the large number of phone call and emails VVAW receives from veterans looking for help to obtain benefits, discharge information, PTSD issues and legal assistance. There are also many inquires from students looking for information about the effects of war on the troops.

"There are some veterans groups and individuals that think we should have stayed in Vietnam until the job was done - sound familiar?" Steve said. "They say they stand tall for America but in a threatening and twisted way," he noted. Steve did his homework. He did some research and asked questions about VVAW before he joined, and in this process, he found he had a choice to just be a member of the group, or, he could get involved. He chose to get involved.

On Saturday, March 17, Steve proudly represented VVAW publicly for the first time at a march in Ventura, California. Approximately 300 people took part in the march. There was lots of support from the public, honking horns, cheers and peace signs. The theme was "Stop the Funding – End the War." It was sponsored by the Peace Coalition of Greater Ventura. Steve marched up front with the president of the Ventura Chapter of the Veterans For Peace. There was also representation from the Green Party. Steve pushed Carl Smith in a



Steve Crandell and Bill Hammaker, 98-year-old World War II CO

wheel chair. Carl suffers from MS thought to be brought on by Agent Orange. The march in Ventura went without incident. There was one man who had a t-shirt that said "Dog Soldiers" on it. According to Steve, he shadowed the march the whole distance. He saw him at the park where the march ended at the "Iraq Wall" with names and pictures. He was staring at the wall and seemed to be getting angry. Steve thought it would be best to try to open a dialog with him. His son is in Iraq and asked if they had permission from the families to post the names and pictures. He told him probably not but the information is available publicly on websites. The man said if he ever saw his son's name and picture on the "wall" he would destroy it. Then he left. "Maybe the reason he left so abruptly was that he just wanted someone to know why he was there," Steve wondered.

Steve said his mission is to support veterans in whatever way he can and spread the word about the devastating effects of war, just or unjust. In the short time he has been a VVAW contact, he has been able to help a couple of students with their reports about war by letting them know how the Vietnam War has effected him. He feels it is our responsibility as veteran "gray hairs" to teach the youth and hopefully they will make the right decisions.

"I never regretted going to

Vietnam," Steve said, "but becoming involved in VVAW has brought forth a whole new way of looking at the effects of war, and has created a whole new group of friends. Friends that share a common goal of helping other veterans and trying to put an end to senseless wars. Get involved and you might find the risks very rewarding."

Welcome Home Steve and welcome to the VVAW family!

Steve is also an executive board member of the Democratic

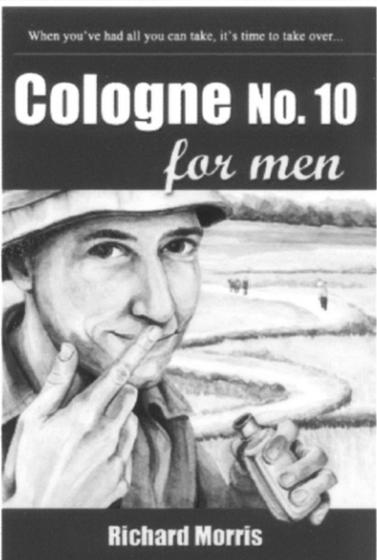
Club of Camarillo, Chairs the Veteran's Committee and writes a column in the club newsletter called the "Veterans' Corner." His wife, Carolyn, is the Vice President of the club and editor of the club newsletter. They were both elected as delegates to the 37th Democratic Assembly District.



MARTY WEBSTER IS THE NATIONAL ORGANIZING SECRETARY FOR VVAW

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2006 Veterans Day Observance, Chicago

AMY MEYERS

It was a crisp November day in Chicago when VVAW held their annual Veteran's Day observance at the Vietnam memorial. Folk singer Anna Stange opened and closed the event with folk songs. This year's speakers included veterans of the past 50 years, each giving their own personal rendition of war and the continuing impact. VVAW's GI Counselor Ray Parrish was this year's emcee; between speaker introductions he offered some of his own insights.

Eric Alhberg served in Afghanistan and Iraq with the 82nd Airborne. He joined the Army out of high school for the college money. From the start, he questioned the motives of the Iraq war, stating he was against the war but went because he signed the contract. Upon his return, he recalled feeling alone until he was back in college and experienced the anti-war movement first hand. It was then that he became aware of VVAW and joined IVAW. He advises returning vets to talk about it, acknowledging that his own speaking out against the war has been a release for him.

Melissa Woo, Don Goldhammer and Robin Schimer, 3 members of the "Tasty 7" spoke on their arrests this past July, while counter recruiting at the Taste of Chicago. Military recruiter's reportedly told the Chicago Police they felt intimidated by the 'peace recruiters' presence. The counter recruiters were told to go to the imaginary 'free speech zone' located behind dumpsters, upon refusing, 7 were arrested. Chicago is the most militarized school district in the nation, not only are military recruiters prevalent in most high schools, they come out in full force to public venues such as the Blues Fest, Taste of Chicago and the Air and Water show. The right to leaflet in opposition to military recruitment of youth is a hassle each year, however, this action was the first that led to arrests, and a striking opening to the summer season for "peace recruiters" and the right to free speech.

Adam Navarro served 3 years as a MP with the 101st airborne including a 6 month tour in Kosovo. Adam discussed the sacrifices veterans make and why he thought it was important to allow his voice to represent those active duty soldiers who



Steven Majors on Veterans Day 2006, Chicago

can't speak today. He reminded the crowd that "war is tragic, that the military serves one purpose in war: to kill the enemy, but when troops return home they continue to make sacrifices, along with the difficulties of reintegrating into society." Adam went on to say that the people do not support the war or the administration's policies, stating "the war on terrorism is terrorism, war solves no fundamental problems, the death toll is rising, and while Rumsfeld can resign, can those fighting in Iraq also resign?"

Joe Miller is an active VVAW member and National Coordinator, as well as professor of Political Science at the University of Illinois. Joe spoke on the generational connections, from his aunt's attendance, a WWII veteran and member of VVAW, to the countless other Veterans from various generations, at this year's observance. VVAW members have been informing folks about the lessons they learned from their war, their era. Now the younger vets help keep VVAW members motivated to continue the struggle for veteran's rights and peace and justice worldwide. "Bring home the sons, daughters, grandkids that are over there now." In a film class he teaches on Vietnam (showing *Sir! No Sir!*, *Born on the 4th of July*, *Winter Soldier...*), Joe mentioned that many don't know that the veterans as well as the soldiers fought during that war to end the war. VVAW has been wiped out of the history books but new scholars are finally coming out and putting us back in the history books. Veterans and GI's stood up against the Vietnam War. "Its important students learn this part of history. We need to be visible, make these connections with the vets of today's generation." In closing Joe quoted from a 1971

speech by John Kerry, "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?"

Aaron Hughes served 1 year 3 months and 7 days in Iraq with the Illinois Army National Guard. Aaron thanked VVAW for helping him to have a voice, having been frustrated trying to find a voice, find a space to come back to, "when everything you realize, everything you thought about the way the world was, isn't true." Never fully understanding why he was deployed, what they were doing, why they couldn't help the kids that were lining the roads of Iraq, why the civilians were looked at like they weren't people, how money and contracts are more important or how his unit didn't have proper armor until 3 months before leaving, were some of the questions that led Aaron to where he is today. This frustration led to meditation and his art work, trying to create some type of understanding, redefine who he is through art and activism.

Gerry Condon, a Vietnam War resister, who spent time in Sweden and Canada, has been working with Project Safe Haven, which is comprised of war resisters and conscientious objectors since the Vietnam era, who support the war resisters of today. Gerry met AWOL soldier Kyle Snyder doing this work and is traveling with him now. Gerry introduced Kyle to the crowd of Chicagoans that have come to know him over the previous weeks, as he was very active in Chicago during November telling his story to schools and media.

Kyle was recruited in October of 2003, given promises of money and other benefits. He signed up as a heavy construction equipment operator, believing he would be helping to rebuild Iraq by building schools and roads. After arriving

in Kuwait his job was changed to 50 cal. gunner providing escort for high ranking officials. He witnessed the shooting of a civilian, which was not properly investigated and brought him to further question and doubt the Iraq war and US military. He saw Iraqis angry and fed up with the occupation, realizing the people in Iraq were fighting just like him. Youth, 17, 18 years old defending their homes, doing the same thing he would do if someone attacked his home in the United States. While on leave, he fled to Canada where he remained for a year and a half. Kyle recently returned to the US under the impression from the Army, that he would be discharged without prison time. Upon turning himself in and being told otherwise, he's since gone AWOL for the second time and is now traveling the states speaking out. Kyle said "demonizing the Iraqi people, saying they are lesser beings than we are, is what keeps this war going and once soldiers in country, in Iraq, realize that these people are people, they're not anything less than we are... that once they realize this - the war will stop. Once people follow their conscience, this war is going to stop. I followed my conscience and I'm being persecuted for it."

Steven Majors, a Vietnam Army veteran read 2 poems about what the Veteran has provided the people. And with experience and compassion, Ray closed with a Native American prayer and reminded us that post traumatic stress disorder is a matter of conscience, saying "obey your conscience and cure yourself." Imploring everyone to "visualize peace, bring end to war and get the help we need for our Veterans." In the blistery cold air, between the observance and Aaron's art exhibit

continued on next page

"Citizens Arrest" Attempt at The White House

WARD REILLY

On Election Day, November 7, 2006, VVAW national-contacts Ward Reilly of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Bill Perry of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Patrick McCann of Washington DC, helped organize, and participated in a unique, multi-phased, antiwar action at the White House. It was a 2-day action, during which, among other things, we wrapped the White House in "crime scene tape," and I attempted to exercise my civil rights by performing a "citizens arrest" of President Bush and Vice President Cheney. There were 4 arrests.

I rang the front gate door bell over and over to get the attention of the Secret Service, in order to talk to them about performing the planned "citizens arrest" of Bush and Cheney. The Secret Service was not amused, but talked to me at the front gate, and asked me "what the charges would be brought against Bush and Cheney?" I told them "treason, spying on citizens, kidnapping, torture, lying, using banned weapons, and war crimes." After a short discussion, in which the Secret Service supervisor was called, the agents declined to allow me entry into the White House, to make the arrest.

I pointed out to the 3 (not-so) Secret Service members that "if they denied me my right to make the arrest, that they were complicit in the crimes." I also pointed out to them that "they worked for me," which one of the agents angrily denied. One agent told me that I had to "do it without help, which is why it is called a citizens arrest," and I told him, in reply, that all I wanted him to do was to "open the gate and let me in."

Another highlight of the

action was the news early in the early morning of November 8 that Donald Rumsfeld had been fired by Bush, only days after Bush said that he had full faith in the Secretary of Defense.

Typical of all politicians, the "buck" never stops at their desk, it just bounces around from one to another, in a blaze of bullshit.

Joining the action was VVAW member Bruce Berry, veteran Mike Herington, Desert Storm veteran and DU activist Dennis Kyne, former diplomat Ann Wright, former CIA agent Ray McGovern, Gold Star aunt DeDe Miller, Gold Star mother Cindy Sheehan, musician Jesse Dyen, the musical duo of Pat Humphries and Sandy Opatow, who are known as "Emma's Revolution," and a few dozen other activists. It was intentionally a small and personal action, and it was very effective. It was guerilla theatre with plenty of anger and sadness mixed together.

During the 2 days, the small group took turns reading the name, rank, age, and hometown of all the US KIAs in the Iraq War, using a LOUD megaphone. It took about 4 hours to go through the list, and we did it four times during 2 days, with the megaphone pointed directly at the CIC office.

We also attempted to deliver a petition signed by 80,000 citizens, which the White House police refused to accept, so we threw the petition on the front lawn, through the fence. The petition demanded the end to the war, and the immediate pull out of the occupying army.

At about mid-morning on the 7th, I produced a roll of bright yellow tape with the words "crime

scene-do not cross" on it, and the group unrolled the tape until it went completely around the front fence of the White House, about 300 yards, or so. A group of high school students were enthralled by the events unfolding in front of their eyes, and they asked if they could stand with us, which they did, none to the joy of their teachers, who were escorting them.

Amazingly, the Secret Service allowed the tape to be carried back and forth in front of the entire White House, and the national Press Corp, stationed on the front lawn, sent several camera crews out to record the event. I also tied a piece of the crime scene tape to the front fence, which the Secret Service ordered to be removed, but it stayed on the fence long enough to be photographed.

To end the 2-day action, the 4 Gold Star moms chose to be arrested by blocking the main entrance in the front the White House, with the rest of our crew

encircling them in support, as per the plan.

Isn't it just like George W. Bush to arrest those that have already been hurt the most by his illegal and pathetic attempt to "one-up" his daddy? The occupants of the White House continue to disgrace our house every day they are allowed to continue to live there.

All in all, it was a GREAT action, and VVAW was well represented, and I wish all of our members could have been there.



WARD REILLY IS THE SOUTHEAST NATIONAL CONTACT FOR VVAW.

HE WAS A VOLUNTEER INFANTRYMAN SERVING IN THE FAMED 1ST & 16TH (RANGERS) OF THE FIRST INFANTRY DIVISION FROM 1971-74, SPENDING A THOUSAND STRAIGHT DAYS IN GERMANY WITH THE BIG RED ONE. HE JOINED VVAW ORIGINALLY IN 1972 AND RE-UPPED IN 2001.



VVAW members Bill Perry on right... Patrick McCann-rear, raising 1-finger salute... Ward Reilly-center, also "saluting Bush and Cheney"... and friends, including Ann Wright on phone, DeDe Miller, Dennis Kyne, and others

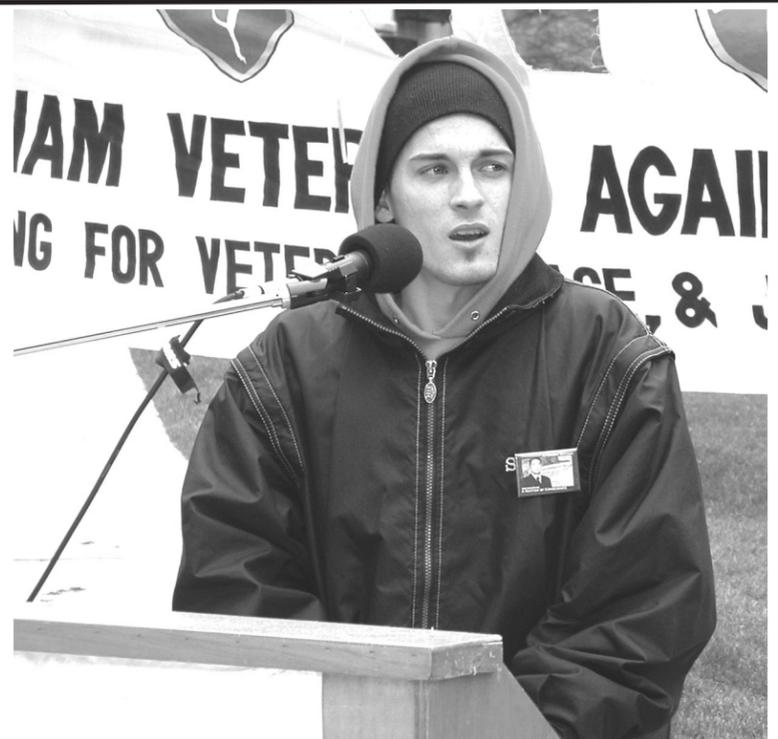
Veterans Day, 2006

continued from previous page

opening, VVAW had a party outside of the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum. VVAW's very own, Barry Romo and Bill Davis, took turns as master chefs on the grill, while others partook in the festivities, eating and drinking over comical, solemn and poignant conversations. The party and exhibit were well attended and a great success.

Aaron Hughes is the first non-Vietnam era veteran to exhibit artwork at the NVVAM. In Aaron's art exhibit "Shifting Memories," he shares a series of projects that bring to the forefront

the over-complex personal realities of the War in Iraq. Conveying a series of metaphors, critiques, and ambiguous narratives in order to deconstruct the nostalgic war epic that informs much of how mass media interprets war. Veering away from ideologies, these projects point instead to the complexity of daily experiences, practices, and tactics. This shift suggests that personal expressions and independent alternative communications can deconstruct the social, cultural, and political walls that foster dehumanization.



Kyle Snyder on Veterans Day 2006, Chicago

VVAW Marches in DC

continued from page 1

Potomac River. On the sidewalk at the southside of the bridge were several hundred war-mongering protesters who heckled the anti-war protesters. One bunch dressed in black motorcycle jackets called themselves "freedom eagles." This name was born out of their ignorance and stupidity, they are the ones who continue to believe the lies of Bush and his cronies. Their ignorance shone through in their shouts supporting US domination of the world because we are the "protectors of world Democracy." They shouted obscenities and tried to spit on the crowd. They demonstrated the stupidity of might is right by trying to stop people from going to the "Wall" as well as blocking anti-war protesters from joining the march. However, Carol stood up to them in her visit to the wall and the "eagles" had to back down and let her through.

The march snaked its way for miles across the bridge and then turned and marched toward



Ted Kautzman and Breezy Brzeski march in DC, March 17, 2007

the Pentagon. Protesters marched and sang John Lennon's immortal words "All we are saying, Give peace a chance." They also chanted, "What do we want? To stop the war! When do we want it? Now!" These slogans and others charged up the protesters who were very vocal and energized. There were marchers of all ages, from little children with their parents, to

elderly folks in wheelchairs.

The marchers gathered at the stage, which was set up at the end of the march in front of the Pentagon. The Kentucky VVAW was right up at the front, holding their VVAW banner high for all to see. Anti-war activists including Cindy Sheehan spoke for over an hour. The large crowd was very receptive to their message of "No

more money for Iraq" and "Get out of Iraq Now." Again, VVAW responded to the call to protest an illegal and unjust war with their efforts and participation in this march.



BREEZY BRZESKI IS A MEMBER OF THE VVAW MILWAUKEE CHAPTER.

Marching on DC, January 27

AMY MEYERS

United for Peace and Justice sponsored an anti-war demonstration at the steps of the capital in Washington DC; just in time for the president's formal announcement of troop escalation in the war on Iraq. The "surge" (coined word today for 60's word "escalation") includes 21,500 more troops, most going to Baghdad, and extends Army and Marine tours by a few months each. As of March 2007, the escalation has already surpassed the stated amount and has reached upwards of 30,000 additional troops.

This article provides experiences from one day in the streets of DC. Offering perspectives from longtime members of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and my own, as a younger supporting member.

The GI anti-war movement is one of the most admirable, noble and important factors and historical lessons of war. In the midst of an unplanned reunion, this demonstration provoked generations of anti-war veterans to participate. What does it feel like to be marching in Washington

40 years later, with comrades 40 years older, based on your son's/daughter's generation's war with eerie similarities to your own?

"I haven't gone to Washington DC to demonstrate in more than 20 years, but I could feel both from people here and around the country, that things were moving. And so even though I had to fly in and out, I really wanted to make this demonstration and I wasn't disappointed," said Barry Romo of Chicago VVAW.

As an outsider looking in, I tried to imagine what it was like then and how it must feel now. Observing a friend from afar, a young, innocent, vulnerable human; I saw VVAW 40 years ago. I wasn't even alive then. That war was before my time. Watching their interactions, as if a part of his heart was reaching out to hear and be heard. My eyes tear, seeing him smile amongst his comrades and newest/oldest friends, watch-

ing him stand in silence amongst chaos, in solidarity with his brothers and sisters; thinking on his life, his stories, his impact, his willingness, his strength, his pains and his fears. Him, them, tens, hundreds, thousands I felt these faceless reflections of stolen years and lives. I was standing with VVAW watching IVAW, feeling the same tide of emotions, shared anguish, from the older to the younger and back again. Their age, their era, *their war*, their understanding, their truth, their words, their discomfort - them finding a home of belonging and solace with the likes of each other.

"The size and appearance of the crowd rivaled what I saw in the early 70's when I was serving active duty at Fort Myer Arlington...It was good to see some old VVAW show up...the Iraq Vet's did well with their group," said Bruce Hyland of Indiana VVAW. Barry added, "The VVAW contingent was mainly from the Midwest and East coast; I saw people I haven't seen in 30 years! And beyond VVAW the fact that there were active-duty GIs, and that the march was led by IVAW



Jim Murphy, Bruce Hyland, Barry Romo and Marty Webster

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Passing the Torch From One Generation to Another

MARTY WEBSTER

They came in on the red eye special, or on chartered buses. They slept in cars and took turns driving, some even camped on the Capitol Mall. VVAW members from all across the country came to protest the Iraq war and the sending of more soldiers to be placed in harm's way to help perpetuate a lie.

Yes, VVAW was there. The old and the young. Comrades embraced and reminisced. New members from around the country met others for the first time. All were reminded of a war in southeast Asia, somewhere between time lost, and time found. A place most have forget. A place some can never forget.

The "old guys" and a new generation of Veterans. The 'Nam combat vet and the children, and grandchildren of those who were sure that years ago, they had sealed the fact that their children and children's children, would never have to participate in an event such as this again.

They came to join over 500,000 demonstrators in a massive march on our Nation's Capitol on Saturday, January 27. Some vets rode in wheel chairs or leaned on canes, limping from wounds sustained in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the first Gulf War, and now sadly, the Iraq war.

In addition to Gold Star Mothers for Peace, Military Families Speak Out, and thousands of other antiwar activists, students, religious groups, and unionists, the

most significant aspect was the participation of Iraq Veterans Against the War and the active duty soldiers who marched in civilian clothes.

The demonstration also included a wide variety of social organizations such as those involved in the Katrina struggle, environmental activists, defenders of the poor and underprivileged, and the famous "Raging Grannies," who consider the war in Iraq and Afghanistan - and their human, political and economical costs - a main issue for every US citizen.

Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA), who was near the front of the march, spoke with the Capitol Hill Police officers and demanded that the police move the buses they were using to blockade a portion of the parade route. Perhaps in deference to the new Democratic congress, perhaps in deference to a member of Congress, or perhaps in deference to over 500,000 US citizens, the police moved the buses.

The demonstration was so huge that it was impossible for groups and organizations to stay together. A surge of protestors, in their creative and exuberant spirit, partially dispersed the Veterans contingent. At first, cohesiveness appeared diluted, but the unified voice of resistance became a grati-



fyng show of solidarity.

Cadence from the veteran's contingent became the order of the day and a defiant chant:

"Hey, hey, Uncle Sam, we remember Vietnam,

Combat vets don't want your war, peace is what we're marching for.

Bring our troops back to our soil. Iraq vets say NO blood for oil.

