



# THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

50¢

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## VVAW and 40 Years ... We Must Continue!

WARD REILLY

August 8, 2007

1967, the year Vietnam Veterans Against the War got started. 4 full years before I joined. And what a bloody and horrific year 1967 was for US troops in Vietnam, as the anti-war movement started to grow inside the military, and here at home on the streets.

And here we are in 2007, forty years later, and in the same exact position. A bloody occupation that is ruining everyone and everything it touches. It's a painful reality to many of us that have been in and out of the world of resisting since the 60's and 70's. Forty years gone, and the politicians have done it again ... and along comes Iraq Veterans Against the War.

Welcome home, brothers and sisters. Deja vu! VVAW plus 40 years ... we must continue!

The 40th anniversary of



VVAW - 40 Years Later

Vietnam Veterans Against the War found many of us meeting in Chicago. It was a beautiful 4-day-weekend reunion, well organized and well attended. The continuous string of events and meals organized by the local

VVAW members, and our friends, was simply perfect.

Panels, film, slides, meals, beer, camaraderie and even a little merchandise, which kept us happy and busy. A couple of commemorative books were put

together to mark the celebration. So much work done by so few. I mean, they even got Lollapalooza put right there into Grant Park for us, for goodness sake. These organizers rule! Truly an  
*continued on page 12*

## Fallen Comrades



**Bill Davis**  
VVAW National Coordinator  
1948-2007



**Dave Cline**  
VVAW National Coordinator  
1947-2007

**Honor the Dead  
and  
Fight Like Hell  
for the Living**



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# From the National Office

BARRY ROMO

As we approach 4,000 US deaths in Iraq, many wonder, "Where is the outrage?" It seems that a whole part of the movement has moved on to wanting to talk about impeachment or Iran. Yet, the war continues, and Americans and Iraqis continue to die, even as Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) tries to raise the level of awareness and intensity of action.

Some people seem to be tired of trying. They'll say, "Well I've brought up the war so many times." So what! There are still many more people to be brought out to the streets; more teachers can bring VVAW and IVAW into their classrooms. I think next year, an election year, is going to be pivotal, much like 1968 was during the Vietnam War. This will be a year where political action, in the broadest possible terms, can make a greater difference.

What we need right now is an all-encompassing movement that draws more and more people into it, not one that is exclusive or made up of true believers. In my day, the labor movement wouldn't allow commies into the unions. Why? They were afraid to debate ideas

and strategies. They were afraid of the radicals, of their dedication and organization. And yet, as we approach 2008, we have an entire generation of "radicals" running for cover. Today the ultra-leftists want to ban the Democrats! Yes! The Democrats!

It is unbelievable that they are so afraid of dialogue, afraid to actually participate in a mass movement to push the politicians to end this war. Coming out of a veterans' movement, a group made up of people who bought the ultra-left party line in the past, this is especially difficult to take. In my state, a minority Iraq vet who wanted to work with young democrats and place 3,500 American flags as part of an anti-war memorial was actually driven out of the campus movement by an ultra-leftist who claimed that the flag was a symbol of imperialism and should not be used in any way as part of the anti-war movement.

Is the movement better off if it is smaller and more exclusive? Well, let's see. There are probably 80 million Democrats, including families, more minorities, more

working people, more trade union activists who are politically active. The ultra-leftists, Trotskyists, Maoists, Stalinists, anarchists, and Avakianoids are mostly estranged from their own families, mostly active on campuses... and number in the thousands. Who's more important?

Let's be clear. I don't want them driven out of the movement or kept from speaking (except for the Revolutionary Communist Party), although they do get on my nerves hawking their papers. In a bunch of the local coalitions they withdrew their endorsement but still sold their papers at anti-war events. There is a term for that kind of activity, and we all know what that is.

In case you don't already know I am a Chicano Nam vet who has been politically active for almost 38 years straight. I've been arrested eight times, beaten by the cops four times, and I have, with other brothers and sisters in VVAW, fought Nazis and Minutemen. I've been active in my union for 28 years (as President, Chief Steward, Steward). Anti-imperialist? Yes. In my case, and

that of hundreds of thousands of other vets, we had to actually kill someone to find out that killing was wrong.

Also, I proudly worked to elect Harold Washington mayor in Chicago. He appointed me to serve on the Human Rights Commission, a nonpaying advisory position. Our late comrade, Bill Davis, took it a step further and was active as a Democratic Party Committeeman.

Sorrowfully, we have had two deaths in the family. Long time members and National Coordinators Bill Davis and David Cline died soon after VVAW's 40th anniversary reunion. If you haven't checked out our website lately, please go there to see and hear it straight from our two brothers.

Finally, get out your boots and put in for vacation time in March, because we are going to Washington, DC, to support and march with our brothers and sisters of IVAW. We'll have some buses. Watch for more info on our web site.

The struggle continues!



Thanks to Jeff Danziger and Billy Curmano for their cartoons. Thanks to Tony Velez, Lovella Calica, Aaron Davis, Horace Coleman, Marty Webster, Ward Reilly, Bob Gronko, Amy Meyers, Bill Branson, Claudia Lennhoff, Brooke Anderson, John Zutz, Shara Esbenshade, Pat McCann and others for contributing photos.

## VVAW Merchandise

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Vietnam Veterans Against the War  
Fighting for Veterans, Peace and Justice since 1967  
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# TESTIFY

## WINTER SOLDIER: IRAQ & AFGHANISTAN

AARON HUGHES

Winter Soldier was one of Vietnam Veterans Against the War's most important tactics. This action brought together over a hundred veterans to testify to the crimes of United States foreign policy and catapulted Vietnam Veterans Against the War into a national organization.