Guns to shoot and bombs to drop, all this killing has to stop

They wave the flag when you attack, when you come home they turn their back,

We don't want your Iraq war, peace is what we're marchin' for,

Am I right or wrong? (you're right), are we weak or strong

(we're strong)"

"Sound off" "One, two"

"Sound off" "Three, four"

"Bring it on down" "One, Two, Three, Four, ...One, Two... THREE, FOUR!!!"

When the veterans contingent passed by, onlookers yelled and cheered. The vets responded with the cadence. Often the crowd joined them. Soon, everyone was one mass drill team. Then, a new crowd would notice the vets and it started over. And over. And over. For over two-hours, the chanting continued. "I cannot over-emphasize the impact this had on me and the crowd," said a Veterans For Peace member. People came over saying, "Thank you for serving our country and thank you for being here."

Bob Watada, father of Lieutenant Ehren Watada, the first officer who refused to be sent to Iraq for considering it an "illegal" war, marched with Jonathan Hutto, an active duty Marine, and more than 300 relatives of American men and women serving or killed in Iraq.

Jaime Vazquez wore his olive drab Marine tunic with nearly a dozen combat medals pinned to it including the Purple Heart and the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry. Vazquez, now Jersey City's Deputy Mayor for International Affairs, served in Vietnam with the First Marine Division from 1967-68. "I was hit with 70 pieces of shrapnel," Vazquez told the world as he marched. "I still have eight or nine pieces of metal buried inside me."

"I learned one lesson: to



Aaron Hughes leading the national IVAW and active duty soldiers delegation

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Passing the Torch

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struggle for peace and understanding," Vazquez continued. "I think we rushed into this war on Iraq. We have lost all the goodwill around the world that we got from the Sept. 11 terrorist attack. Anybody who doesn't believe this is a war for oil and global power is deluding himself."

Cherie Rankin was dressed in the Red Cross uniform she wore as a nurse in Vietnam. "We decimated the population of a very beautiful country," she said. "I feel very intense grief for our soldiers, their families and for all the Iraqi people."

The mobilization, called for by United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ), began with two hours of speeches in front of the capitol on the National Mall, followed by the march which deviated from the route that Capitol Police approved and ended up encircling the Capitol. The original march route would have had the peace activists sharing one road. Observers say they have never seen such a march route before. It had activists chanting and marching towards each other. It was the first time any demonstration was so large that it completely encircled the Capitol.

Reverend Jesse Jackson, who was one of the speakers, said that the conflict in Iraq is causing a war against the poor here at home. We do not need more troops in Iraq. What we need is more funds for the poor here at home.

Actress Jane Fonda, longtime activist and friend of VVAW, took the microphone and said it was the first time in 34 years that she took part in an antiwar demonstration because "silence is no longer an option." "I'm very sad we still have to do this, since we

didn't learn the lessons from the Vietnam war," she added.

Standing on her toes to reach the microphone, 12-year-old Moriah Arnold laid into the policies of George W. Bush as she told the crowd: "Now we know our leaders either lied to us or hid the truth. Because of our actions, the rest of the world sees us as a bully and a liar." Somehow the voice of this sixth-grader from Harvard, Mass., resonated more loudly than any adult in attendance. The youngest speaker on the National Mall stage had also organized a petition drive at her school against the war.

Actors Sean Penn, Tim Robbins and Susan Sarandon also spoke up, as well as several legislators, including long-time Veteran's advocate John Conyers, the new chairman of the Judicial Committee from the House of Representatives, and his colleagues Maxine Waters and presidential hopeful Dennis Kucinich, among others.

The march around the Capitol was to express the demonstrators main message: to demand Congress put an end to the war and to stop the sending of more than 20,000 additional troops that president George W. Bush has ordered, as the center of his new strategy for the war. Shortly after that, there was a massive rally in the large park located across the Capitol.

In addition to this march in Washington, over a 100 other simultaneous protests took place around the country, including a massive march in Los Angeles and a smaller one in San Francisco.

Gene Glazer of New Jersey, a medic in Europe during World War II said, "We were fighting fascism then. We are here today

to stop the Bush agenda of world domination. We're already being primed for the next war: Iran, North Korea, or wherever Bush wants to go. This is not the American way. My America is a defender of democracy. Today we are the aggressor. I wear a black arm band in mourning for my country."

Cindy Sheehan, the mother of Casey Sheehan a US soldier killed in Iraq and perhaps the most famous face of this movement against war, participated in the march that took place in Los Angeles.

VVAW Kentuckiana contact Carol Rawert Trainer and her husband Harold arrived several days early to visit the offices of members of congress. They then joined with hundreds of activists who remained in Washington to carry out an intense lobbying campaign among legislators on Monday, in the second stage of the struggle to force Congress to stop Bush's war-like policy.

On January 27, 2007, a torch was passed from VVAW to IVAW, from Jane Fonda to 12 year-old

Moriah Arnold. It is sad that such a rite of passage is necessary. The old, however will never abandon the new, all, will carry the banner together, for such is the way of honor.

Perhaps such demonstrations are not recognized by the Bush administration, nor accepted with credibility by the mainstream media either. Maybe they are only for us. Perhaps, however, they will serve as a reminder to all who attended, or those who watched on TV, and to those numbering in the hundreds of thousands, if not millions, on the internet, that VVAW is still around, and we are alive and well, and we remain in the vanguard of a movement that will not tolerate this insane war. Many years ago VVAW pledged that never again would one generation of veterans abandon another generation of veterans. That is reason enough to demonstrate.



MARTY WEBSTER IS THE VVAW NATIONAL ORGANIZING SECRETARY.



Jane Fonda, with extra large VVAW button



Madison Quakers Agent Orange Projects in Vietnam

MIKE BOEHM

Reprinted from Winds of Peace newsletter #12.

In March, 2005, the Madison Quakers implemented their first project to help the victims of Agent Orange. Agent Orange, along with Agents Purple, Pink, Blue, White and Green, were defoliants used in Vietnam during the war. Agent Orange was by far the most heavily used herbicidal spray during the war. These defoliants contained dioxin a highly toxic chemical which caused severe birth defects and high rates of cancer in those exposed to it - the Vietnamese people and American soldiers, and our allies.

For those of us who have followed the debate over Agent Orange all these years, we have seen a very familiar scenario-cries for justice which go unheard, complete denial of responsibility by the US government and the corporations which produced Agent Orange, anger unleashed and uncontrolled. And this reaction is only in response to the mistreatment of American soldiers; the effects of Agent Orange on the people of Vietnam have been virtually ignored by the parties responsible.

While it is vitally important that awareness continues to be raised about the need to address our responsibilities concerning

the after-effects of spraying the herbicide Agent Orange on our soldiers and on innocent Vietnamese civilians, it is also important that the anger and grief we all feel about the victims of this abuse not devolve into pointless, mindless rage, as so often happens.

So, consistent with our approach to the massacres at My Lai and elsewhere, we have chosen to take the path that bypasses recrimination and anger and instead focuses on what we can do for the people in Vietnam affected by Agent Orange.

We began to do so in 2005 with the family of Mrs. Nguyen Thi Ha from Tinh Giang village, one of the villages with a loan fund program funded by our organization. Their household consists of three women-grandmother, mother (Mrs. Ha) and daughter. The husband of Mrs. Ha was sprayed with Agent Orange during the war. When the war was over, they married; and, when he realized he had sired a child with severe birth defects and that his wife was losing her hearing, he ran away. He has not sent any money for support and in fact has never been heard from since.

I spoke to Mrs. Ha's mother when I visited because Mrs. Ha by then had become completely

deaf. She showed me around their "house"—mud walls, dirt floor and thatch roof. Then she introduced me to her granddaughter, who was 15 years old at the time but looked to be about 9 or 10 years old. She can only respond to stimulus such as light or noise; other than that, she has no sentience. One of the medical problems she has is an insatiable craving for water, and so she consumes enormous quantities of water all day long. Her grandmother told me that she spends a large portion of her day just boiling water for her granddaughter. And, of course, as a consequence of drinking so much water, her granddaughter is urinating constantly. Her mother and grandmother didn't know what more they could do for her. In a house of mud, where can you put a child like this? They have put her on a plastic chair with slots in the seat next to a door so she can have some light and fresh air. Mrs. Ha and her mother must work in the fields every day to be sure there is enough food for the family. They can't be with her all day so this little girl sat in her urine all day, day after day after day, her feet caked with mud made from her urine.

Our response was to fund what the people of Vietnam call a "compassion house" for the family of Mrs. Ha. These compassion

houses are made of durable brick and cement walls, cement floor and tin roof.

There is no solution to the effects of Agent Orange. The genetic damage is done and cannot be undone. But we can provide relief for these families and that is our goal. For the first time in their lives they are safe; safe from monsoon rains and wind, safe from insects and snakes. Safe. And for the first time in their lives they don't feel so alone because they know now that someone cares.

A meeting with the newly formed Vietnamese governmental organization, the Organization for the Victims of Agent Orange, this year confirmed the building of compassion houses as the most important aid that can be given to victims of Agent Orange. As of October, 2006, we have had constructed two more compassion houses for victims of Agent Orange and we will be constructing many more in the near future.

As of 2006 each compassion house cost \$900.



MIKE BOEHM IS THE CHAIR OF THE MY LAI PEACE PARK. HE SERVED IN CU CHI FROM 1968-1969. HE IS A MEMBER OF VVAW. WWW.MYLAIPEACEPARK.ORG

Marching on DC, January 27

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(Iraq Veterans Against the War), only reinforces how deep that the antiwar movement has gone...often the media tries to claim that we speak for no-one, in fact we speak for 65% of the country!"

Following the march VVAW and IVAW members joined in a post-demonstration party. This provided an opportunity to sit down together, rap and rejuvenate, to continue the fight to end another bloody war.

Later in the evening, a few of us made a visit to the Wall. I walked alone trying to organize the storm of emotion. A long, cold, dark walk, I couldn't read the names; I couldn't remember the start or see the end. As the wall became more visibly narrow,

reaching the last name scribed, I touched it with all the feeling of the world in my finger tips, eyes closed, completely unaware of who it belonged to...encompassing thousands of faces and stories in one life-changing touch of etched stone. Aware of the affliction it brought me, I wept inside for what it must present to others.

According to Bruce, "the late night visit to the Wall was quite interesting. The chance meeting of the three college student's who belonged to NOW...speaking with Barry about the memorial and the Vietnam War...probably not totally realizing who they were listening to." Nonetheless Barry did a wonderful job of providing historical context...from a

personal point of view. I always take the time to look and touch the names I have connection with. This trip, viewing the Wall with a Vietnam Vet I found myself in a new emotional situation. He stood in front of and indicated the panel his nephew is located on, but he has never been able to look at the name. When he told me, I found

myself unable to look also...some kind of emotional pain sharing."



AMY MEYERS IS A MEMBER OF THE CHICAGO CHAPTER OF VVAW, THE CHICAGO COALITION AGAINST WAR AND RACISM AND THE CHICAGO COALITION OPPOSED TO MILITARIZATION OF YOUTH.



The Milwaukee Beerfest and a Small Dream in a Far Off Land

CHUCK THEUSCH

The Milwaukee Beerfest "Blessing of the Bock," John Zutz's brainchild for a humanitarian event that is at once a FUND RAISER and a FUN RAISER has proved to be a great good fortune for the Library of Vietnam-Laos-Cambodia Project, our goal of helping the peoples in the war-torn countryside of Southeast Asia and the people and children of a small village in Southern Laos.

The generosity of Americans is well-known when it is seen in major national outpourings of help for disaster and disease relief such as the 2005 tsunami, hurricane Katrina, and uncounted others throughout our history. But that is far from the whole story. It is personal generosity of time, effort, and money in small amounts by many that is the fountainhead of our work. There is an untold story of millions of these kinds of efforts that are a testament to the better angels of our nature.

This is a report on our efforts told to those who make it possible, as a song of thanks, and to others who may find some inspiration in the work it takes to put on an event, the people that do it, the money that comes from it and the hopes and dreams it funds in a small village on the other side of the world.

We build libraries, of course. But we do more than that. We inspire hope where it is needed, a sense that someone cares among people who need to know they are not alone on life's journey. We have larger "District" libraries that cost \$35,000, a standard design.

Then we do projects with customized size and design ranging from \$5,000-\$15,000. These are called "Small Dreams"---the Milwaukee Beerfest with Vietnam Veterans Against the War has built a small dream. To be sure small dreams are as important as big ones...especially if its your dream of a better life in the heart of a jungle in war-ravaged land.

Kean Village, Savannaket Province, Laos

The Milwaukee Beerfest has funded a small library and school expansion in Kean Village Savannaket Province, Lao People's Democratic Republic, southern Laos. This area was one of several staging sites for operations to interdict Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army supply traffic along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The "Secret War in Laos" has received relatively little notice, but it raged with a fury fully as vicious and deadly as anywhere in Southeast Asia.

The Village has about 300 families, with about 150 children attending the elementary school. There's no electricity yet, but this does not in any way dampen the fervor of the local officials in their attempts to provide an education and a brighter future for their children.

A Word About Our Representative in Laos

In Laos we are blessed to have Madame Kongdeuane Nettavong, last surviving member of the royal family of the Middle Kingdom of



Chuck Theusch and Mike Boehm at the 2007 Milwaukee Beerfest

Laos (Xieng Khouang province/ Plain of Jars) and the Director of the National Library of Laos as our In-Country Representative. We call her the "Mother Theresa of Education" in Laos. She has one sister married to the former Regional Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (Yes, CIA) for Southeast Asia from 1965 to 1972 living in the US. She has a second sister living in Paris. She could be living either place. But she's chosen to dedicate her life to building the future of Laos through libraries and education. She travels the long dusty roads and trails of the jungles, forests and mountains of Laos planting the seeds of knowledge with us.

Thank You from the Children

You live in a village with no electricity in southern Laos. Your children still must be wary of un-

exploded bombs and landmines when taking a playful jaunt in the woods to hunt frogs. Someone in America sends you money to have the first library in the 400 year history of your village. Your diet is rice and fish. You wish to thank them with a gift. So what do you do?

You give them some of what you have---RICE! On September 8, 2006, I went to the village on our standard continuing support visit to donate money and more books. We were moved beyond words to find that the children had EACH brought a small bag of rice as a thank you gift for the donors. It was placed in a larger bag and I brought some back to pass on to the people of the Milwaukee Beerfest and the Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

This heartfelt deep thank you from the children and families of Kean village goes to everyone who buys a ticket, everyone who works the tables, every single exhibitor, the musicians, the bidders at the auctions, to all. Please know that this event, and everyone associated with it, has indeed changed one small corner of the world. Also, we ALWAYS go back and will continue the relationship this event has made possible. We will continue to bring you the news of your accomplishment through support of the Library Project.



CHUCK THEUSCH IS A VIETNAM VETERAN AND THE FOUNDER OF THE LIBRARY OF VIETNAM PROJECT AND THE LIBRARY OF LAOS PROJECT BASED IN MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN.



Chuck Theusch and his wife present the Laotian rice to Mike Goetsch, Bob Gronko and Bill Homans at the 2007 Milwaukee Beerfest

Putting the War on Trial in Cincinnati

MARTY WEBSTER

The temperature outside would dip into the 20s before the evening was over. But inside St. John's Unitarian Church in Cincinnati, where between 90 and 100 people had gathered to attend the "Bob Watada Tour," there was warmth and love.

Lt. Ehren Watada became the first commissioned officer to publicly refuse deployment to Iraq. He takes this stand based on his belief that the war is illegal, and that it is his moral and legal duty under the constitution to refuse orders to deploy. His court-martial ended in a mistrial at Ft. Lewis, Washington in February of this year. He is being charged with contempt toward officials, specifically, the president; conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman; and missing movement. The army has chosen to prosecute Lt. Watada primarily on the basis of his speech, rather than his refusal to deploy, confirming that their primary objective is to silence his dissent. For the first time since 1965, the army is prosecuting an objector for his opinion.

Lt. Watada's father, Bob, was on a national speaking tour in support of his son when he visited Cincinnati on November 2. Mr. Watada's background includes service in the Peace Corps and 10 years as Executive Director of Hawaii's State Campaign Spending Commission. He spoke about his son's path from enlistment after 9/11 to his realization that the basis for the invasion was fraudulent, to his decision to follow his conscience and refuse illegal war. "He was very, very patriotic...very much for his country. He didn't realize then that the president could lie," Mr. Watada said of his son.

Bob Watada did an excellent job and the video *Sir! No Sir!* was well received. The highlight of the evening was the appearance of two Iraq war resisters invited to attend the event. VVAW supports the actions of and stands 100% behind our war resisters. When we first came home there was no venue where we could go to for support. Painstakingly and out of necessity a small group of veterans got together to form VVAW. And at that time we pledged to one another and all future veterans that one generation of veterans must never abandon another generation of veterans again. We as an orga-

nization were in the vanguard of the GI resistance movement and we still are today.

The "Wolftones" sang a song entitled "Stand Behind the Wire" in reference to members of the IRA being illegally interned in the six occupied counties in the north of Ireland.

"Armored cars and tanks and guns, have come to take away our sons, but we stand behind the man who stands behind the wire."

Darrel Anderson, recently returned from Canada, and Kyle Snyder came to the front. After being AWOL for some time Darrel turned himself in at Ft. Knox. However, the Army had no idea who he was. After a further search they said he was in Germany and was not listed as AWOL. Darrel was immediately released from active duty and eventually given a less than honorable discharge. Ray Parrish, VVAW's professional Military Counselor, is working with Darrell to upgrade his discharge, and restore benefits. Darrell, like many Iraq veterans and active duty personnel, suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

When Kyle Snyder returned from Canada and reported to Ft. Knox last year with a promise that he would receive the same "Deal" that was given to Darrel Anderson, However, when he reported to Ft. Knox, he was given travel orders and a ticket to return to his unit for redeployment to Iraq. Kyle, who quickly understood that he had been deceived, bravely took another road. This was the first public appearance in the US that Kyle had made after refusing his order for redeployment. Since that time he has become a polished speaker and has toured the entire country and has spoken out against the war. Kyle has recently returned to Canada and on March 28 he was married to Maleah Freisen in a small chapel in Alberta. Although, I was unable to attend in person, I had the privilege of being the best man via phone hook-up.

I then invited everyone in the audience to join hands as Darrel, Kyle and I joined hands in the front of the room. I mentioned that at this moment something beautiful was taking place. A bond was developing between one generation of veterans and



Kyle Snyder, Darrel Anderson and Marty Webster

another. As the three of us hugged and wept openly, something was sealed in our hearts. Kyle who is currently considered AWOL said this encounter has built a bond that none of the of us could ever forget. I then invited them to say a few words which were well received by all.

I closed by inviting all in the room to come forward and embrace them, tell them they love them, thank them for their stance and most importantly to publicly stand behind these men and all of our men and women who are "standing behind the wire."

This is what it is all about, one vet lighting the fire in the heart of another. There was not a dry eye in the place. Doug Zachery who was the Watada Tour Facilitator said this was by far the best and

most emotional ending of any event on the tour. Bob Watada was very moved when he joined Kyle and myself for an embrace and Kyle told Bob that "your son is my idol." Bob then thanked VVAW Ohio Valley for a very special evening.

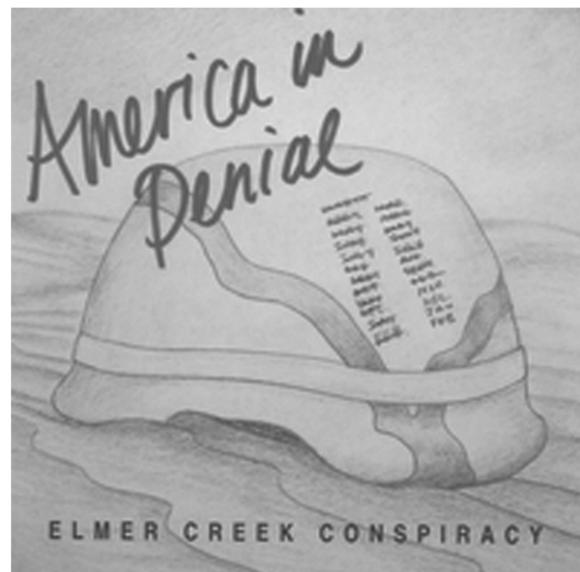
I am proud to be a member of an organization such as VVAW that fosters and perpetuates such an ideal. Anytime, anywhere, a veteran reaches out for help the extended hand of VVAW must always be available, and for that I/We are responsible!

"It only takes a spark to start a prairie fire." 

MARTY WEBSTER IS THE NATIONAL ORGANIZING SECRETARY FOR VVAW AND THE OHIO VALLEY REGIONAL CHAPTER COORDINATOR.

AMERICA IN DENIAL Elmer Creek Conspiracy

Two vets musical take on the state of the union



Free download of latest song, *Fairweather Patriot* at www.elmercreek.com

VVAW Supports Iraq War Resister Kyle Snyder

GERRY CONDON

Barry Romo and Kyle Snyder met on Veterans Day, November 11, 2006. First at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall on the Chicago River in Chicago. Vietnam Veterans Against the War had asked Kyle, AWOL from the Iraq War, to speak at the annual memorial. It was freezing cold. But VVAW was joined by Veterans For Peace, Iraq Veterans Against the War, and many good friends. It was a solemn memorial to honor the warriors and to recommit ourselves to resisting war.

Later, Kyle and Barry met again at VVAW's barbecue outside the Vietnam Veterans Art Museum. Somehow Barry and Kyle must have recognized one another. They had both been 19 when they went to war. At 19 years of age, Barry Romo served as an Infantry company commander in the Vietnam War. At 19 years of age, Kyle Snyder was in the Iraq War, escorting officer convoys with a 50-caliber machine gun. It was on one such mission that Kyle saw an innocent Iraqi shot by one of his men.

And Barry and Kyle both said say no to war. Barry returned from Vietnam angry at having been lied to by the US government. An early leader of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Barry has served as a national coordinator for 35 years.

Four months of the Iraq War was enough for Kyle. Profoundly upset by the uninvestigated shooting he had witnessed, he took leave and flew to Canada in search of a safe haven from the war. In Vancouver, British Columbia, Kyle became a popular speaker against the war. He applied to remain in Canada as a political refugee. Once he received his work permit, he worked at a wellness center for children in a small town in Alberta, where he met his fiancé.

The Canadian government did not seem eager to welcome Kyle. Canada has never granted refugee status to someone from the US. How could it be possible for the United States, Canada's ally and the "leader of the free world" to persecute its own citizens for their political beliefs? Disturbingly, Canada, which had stayed out of the Iraq War, was sending its troops to join the US war in Afghanistan.

After a year-and-a-half of uncertainty in Canada, Kyle was anxious to get on with his life.

On October 31, Kyle had turned himself in at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Fort Knox authorities had told his lawyer, Jim Fennerty of Chicago, that Kyle would be quickly discharged from the Army. But once Kyle was in their custody, the Army told him he would have to report to his old unit, the 94th Engineers at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Realizing that he could be ordered back to Iraq or court-martialed and imprisoned, Kyle went AWOL again and began an impromptu speaking tour. His first stop was Chicago.

Visit the Vietnam Veterans Art Museum

The National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum is little known outside of Chicago. But it is a must visit for all thinking Americans. The artistic expression of Vietnam veterans is at once personal, universal, sometimes beautiful, always profoundly disturbing. On this particular Veterans Day, the Museum hosted a special event. For the first time they displayed the art of a veteran of the Iraq War. Kyle and his fiancé Maleah visited the crowded room to take in the diverse and evocative art of Aaron Hughes. Kyle began to stare at a simple line drawing of an Iraqi horizon, and he froze, not knowing why. His girlfriend Maleah hugged him for a long time. They went outside to the barbecue, where Kyle was comforted by Barry and several other veterans who had a pretty good idea what he was going through.

Marty Webster was there. Marty is the VVAW organizer in Cincinnati, Ohio. Kyle, Maleah and I had visited Cincinnati the week before. Marty and his daughter had organized an event for Bob Watada, the father of Ehren Watada, the first officer to publicly refuse to deploy to the Iraq War. When I phoned Marty Webster for directions to the event, he said "you won't have any trouble spotting me." He was right. Marty is big and burly, with grey beard and ponytail. Wearing a jean jacket with VVAW patches, he looked like your Hell's Angel variety of Vietnam veteran. But everyone knows Marty is a teddy bear. He could not hold back the tears as he publicly welcomed Kyle and fellow Iraq veteran/resister Darrell Anderson. Now here was Marty again, comforting Kyle in the courtyard of the Vietnam Veterans



Kyle Snyder speaks at SOA event

Art Museum in Chicago.

Ray Parrish was there too. Ray is a Vietnam era vet who has become an indispensable activist for VVAW. Ray dedicates himself to knowing all there is to know about veterans' healthcare, benefits, rights, etc. In particular, he knows a lot about the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that affects so many veterans. Ray Parrish manifests VVAW's longtime commitment to serving veterans even as they organize against war.

Ray Parrish had joined Kyle in a press conference on Monday, the day before the US elections. Kyle had called on the people of Chicago to vote yes for a referendum demanding the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq. The referendum, which was on the ballot in about half of Illinois' counties, passed with an 80% margin.

Ray talked to Kyle before and after the press conference. Kyle makes no secret that he suffers from symptoms of PTSD. So Ray put him in touch with another VVAW member, who works in Chicago as a psychotherapist and agreed to see Kyle for an evaluation. It might be helpful, she said, if he were able to document his PTSD. She saw Kyle on several occasions. In lieu of asking a fee for her services, she suggested that when he was able, Kyle make a donation to Iraq Veterans Against the War. This solidarity, on the professional, political and personal levels, were just what Kyle needed at the time.

Another longtime leader of VVAW, Bill Davis, offered Kyle transportation and hospitality. Bill's wife, Joan, arranged for Kyle to speak at the high school where she teaches.

Kyle had found some really good friends in Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Friends who

understood where he was coming from and what he was going through. Friends who were eager to help him in any way they could.

Kyle Visits Fort Benning and New Orleans

After Chicago, Kyle, Maleah and I headed for the annual protest against the School of Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia, where he met some of his peers in Iraq Veterans Against the War. IVAW had an old school bus, brightly painted with calls for peace. They put on musical performances from the top of their bus and invited passersby to join them. When School of Americas Watch organizers invited Kyle to speak from the main stage outside of Fort Benning, eight members of Iraq Veterans Against the War filed up on stage behind him in a show of solidarity.

Kyle was introduced to the crowd by Col. Ann Wright (ret.), a tireless heroine of the antiwar movement. He and the other Iraq vets received a standing ovation. Backstage was Hannah Frisch with a smile and a hug. Dave Cline, a longtime leader of VVAW who serves as president of Veterans For Peace, was there with words of support. Dave and Kyle first met last summer in Castlegar, British Columbia, at the Our Way Home Reunion of Vietnam War resisters and veterans.

Iraq Veterans Against the War invited Kyle, Maleah and I to jump on their bus and head to New Orleans, where they are helping to salvage the Katrina ravaged homes of musicians and veterans. After the *Associated Press* reported his presence in New Orleans, Kyle experienced the first of several attempts to have him arrested. He had left town just in the nick

continued on next page

Chicago Veterans Honor a War Resister

AMY MEYERS

Friday, March 23, 2007, the Chicago Chapters of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Iraq Veterans Against the War and Veterans For Peace, along with friends from Chicago Coalition Against War and Racism, hosted a fundraiser for war resister Kyle Snyder.

Kyle has personal ties to Chicago since spending time here in the fall of 2006, where as an AWOL soldier, he insistently spoke out on the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan. From televised interviews, classroom presentations and discussions, to public forums and the VVAW Veterans Day observance.

The event was a success in outreach and fundraising. Over 50 people were in attendance, many staying for the entirety from 7pm-12am. Most were involved in intimate conversations in the gallery area, over food and drinks; while others watched video shorts of Kyle and fellow war resisters, in the media room. Members of VVAW, IVAW and VFP were present, coming from

metropolitan Chicago, and as far as Ohio and Indiana. Also we were honored to have in attendance Juan Torres (GSFP, MFSO), Anita Dennis (mother of resister Darrell Anderson), and 3 currently AWOL soldiers.

Chicago's IVAW chapter had their first Speak-Out at the event. Held the week of the 4th anniversary of the Iraq war, this event provided an ideal time and platform to introduce the chapter. Formed officially in February 2007 with 10 plus members to date; Aaron, Eric, Ryan, Justin, Dave, Patty and Matt, each gave personal renditions of their military experience.

The current state of affairs highlights the significance of resisters, veterans and civilian activists working together. It's no longer just about the war(s), but the media manipulation and lies used for going in, and at this point staying at war. Forcing us to heighten our commitment and continue providing support to one another, particularly resisters and veterans.



Aaron Hughes speaks at Kyle Snyder event

We must reach out to youth and their guardians, talk about the risks and economic conditions that pressure young, poor, working people to enlist. Although providing specific, realistic alternatives offering comparable benefits to that of military enlistment are difficult, more of us have to address and come to understand these implications. With this we can provide solutions and demand changes to our current social system, while ensuring the most viable options to pursuing decent employment and

educational opportunities are not rendered by means of the military, but by legitimate choices.

Without the GI's and Veteran's sharing their voices of dissent and opposition to military indoctrination with civilians, the ability to identify and understand allusions of the military industrial complex would be severely damaged. We must support the GI resistance!



AMY MEYERS IS A MEMBER OF THE CHICAGO CHAPTER OF VVAW.

VVAW Supports Iraq War Resister

continued from previous page

of time.

Kyle returned to Chicago, where the American Friends Service Committee had arranged for him to speak with high school students who were being targeted by military recruiters. Kyle spoke in a dozen of Chicago's poorest high schools, which were predominantly Black or Latino. From the working class, and having lived for a while on the streets, Kyle had no trouble connecting with these students. They knew he was telling the truth, and they hung on his every word.

On that second trip to Chicago, Kyle met Barry again at the annual fundraising dinner of a progressive publication. They drank and shared tales of their personal wars and had an outrageously good time. They were from different generations. But the two veterans had become brothers.

Hunted by Army

Kyle Returns to Canada

Kyle's speaking tour took him next to California. But the Army was on his trail. On December 8, they asked police in Alameda, California to arrest Kyle at a public event in support of war resisters. But Kyle was speaking in San Jose

that night. Bob Watada was the speaker in Alameda. Once again, military intelligence proved to be an oxymoron.

But Kyle continued to reflect on the possibility of going to prison. He decided he did not want to submit to this injustice. In early January he returned to Canada. He and Maleah decided they would get married and settle in the quaint little town of Nelson, nestled in the mountains of southeastern British Columbia.

But the long arm of the US Army reached across the Canadian border and shook him. On February 23, Kyle was arrested by local police, apparently at the request of the US Army. He was released six hour later on orders of Canadian Immigration officials. Quick action by his roommates, a US war resister couple, Ryan and Jenna Johnson, and calls from friendly members of Parliament, secured his release. Why Canadian police would have done the bidding of the US Army is currently the subject of local, provincial and federal investigations (for more on this story, go to www.SoldierSayNo.blogspot.com).

Vietnam Veterans Against the War was there for Kyle Snyder

once again. They organized a fundraiser to help Kyle with his legal and living expenses. VVAW, along with other veterans, plans to call on the Canadian government to provide sanctuary to Iraq War resisters. VVAW is also asking, "How does the US Army get away with harassing US war resisters in Canada?"

This is a story about the importance of personal relationships. It is a story about solidarity among veterans and resisters across generations. Stay tuned for the next installment. United, we are educating our youth about the realities of war. United, we are defending GI's who take a stand against war. United, we can bring a measure of peace to one another as we continue our collective mission: to end the wars of empire once and for all.



GERRY CONDON REFUSED ARMY ORDERS TO VIETNAM IN 1968. HE WAS COURT-MARTIALED AND SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS IN PRISON AND A DISHONORABLE DISCHARGE. BUT HE ESCAPED AND FLED FROM THE US, LIVING FOR 6 YEARS IN SWEDEN AND CANADA WHERE HE WORKED WITH EXILED WAR RESISTERS AGAINST THE VIETNAM WAR. WHEN GERRY RETURNED TO THE US IN 1975 CAMPAIGNING FOR AMNESTY FOR ALL WAR RESISTERS AND VETERANS WITH LESS-THAN-HONORABLE DISCHARGES, THE GOVERNMENT DROPPED HIS JAIL SENTENCE. GERRY HAS BEEN AN ACTIVIST FOR A JUST US FOREIGN POLICY EVER SINCE. HE CURRENTLY WORKS WITH PROJECT SAFE HAVEN, WHICH SEEKS TO SECURE A CANADIAN SANCTUARY FOR US WAR RESISTERS. HE MAINTAINS A WEBSITE, WWW.SOLDIER SAY NO.BLOGSPOT.COM



Kyle Snyder and Barry Romo, Chicago, Veterans Day 2006

Carousing with GIs in Germany

AMY MEYERS

I arrived early Monday at Frankfurt International Airport and within 40 minutes I had made my destination, Pioneer US military base, located in water boarding.

Invited by a friend in the Army, I decided this was the perfect opportunity to visit, see Germany and do outreach with VVAW papers, IVAW pamphlets and GI Rights cards. My friend, who's more like a younger brother, had done a year in Kuwait with occasional trips to Baghdad. Although he wasn't in direct combat he dealt with the more quiet horrors of war...the personal aspects that attack a soldier's heart and soul: Loved-ones quarrels, Dear John letters, loneliness and bigotry within the military.

There are multiple small-sized posts in Hanau, the bowling alley, PX, commissary, barracks and MP station are on different posts within a few miles of each other. Security at the gates are contracted Germans, their main job is to check military IDs and passports for all guests entering and exiting the base.

Me, my friend, my brother, a Sergeant First Class and 2 other 20 year old GIs (one male, one female) went to a "GI-friendly" Irish pub near base. One asked to see the buttons on my coat, VVAW and IVAW, he smiled and nodded as if he approved. I asked what brought them to the service; they said they joined to get out of their home towns, out of their parent's houses and to get money for college. The bartender (a young friendly local) and the SFC were telling me about the kind of soldiers who make places not GI friendly. Considering the difference in drinking age, practice and behaviors in America and Germany, I was told younger Americans tend to lose control and act up, so rather than bars dealing with possible problems, American military just aren't welcomed in some off base establishments.

We started talking to other GIs and decided to go to another tavern. On my way out I left IVAW, VVAW and GI Rights info in the lavatories and on tabletops. At the other bar, over coffee, I talked to the owner and his friend; very nice, middle aged Turkish men. They saw my buttons and said curiously, "with the GIs" and I said, "yes." This led to conversation about the war's bogus justification, really being about economics and power, and that those who are fighting are

pawns in a political game. They gave me more coffee and insisted it was on the house.

It was easy to talk candidly with the GIs around. One opened up about his time "downrange" in Iraq, he was angry and upset about his experience. One of the GIs was mad at the kids and said insurgents use kids as decoys, to set themselves off, trigger bombs off or distract the troops. He blamed the insurgents and the kids, using this rationale to say "fuck em, kill em all." Rather than argue with him, I responded with sarcasm, to invoke thought...and it worked. I said, "some kids throw rocks, I would if I were them, some are hungry looking for MRE's and some might be distractions but you can't blame them or kill them all, because one truth in all of this is that the children are innocent. No matter how they are being used, they did not choose this war or how it's being waged; they're just being destroyed by it." They all agreed to that. These guys seemed to be genuine and friendly. Beyond the select horrid remarks of justified carnage, they seemed more mad, scared and hurt over everything and what they've suffered (possibly guilt, distance from family, filth) because of this war, than honest disdain for the Iraqis. They were frustrated and angry about the mercenaries giving GIs a bad name and contractors making four times their salary. They talked about the measly reimbursements Iraqis receive from the US when a child or goat is killed, how they have to go into villages with little or no security, and that if people can prove Americans caused the

kill, they are to be compensated for their losses. I gave VVAW and IVAW information to a few of the guys and told them that regardless of politics, these are veterans groups and may be able to help. On my way out, the owner stopped me to introduce a friend, a medic that just got back from downrange and was looking forward to getting out of the military altogether. We were only able to talk for a few minutes, but I gave him VVAW and IVAW information and wished him well. He was very appreciative.

I left feeling hurt and empty, for anyone to think or say some of the things I heard, but then contradict themselves by agreeing with me; I thought—how horrible this war has left them, so vulnerable, angry and confused. The most sincere of them all, but with some of the most heinous remarks, a 23 year old that doesn't know what he's going to do when he gets out in two months, but said "fuck the army" its not a career for him. His wife (who just got out of a year tour in Iraq) is sick, can't have babies and they don't know why, and he's got blood stained hands from this war. I'm thinking...what is happening to our troops over there and how do they survive living if they make it out alive? Twenty years old and his life seems doomed.

My last day on base, was spent at the PX, commissary, and bowling alley dropping information. About 10:00pm I began dropping VVAW papers, IVAW pamphlets and GI Rights cards in the barracks (stairwells, laundry rooms, lavatories). I had gotten through a few buildings before

being noticed. I heard someone coming so I finished quickly and left. Half way through the parking lot, 2 men, still in their BDUs, yelled out, "hey, what are you doing." Rather than show concern I walked over and said "excuse me" (as if they should have known me). They pointed at all of the information stacked near the door. I told them I was "dropping information off." They asked who I was and if I was new. I replied "Ame; not new, been here a week, nice to meet you." They asked what I was doing, I said, "making sure everyone gets this information, I have a lot of buildings to get through, so excuse me while I'm on my way." I turned and walked away, they stood there, jaw to the ground. I think they were shocked and confused as to who I was, what I was doing, the information I was delivering and how I got on base. But rather than stick around, I finished the rest of the barracks in a light jog, cautiously suspicious of approaching vehicles. The last thing I needed was to be picked up by MPs on my final night in Germany.

My last copy of *The Veteran* was left at Frankfurt International Airport, United terminal—in hopes that a GI would be the lucky one to discover it while waiting on a flight back to the States.



AMY MEYERS IS A MEMBER OF THE CHICAGO CHAPTER OF VVAW, THE CHICAGO COALITION AGAINST WAR AND RACISM AND THE CHICAGO COALITION OPPOSED TO MILITARIZATION OF YOUTH.



Veterans Day, Chicago, 2006

Welcome Home at the University of Cincinnati

MARTY WEBSTER

On Wednesday January 6, I was invited by a student group at the University of Cincinnati to show the video *Sir, No Sir* and moderate a discussion.

When I arrived that Wednesday evening, over 200 people had gathered at Swift Hall. The attendees were parents of active duty servicemen and women, professors, students and the usual assortment of people who attend such functions. They covered a political spectrum that ranged from Peaceniks and the progressive left to CPUSA to Maoists and Trotskyites. Most were certainly anti-war. All seemed to enjoy the video and a lively discussion followed. They invited me back next month to show *Winter Soldier*. I also received invitations to speak at the University of Kentucky and Northern Kentucky University.

However, there was a plant there. When someone asked a question about unethical recruiting practices a young gentleman from the National Guard jumped up with his prepared speech and thanked the Army for fulfilling its promise to provide him with a college education. A perk he stated

that is available to all servicemen and women. He wondered why we were all so negative and why we failed to mention all of the good things that we have accomplished in Iraq. He said he couldn't wait to go back for another tour. I wondered if I should challenge this chap and debate him. But, no, something told me to wait and see what would develop. When asked several times during the question and answer period after the film to explain exactly what some of the "good things" were he could not respond. Parents of active duty personnel began to share their feelings and others spoke of the misrepresentations of the recruiters. As the evening progressed many people shared with him and he began to hang his head as he listened. It seemed some sort of group consciousness had taken over. Reality was beginning to set in and he was becoming mildly shaken.

I went over to him and pointed to the wording on the VVAW banner, *Honor the Warrior, Not the War*. I extended my hand and welcomed him home. I gave him my card and suggested that if he

ever wanted to talk to give me a call. I mentioned to him that as time went by reality would set in and he would begin to evaluate his actions in Iraq. Maybe it will be a newsreel, a movie, something someone says, it could be the weather or a smell that will remind him of Iraq. I saw a tear begin to well up in his eyes and I knew eventually what he would have to face. I embraced him and told him that I loved him and would be there for him if he ever needed to talk. VVAW Ohio Valley Regional member Jerry Smith saw what was happening and came over and joined the embrace. In an AA sense a seed had been planted. For me that gave the whole evening meaning.

VVAW must extend a hand to all our active duty servicemen and women along with our returning veterans, no matter what their status, and for that, I am responsible. Most individuals, whatever the reason they enlist, do not understand the totality and consequences of serving in the Armed Forces. *Honor the Warrior* does not mean to honor their actions, but, to stand by him/her

when the result and reactions to their actions begin to creep into their lives and reality manifests itself as PTSD. We welcome them home. We do not judge their original intentions. Originally most of us felt our intentions were honorable. We let them know they are not alone and we honor them as human beings and help to restore their dignity as human beings.

I went home that night and as I usually do, listened to protest songs and reviewed the evenings activities. However, that night, as I thought about how the Vietnam war has totally altered my life and the lives of many of my friends, of how so much has been taken from me I began to consider the looks on the faces of those to whom I have had the privilege of extending the hand of VVAW, and I began to realize that I have been given so much. And for the first time in many years, for one split second, the world almost made sense.

All gave some, some gave all.



MARTY WEBSTER IS THE NATIONAL ORGANIZING SECRETARY FOR VVAW.



"Waiting for Henry Kissinger" by Charlie Shobe,
displayed at the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum, Chicago, Veterans Day 2006
www.nvva.org

Nicaragua Triumphs

LOUIS DEBENEDETTE

I visited Nicaragua several times from the 80's to the present and often lived with the Sandinistas in Boaca (70 miles northwest of Managua). Many VVAW members protested the horrible Reagan-Contra war. There was Brian Willson whose name is on the lips of many I met and Clarence Fitch. Our New York chapter bears his name. I poured blood on the White House gate protesting CIA interference in the 1990 elections in Nicaragua. I did jail time.

The Iraq war is a Bush war. Bush, Sr. ousted the Sandinistas from the presidency but they continued to rule from the bottom. Sixteen years later, on November 5, 2006 Daniel Ortega Saavedra and the Sandinista party (FSLN) reclaimed the presidency. The poor and the youth elected Daniel. Past regimes favored US interests, sweat shops, low wages and oppression of the poor. The new government promises unity, love and a preferential option for the poor. They won by the vote not the gun. I believe Daniel Ortega was the best choice.

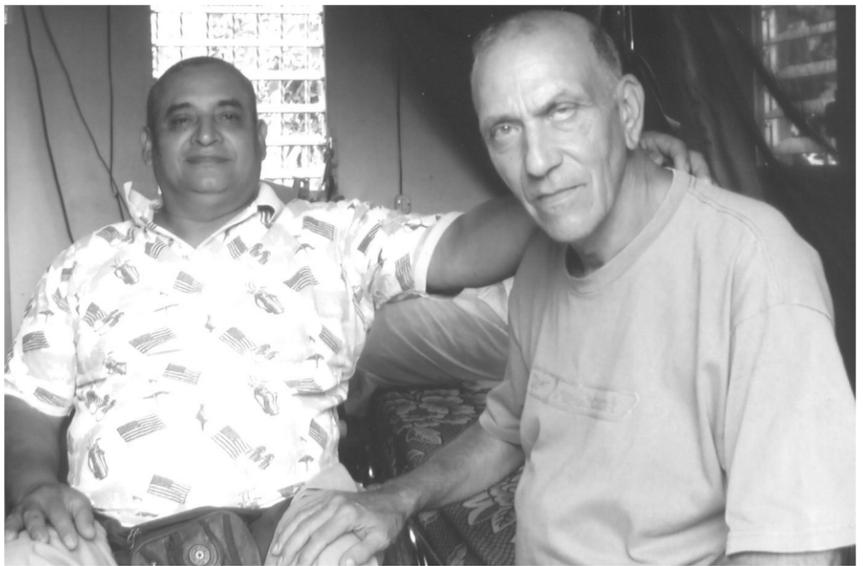
400,000 Sandinistas packed the Plaza de Fe in Managua for the inauguration on January 10, 2007. Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, and Eva Morales of Bolivia gave speeches. Hugo Chavez condemned Bush and the Iraq war. Two Sandinista youth whom I knew, carried my banner of an upside down American flag condemning the war. Chavez presented a replica of the sword of Simone Bolivar, liberator of South America, to Daniel. Father Roy Bourgeois, Vietnam Vet and founder of SOA Watch, attended the inauguration. He baptized the daughter of Daniel in 1989. He wanted Daniel to take his troops out of the SOA. I loved being there among the people and those who oppose US intervention and power.

Daniel wasted little time

showing where he stood. Two days after the inauguration he invited the President of Iran to Nicaragua. Iran is on the US list of terrorists. I joined a march and rally in his honor in a poor barrio in Managua. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad spoke through a translator and condemned US imperialism and promised 5,000 houses. He observed the dances of Nicaraguan youth. This union of President Daniel Ortega and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was an act of courage and commitment to the efforts of peacemaking.

I proposed to the Sandinista Veteran's organization in Boaco that they hang a banner protesting the Iraq war. Two Nicaraguans died in Iraq while I was there. One was from Boaco and I knew the relatives well. Some veterans, Sandinista youth and myself were prepared to protest the war when a US army honor guard showed up for the funeral. We used the slogan *Honor the soldier not the war*. The national police, whom I have deep admiration for, could not permit the protest since Daniel had not yet taken office. Roger came home in a shoe box. The honor guard included a general from the southern command and the US ambassador. Sandino fought against US Marines in 1928. They had blond hair and blue eyes. This US military honor guard was all Latinos. I think you get the picture. And the hypocrisy. The other soldier, Victor, was on his second tour when he died. He told his wife before leaving that if he died in Iraq that he would not know why.

His wife wrote to the local papers calling Bush corrupt and a dictator. There was no honor guard. There were more than 400 combat veterans at this meeting. They elected their "directive," and formed plans to obtain land previously denied them and find jobs and health care. They were



Antonio Oporta, wheel chair vet, and Louie

confident of the help that Daniel would give them since he had been their commander and chief. Later they hung the banner and moved it to various locations in the area. They do respect VVAW.

The oppressive dominance of the US over the years has made Nicaragua one of the poorest countries in the world. One day a woman asked me for busfare. She was holding a cardboard box. She said the box held her dead child and she wanted to bury the child in her village. The children of Boaco and Puerto Cabeza, near Boaco touched me deeply. The parents loved their children but at times they lacked employment so the children had little food, education and health care.

Since the elections the Sandinistas have begun food emergency drives, eliminated tuition for school and obligatory school uniforms. Those children selling in the streets must attend school. The new government cracked down on the medical system and appointed new directors. Catalina is a Sandinista political secretary in Boaco and a friend. Her new task is to help every barrio elect a leader regardless of party and to determine the three most important needs of the community.

The plan is similar to the plan used by Hugo Chavez in Venezuela. Catalina works very hard. Her husband died due to the Contra war. I still remember the children and the cardboard box. So much is repeated in Iraq.

In 1990 Dave Cline, Barry Romo, myself and VVAW hosted two wheel chair Sandinista veterans, Fernando and Pastor. We attended the anniversary of the massacre at Kent State and sought medical help for the vets. They had to leave the US sooner than expected since their property was being confiscated by the Chamora

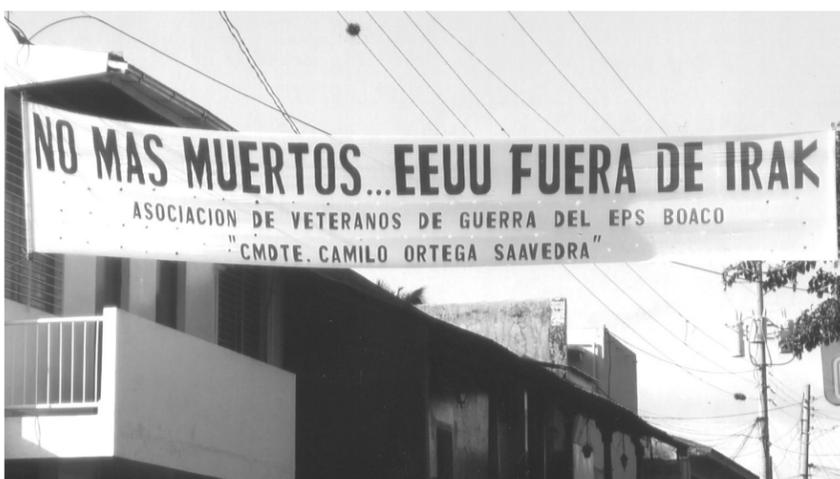
government. Fernando and Pastor are well but many others have suffered horribly over these years. ORD (Organization of Disabled Revolutionaries) takes care of the ill. Their office has never been painted or the roof repaired or furniture added in the past 16 years. The disabled veterans have all but been forgotten by the past governments. Wilber is blind and the president of ORD. He is gathering medical and military records of many disabled veterans and processing them for disability claims. I saw many veterans at the office in Managua. Antonio Oporta, a wheel chair vet and a friend, took me there to see the progress being made. The contra did much better over the years than the Sandinista for obvious reasons. I would donate to ORD at the drop of a hat. Any takers?

A parting shot: two days before my leaving Nicaragua, Feb. 16, 2007, the US government was demanding that Daniel Ortega destroy the 1,194 SAM-7 anti-aircraft missiles sent from Russia during the Contra war. Ortega refused saying that the US is currently sending planes to Honduras and that Nicaragua will not forget that Honduras had a US air base there during the Contra-Reagan war. The US says the planes are for drug enforcement. Nicaragua has no war planes and needs their missiles for defense declared Daniel.

I hope the Sandinistas remain in power for many years. I have protested all our wars beginning with Vietnam. I felt in Nicaragua that I should be here in the belly of the beast as always. I have come to know many brothers and sisters in Nicaragua and I will not forget them.



LOUIS DE BENEDETTE IS A VIETNAM ERA VETERAN AND A MEMBER OF THE CLARENCE FITCH CHAPTER OF VVAW.



No More Dead: US Out of Iraq - Sandinista war veterans - Boaco

Liberation Theology in El Salvador

LANE ANDERSON

Along with five other veterans, including two Vietnam era vets, I joined a dozen others in the Center for Interchange and Solidarity (CIS) El Salvador in the marking of the assassination of the clergy in El Salvador.

Yesterday and today we made the pilgrimage to El Paisnal, the home of Father Rutilio Grande, the first of the Catholic priests killed by US trained death squads. Father Rutilio was killed in 1977 and his assassination caused the awakening of his friend Archbishop Oscar Romero, who was in turn assassinated. The liberation theology embraced by Father Rutilio and Archbishop Romero led to further killings and President Carter's suspension of military aid and training for the Salvadoran government and its military. This in turn led to peace negotiations which redistributed some land to the peasants and rebels.

The tendency of the powerful and greedy to anticipate success through violence is their flaw. What if they had not killed the priests? Would the US have withdrawn aid? What if Johnson had not fabricated the USS Maddox story to increase the violence in Vietnam? Would his legacy of the great society have been forgotten in the muck of a tragic war? I participated in an assault on North Vietnam that LBJ thought would scare them into submission but caused the Tet offensive instead... the beginning of the end!

What if George W. had responded to 9/11 with a careful analysis of what had caused the assault and tried to rectify our errant foreign policy instead of rushing to aggressive violence?

We spoke at length with Father Orlando in El Paisnal today. He is a liberation theologian and the priest in this historic town. He

said that the theology of liberation is actually the liberation of theology...held hostage for centuries by the powerful and greedy. He has been threatened but persists in building a community of caring and sharing contrary to the precepts of the society here. He said that when he gave his life to God he also gave his death to God. He was very critical of the FMLN politicians in the legislature here, thinking them to be too timid and willing to compromise the ideals they were elected for. It is true that in Latin America in general and El Salvador in particular it is the liberation theologians and their followers who hold the politicians feet to the fire! And it is they who pay the price when greed wins temporarily, but the violence perpetrated on those of faith has led to change and will in the future. We discussed with him the censure of Father Jon Sobrino

by Pope Benedict. Father Orlando does not lose faith, but his faith is in the community and the people, not the church leadership.

Liberation theologians are building sustainable communities for the post-corporate world and we should take a lesson! Christian communities in the US are now openly discussing conservation and environmentalism in their meetings and we should be a part of this. Latin America now has many lessons for the US, and one is the need to embrace the religion of the people who inhabit our society. Peace and justice folks and conservationists alike sometimes turn away from religion but as long as it is ceded to the politicians, the community based change that needs to happen will not.



LANE ANDERSON IS A MEMBER OF VVAW.

Musings from Central America

LANE ANDERSON

We do live in interesting times... and challenging times!

Here in Latin America there is a certain gratitude among those on the left that the US is bogged down in Iraq. Remember that Mexico was invaded several times by the US, and Guatemala, where I am headed next, was the first successful coup of the CIA. They have long memories down here. They know that if the US military were not so overextended in Iraq and Afghanistan, that they might well be in Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua...all of which have elected leftist leadership recently, and the first two of which are nationalizing resources which US corporations used to profit from...usually a precursor to intervention.

So the resources (and the profits they represent) have been the basis for nearly every war we have fought, I think. Perhaps the Korean war and Vietnam war were not so overtly about the resources, but about ownership of them.... would they be publicly owned (communism) or privately owned (capitalism)? This is the debate that Latin American countries are now having, and without the kind of intervention that they once would have expected.

And what exactly can we do about globalization and corporati-

zation of economy and resources? We are not in the category of Bolivia, Venezuela or Mexico... we are not producers, but we are consumers of those resources... and it is our military that is used to go after those resources...our sons and daughters who die!

With a broken democracy, a corrupt system of corporate plutocracy, and the specter of global warming, peak oil, and endless future conflicts to secure the resources that the corporations require, we must look to the only place we are still in control...total control... that of consumption. The US citizenry may not be able to elect the kind of candidate they want, and they may not be able to get their representatives to stand up for peace and justice, but they CAN change the way they consume the resources... that is in our power.

As they have in the past, veterans who have served their country in time of war can lead the way to this needed change. Last summer Brian Willson led a Veterans Ride to the

Veterans For Peace convention in Seattle while the VVAW had a convention in Chicago. This year the two conventions are close enough for a vets ride between the two...the VVAW 40th August 4th and 5th in Chicago and VFP in St. Louis August 16th. The ride will require 40 miles a day, something we learned we could do last summer. We will be hosted by churches, peace and justice groups and conservation groups along the way (as we were last summer).

I invite my comrades in VVAW to join in this effort to do 40 miles a day for oil independence and a new American Way Of Life (AWOL).

To join up and be included in the planning, email andersonlane47@yahoo.com



LANE ANDERSON IS A MEMBER OF VVAW.



CIS delegation to Rutilio Grande and Romero events...the bearded man in the middle is Father Orlando, Rutilio Grande's nephew and the location is the church in El Paisnal, where Father Rutilio Grande lived and spoke. Six of the men are veterans, including two Vietnam vets. Lane Anderson is in the VVAW shirt, National VFP Boardmember Wayne Wittman is in the VFP shirt.

Some Republicans Are Getting It

BOB RIGGLE

As the nation witnessed demonstrations during the St. Patrick's Day weekend, protesters in Phoenix, Arizona took to the streets on Monday, March 19, 2007.

The 4th Anniversary Protest Against the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq was a two front event. People began gathering about 11:30am outside the office of Senator Jon Kyle (R-AZ). At an appropriate time a delegation of vets and family members of military personnel entered Kyle's office where the names of those Arizona troops killed in Iraq (100 at the time) were read. There was also an appeal for redress read and presented to Kyle's representative which was written on a very classy scroll in ye very old

fashion. The delegation returned to the growing crowd and reported on the incident before gathering forces and marching to the office of Senator John McCain (R-AZ) arriving about 3:00pm.

As the crowd continued to grow and rush hour was starting to build a good head of steam, the same delegates entered McCain's office where names of Arizona KIA's and the appeal for redress was again read and presented to McCain's representative. No, he would not come out either.

Again the delegates advised the crowd of what we had just done. As honks of support were solicited from our captive audience of rush-hour drivers stopped for long lights, a bevy of speak-

ers from vets, former politicians and military family members addressed the crowd. It seemed like there was a dramatic increase in supportive honks from the last major outdoor demo here last July. Of course that was in one of the more elite and "Red" burbs and 9 months and how many more deaths since then. From 7:00 to 10:00 a candlelight vigil with another reading of Arizona KIA's interspersed with poetry and music. While the crowd was quite small at this point we did have about peak of about 500 people earlier. A very good turnout for this city.

The day's events were organized by the End the War Coalition which is composed of: Arizona Alliance for Peace and Justice, Code

Pink Phoenix, Women in Black Phoenix, Phoenix Vets For Peace, Vietnam Veterans Against the War Cave Creek, Grandmothers for Peace and many others. Numerous smaller groups and an impressive number of high school age kids were also out for the cause. Even State Senator Karen Johnson (R-AZ) had her End the War/Bring the Troops Home sign with the rest of us. We love ya Karen.



BOB RIGGLE HAS BEEN A VVAW MEMBER SINCE 1971 AND IS CURRENTLY THE VVAW CHAPTER CONTACT FROM CAVE CREEK, ARIZONA.



VVAW Cave Creek Arizona Members and Supporters.

Members are: Bill Clarke, Bob Riggle, Mark Flemming, Leonard Clark (rear), Bonnie Palmer, and Dave Lester.

Letter to VVAW from an Active Duty Marine

I have tried on numerous occasions to write this letter but have found myself distracted by the daily grind of work, family, and life in general. I am an officer currently serving on active duty. I served in Iraq, and write this letter as I get ready to deploy for my second tour.

I have been a member of VVAW for awhile now and admire the work done by this fine organization. I look forward to each issue, and the strides the members are making on behalf of veterans past, present, and future. I can't say I agree with everything in the publication. In the military I operate in, the consensus is that there is a special place in hell for Cindy Sheehan, Ward Churchill, and John Murtha, and it troubles me when I see them in the *The*

Veteran. But alas, the good that VVAW does overshadows anything I could find offensive.

My message as an active duty member of the military about to deploy again is that of tenacity and perseverance. This may oversimplify the statement; but please keep doing what you are doing! Organizations like VVAW are desperately needed now more than ever. It seems as though this country has made the system of checks and balances an agonizingly painful and convoluted process. Working for citizens has apparently taken a back seat to special interests. This is where groups like VVAW have stepped in to pick up the slack and have consistently been the honest broker for service members.

I respect the tenacity of my predecessors who after 40 years

are still fighting for veterans. Each generation of veterans has taken up the torch and filled the ranks of VVAW over the years to keep this important message alive. I respect the tenacity of those in VVAW who never served a day in uniform, yet are compelled to "serve" this country in a different capacity.

In this day and age the rift between the military and civilians worlds has been more pronounced as conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan plaster the headlines. When VVAW was started, everyone had a brother, cousin, uncle, or friend in uniform. Now, that number has dwindled so that someone may know a "friend of a friend." Service members are someone that Americans may see on the evening news, in an airport, or

the latest issue of *Newsweek*. As the American population becomes more detached from the military, the more important it is to keep service member's interest in sight. Service members coming back from deployments are still facing the same mental health, VA Hospital, and family problems they always have. I leave it to those in groups like VVAW to keep fighting on behalf of those veterans that can't speak up for themselves. Keep pressing this issue, and keep it in front of the American people so they are constantly reminded that they need to take care of veterans long after the conflict is over.





THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

50¢

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Iraq Veterans Against the War Takes Action

HANNAH FRISCH

So you are standing in Union Station in Washington, DC waiting for your commuter train at 8am one weekend back in March, and you see thirteen soldiers in full desert camouflage uniforms with military packs on their backs. They aren't acting like soldiers on leave, they're acting like they think they're in Iraq. They're in some kind of formation and they are barking out orders to each other about danger area and watching the doors. They close in on a small group of young people and form a circle around them. Four of the soldiers form a perimeter around the young people and face outwards in different directions. The rest of the soldiers yell at everyone in the group of young people to lie face down on the ground. There's yelling and screaming and pandemonium. The soldiers separate two of the group from the others. "Get down on your fucking knees." "If you move again I will shoot you in the head." They "zip tie" the two with plastic handcuffs behind their backs and put bags on their heads. They leave them on their knees by a planter and form up and march off.

After the "soldiers" left, someone called the cops. The "civilians" had trained for the operation along with the Iraq Veterans Against the War members, who played the soldiers. By the time the cops arrived, the IVAW members had left Union Station, which is private property. IVAW activist Charlie Anderson said, "The cop just looks at me and gives me the peace sign and moves off."

Union Station was the first stop of Operation First Casualty (the first casualty of war being truth), which was designed to show people in the US what it really means to occupy a country. Next stops were *CNN*, *Fox News*, the Capitol Building, the White House, a press conference, the Washington Monument, and finally Arlington National Cemetery.

The White House was scary

because they knew there were snipers on the roof. At the Washington Monument, their action was so close to a line of tourists that it felt awkward not to say something. Charlie was trying to figure out what to say, when new IVAW member Ryan Lockwood, of the Chicago area, standing next to the kneeling, zip-tied civilian, spoke up spontaneously and told the tourists, "This happens every day in your name. I know because I did it."

The final stop was Arlington National Cemetery for a small memorial service that ended with a hand salute to the traditional memorial of an upturned rifle, with a helmet, dog tags, and boots. Then each of the IVAW members removed their camouflage uniform shirts and left them in front of the memorial, to symbolize their change from soldier back into civilian. It was hard for all of us to go back into that role, Anderson said. "We don't like being violent and aggressive and abusive. Every one of us had some degree of PTSD as a result of the action."

Geoff Millard, President of the DC-IVAW Chapter, led the planning of Operation First Casualty. He described how intensively they trained for it and said that they had underestimated how mentally stressing it would be on the participants.

He was inspired by Vietnam Veterans Against the War's 1970 Operation RAW, a guerrilla theater "search and destroy" mission, clearing the road from Morristown, NJ to Valley Forge, PA. It was also designed to show ordinary citizens what was actually happening in the war. Because Operation RAW was held away from a major city, it got little publicity. That aspect IVAW did not want

to repeat, and they got excellent coverage in the *Washington Post* on TV, and on *You-Tube*.

"VVAW took years to form," Millard said. "We took only five months after the Iraq War started because we have the luxury of looking back to VVAW and learning from their successes and failures. If it weren't for VVAW, there could be no IVAW." Millard expressed appreciation for the mentoring of VVAW leaders such as Dave Cline, Bill Perry, Barry Romo and Jan Barry. "VVAW is not an abstract influence. They personally showed us the ropes and talked to us about the late nights when you are trying to get through while still tripping about the war."

Millard pointed proudly to IVAW's growth—now up to 16 chapters around the country. He sees IVAW as structured but decentralized. Chapters can act independently of the National Office. The DC chapter initiated Operation First Casualty.

IVAW went to Camp Casey over Easter. There also were Operation First Casualty Actions in Philadelphia in April and in New York in May.

IVAW now has volunteer

regional coordinators and has held regional strategy sessions around the country. Millard also talked about the importance of talking to active duty personnel and of having IVAW be a safe place for veterans who are people of color or women or openly gay.

A group of members have formed IVAW Deployed. They fixed up a bus and toured the US over the winter, traveling from a Baltimore school to Ft. Benning for the School of the Americas demonstration, then New Orleans for reconstruction work. They were in Washington State outside Ft. Lewis to support Lt. Watada when his court marshal was held in February. They put on the "Uprise Tour" through the rust belt with talks at colleges, little clubs and bookstores. They had hip-hop, punk and folk rock, making a particular point of talking to youth. Toby Hartbarger, a participant in the Tour said the music brought in a lot of people. "When they get the lyrics they pick up on what's going on. It was fun, but it was real." They spoke to classes about their experience in Iraq, about the poverty draft, about the reality of

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Ryan Lockwood and Aaron Hughes at Chicago anti-war march, Jan 20, 2007

Mr. Bush, Have You Ever?

THOMAS AYALA

This speech was delivered at a rally to protest the fourth anniversary of the US war on Iraq on the Champaign-Urbana campus of the University of Illinois.

Good afternoon. My name is Thomas Ayala—and this is my friend and fellow veteran Marty Smith. We represent a registered student organization here on campus called Iraq Veterans Against the War.

We demand three things: The immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces from Iraq; reparations to the Iraqi people for the destruction and corporate pillaging of their country, and full health care benefits for all returning veterans. We are here today to oppose Bush's unjust and illegal wars against the people of Iraq and Afghanistan. Four years ago this week, President Bush sent US soldiers, sailors and Marines into Iraq to fight a war of choice—a war of choice!—against a country and its people who had nothing to do with the attacks of 9/11. Not one hijacker on September 11th was from Iraq, yet Bush lied to the American people and to the world by falsely connecting the Iraqi people with the terrible acts that happened that year. Let me be clear: Bush lied to us!

Now he's doing the same thing to Iran and following the same old pattern: scaring the people of the United States with the threat of a nuclear attack by a rogue nation. It's the same old song and dance, a smoke and mirrors routine in order for Bush to spread his crusade against Muslims even further across the Middle East. Will this man ever stop?

Last November, the American people spoke louder than ever before when they threw out the Republicans and voted to end the war in Iraq. But what does Bush

do with that message? I'll tell you what he did.

He did the opposite of what the American people demanded: to bring the troops home.

He did the opposite of what the Baker Hamilton report recommended: he threatened Iran and Syria with military action.

He did the opposite of what military generals advised: he chose a Vietnam-like escalation of violence. Right now, all across this country fathers, mothers, students, employees, regular people from across the country are being activated from the national guard and reserves for involuntary service against the struggling people of Iraq and Afghanistan.

But I'll tell you who is not going: George Bush will not be out there fighting on the front lines. He'll be in the White House having steak and lobster for dinner. Bush is willing to send other people's sons and daughters off to war, but he skipped out on his own National Guard duty, and got deferments to avoid Vietnam.

I'll tell you who else is not going into Iraq: Dick Cheney. Dick Cheney received 5 deferments from the military so he wouldn't have to fight in Vietnam, yet he wants to send more Americans to their deaths in Iraq.

I'll tell you who else isn't going to Iraq: former and current Secretaries of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Robert Gates, Ivy League graduates who run the war—however poorly—from air conditioned offices while eating catered gourmet sandwiches and drinking mocha lattes.

As of last night, there were 3,201 dead US soldiers from the Iraq war and another 373 in Afghanistan. It is estimated that upwards of 500,000 Iraqis have been killed in the violence. 22,000 US soldiers have been injured. Some

lost arms and legs and eyes. And when those injured troops come home, do they receive adequate medical and mental health treatment? No! They receive sub-standard care because Bush doesn't provide adequate funding for VA hospitals.

Eddie Ryan, a US Marine who suffered a traumatic brain injury while serving in Iraq and who can no longer care for himself, spent four months in Walter Reed Hospital. While there, he sat in his own feces and got bedsores because of a lack of nurses to treat all the patients. Cockroaches crawled under his bed and mold infested the walls of his room. There is no money to treat the heroes of war, yet Bush continues to pour money into the military industrial complex to develop the latest satellite-guided bombs or, as was announced last week, new nuclear missiles to replace the current fleet. Mr. Bush, sir, where are your priorities?

Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld and Gates didn't go to war themselves because war is hell. War is designed by elite Ivy School graduates but carried out by the working class and minorities. War is dirty and sweaty and bloody and nauseating and confusing and traumatic; it's not for pampered politicians.

I have some questions I want Mr. Bush to answer:

Mr. Bush, have you, sir, ever smelled the burning flesh of a child whose home was just demolished by a two thousand pound bomb?

Have you, Mr. Bush, ever seen a man's head split open from the bullet of an M16 or an AK47?

Have you, Mr. Bush, ever seen body parts—arms and legs and eyes and toes and brains, spread across city streets?

Have you, Mr. Bush, ever

seen your buddy's flesh ripped from his body by a road side bomb?

Have you, Mr. Bush, ever secured a helicopter crash site, where the bodies of a half dozen men lay inside the wreckage, soon to be sent home in flag-draped coffins to grieving widows?

All this and more, for what? For what, Mr. Bush? Please tell me exactly what it is you've accomplished by starting this war? Death, destruction and misery, those are the only things you've accomplished.

The only way this man is going to stop this war is if we make our voices heard loud and clear: we will not tolerate any more of this racist and unjust war! This war is one of ideology and corporate greed at the expense of American men and women and Afghan and Iraqi people—and US credibility in the eyes of the world.

Too much is at stake! We must act now! End the war! Bring the troops home!

Troops home now! Troops home now! Troops home now!



THOMAS AYALA IS A DOCTORAL STUDENT IN THE ENGLISH DEPT AT UI, URBANA-CHAMPAIGN. HE SERVED ON ACTIVE DUTY IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS DURING THE FIRST GULF WAR IN 1991, AND VOLUNTEERED FOR SERVICE IN AFGHANISTAN IN 2005 WITH THE TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD. AFTER NEARLY A YEAR LONG TOUR WITH AN INFANTRY UNIT IN THE MOUNTAINS OF AFGHANISTAN, THOMAS IS HAPPY TO HAVE RETURNED TO TEACHING AND STUDYING. IN CHAMPAIGN, HE IS PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL CHAPTER OF IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR. HE CURRENTLY LIVES IN ILLINOIS WITH HIS WIFE NANCY.

IVAW Takes Action

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what you'll get from the military, and the lies recruiters tell you. At one inner city school, several kids came up to them after presentations to say they would rethink plans to join the military.

Aaron Hughes, coordinator of the new Chicago IVAW Chapter and co-coordinator of the Midwest Region talked to me immediately

after a weekend-long strategy session held by 20 IVAW members from all over the Midwest. They worked on coming up with a strategy to focus pointedly on actions to end the war and bring the troops home. "Instead of participating in events with a broader focus, IVAW will be more effective if our actions are directed to one

specific goal."

"IVAW is changing from being a group that follows other groups, for example, joining peace movement marches, to a group that leads and asks others to follow, to help, and to strengthen our actions. The focus will be less on speaking engagements and more on tactical actions that are informative to the public and a way to recruit new

members. The new actions will not necessarily duplicate Operation First Casualty, but will reflect local discussions and ideas."



HANNAH FRISCH IS A MEMBER OF IVAW'S NATIONAL STAFF.

GI Coffeehouse Opens at Ft. Drum in New York

HANNAH FRISCH

When you come to the Different Drummer Internet Cafe, you'll be welcomed by Cindi Mercante, former military, Army '84-'92, mother, and local resident for the last five years. Cindi is the on-site manager of the six-month-old café near Ft. Drum, "the door-opener" she calls herself modestly. "I think of this as the big living room down on Paddock Arcade."

"The community here doesn't know quite how to take us. They first heard about us from a newspaper headline, 'Anti-War Café opens in Paddock Arcade.' The anti-war label loses people who don't understand that you can help service members while being anti-war. People ask, 'Are you anti-war or do you support the soldiers?' I ask them, Can't you do both? If you give people a minute to think for themselves, they do -- if you give them an atmosphere where they feel comfortable."

"I've had soldiers come in here and tell me, 'You guys are all wrong.' I ask them why. Then we talk. Soldiers need to feel they are in a safe place to share how they really feel."

"We don't all have to agree. We need to have compassion for the other's point of view."

Cindi describes the space to me over the phone: "Pretty big space, white walls. There are posters of bands that have played here. We also have maps on the wall, maps of the US, of Iraq and Afghanistan, New York maps, some of them antique. There is a water channel map. People are always looking at the maps. We

have computers for internet access. Coffee, tea and hot chocolate mix are free. People can get a soda and a treat for \$1."

"On another wall are 3,100 names of soldiers we've lost in Iraq. Sometimes I put the names in the window for people to look at. It's sad. Sometimes people see names of people they knew. You wish you could bring that person back for them. We have a small Vietnam wall going on right here in the Paddock Arcade. It would be nice not to add any more names to it but I'm not thinking that will be the case."

The coffee house started slowly with only a few service members coming in. Only 12 people, including 2 soldiers and one military family member, attended an appearance by Col. Ann Wright, although she drew a larger crowd earlier at the local junior college. Film showings of *Sir! No Sir!*, *Iraq for Sale*, *the Ground Truth*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Poisoned Dust* (about DU) drew modest crowds.

The Different Drummer hit its stride when it invited local bands to play. They were happy to have the chance to perform for a share of the modest door charge. They brought in young people, including soldiers. A local band will draw 65-70 people, including 15-20 soldiers. Just recently a soldier told Cindi that, "This place is the new word at Ft. Drum." Cindi says people are beginning to get the idea this is a cool hangout place, not a radical hippie place.

The Different Drummer is a

project of Citizen Soldier. Director Tod Ensign believes that only a GI movement can stop the war in Iraq. He stresses how different things are now from the times when GI coffee houses flourished during the Vietnam War. "Back then we had the counter-culture and the drug culture. There were posters of Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix on the walls."

"We were the only cool places around, but we aren't cool to today's soldiers. They have many more sources of information and much more money than soldiers used to have. They have expensive computers, ipods, they own cars, they can get into bars because they are older and some bars let underage soldiers in anyway. Nevertheless, we do have a niche with soldiers who are under 21."

"Soldiers used to buy up copies of books about Malcolm X and about the Black Panthers, but our books haven't sold very well. Today's soldiers get their information from the internet. Soldiers will pick up handouts about events, about the Appeal for Redress, about veterans' services. Having a lawyer available is crucial because you need to give guys in trouble the correct information."

Volunteers to help Cindi have been hard to come by. The nearest large city is Syracuse, 65 miles away. People in economically depressed areas don't have the leisure to volunteer. Students at the local college are married adults with children.

The café runs on \$40,000 to \$50,000 per year. Cindi is the

only employee and the café is open only Wednesday and Thursday afternoons and Friday and Saturday evenings.

Like Cindi, Tod stresses the centrality of the base to the local economy, where wages are low and people struggle economically: "The community is totally economically dependent on the base. The community college would be welcoming in other areas but it is not here. We had to involve the New York Civil Liberties Union to be able to rent space at the college for veterans to talk about health care. We've found only two friendly professors. The mayor of Watertown was set to attend our opening press conference, but cancelled at the last minute."

If the Different Drummer succeeds, one factor will be the cordial collaboration between Tod, the longtime urban political activist and Cindi, the savvy, small town Army veteran. Cindi says of Tod, "He's a 60 year-old guy. I don't know if he knew what he was getting into. He drove through a couple of wicked snowstorms to get here. My hat's off to him. He has a passion for helping the soldiers for sure."

When I asked Tod why he thought the café could succeed in spite of all the obstacles he had laid out, he told me, "We have to try. Two years will be a fair trial." He estimates that 25 soldiers per week come through the café if a band is playing—not a bad start.



HANNAH FRISCH IS A MEMBER OF VVAW'S NATIONAL STAFF.

VVAW on the Move in Louisville

MARTY WEBSTER

My daughter and I were traveling south on Hurstborne Parkway in Louisville, Kentucky on Saturday, January 6th to attend an anti-war demonstration sponsored by the Louisville Peace Action Coalition (LPAC) and to lend support to our newest VVAW Chapter.

As we approached the intersection of Hurstborne Parkway and Taylorsville Road we were overwhelmed by what we saw. There were several hundred demonstrators standing at the intersection as part of a commemoration of the more than 3,000 US troops and countless Iraqis killed in Iraq.

The group had strung up close

to 3,000 t-shirts around the corners on both sides of the intersection with burlap twine and wooden stakes in order to humanize the death toll of US service members. If placed end-to-end they would stretch for over 2 miles.

Each shirt represented one soldier who had his life taken from him in this insane war. The organizers wanted people to see how huge a body count it is -- and that's just for Americans, they did not include the Iraqis.

"We did this for 2,000 deaths and then 2,500 deaths but we had protests without the shirts before that. I'd like to do one with all the

State flag," stated Carol Rawert Trainer USAF 66-68, the VVAW Contact for Louisville.

The shirts, in various colors, stretched for blocks, interspersed with signs attached to the shirts that said such things as "I wish I had seen my baby and I played soccer. I will never see my daughter, mom, etc. again; I liked to play football; I liked ice cream; I will never come home again, etc." We tried to make it very personal.

The messages were meant to express sentiments that young service members might have shared with their families. It was an effort to make it real for the public.

"Our overall message is that this war is wrong," said Sam Avery, who helped coordinate the event with VVAW. "It's wrong for America, it's wrong for Iraq and it's wrong for the troops that have to fight in it."

Suzanne Webster, VVAW Ohio Valley Regional Chapter member, stood by a sign that stated, "3,000+ Why?" The symbolism was powerful and hopefully made an impact on people passing by and will move them to do something to help get us out of this war.

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PTSD, VA Benefits and Discharge Upgrades

RAY PARRISH

It is all too common for veterans who are suffering from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), to also have a less than honorable military discharge, which keeps them from getting help from the VA for their PTSD. In addition, many vets suffering from PTSD are discharged with a diagnosis of "personality disorder," which may delay VA benefits. There are two ways to overcome these obstacles; change the discharge or get the VA to grant benefits regardless of what the discharge says. You can pursue both options at the same time and use a positive result from one in support of the other. You can go to the BCMR (Board for the Correction of Military Records), or the DRB (Discharge Review Board), and ask them to change (upgrade) the military discharge. You can also ask the VA to grant benefits in spite of the "bad" discharge or the inaccurate diagnosis. The key to both routes is using a medical opinion as evidence.

The BCMR should upgrade the discharge if they are convinced that either the punishment was too harsh for the "crimes" that you did or if the military violated discharge procedures. GIs who were suffering from PTSD can argue both points. You can argue that PTSD affected your ability to control your behavior, and therefore, your misconduct should be forgiven or punished less severely.

If there is evidence of treatment for PTSD or depression or stress while you were still in service, you can also argue that you should have been given a medical discharge. They will change the reason for discharge with a medical opinion explaining the "mistake."

The VARO (VA Regional Office) will initially deny claims from vets with less than honorable discharges, Bad Conduct Discharges (BCDs), given in a court martial or General Discharges under Other Than Honorable conditions (OTHS), because they can't give benefits to those who "served dishonorably." You can appeal and ask for a "character of service" hearing where you can tell your story. At this hearing you can use your military records to show that you did not serve dishonorably until the service connected PTSD affected your ability to serve and that the "misconduct" that resulted in your bad discharge was minor, out of character and due to untreated PTSD. You can repeat the arguments that you made to the BCMR and add that if your service-connected PTSD had gotten proper treatment that you would have been given a disability retirement and no misconduct would have occurred.

These arguments are rarely successful without a properly worded medical opinion as supporting evidence. The first thing

needed is a confirmed diagnosis of PTSD. The doctor doesn't have to repeat the specific incidents that caused the PTSD, just what "kind" of incidents, such as combat, seeing buddies die, treating the wounded, etc. Also the opinion need not give specific behavior that is seen as PTSD "symptoms," just what "kind" of behavior, such as flashbacks, trouble with anger control or sleeping, etc. The VA will need specifics in order to assign a "degree of disability rating," especially if the PTSD causes "unemployability." When appropriate, the medical opinion needs to explain the cause and effect of combat leading to stress severe enough to lead to misconduct resulting in the bad discharge. It's important to tell a doctor who might be willing to help on this issue that their conclusions don't have to be "absolutely 100% certain." The VA's "benefit of doubt" doctrine means that the evidence for and against a certain conclusion is "weighed" and the vet wins if there is at least an "approximate balance" of this evidence. The doctors need to express their "degree of certainty" in the opinion. The VA is looking for a phrase such as "at least as likely as not."

The doctor may not feel confident that they're giving an accurate opinion without seeing some kind of verification of the veteran's history from someone

other than the veteran. This is where you can use military records to verify service and prior medical treatment records and statements from friends or family to verify the vet's behavior. These "buddy statements" should start with "I hereby swear the following to be true..." and the signature should be notarized. This makes it an "affidavit." These should also be submitted to the VA. At this point the VARO will see this as a claim that the PTSD is service connected and will want to look in official military records in order to confirm that the PTSD "stressors" (the incidents that caused the PTSD) really happened. However, the doctor doesn't need to wait for this verification and can simply say that the history given by the veteran would cause PTSD. The VA will need to make two separate determinations, that the "character of service" was not dishonorable and that the PTSD is "service connected."

This is just a brief overview. Case specific details will be needed for further advice.



RAY PARRISH (SGT., USAF, 72-75) IS VVAW'S MILITARY COUNSELOR. IF YOU NEED HELP, CALL HIM AT 773-561-VVAW OR EMAIL HIM AT CAMIBLUE@VVAW.ORG.

Seizure Disorders and VA Benefits

RAY PARRISH

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and repeated head concussions are injuries that many recent veterans have to deal with. A common result of these injuries is a chronic, disabling seizure disorder. Getting proper compensation for this problem is difficult without knowing what to look for.

People with epilepsy or a seizure disorder are often victims of misunderstandings, prejudice or outright exploitation and discrimination in employment, housing, government services, finance and small businesses. Since the severity and exact nature of the disability vary with each person, any generalization, such as the VA Rating Schedule, is prone to misapplication. This briefing is intended for veterans' counselors who are trying to present evidence in a disability claim which will

accurately portray the nature and severity of the seizure disorder. First off, the person that you are trying to help shouldn't be addressed, thought of or referred to as an "epileptic." It's not merely PC to use the phrase "people with epilepsy," it's a way to train yourself and others to recognize the fact that the person is not *defined* by the disability. The courage they show by living with this disability is remarkable and should be recognized at every opportunity. We should help them to replace the shame associated with having epilepsy with pride in successfully living with it. "Seizure disorder" is also a term that many prefer to epilepsy.

There are many causes and types of seizures, people may suffer from one or several of these and each person's set of symp-

toms is unique, although each can find similarities in the history of others who are also living with a seizure disorder. Additionally, sufferers seek relief in a variety of treatments, all of which seem to be a "best guess" on the part of the health care professionals. Most people will try various medications and therapies in their effort to control the seizures and minimize the drug's adverse side-effects. Changes in body chemistry (change in hormone levels due to loss of an organ or menopause) or environmental factors (pollution or allergies) may necessitate changes in medication or treatment. After the seizures themselves, the most common complaint is dealing with the sedative effects of anticonvulsant medications. Most have to adapt to these changes by developing new

habits and changing old ones.

Most people are familiar with "grand mal" seizures which are characterized by loss of consciousness lasting several minutes, severe whole body convulsions (which may cause further injuries) and loss of bladder control. Often many hours or days are needed to recover physically and cognitively. The VA calls these "major" seizures. They term as "minor" seizures all other types of seizures, which have a variety of physical manifestations, such as repetitive movements or tics, and "absence," also called "petit mal" seizures. Petit mal seizures, either alone or together with other types, are most common and most misunderstood. We need to discuss

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Are We Still Missing the Point?

DIANE FORD WOOD (INTERVIEWER)

This article originated as a review of Camouflage & Lace (Camo), an audio book about Diane Ford Wood's experiences with Willie Hager, VVAW and PTSD in the early 1970s. Vietnam vet Jerry Lembcke (The Spitting Image) also wrote about Hager related to the 1978 film Coming Home. This historical overlap revealed powerful ways that Vietnam veterans can support the post-traumatic struggles and understanding of today's returning veterans. The interview evolved from there.

Diane: What is your connection to the movie *Coming Home*?

Willie: As the VVAW regional coordinator in LA at the time, I was interviewed extensively for the movie. Screenwriter Waldo Salt asked me what was the hardest part of Vietnam. "Coming home," I told him. For me, that was far more painful than Vietnam itself. I was given a role as a technical advisor which wasn't a completely new experience. In 1976, I helped make *Still at War*, one of the earliest documentaries on PTSD and mistreatment of paraplegic veterans on film. After Salt got informally sidelined, the new writers revised Bruce Dern's character (loosely based on my life) in the same way society revised us. In an insightful and compelling way—and with the benefit of having reviewed the original UCLA interview transcripts—Lembcke got this.

Coming Home began as a story about how a career Marine turns into an anti-war veteran organizer. Dern's character and the script took a completely different turn from Salt's original story premise; it became a foil for the administration's reframing program. Go figure! It wasn't the movie I had signed on to make. I probably wouldn't have become involved had I known how it was all to come out.

Jerry: When I was writing *The Spitting Image*, I came across interviews that screenwriter Waldo Salt did with Willie and other veterans for the script of *Coming Home*. Speaking of what was then called "post-Vietnam syndrome" (PVS), Willie told Salt that their Vietnam experience had taught veterans that American society was a lie and that that same society did not want to deal with

them. I wrote that, in effect, the raised consciousness that men like Willie came home with was pathologized, beginning with the way Salt used Willie's story to construct the prototypical whacked-out veteran played by Bruce Dern in the film and later canonized by psychiatrists as the mental health problem, PTSD.

Images of spat-upon veterans and traumatized veterans constituted portraits of victimization. These portraits displaced from public memory the fact that their time in Vietnam was one of empowerment and politicization for many GIs. Reading books like Alan Young's *The Illusion of Harmony: Inventing Post-traumatic Stress Disorder*, I became aware of how the diagnostic category PTSD also functioned as a political and cultural concept.

With the Vietnam-era "anti-war warrior" screened out by the "victim-veteran," it was no surprise that the current wars began with both the pro-war Right and anti-war Left pledging to support the troops. It was no surprise either when the film *Sir! No Sir!* (about the GI anti-war movement during Vietnam) pulled that piece of history back into view. It inaugurated a new anti-war coffee house near Fort Drum; a petition campaign against the war by military personnel; and new stories of spat-on veterans. This redirected public attention to the televised images of battered veterans images heretofore banned from public consumption.

Diane: *The Spitting Image* talks about how Willie's experiences were misunderstood by the VA, the military, Hollywood, society and even those closest to him. *Camo* describes living this nightmare from a woman's perspective. Were we all too caught up in the moment to have any kind of overview? How could so many caring people miss the point?

Willie: We were living history. We were blinded by the light.

Jerry: Hollywood was a major player in displacing the story of the war itself with the story of GIs coming home to the country that had betrayed them and their mission. *Coming Home*, for which Willie's interviews were used, had powerful feminist and anti-war messages and was heralded as

a contribution to the disability-rights movement. For those who needed a different story, it also helped construct a mythical betrayal narrative for why we lost the war.

Diane: When producing *Camo*, we enlisted the help of Vietnam-era veteran/musician Russ Scheidler and Vietnam veterans Steve Sherlock (Aid to Southeast Asia) and Doug Drews (Vets For Peace) to read the parts on tape. Russ and Doug say that the new cycle of returning veterans with PTSD seriously rekindles their own depression. Do you have these feelings?

Jerry: In *Sir! No Sir!* Bill Short recalls that one of his duties in Vietnam was to count the dead Viet Cong after a fight. The task revolted him and when he refused to do it any longer he was sent to the unit shrink for psychiatric evaluation. His resistance about to be pathologized as a mental health problem (he thinks), the psychiatrist turns instead and pulls from the shelf a copy of *The New York Times* with a full-page petition against the war signed by GIs. Bill needed a social movement, not treatment, and the same can be said for hundreds of troops and veterans today who are similarly disgusted with the war they've been sent to fight and depressed with the realization that there is no glory in inglorious war.

Willie: The devil is in the details: The more you know about PTSD, the more pissed you become. Sure I have those feelings, especially when it is all coming around again as a result of our combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. We need to eliminate PTSD as a "mental" disorder and address it for what it is: A psycho-social anomie arising from our service on behalf of a power-mongering government out for political, personal, and capital gain.

Diane: Jerry, you are a Vietnam veteran, presumably with some level of disillusionment. Yet you found your way in society to become a college professor. How have you managed to survive in a society with which you have such issues?

Jerry: Janice Joplin sang "freedom is just another word for nothing left to lose." That was the mindset I returned with from Vietnam. One of the veterans in Gerald Gioglio's book, *Days of Decision* (about in-service conscientious objectors) says he never had more clarity about life than during his days of resistance. This is the kind of clarity that comes when you're stripped-down to the essentials of life. That's the way I felt. I vowed never again to be entrapped by this society's materialism or to be

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Willie Hager

Are We Still Missing the Point?

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bonded to what Willie described to Salt as "little bullshit jobs that don't really count." At about that time, I read Neil Postman's book *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*. I used it as a kind of playbook for a dialectical engagement with society—surviving within it while simultaneously working for its transformation into something beyond itself.

Diane: Willie, you and veterans like Calixto Cabrera ("Alfredo" in *Camo*) joined the military as patriots and believers. You turned down a presidential appointment to Annapolis to become a Marine. Yet ultimately, you chose the outlaw life after Vietnam. How do you feel about that choice now?

Willie: I am still a patriot and always will be. I joined the Marine Corps in 1959 as a result of patriotism. Ten years later, I left and joined VVAW in 1971 – also

as a result of patriotism. It was a patriotic act to rally with the grassroots to maintain our Constitutional perspectives. We won. Nixon and his band of thugs were ousted from power and for a while, the government did the People's Business. Remember the Erich Fromm quote: "The successful revolutionary is a statesman, the unsuccessful one a criminal"? Given the context, and using this history as a criterion, I consider "outlaw" an honorable definition of character synonymous with "patriot." Oh, yes; and I still believe.

Diane: In the '60s and '70s, VVAW trail-blazed post-traumatic stress research using their own lives as collateral. Can this make a difference to today's returning vets?

Jerry: The movement of in-service resisters and Vietnam veterans against the war called

attention to the human costs of that war and mustered the political support for increased services for the mentally and physically wounded. The needs of the current wars' many victims will be best served not by public lamentations on the costs of war and pledges to support the troops but by an anti-war movement inclusive of the men and women sent to fight the war.

Willie: Absolutely! But only if we don't allow the government to divide and conquer us as they did after our initial victories back in The Day. There is always a cost for speaking truth to power. For us, it was being shunned as Communist agitators and told that Vietnam wasn't a real war. Our service was questioned. We were labeled crybabies and sissies for calling attention to inferior conditions at the VA (See *Camo*, *Still at War*, *Winter Soldier* and more). Some older veterans worried that the surge of new combat veterans might infringe on their lock on Congress

and the VA and minimize their priorities and benefits. And we often experienced non-acceptance at VFW and American Legion Posts throughout America.

Hopefully we can be more supportive to the men and women coming home today. Vietnam veterans have never been a quiet group. The counsel and experience we offer is practically unprecedented in American history. But I'm afraid the recognition of that fact might take a very long time.



JERRY LEMBCKE IS A PROFESSOR AT HOLY CROSS COLLEGE IN WORCESTER, MA. THE SPITTING IMAGE: MYTH, MEMORY, AND THE LEGACY OF VIETNAM (2000) IS AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE. WILLIE HAGER AND DIANE FORD WOOD ARE PRINCIPAL ORGANIZERS OF PTSD-CENTERED VETSPEAK.ORG. STILL AT WAR WILL SOON BE AVAILABLE AT WISBOOKS.COM. CAMOUFLAGE & LACE (2005) IS AVAILABLE AT WWW.CDBABY.COM/CAMO.

War...Good God You All!

PAUL S. CAMERON

Recently, I made my annual guest appearance to high school American History classes to share my Vietnam War experience with students. Generally, the students ask me to share specific Vietnam War areas of concern to enhance information they have obtained from the teacher and textbook. For instance, students will inquire about the daily life of an American soldier during their tour of duty in a combat zone, or what was it like living in America during the war years. War...huh...good God y'all, what's it good for? (from Edwin Starr's song, *War*). With the aid of video clips, photo albums, sketchbook drawings, and letters, I'm able to illustrate to the students with a fairly realistic concept of war. When a living war veteran tells the truth about their experience, students better understand the meaning of war. Most war veterans do not talk about their war experiences for various reasons. This year, an interesting question was posed to me in the classroom. The teacher asked me to make a comparison between the Vietnam War and today's Iraq War. Therefore, my response included the following:

Similarities

1. American involvement generated by political interests.
 2. Escalation during the first five years of involvement.
 3. American presidents were from Texas during escalation period.
 4. Lack of enough training to meet expectations of the regions and type of warfare.
 5. Peace talks seemed ill-fated during both wars.
 6. Administration and Congress were at odds about continuing US involvement.
 7. Change of military leadership was constant throughout US involvement.
 8. Guerrilla or insurgent activity complicated US military success.
 9. Regular rotation of troop strength due to length of US involvement.
 10. High rate of disabling wounds such as loss of limbs and permanent injuries.
 11. American public opinion moved from support to opposition of US involvement.
 12. War veterans formed anti-war groups to join the American peace movements.
- In previous years, my classroom visits have been almost entirely targeted the war of my generation.

Differences Vietnam War

1. Troop strength dependent upon the 'draft.'
2. The Vietnam War was training-jungle oriented.
3. 365-day tour (volunteer extension).
4. Homeland support was lacking (always).
5. News media coverage was minimized.
6. Severely wounded soldiers medically discharged after hospitalization.
7. Females in combat roles.
8. Soldiers (blood relatives) could not serve in the same unit.
9. Letters **only** form of contact to/from home.
10. Basic weaponry and equipment.

Iraq War

1. No draft, just enlistments, reserves.
2. The Iraq War is training-desert oriented.
3. 12-18 months and recall.
4. Support for war stronger (at first).
5. News media saturation due to technology.
6. Severely wounded soldiers allowed to discharged after hospitalization return to war zone.
7. Females in non-combatant role

8. Relatives serving in same units.
9. Computer email, cell phone, and letters.
10. Technology is highly advanced.

Today, I'm seeing a great deal of concern among my students about a war in their generation. It's time for the heads of state in Washington DC to rethink what's really going down in Iraq and the entire Middle East region. As a member of the Vietnam Veterans Against War (VVAW), I wish to quote Edwin Starr from his song, *War*:

"War has shuttered many a young mans dreams
Made him disabled bitter and mean
Life is much too precious to spend fighting wars these days
War can't give life; it can only take it away
War! Huh – Good God y'all
What's it good for
Stand up and shout it.
Nothing!!!"



PAUL CAMERON IS A MEMBER OF VVAW.

Seizure Disorders and VA Benefits

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them in depth.

Most importantly, the person having a petit mal seizure will RARELY realize that they just had one! The typical petit mal seizure lasts only a few seconds and is easy to miss unless you are looking at the face of the person having the seizure, and see the blinking eyes or blank stare. "Atypical" seizures may occur without blinking. During the seizure they are temporarily "absent" from reality, though not "unconscious." They actually lose a few seconds of time during the petit mal seizure. This can be very disconcerting, even dangerous, for the person having the seizure, especially if it happens while driving or simply walking where they may stumble and fall or pause in a crosswalk. A petit mal may happen while you're hurrying to get ready in the morning, which may cause you to stumble, fall, hit your head and cause a grand mal seizure.

Seizures are often "triggered" when the person is "startled," which may take surprisingly little, especially if their anticonvulsant medication is "off" for any reason. The trigger might be a car horn, a subway or elevator door opening, a flash of light, a strong odor, a light touch on a shoulder or arm or a call to get their attention, even a mental search for a word during a conversation or consternation when they are criticized or under stress.

The amount of anticonvulsant medications in the blood varies constantly but regularly, depending on how recently it was

taken and is a constant variable in determining the likelihood of or the frequency of petit mal seizures. The blood level may be low, because it's in a regular "trough" due to stress or adverse drug interactions decreasing the medication's effectiveness. Several petit mal seizures may occur every minute until the next dose is absorbed and reaches a "therapeutic" level or if the trigger is removed or lessened. Conversely, during times of "peak" blood levels, increased sleepiness may increase the susceptibility to being startled and may look like an absence seizure.

In addition, the combination of seizures and medications means that it takes a constant mental effort to minimize seizure activity and compensate for the effects of the medications, that is, to maintain "normality." This extraordinary amount of focus needed to accomplish routine tasks makes them even more susceptible to being startled. And the necessary attention to their own needs also commonly leads to behavior which can be misperceived (and misdiagnosed) as being thoughtless, self-centered, egotistical or ignoring the needs of others.

Often this behavior interferes with normal behavior so much that it warrants an additional diagnosis of a "mental disorder," such as dementia, paranoid delusions, depression, bi-polar or generalized anxiety disorder. VA disability ratings should include these additional disabilities as secondary to or directly associ-

ated with the epilepsy (text in the VA rating schedule immediately following the epilepsy ratings, codes 8910-8914, discusses this and "unemployability"). In addition, paragraphs 4.120 thru 4.122 in the rating schedule should be reviewed before agreeing with ratings assigned by the VA.

Under the VA Rating Schedule's diagnostic code 8911, percentages are given for the amount of seizure activity so a "60%" rating is assigned if seizure activity averages one major seizure every 4 months over the past year or 9 or more minor seizures weekly. This rating also entitles the veteran for consideration of "Total Disability due to Individual Unemployability," which pays compensation at the 100% rate if the disorder prevents "gainful" employment.

Even if you consider a medication to be "successful" if it's "99% effective" in preventing seizures, that 100th time, when a petit mal seizure does occur, is inevitable, but not always observed. Since petit mal seizures last only a few seconds, a sufferer has the opportunity to have a seizure 6-10 times every minute. If we call it six times a minute, that 100th time will happen in less than 17 minutes, more often in "stressful" situations. Not all seizures are observed since it's hard to tell if that "pause" during a telephone conversation was a petit mal seizure. Since this math is never-ending, "hiding the disability" is often impossible and a self-delusion. It's easy to understand why many suffering from a seizure disorder also live with depression, anxiety and mood disorders.

Although the VA needs a

doctor to verify a diagnosis, they will accept "competent consistent lay testimony" as to the frequency of seizures. This number determines the rating that the VA gives the disability and the amount of compensation paid monthly. This is one of the few times that counselors, friends and family can "testify" in support of the veteran, by documenting any seizures that they observed. More importantly, this is something that the veteran cannot do with total accuracy, since outside observers may be the only ones aware that a petit mal seizure even happened. And doctors spend too little time with the patient to make a truly comprehensive report. The supporting statements should begin with the phrase "I swear the following to be true" and the signature should be notarized. Present this evidence to both the VA and your doctor. Based on this evidence the doctor can write up an opinion verifying the accuracy of the reports and the severity of the seizure disorder.

So, the ratings given for the physical damage to the nerve, bone, muscle and skin systems should be combined with ratings for the seizures themselves, the mental disorders caused by having the seizures and other disabilities, the side-effects of medication and the effects of their long-term use.



RAY PARRISH (SGT., USAF, 72-75)
IS VVAW'S MILITARY COUNSELOR.
IF YOU NEED HELP, CALL HIM AT
773-561-VVAW OR EMAIL HIM AT
CAMIBLUE@VVAW.ORG.

Peace Speaks From The Mirror

War is not a DVD
to eat some pizza, drink some beers
and pause the war to take a pee.
War is a Soldier in a dark room all alone
you can not see his tears
because he hides them.
Those who think they know of war
can never watch the Soldier weep.
A Soldier has a war on his TV
recorded in his brain, filmed by emotions
edited with pills
so he can live like normal people do.
There are no fast clips
of the dead, the wounded
the Soldier must keep seeing them
the rest of his life.
But some nights he holds a pistol
to his head, his finger on the trigger
looking into a mirror

that speaks to him of peace.
"Think of your wife and children,
your suicide will hurt them
throughout their lives,
a life of emotions and tears,
you could never hurt them more."
So he puts the gun down
like he has done before
and peace speaks from the mirror
and reminds him once again,
See, you are filled with love now,
I'll see you if you need me,
like if a thousand white moths
turn into crosses on a hillside
as the war comes back to you
for coming back without them."

—Dennis Serdel
VVAW - Perry, Michigan

VVAW Members Form Backbone of Philadelphia's Sea of Tombstones

SANDY FULTON

Since October 2005 VVAW members from the Delaware Valley area have been working on the preparation, installation and observation of *Arlington North—A Sea of Tombstones*. On three important weekends—Veterans Day 2005, Memorial Day 2006, Veterans Day 2006—we set out rank after rank of white-painted wooden tombstones on the lawn of the national shrine, Philadelphia's Liberty Bell. The next display is planned for Memorial Day 2007.

Arlington West and Eyes Wide Open inspired VVAW National Coordinator, tireless activist Bill Perry, to speak to the National Park Service, to turn Philadelphia's Liberty Bell lawn into a temporary military graveyard. That was in the late summer of 2005, following Cindy Sheehan's Peace Bus appearance in Philadelphia, but there was little interest when Bill presented it at a local peace vets' meeting—except among certain VVAW and IVAW veterans eager for local actions to reach ordinary citizens. The plan came into focus in Washington DC in October 2005, during Bill's discussions with Gold Star families desperate to reawaken antiwar activities. On October 25, the day after DOD confirmed 2,000 troop deaths, Bill, Col. Ann Wright and Gold Star family members Cindy Sheehan, Juan Torres, Bea Salvidar, Bill Mitchell, and DeDe Miller placed wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery and later that evening were arrested at a "Die-In" at the White House gate.

Bill came back from Washington determined that the best way to bring home the war losses to Philadelphia-area citizens was to create a *Sea of Tombstones*.

Only 17 days remained until Veterans Day! Yet Bill had faith that there were enough activist veterans. He finalized the Liberty Bell lawn reservation, procured materials, and got a team together—not only VVAW members but activists of the Philadelphia Regional Anti-War Network (PRAWN) and others. Intense, heavy work over the next two weeks—sawing, painting, adding lawn prongs and photo markers, loading, setup—resulted in an impressive 4-day weekend display of white-painted wooden rectangular gravestones (we do not use crosses) with photo markers for Gold Star families' loved ones. The commemoration offered a quiet respectful space where visitors, including bereaved families, could mourn the troops killed in Iraq. The construction team mingled with the crowd and furnished handouts exposing the lies that had, as of November 2005, caused the deaths of over 2,000 Americans and an estimated 100,000 Iraqis. This *Sea of Tombstones* attracted thousands of awed visitors, and the Park Service invited us back. Tragically, by Memorial Day 2006 the number of tombstones had increased. On Veterans Day 2006 the tombstones numbered 2,500, as US deaths reached 2,843. Iraqi deaths, by last November, were believed to number above 650,000.



Cindy Sheehan and Bill Perry

In August 2006, to promote greater local veteran activism, a new super-activist group was formed, Delaware Valley Veterans for America (DV-VFA), now numbering over 30 veteran members. Of those who came together in DV-VFA, at least 60% were already members of VVAW, and the veterans who worked on the 2005 tombstone project form one of its two core groups.

The other core group is from IVAW. Patrick Resta, President of DV-VFA, was a combat Army medic in Iraq, and his long-range project, with fellow IVAW member Chad Hetman, is to obtain funding for a halfway house for PTSD victims returning from Iraq and Afghanistan to our area—a safe place with counseling where they can sleep, board, and reacclimate. Patrick is well aware of PTSD, both as a medic and a victim.

Bill Perry, who joined VVAW in 1969 and testified at Winter Soldier in 1971, is DV-VFA's Executive Director and continues

to lead the *Arlington North* projects. He served as a combat paratrooper in Vietnam, was wounded in action and suffers from combat PTSD. 100% disabled, he advises veterans on benefits and provides a useful liaison between union activists and the many veterans groups to which he belongs. Bill's energy and planning expertise are inspirational. Not only has

he coordinated the tombstone displays but he's provided far more than his share of hard work and money. He's been an activist for years, and since the founding of DV-VFA six months ago has been the primary organizer of an enormous number of local and Washington, DC peace vet activities, summoning DV-VFA to support over a hundred actions. Bill led a large combined DV-VFA and VVAW group at the recent January 27 Rally and March, where he was on stage with other activists. All his peace and justice activities, which number from four to six per week, couldn't possibly be listed here.

Other DV-VFA members get out and work hard. Some turn their talents to writing, led by Dave Kalkstein, a New Jersey veteran, Sandy Fulton and Dr. Jon Bjornson, both of Philadelphia. Dave is not only an outstanding writer, but an organizer of boundless energy and managerial ability who's taken a leading part in coordinating our DV-VFA film series and other Delaware Valley peace actions, especially those in South Jersey.

Sandy resigned after 12 years as a Naval officer in December 1968, joined VVAW in 1969, is a charter member of the Arlington Cemetery Women's Memorial, and mother of a Gulf War vet. Retired, she's been a published writer, editor and illustrator, with over 20 books in energy conservation, community development and the history of dissent, as well as poetry in *The Veteran*. In the Navy she became the first woman to undergo full vacuum tests in NASA's space suit. Sandy is DV-VFA's secretary and has been creating the tombstone photo markers,

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Arlington North—Sea of Tombstones, Memorial Day 2006. Bill Perry carefully answers questions of a little girl wondering why a PTSD-suffering veteran, a Gold Star family's son, killed himself.

Sea of Tombstones

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now more than 1,000, working on tombstone construction, and producing text and graphics for flyers, flags, stickers and political buttons.

Many others contribute to graphics, since creative teamwork is the backbone of DV-VFA activism. Jon Bjornson, Bill Perry, Ray Smith, Dave Kalkstein and Sandy Fulton worked as a team designing the flyer to advertise the *Sea of Tombstones* for last Veterans Day. (Go online and click on www.vfp144.org to view the flyer.) Photo talents enhance our written documents. Marine veteran John Kline and former Army doctor Jon Bjornson deserve special credit for their large-size photo displays at the *Sea of Tombstones* and their accomplished photography during all DV-VFA actions.

"Doctor Jon," retired psychiatrist and a Major in the Army Medical Corps in Vietnam, is DV-VFA's treasurer and, like Bill, a Regional VVAW contact. For the *Sea of Tombstones*, he constructs and laminates the photo markers. Jon has a peace vet record of almost 40 years, starting as an organizer and leader of Pennsylvania VVAW in 1969. He served on two panels at Winter Soldier in 1971, moderating one. Distressed at lack of press coverage at Winter Soldier, Jon organized war crimes hearings called "We Accuse" at the University of

Pennsylvania soon afterward, then joined the veterans' march on Washington to return medals. As Camp MD for 1,200 Vietnam vets he attended Dewey Canyon III in Washington DC, May 1971, and in 1972 moderated a panel on the psychological consequences of the Vietnam War at Winter Soldier II in Boston and another on war crimes in Harrisburg, PA. Jon sat on panels of both the American Psychiatric Association and American Orthopsychiatric Association to determine the cause and treatment of what was then called "Post Vietnam Syndrome"—now PTSD—and is a recognized PTSD authority.

Ray Smith, Army vet, offers his background as a CAD-CAM graphics expert. Ray has contributed graphics edits and furnished color printing for the *Sea of Tombstones* photo markers. An enthusiastic member of DV-VFA, he and his wife Nancy travel all the way from Atlantic City to saw, nail and paint wood, help out during the displays, and participate in many other actions. Rich Gardner, disabled Navy vet and both a DV-VFA and PRAWN activist, helps with construction



DV-VFA and VVAW veterans from Delaware Valley marched together in DC, Jan 27: Jon Bjornson, Jack Marquess, Walt Comisak, Peter Brunner, Bob Fields. All, including the photographer, Sandy Fulton, signed up with VVAW 37 or more years ago.

and is webmaster of the DV-VFA website, www.vfp144.org, where you can scroll down and click on an impressive short video of the Memorial Day 2006 *Sea of Tombstones*. Other hard-working DV-VFA activists include Sam Adams, Peter Brunner, antiwar poet Robert Dennen, Al Kovnat, Jack Marquess, disabled Marine Bruce Tornari, Steve Mortillo, Toby Hartzbarger, Cathy Santos and Mark LaChance. Most are Marine or combat Army veterans and either VVAW or IVAW members.

We continue to work hand in hand with PRAWN members and two of them, Nancy Smith and Monique Frugier, a noted photographer, are now associate members of DV-VFA, as are veterans' wives Nancy, Terry

Perry and Michelle Resta, and Dr. Jon's daughter Noelle. We team up with Gold Star Families and Military Families Speak Out, represented at the last *Sea of Tombstones* by speakers Cindy Sheehan, Celeste Zappala, and Sue Niederer, along with regional protest musicians like rapper S.O.N., and the Philadelphia Grannies' Peace Brigade. DV-VFA had the pleasure of rallying for the Grannies at their trial on December 1, where charges against them were thrown out. We often join actions with Colonel Ann Wright and Gulf War vet Dennis Kyne, both of whom spoke, with Michael Berg—whose civilian son was killed in Iraq—at November 11's *Sea of Tombstones*.

For the opening day of Washington DC's Camp Democracy, DV-VFA furnished 21 veterans—the only contingent from the Philadelphia area. Each week we take part in four to six rallies, forums, antiwar film showings, panel discussions, lobbying efforts, support of other peace groups, letter-writing campaigns, and other antiwar and pro-veteran actions. We've lobbied for veterans' benefits and coordinated the visit of Lt. Watada's parents to Philadelphia. Most DV-VFA members participate regularly in these activist efforts, and we don't intend to stop even *after* the troops come home. We've learned the hard way that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."



SANDY FULTON IS PROUD TO BE A MEMBER OF VVAW AND DELAWARE VALLEY VETERANS FOR AMERICA.



Philadelphia Gold Star mother Celeste Zappala speaks of her son, KIA Sgt. Sherwood Baker, at Sea of Tombstones, Veterans Day 2006. Speakers from IVAW/DV-VFA and Gulf War; (l to r): Chad Hetman, Dennis Kyne, Steve Mortillo, Toby Hartzbarger, Patrick Resta. Behind Celeste Zappala, unseen: Mark Lachance.

Tilling the Man

When a most famous warrior leaves
the playing field for the slaying field,
it's not "wise" when his demise is by
the hand of some one in the same command.

When friendly fire tears friendly flesh,
war's haze can fill a maze of lies.

It began with those who chose
to burn the slain man's clothes.

By unwritten regulation (and with no hesitation),
those higher up the chain tried to bury
the blame before the man and avoid shame
by overly praising his already glittering name.

As usual, it was the stupid lie, not the anxious deed, that
announced fate's crime with a loud cracked chime.

—Horace Coleman

Mar 07

I Will Teach You to Perform a War

I will teach you how
to perform a war
a clean operation
to remove that dangerous tissue
which can no longer be controlled
we first name it cancer
we curse it for an inhuman bastard
nothing legitimate to be found
the pathologic question
must be asked and answered
weighing whether a pound of flesh will be enough
shared definitions in hand
we sharpen our knives
sanitary
chrome and steel
bright lights
remove any shadow
of doubts
patriotic anesthesia dulls the senses
common and other
to the loud cutting
ripping and
bleeding to come
once hidden viscera bloody red
broken bone white
and hypoxic blue tissue
stare out at us
unexpected collateral damage
can be dressed
with sterile white gauze
although the bloated smell
sometimes remains

afterwards
we will remove our gloves and
wash our hands

—Larry Kerschner



"Road stop... STOP...", painting by Iraq Vet, Aaron Hughes,
displayed at the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum, Chicago, Veterans Day 2006

www.aarhughes.org

www.nvvam.org

Here We Grow Again - VVAW Kentuckiana

MARTY WEBSTER

Long before 9/11 and the start of the Iraq War, Carol Rawert Trainer had been active in Louisville Peace Action Community (LPAC). Carol has now expanded her efforts and formed a new chapter of VVAW in Louisville, Kentucky. Our newest chapter is called VVAW Kentuckiana. Kentuckiana is the Louisville and southern Indiana area.

Carol first represented VVAW at the Kentucky State Fair from August 17-26, 2006. Carol is a Vietnam-era vet and the wife of Vietnam veteran and retired Air Force officer, Harold Trainer. She participated in the Louisville Peace Action community booth, whose theme was "Support the Troops: Stop the War." On each day of the fair VVAW and IAW brochures were distributed along with other related materials. For the most part, they were supported and thanked by the public, including active-duty military and veterans.

VVAW Kentuckiana has also sponsored a series of protests and demonstrations surrounding the 3,000 plus deaths.

On New Years day VVAW Kentuckiana sponsored their first protest at Hurstbourne and Brownsboro Road, in Louisville, Kentucky. VVAW Kentuckiana member Harold Trainer, USAF Retired, came up with an idea for "Random Acts of Protest (RAP)." About 6 people showed up. Not bad for the first chapter event with last minute arrangements.

On Saturday, January 6th VVAW Kentuckiana co-sponsored a massive demonstration at the intersection of Hurstbourne and Taylorsville Road in Louisville.

There was a protest at the Federal Building in Louisville on January 10 after Bush's speech to the nation. About 50 people joined with VVAW Kentuckiana for the event. Local media was present,



Marty Webster congratulates Carol Rawert Trainer and her husband Harold on their new banner, provided by a grant from the VVAW National Office

but there was no mention in news concerning the event

At 4pm on January 12, VVAW Kentuckiana sponsored another RAP (Random Act of Protest) at Hurstbourne and Brownsboro Road. This was to protest the surge. It was rainy and dismal and about 4 people showed up. This was in a mostly pro-Bush area and they felt good to be in their face to remind them that a war is going on. "One screamer rode by and yelled, 'Get over it.' I gave that a lot of thought. How can we get over it when people die every day for a lie and in our name?" said Carol. The chapter has been very active and continues to keep the pressure on congress through RAPs, phone calls and emails. The RAPs that Carol and her husband do seem to be very effective. "It only takes a few on a busy corner to make an impression," Carol added further.

Carol and Harold attended and displayed their VVAW Kentuckiana Chapter banner at the anti-war marches in Washington on both January 27 and March 17.

On Saturday, February, 17 VVAW Kentuckiana participated in a "Cut off War funds" demonstration by the Summit

shopping center in Louisville. The following Monday, they organized a "Protest the Escalation of the War" event surrounding a visit by Senator Mitch McConnell as he spoke at Vincenzo's restaurant. The demonstrators certainly let him know how they felt about his stance on the war.

On March 2, VVAW Kentuckiana took part in the Second Annual King Memorial Walk and Peace Fest which helped close out the Fourth Annual Greater Louisville Martin Luther King, Jr. Season of Service 2007, which mobilized over 2,000 volunteers for community service projects. Close to 1,000 walkers participated.

For those who could not attend the DC event, LPAC/VVAW Kentuckiana held an anti war protest on Saturday, March 17, at the busy intersection of Hwy 22 and Hurstbourne Road, a very "Republican" area. They had someone on each corner holding VVAW signs and "Out of Iraq now" signs left over from UFPJ march in DC. There was a lot of interaction. One woman and her daughter stopped and delivered Starbucks coffee to everyone and thanked us for being there. The snow was coming down pretty

hard that day and it was so cold the ground was frozen and they could not put their yard signs in the ground.

At Waterfront Park, in Louisville on Monday, March 19, LPAC/VVAW Kentuckiana set up about 4,000 small white flags to commemorate the US and Iraqi deaths since March 19, 2003. The flags were arranged in straight lines, approximately 200' x 200', on the Great Lawn at Waterfront Park. Throughout the day, they had speakers, musicians, a bell choir, and people to read the names of the dead.

I truly believe that it is because of folks like Carol and her husband Harold stepping forward to help carry the VVAW banner that we are able to remain in the vanguard of the anti-war movement.

What a privilege it is to offer them our thanks and support, share with them the benefits of our experiences and with great pride and respect, welcome them to the VVAW family.



MARTY WEBSTER IS THE NATIONAL ORGANIZING SECRETARY FOR VVAW.

VVAW on the Move in Louisville

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3,000 plus is not just a statistic. These are sons and daughters. They are real people who deserve our honor in a totally misguided and insane war.

There was the usual array of "Peace Now" and other anti-war signs amid the display. However this time something was

different. There was a banner that stated "Honor the Warrior Not the War – Kentuckiana Chapter – VVAW."

After seeing the VVAW banner, Suzy Post, 73, director emeritus of the Metropolitan Housing Coalition, said she was frightened by what she views as

the parallels between the Vietnam War and the war in Iraq. "I'm out here because I have always had the feeling that my absence from any social-justice movement makes me complacent."

VVAW Louisville Contact Carol Rawert Trainer was interviewed by WHAS-TV Channel 11. The Louisville Courier Journal covered the event but didn't mention VVAW or show the banner. Yes VVAW was there. VVAW

has always been there and thanks to the effort of veterans like Carol Rawert Trainer our new VVAW contact in Louisville, VVAW will always be there.



MARTY WEBSTER IS THE NATIONAL ORGANIZING SECRETARY FOR VVAW.

The Global Class War and Working with Classes

HORACE COLEMAN (REVIEWER)

The Global Class War: How America's Bipartisan Elite Lost Our Future - and What It Will Take to Win it Back.

By Jeff Faux

(John Wiley & Sons, 2006)

Jeff Faux's language is clear, crisp and comprehensible. The book's about globalization, those who put it into effect and how it affects various economic classes and countries.

Some sample chapter headings:

- NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement]: Class Reunion
- "Good Jobs" and Other Global Deceptions
- The Governing Class: America's Worst-Kept Secret
- How Reagan and Thatcher Stole Globalization
- A Bipartisan Empire
- NAFTA: Who Got What
- The Constitution According to Davos [Davos is a Swiss resort where corporate managers meet annually with political leaders to "discuss" the "state of the world"]
- Toward, and Beyond, a Continental Democracy

Faux founded the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), a think-tank on political and economic issues American face. He's been an economist in the Departments of State, Labor and Commerce. EPI's mission is providing research and education that promote

a prosperous, fair, and sustainable economy.

To paraphrase and summarize Faux's book:

* NAFTA was supported and promoted by America's financial and political elite.

* Business lobbyists are regularly against minimum wages, health and safety rules.

* Any place in the world is essentially the same as any other if wage competition, encouraged by trade agreements, pushes wages down and eliminates job security.

* Three overlapping circles at the top of the American pyramid shape and affect government the most: The Policy Formation Organizations of politic and technocratic Washington; the Corporate Community's managers; the Social Upper Class (the super rich who live off their investments).

* Corporate executives and lawyers move back and forth and in and out of power positions in business and the government.

* There is only one political party in this country [Demopublican/Republicrat (call them Dimocrat or Repiglican if you like)].

In an article published in the *Nation* magazine in February 2006, Faux wrote "Here in America, the coming unrest could turn right as well as left. The Republican Party is hopelessly tied to the multinational priorities of the US business elite, but its managers are skilled at stoking nationalist resentment among the working-

class victims."

And, say I, in using "identity politics," "family values," "pro-life and abstinence only" sex education issues, religiosity, sexual orientation, etc. to divert and stir up the "common" folk. Do we have home grown, US style, Sharia law, Taliban and jihadists tearing us apart? The flag follows the dollar; the dollar follows the flag. The military goes along, ahead, or soon after, to support and defend corporate--not national--interests.

Class in America is as blatant and obvious as rank insignia on a sleeve, cap, shoulder or collar is in the military. In civilian life we know about knockoffs, imitations, counterfeits and the real thing--supposedly. Except in politics. And, taste, style, bluster, garishness and ostentatiousness (hopefully). Why is it that those who have the most money and clout, are usually the first to shriek whenever class warfare is mentioned? Even though their class is winning.

"It's worth remembering," said Faux in a February 06 *Nation* article, "that Franklin Roosevelt, who was as elite and privileged as one could get, responded to the economic crisis of his time by becoming--as they muttered in the best clubs--"a traitor to his class." But a positive problem solver for his nation.

It's hard to have people respond appropriately to what is painful, long-term and difficult.

Lately I've found myself

working with a priest in a low income parish, with middle school teachers and students, high school teachers. Providing literature, sharing personal history, answering questions, making referrals, getting a letter-to-the-editor published, etc. Low key, unglamorous things.

It's Memorial Day for me every time I watch the Nightly News on *PBS* and see another batch of young faces--KIAs from Iraq and Afghanistan. So many "good citizens" who say they "support the troops" don't do any thing that does that.

All those faces: Male. Female. Soldier, sailor, reservist, Marine, Air Force, National Guard. White, Latino, Black, Asian, Middle Eastern and all the combinations--all the patches--in the American quilt.

I hate to see people die in dubious battles they've entered because they didn't know recent history, current affairs or the reasons for what they've committed to. Informed assent is one thing. Putting your life, mind and soul on the line because of some power and money seeking, stay-at-home, Judas goats is another.

The struggle for truth and justice is a continual.



HORACE COLEMAN IS A VETERAN, POET AND WRITER. HE IS ALSO A VVAW CONTACT IN CALIFORNIA.

Flyboys: A Book and its Covers

DAVE COLLINS (REVIEWER)

Flyboys: A True Story of Courage

By James Bradley

(Little, Brown and Company, 2003)

"Can't judge a book by lookin' at its cover," sang The Yardbirds. I have found few books of which this is more true than James Bradley's *Flyboys*. On the surface this appears to be yet another tale of the war in the Pacific. I undertook to read the book at the urging of a friend, but suspected I would put it aside after not too many pages.

In Bradley's first World War II novel, *Flags of our Fathers* he tells the stories of the Marines on Iwo Jima. The central story of *Flyboys* is the fate of a group of Naval and Marine aviators shot down in

raids against the island of Chichi Jima. However, after introducing this story Bradley engages in a lengthy digression. He sets about exploring the historical context for the Japanese aggression that began against the Russians in 1904, expanded against China in the 30's, and finally came to the US.

Bradley argues that after Commodore Perry's gun ships opened Japan in 1853, Japanese leaders looked to western nations, the US in particular, as models for their imperialist period. Bradley undertakes an unflinching look at US imperialism in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. He examines the long-running wars with nations of the indigenous peoples of North America, the invasion of Mexico

in 1846, and finally the explicit imperialism of the Spanish-American War.

Bradley argues that the first stage of Japanese imperialism, a highly successful expansion into Russian territories, reflected long standing military traditions of the samurai class. He suggests that the standards of conduct in that imperial war reflected samurai traditions of the honorable warrior.

With a new, weak, emperor in 1926, the military began to change. Rapidly, Japan became a very different place, deeply militaristic from top to bottom. Bradley examines how the military even reached into the elementary schools, dictating curriculum. By the 1937 invasion of China, Bradley reports that perversion of the samurai tradition

was complete. Military leadership was marked not by the broad, "liberal" education of the samurai but a narrow and constrained base of knowledge intended to produce a ruthless and racist killer. Junior troops were treated as near slaves trained to accept brutality from their superiors as the natural order. All civilian efforts turned to the waging of wars of conquest.

Only with this context established does Bradley return to the central story, the lives and fate of a handful of aviators taken prisoner by the Japanese garrison on Chichi Jima. Here Bradley shapes the story in the tradition of "honoring the warrior, not the war." He traces the story of each man from childhood to death at

continued on next page

A Soldiers Journey From War to Peace

AARON DAVIS (REVIEWER)

At Hells Gate: A Soldiers Journey from War to Peace
By Claude Anshin Thomas
(Shambhala Press, 2004)

I first read about Claude Thomas in an newspaper article about his peace walk across America in the summer of 1998. I read his book, *At Hells Gate: A Soldiers Journey from War to Peace*, two years ago.

Claude Thomas was raised in a small town in Pennsylvania and at the tender age of seventeen enlisted in the Army. He was immediately sent to Phu Loi, Vietnam as a helicopter door gunner. assigned to the 116th Assault helicopter Company. "During my tour in Vietnam, I was directly responsible for the deaths of many, many people. But after the horrors of basic training, and after my childhood of abuse and neglect, I didn't recognize what I was doing as killing people. The enemy was simply the enemy, not human." After being promoted to crew chief, he flew over 625 combat missions and was awarded 27 air medals, a Distinguished Flying Cross, and

a Purple Heart.

After returning home, Claude dealt with drug abuse, alcoholism, homelessness, divorce, and post traumatic stress disorder. His healing journey began when he met Vietnamese Zen master, Thich Nhat Hanh. In 1995, he took the vows of a mendicant Zen monk under Bernie Glassman. He has walked across Europe and America for peace in what he calls a "pilgrimage".

"As a Vietnam veteran, I feel a responsibility to live, to heal, and to change - so that the lives of all those who have died in war will not be wasted. Veterans have this responsibility because we know war so intimately, so directly. Their deaths ask us to learn, to see clearly that war, that violence in any form, is never a solution. That war and violence do not lead to peace."

As a member of VVAW and Veterans For Peace, I highly recommend *At Hells Gate* for its message of hope and healing. Claude Anshin Thomas is very honest about his emotions, issues, addictions and PTSD.



Zen monk Claude Anshin Thomas spoke to veterans in Salt Lake City, Utah. Vietnam vets Rick Miller and Nikko Schoch listen. Miller is A VVAW member. Schoch passed away August 5, 2006 and the Veterans For Peace Chapter 118 now bears his name.

Claude Anshin Thomas is currently a monk in the Soto Zen tradition and active teacher and speaker in both the United States and Europe. He is also the founder of the Zaltho Foundation, a non-profit organization that

promotes peace and non-violence (www.zaltho.org).



AARON DAVIS IS VVAW MEMBER FROM SALT LAKE CITY AND PRESIDENT OF CHAPTER 118 VETERANS FOR PEACE

Flyboys: A Book and its Covers

continued from previous page

the hands of their captors. The tale of each man is told through first person reports of surviving family members, friends and comrades. The only one of these fliers to have survived, G.H.W. Bush, receives no special treatment due to his subsequent celebrity; an admirable bit of restraint on the part of the author.

In telling of the suffering the captives endured, Bradley again provides context, returning to the "Indian Wars" and the US occupation of the Philippines. In this well-documented section of the narrative he examines the great grandfather of "waterboarding" developed by the Army in the Philippines and encouraged by US military leadership. He also documents the brutality of the Japanese in the China campaigns, where the senior officers on Chichi Jima honed their brutal ways. The most chilling aspect of this part of the tale relates to ritual cannibalism that arose among Japanese officers in Malaysian campaigns and brought to the little hunk of rock in the North Pacific.

In examining the conclusion

of the war, Bradley's writing gives the appearance of becoming confused and unfocused. Discussing the pending invasion of Japan, he at one point takes the side of the debate that says invasion would have been monumentally costly, that each and every Japanese civilian would have taken up whatever arms were available to repel the invaders. Noting the deep penetration of military propaganda and its effects on the psyche of the population, he poses the argument that the cost in US military casualties might have run to the millions. He then flips the argument as he examines Curtis LeMay's firebombing campaign and its devastating consequences in most major cities of Japan. Replete with interviews of survivors of the firebombing of Tokyo and other cities, he makes real for the reader the horror that campaign produced and the devastation it wrought. In one startling passage, he presents data compiled by the Strategic Bombing Survey reflecting the extent of damage - in one city fire destroyed over 80% of the residences.

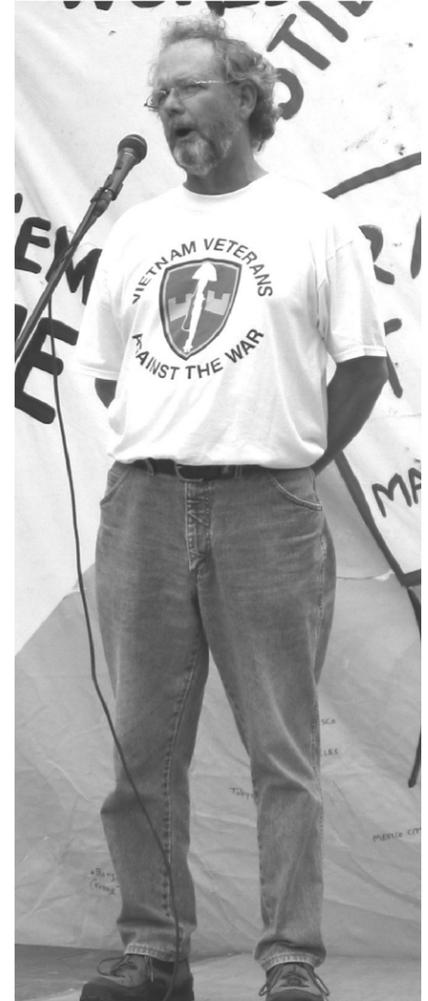
So, when Bradley finally comes to the flight of the Enola Gay, it is simply impossible for this reader to determine his perspective regarding employment of nuclear weapons to end the war without invasion. It seems that it is likely that Bradley sought to convey the confusion and uncertainty that may have been quite real for decision makers at the time. He does note that the destruction and death resulting from firebombing overshadowed that of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by orders of magnitude.

Though based on the cover of this book I would not have guessed it, James Bradley has made a significant contribution to the annals of anti-war writing. *Flyboys* is a unique addition to that canon and worthy of a serious read.

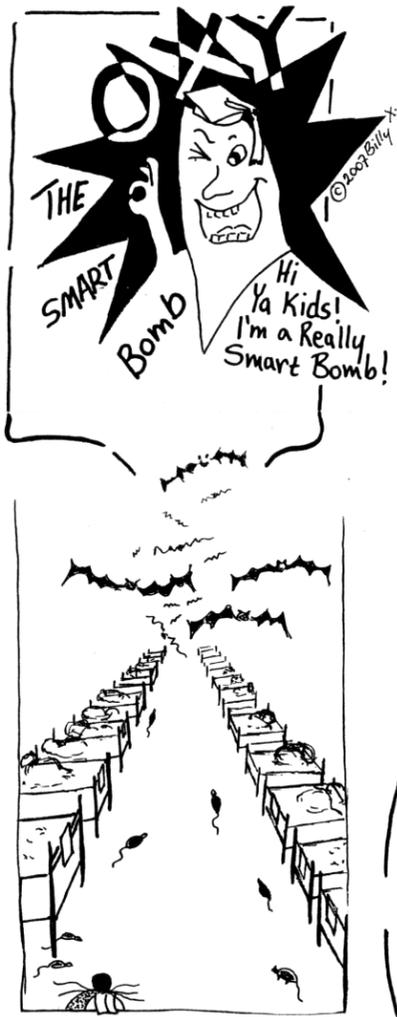


DAVE COLLINS IS THE AUSTIN CONTACT FOR VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR. FOLLOWING HIS RETIREMENT FROM A CAREER AS A MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT, HE RETURNED TO PEACE AND JUSTICE ACTIVISM, AN EFFORT HE BEGAN IN 1971 AS OKLAHOMA COORDINATOR FOR VVAW. HE HAS HELPED NON-MILITARY OPTIONS FOR YOUTH IN AUSTIN, WORKING TO ENSURE THAT

YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN CONSIDER THE ENTICEMENTS OF RECRUITERS WITH ALL THE FACTS. HE HAS ALSO WORKED WITH VETERANS FOR PEACE AS A SPEAKER AND IN SUPPORT OF THE DOCUMENTARY COST OF WAR. HE IS A CO-FOUNDER OF OIF/OEF VETERANS ASSISTANCE FUND.



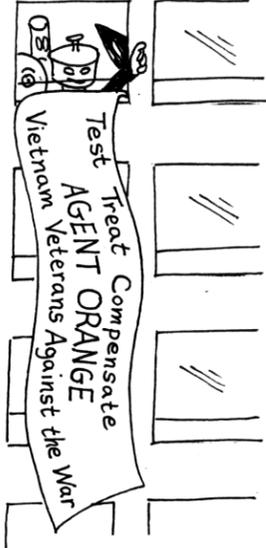
Dave Collins



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Story ideas and fan/hate mail: billyx@acegroup.cc

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Some of the IVAW & VVAW Milwaukee Beer Fest 2007 crew

Slim Review

BOB RIGGLE

Watermelon Slim & the Workers

The Wheelman

(Northern Blues, 2007)

www.watermelonslim.com

What a pleasant surprise to find a copy of the newest cd from Watermelon Slim and the Workers recently in my PO Box. I hope Slim (a.k.a. Bill Homans) was paying these guys overtime. It was only six months ago *The Veteran* reviewed his last one. And constantly on tour also? Way to stay busy guys. A special thanks to Bill for providing his own personal copy so this review could be possible.

If you like harp and piano you'll want to check this latest work. Homan's has included much

more harp work than either of his last two cds. Very special guest David Maxwell on piano provides some fanciful ivory tickling on *I've Got News* and especially so on *Newspaper Reporter*. Slim gets some of the cd's best harp licks off on this cut also.

In the cut *Black Water* there is a sharp contrast between the short edgy, syncopated strokes of the rhythm guitar against the vibrato-like chords of the dobro slide guitar. A great background to the lyrics where Slim is highly critical of the lack of concern or care for victims of hurricanes by the Pols. Took me a while to totally black out the music and focus on the message.

The title cut *Wheel Man* gets the cd off to an eye opening upbeat

start with some good guitar work from very special guest Magic Slim as he and Homans trade licks. Magic Slim also provides backing vocals throughout the cd.

While not credited I do believe he performs the short but great guitar solo on *Rattlesnake*. Probably the best hot guitar lick on the cd.

A lot of images came to my mind while listening to *Peaches*. Some very soulful harp licks gave this cut such a slinky and sexual mood as I pictured Peaches "strolling and clearing the aisles like a mako shark." Made me feel like a lecherous lounge lizard. I hope that was the intended effect.

Time for my favorite part of these reviews. Best road trip tune. That would be *Truck Driving*

Mama. Problem is I'd pick it as best dance song also. If I were a dancing person! There is just enough of a subdued salsa rhythm there that for some reason creates this vision of a small, dark club with a bunch of bikers doing some kind of cowboy swing-rumba. Buy the cd and see what you come up.

Bill Homans (Watermelon Slim) is a 2004 W.C. Handy Blues Award nominee, a VVAW contact in Oklahoma and fresh off an appearance at the Milwaukee Blessing of the Bock and points everywhere.



BOB RIGGLE HAS BEEN A VVAW MEMBER SINCE 1971. HE IS CURRENTLY THE VVAW CHAPTER CONTACT FROM CAVE CREEK, AZ.



Watermelon Slim and the Workers at the 2007 Milwaukee Beerfest

Debunking the Myths about "Cutting Funding for the War"

MARK WESIBROT AND ROBERT NAIMAN

This piece appeared on Huffington Post in February 2007.

The key talking point of supporters of indefinitely continuing the US occupation of Iraq boils down to this: there is nothing Congress can do to compel the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq except "cut the funding," and cutting the funding would hurt the troops.

So far this argument has been quite effective at cowing the leadership in Congress; indeed, until now the leadership has mostly echoed this argument.

It's not surprising: this argument has not been seriously challenged in the media, and in fact, according to recent polls, it's partly accepted by a majority of the public. Recent polls indicate that a majority wants Congress to take action to bring the troops home within a year, but a majority also opposes "cutting the funding." Of course this is a chicken-and-egg situation: the media take cues from the leadership of the parties, the party leaderships take cues from the media, and the public takes cues from the parties and the media.

But so long as the Congressional leadership fails to challenge the view that there is nothing that they can do except cut the funding, and cutting the funding would harm the troops, the war will not end.

There is no question that the troops are in danger. They are in danger because they are in Iraq. The simplest way to remove them from danger is to remove them from Iraq.

There is no serious question that regardless of what path Congress takes towards promoting a withdrawal of US forces from Iraq, as long as US troops are in Iraq Congress is going to make sure that US troops have equipment for self-protection. In fact, Democrats in Congress arguably have been more concerned about protecting the troops in Iraq than the Administration, on questions like body armor and armoring of vehicles, for example.

Would an orderly withdrawal (or "redeployment") of US troops from Iraq increase the danger to US troops? Obviously, after the withdrawal the troops would be in much less danger. How about while they are being withdrawn?

While there certainly would not be zero danger, there is no reason to think that the danger would increase, and every reason to think that it would decrease. There may well be some armed groups in Iraq who have a specific goal of killing American soldiers, and perhaps such groups would continue to

troops - a resolution that still has not passed the Senate, although it was supported by a majority of Senators.

The mostly likely outcome is that Congress could, using its power of the purse and other war powers, force the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq in the

around the impasse, it's not obvious that this strategy will work, so long as the myth that ending funding for the war will harm the troops is left unchallenged. It's quite clear how the President's supporters in Congress are going to argue against the Murtha plan: they are going to say that it is a sneaky way to cut the funding, and therefore, it will harm the troops.

So Murtha plan or no, those who wish to end the war and bring the troops home would be well-advised to get busy pulling apart the argument that ending funding for the war will harm the troops. As Tom Matzzie of MoveOn has argued, Democrats need to directly rebut the Republican charge that Democrats are threatening the safety of American forces in the field by pushing restrictions on war funding. "Cutting off funding as described by the media and White House is a caricature," Matzzie told *The Politico*, "It has never happened in US history, and it won't happen now."



MARK WEISBROT IS CO-DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH (WWW.CEPR.NET) WASHINGTON, DC AND PRESIDENT OF JUST FOREIGN POLICY. HE RECEIVED HIS PH.D. IN ECONOMICS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN. HE HAS WRITTEN NUMEROUS RESEARCH PAPERS ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY. HE WRITES A COLUMN ON ECONOMIC AND POLICY ISSUES THAT IS DISTRIBUTED TO OVER 550 NEWSPAPERS BY MCCLATCHY-TRIBUNE INFORMATION SERVICES. HIS OPINION PIECES HAVE APPEARED IN THE WASHINGTON POST, THE LOS ANGELES TIMES, THE BOSTON GLOBE, AND MOST MAJOR US NEWSPAPERS. HE APPEARS REGULARLY ON NATIONAL AND LOCAL TELEVISION AND RADIO PROGRAMS.

ROBERT NAIMAN IS NATIONAL COORDINATOR OF JUST FOREIGN POLICY, A MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION DEVOTED TO REFORMING US FOREIGN POLICY TO REFLECT THE VALUES AND SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS. NAIMAN EDITS THE DAILY JUST FOREIGN POLICY NEWS SUMMARY. JFP'S WEB SITE IS WWW.JUSTFOREIGNPOLICY.ORG.

The simplest way to remove them (the troops) from danger is to remove them from Iraq.

try to kill American soldiers even if it were clear that US soldiers were withdrawing, but there is no reason to think that an orderly withdrawal would increase this risk. On the other hand, the bulk of the insurgency is clearly motivated by a desire to drive US forces from Iraq, and since attacking US troops is a risky enterprise, there is every reason to believe that if the US were to demonstrate the intention to withdraw its forces attacks on US forces would decrease. In fact, in the past insurgent groups negotiating with US officials have offered to cease attacks on US forces if the US would set a timetable for withdrawal. So it is likely that establishing such a timetable would make US troops safer, even during the withdrawal.

Would withdrawing from Iraq give "victory" to our enemies? Only children and adults who have lost the ability to reason allow themselves to be ruled by this logic. A rational person asks first: what is in my interest? If extricating themselves from a dangerous enterprise that is gaining them nothing is in their interest, rational people do extricate themselves, even at the "cost" of mockery by their "enemies."

Is there any danger Congress will bring about a "precipitous" withdrawal? Is Congress capable of doing anything opposed to the President's policy in Iraq precipitously? Look how long it took the House to pass a non-binding resolution against the increase in

future. Even if Congress didn't appropriate a dollar of the President's request for more funding, enough money has already been appropriated to cover an orderly withdrawal. And if more money were needed to cover an orderly withdrawal, Congress would approve it in a heartbeat.

Does "supporting the troops" require "supporting their mission?" US troops do not determine their "mission." Subject to the requirements of US and international law, US troops follow orders from our elected government. If Congress must "support the mission" in order to "support the troops," then Congress must support and fund whatever President Bush decides, even if it is criminally insane. According to this logic, if President Bush orders 150,000 US troops to jump off the Golden Gate Bridge as a message to Osama Bin Laden that we are not to be trifled with, then Congress must not only support this, but approve tax dollars to pay for the buses to drive soldiers to the bridge.

Representative Murtha and Speaker Pelosi have offered a way around the impasse about "cutting the funding": they plan to give the President all the money he asks for the war in Iraq, but put restrictions on the money that would have the effect of stopping the President from increasing troop deployments in Iraq and force him to begin withdrawing troops. While Representative Murtha deserves credit for trying to figure out a way

Gates' Definition Suggests Further Confrontation with Iran

ROBERT NAIMAN

Before saying anything critical of our new Defense Secretary, Robert Gates, let me state the obvious: I, too, am grateful that Mr. Gates has replaced Donald Rumsfeld. But if you were hoping that the replacement of Rumsfeld by Gates meant a fundamentally different US policy regarding the current confrontation with Iran, I'm afraid a little cold water is in order.

Defense Secretary Gates says the US is open to a "deeper" dialogue with Iran, the *Washington Post* reports. That's welcome news. But his further remarks suggested his notion of a "deeper" dialogue is rather limited. Gates recalled how he and Zbigniew Brzezinski met with Iranian leaders in November 1979 with an offer of diplomatic recognition - "only to be met with Iranian demands that they hand over the Shah."

Gates seems to be suggesting that the fact that Iranian leaders demanded that the US turn over the deposed Iranian dictator shows how unreasonable the Iranian leaders were.

But the demand for the return of the Shah was completely reasonable: the Shah was accused of major human rights abuses in Iran and the theft of significant Iranian public assets (and some Iranians feared the US would reimpose the Shah by force, as it

had in 1953). "The Shah's regime was becoming increasingly and egregiously corrupt," wrote William Daugherty, assigned to the US embassy in Tehran at the time. "To counter rising discontent, the Shah gave his security forces carte blanche to ferret out and halt the dissidents; serious human rights issues ensued..." Daugherty wrote that the embassy staff were "utterly astonished" at the decision by the Carter Administration to admit the deposed Shah to the US, since they had warned Washington of the dangers associated with such a decision, and had been told by "Washington seniors" the consequences of the Shah's admission to the US were so obvious no one would be "dumb enough" to allow it.

"The American search for elusive Iranian 'moderates' is a recurring - and mostly fruitless - theme since the revolution in 1979," Gates continued in his remarks.

This suggests that Gates' apparent definition of an "Iranian moderate" - someone uninterested in pressing fundamental Iranian interests - would not be shared by most people in the world.

No wonder the search has been "mostly fruitless." It's hard to become a leader of a country if you don't work - or at least make

some effort to appear to work - to protect the country's fundamental interests, unless your rule is imposed by a foreign power. I hope that's not what Mr. Gates has in mind.

Some recent press commentary has suggested that the threat of a US attack on Iran has significantly receded. This is almost certainly true if we are talking about the very short term.

But the danger we need to be concerned about is not the possibility that the United States is going to attack Iran this week. The danger we need to mobilize against is that the United States will attack Iran before George Bush leaves office. If we are to head off that danger, we need to mobilize now.

The recent flare-up over the Iranian detention of the 15 British Marines - which, for all we know at present, may well have been in waters claimed by Iran - the area in question has never been subject to an international treaty - indicates the dangers of the current policy of confrontation. Action provokes reaction. The United States seized 5 Iranian diplomats in Iraq, and now Iran has seized 15 British sailors. The Iranian government says its action was not in retaliation, but no outside observer says the two events are unrelated.

Moreover, the policy of confrontation with Iran keeps us from getting out of Iraq. Even Henry Kissinger says a US military victory in Iraq is "no longer possible." Kissinger said the best way forward was to reconcile the differences between Iraq's warring sects with help from other countries, including Iran. But this contradicts the present US policy, because US threats against Iran undermine the possibility of cooperation on Iraq. Iran, for example, warned that it might not attend a regional conference on security in Iraq with the United States if the Iranian diplomats are not released.

Activism has started to shift US policy in Iraq. But to get out of Iraq, we have to shift US policy on Iran. The first step is to get the "option" of a US military attack off of the so-called table.



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Helpful Advice from Past War Presidents



In Memory of Alan Reilly

DAVID CLINE

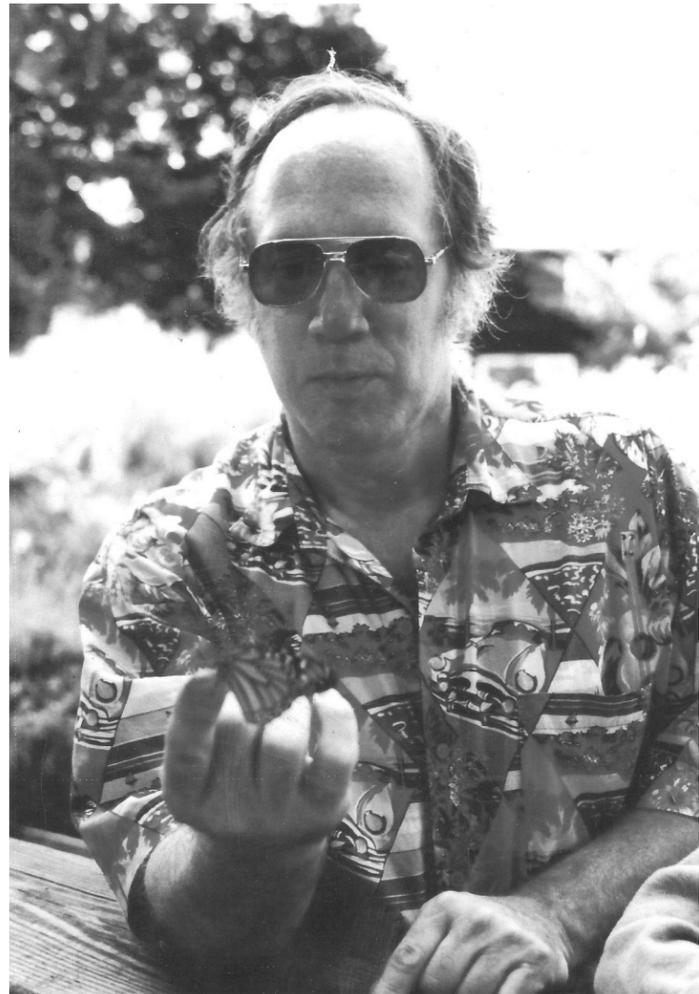
On the morning of October 14, 2006, while riding a subway train to New York City, Alan E. Reilly was found dead from a heart attack. He was 54 years old and had been a helicopter repairman in Vietnam during 1971-72. He worked as an independent graphic artist and lived with his wife Paulette in Harrison, NJ.

For many years Al was an active member of the Clarence Fitch (NY-NJ) chapter of VVAW as well as NJ Veterans For Peace Chapter 21 and the Jersey City Vietnam Veterans Memorial Committee. He was involved in assisting the homeless, whether it was standdowns in Newark or personal efforts to feed the homeless who often lived by the railroad track near where he

lived. He also volunteered as a horticulturalist at Garretson Farm, a community-run garden in northern Jersey.

He is survived by his wife, mother and father, sister and three bothers. He was buried with a military color guard and honors. Alan was a very humble person, not the type to jump in front of a camera or microphone. He just kept plugging away for what was right and just, constantly marching against the war in Iraq, helping others and educating the public about the true nature of war abroad and here at home.

He will be greatly missed by his comrades and friends. Rest in peace brother, you will not be forgotten.



My Winter Soldier

PAULETTE REILLY

After my husband Alan Reilly passed away I read his copy of *Winter Soldiers: An Oral History of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War*. I'm glad he had this organization and the Veterans For Peace to turn to for all the things I was never equipped to help him

with. Alan had an acute awareness of social injustice and political hypocrisy. Alan knew you did not have to go to war to see evidence of man's inhumanity to man. Someone in our neighborhood goes out into the Kearny Meadows and uses homeless people for target

practice. One of the homeless gentlemen Alan sometimes brought food to has a face full of buckshot scars. Someone had snuck up close to this homeless man while he lay sleeping on the ground and shot him just for the hell of it. To paraphrase Bobby

Muller: it's not just that war is wrong; war is only a symptom of a sickness that has infected too many hearts for far too long. Alan never lost his compassion, never lost his hope, never lost my respect, my love. He's in my heart, he's in my thoughts, he's in my dreams.



Winter Soldier

WORDS AND MUSIC BY LESLIE FISH - WITH ADDITIONAL WORDS BY KATHLEEN TAYLOR

They say the war is over. I watch the slow rain fall
And wash away the posters from the streetlamp and the wall.
No one wants to talk about that country or its war,
But we are not the same people that we were before.

Chorus

And I'm a winter soldier, still slogging through the snow,
Trying hard to make somebody see,
You don't even have my reasons to forget the things we've done,
And I can't let you go forgetting me.

No one cares to mention the name of Viet Nam
Or think about the legacies of bullet, blade and bomb,
We died there by the thousands, and we killed thousands more,
And we are not the same people that we were before.

No one seems to notice the survivors of the fight.
You're half an hour a hero and then pushed out of sight,
As if they were ashamed of us—reminders of the war.
Oh, they are not the same people that they were before.

They don't want to talk about our government's defeat,
The protests, the resistance, the marchers in the street,
The fraggings, the refusals to fight their bloody war,
'Cause we were not the same people that we were before.

They say the war is over. It's hard to realize.
But we must go on fighting...our government's damned lies.
We'll call them on their bullshit and remind them, just once more,
That we are not the same people that we were before!

Where We Came from, Who We Are, Who Can Join

Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc. (VVAW) is a national veterans' organization that was founded in New York City in 1967 after six Vietnam vets marched together in a peace demonstration. It was organized to voice the growing opposition among returning servicemen and women to the still-raging war in Indochina, and grew rapidly to a membership of over 30,000 throughout the United States, including active duty GIs stationed in Vietnam. Through ongoing actions and grassroots organization, VVAW exposed the ugly truth about US involvement in Southeast Asia and our first-hand experiences helped many other Americans to see the unjust nature of that war.

VVAW also took up the struggle for the rights and needs of veterans. In 1970, we began the first rap groups to deal with traumatic aftereffects of war, setting the example for readjustment counseling at vet centers today. We exposed the shameful neglect of many disabled vets in VA hospitals and helped draft legislation to improve educational benefits and create job programs. VVAW fought for amnesty for war resisters, including vets with bad discharges. We helped make known the negative health effects of exposure to chemical defoliants and the VA's attempts to cover up these conditions as well as their continued refusal to provide treatment and compensation for many

Agent Orange victims.

Today our government still finances and arms undemocratic and repressive regimes around the world in the name of "democracy." American troops have again been sent into open battle in the Middle East and covert actions in Latin America, for many of the same misguided reasons that were used to send us to Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, many veterans from all eras are still denied justice—facing unemployment, discrimination, homelessness, post-traumatic stress disorder and other health problems, while already inadequate services are cut back or eliminated.

We believe that service to our country and communities

did not end when we were discharged. We remain committed to the struggle for peace and for social and economic justice for all people. We will continue to oppose senseless military adventures and to teach the real lessons of the Vietnam War. We will do all we can to prevent future generations from being put through a similar tragedy, and we will continue to demand dignity and respect for veterans of all eras. This is real patriotism and we remain true to our mission. Anyone who supports this overall effort, whether Vietnam veteran or not, veteran or not, may join us in this long-term struggle. JOIN US!

Insignia of Vietnam Veterans Against the War



We took the MACV patch as our own, replacing the sword with the upside-down rifle with helmet, the international symbol of soldiers killed in action. This was done to expose the lies and hypocrisy of US aggression in Vietnam as well as its cost in human lives. The original MACV insignia also put forward lies. The US military was not protecting (the sword) the Vietnamese from invasion from the People's Republic of China (the China Gates), but was instead trying to "save" Vietnam from itself.

Our insignia has come to represent veterans fighting against new "adventures" like the Vietnam War, while at the same time fighting for a decent way of life for veterans and their families.

Our insignia is more than 30 years old. It belongs to VVAW, and no other organization or group may use it for any reason without permission.

Beware of VVAW AI

This notice is to alert you to a handful of individuals calling themselves the "Vietnam Veterans Against the War Anti-Imperialist" (VVAW-AI). VVAW-AI is actually the creation of an obscure ultraleft sect, designed to confuse people in order to associate themselves with VVAW's many years of activism and struggle. They are not a faction, caucus or part of VVAW, Inc. and are not affiliated with us in any way. We urge all people and organizations to beware of this bogus outfit.

SUPPORT VVAW! DONATE OR JOIN TODAY!

Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc.
VVAW Membership
P.O. Box 2065, Station A
Champaign, IL 61825-2065

Membership Application

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____
 Email address _____
 Branch _____
 Dates of Service (if applicable) _____
 Unit _____
 Military Occupation _____
 Rank _____
 Overseas Duty _____
 Dates _____

- Yes, add me to the VVAW email list.
- I do not wish to join, but wish to make a donation to the work of VVAW.
- Sign me up for a lifetime membership in VVAW. \$250 is enclosed.

Membership in VVAW is open to ALL people who want to build a veterans' movement that fights for peace and justice. Most of our members are veterans of the Vietnam era, but we welcome veterans of all eras, as well as family members and friends to our ranks. The annual membership fee is \$25.00 (not required of homeless, unemployed or incarcerated vets).

VVAW is a democratic organization. Chapters decide on local programs and projects under the general guidelines of the national program. Chapters elect local leadership and representatives to annual national meetings where major organizational decisions are made and national coordinators elected. These coordinators are responsible for the day-to-day organizational leadership of VVAW and issuing national publications.

Signature _____
 Date _____
 Total Amount Enclosed _____

Make checks payable to VVAW. Contributions are tax-deductible.

RECOLLECTIONS

Remembering Randy Barnes

DAVE "RADAR" CURRY

In VVAW's early years, J. Randy "Doc" Barnes was extremely active in VVAW. At Dewey Canyon III, Doc came to be known as a dependable member respected by the national leadership. He served his own important leadership role in the Kansas-Missouri area. When numerous VVAW leaders were leaving the organization due to its expansion of its anti-war mission to include issues such as civil rights and veterans benefits, Randy Barnes saw the importance of these wider issues.

Randy played a pivotal role in Operation Heart of America. Military-style VVAW convoys carried food and other supplies to the black residents of Cairo, Illinois, who were embattled by a racist police force, the White Citizens Council, and the Ku Klux Klan. After the first convoy, Randy Barnes persisted in leading new convoys to Cairo.

When inmates of Leavenworth Penitentiary, including several Vietnam veterans, rioted over deplorable living conditions, Randy Barnes and Kansas City VVAW formed the Leavenworth Brothers Offense/Defense Committee. The committee raised over

\$100,000 for the inmates' legal defense.

Doc Barnes continued to fight for veterans for the rest of his life. In the years following his participation in VVAW, he served as state president of Vietnam Veterans of America and was a mainstay of the organization. Doc had a wealth of information about every VA facility in the Missouri-Kansas region. He could tell a vet just what he or she should say or not say to get decent treatment.

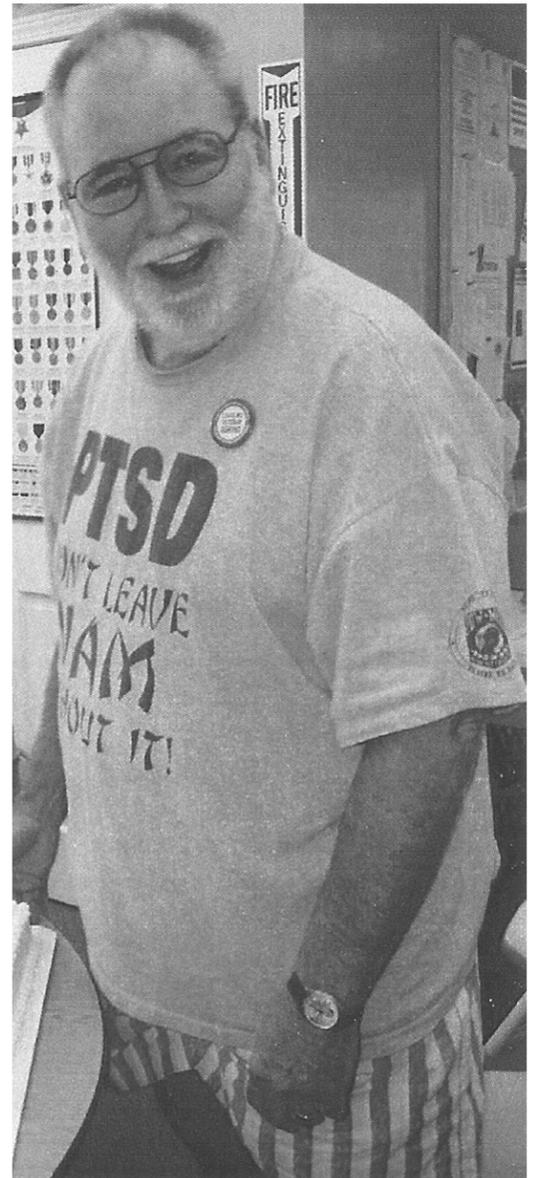
During this past fall's election, Doc was a firestorm of activity. He campaigned fervently for progressive veteran candidates for office in Kansas and Missouri and several neighboring states. His earlier ability to organize had not waned as Doc put convoy after convoy together. The convoys would travel to a candidate's district in order to demonstrate that veteran candidates and candidates supporting veterans issues were part of bigger national movement of veterans.

I only met Randy face-to-face in spring of 2004 when he was serving as Missouri state coordinator of Vets for Kerry and I as secretary for the St. Louis

area. Doc joined other Missouri veterans with whom we worked and called me "Radar." It is a nickname I'm proud of. Doc had an ability to see what abilities were in each veteran whom he met. And Doc could pull those abilities to the surface and put you to work.

Doc used to end his emails with "Take Back America." Doc was one of those who took back Missouri and made it a blue state again. In his words and his memory, I hope that we can begin to take back this country from what Randy feared would be "the fall of democracy."

Randy "Doc" Barnes died December 2, 2006 in Kansas City Missouri at the age of 67. His death came days after a massive heart attack. He was interred in Arlington National Cemetery.



Operation Heart of America