Iraq Veterans Against the War is following in Vietnam Veterans Against the War's footsteps and holding a testimonial series

in Washington DC from March 13 to the 16, 2008 just before the start of the sixth year of the war in Iraq.

Winter Soldier: Iraq & Afghanistan is not just a testimonial series. It is a spear on which Iraq Veterans Against the War will be organizing behind to pierce through the myths of war and unite active duty soldiers and veterans to FIGHT BACK.

Iraq Veterans Against the

War needs your help to get veterans there. PLEASE SPONSOR AN IRAQ/AFGHANISTAN VETERAN. Donations of any size are needed. The approximate cost per veteran will be \$1,250, so work with your communities to sponsor a veteran to one of the most important actions in the anti-war movement. For when the soldiers stop fighting the war ends... HELP UNITE US.

FULL SPONSORSHIP \$1250

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Please indicate that donation is for Winter Soldier. All donations are tax deductible.



IVAW leading the march September 15 in Washington DC



Operation First Casualty - IV in Chicago

# Fraggin'

BILL SHUNAS

In your dealings with The Wife did you ever have a conflict where you were entirely in the wrong, but, of course, you wouldn't admit it? When that happens you obfuscate and prevaricate or whatever that stuff is that you do. And The Wife lets you off the hook because either she loves you or tolerates you - whichever the case may be in your household. For example, you roll out of bed one morning more tired than usual. You see underwear on the chair where you had discarded it the night before. You put 'em on. It won't be long before you hear The Wife. "Are you wearing dirty underwear?" You've been caught, and now you have to save Face. You can try ignorance. "I didn't realize they were the dirty ones." You can try rationalization. "I didn't sweat much yesterday" or "There's only a little yellow." Or you can try an end run. "I was in a hurry. I planned to change later." You talk about anything but the real issue. That way you save Face.

The above underwear scenario is what comes to mind when one thinks about George Bush trying to justify the Iraq War. Lately there has been talk about surges, the Petraeus Report, and some of our goals being achieved. It seems that there is joy in the White House whenever a new word or phrase is discovered that creates the illusion of the war as

being more necessary or more just or more winnable. And that is the main point. It is none of these. But in order to save Face, Bush keeps coming up with new irrelevancies. In reality, there is a little brown in his underwear.

Now there is a new player in the debate - the confused moralists. Okay, so there were no WMDs and Saddam was not allied with Al Qaeda. Can we go home? No. These people say that even though the war was started for dubious reasons, we have to finish it. We broke it. We own it. Their assumption is that we have the capability of finishing it. This is a false assumption. This is a policy version of the idea that we keep sending more soldiers to die in order that those who already died haven't died in vain - which they did.

Bush may welcome these confused moralists, but he is not of the school that the war was started for dubious reasons. After all, he started it. He knows why he started it. For oil control. He can't admit this. So he saves Face by declaring this as part of the War on Terrorism, another dubious concept.

You can't make war against Terrorism in the conventional sense. Armies fight other armies. Or they fight guerillas. Armies are not formed to fight people who stay in the shadows. Yes, if they

ever discover where Al Qaeda is headquartered, maybe the military could help by sending in a missile or a special ops team. But basically, anti-terrorism work is police work. The closest you get to the military fighting in the War on Terrorism is something like fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan. The Taliban are not terrorists except to their own people, but they harbor terrorists (as does our ally Pakistan which is a different story). You may want to send your army after them, but that is only tangential to stopping terrorism. And as Afghanistan shows, military success in terms of eliminating terrorists is dubious.

## Support The Troops - Thought # 71

There are those who believe that during the Vietnam War, the lives of some soldiers were lost because of the anti-war activities back home. Their argument is that without support back home, GIs let their guard down and had to pay the consequences. It is more likely that the factors contributing to the laxity of the troops in Vietnam were other than anti-war activities. Laxity resulted from seeing first hand that the war was hopeless as well as immoral and needlessly destructive. The anti-war movement probably saved a few lives by helping to shorten the war.

And America didn't support

Vietnam veterans when we returned home. When the nation finally figured out that it should support Vietnam veterans, the right wing made some inroads with the "support the troops" idea. They meant that anti-war activities did not support the troops because it encouraged them to let their guard down when in harms way. For the sake of argument, let's say that what happens at home does have an effect on the troops morale and by extension their ability to survive.

At the beginning of the Iraq War, all the hype for this war, and all the reporters embedded with the troops created this popular crusade with the troops all supported and satisfied. Morale was high. But what happened over the next two years? The troops found out that there was no WMDs and Saddam was not involved in 9/11. The White House had lied. The reasons for this war and the basis of the morale boosting hype were bogus. Talk about depleting morale. Right there, the White House did it. And then they send them back for a second tour - and a third. Bush don't talk about supporting the troops no more.



BILL SHUNAS IS A VIETNAM VETERAN, AUTHOR AND VVAW MEMBER IN THE CHICAGO CHAPTER.

## Notes from the Boonies

PAUL WISOVATY

Joe Miller delights in chiding me because I never show up at any of the progressive get-togethers at the University of Illinois, which is about twenty-five miles up the road from my home town of Republicanville. Actually, it's called Tuscola, but sooner or later the City Fathers are going to get around to changing the name. Certainly no one will object. Then, as Joan Baez once crooned, "When summer comes rolling around, we'll be lucky to get out of town."

No, Joe, I don't get up to the old alma mater much, largely because I am extremely uncomfortable in any large metropolitan area with more than 5,000 people in it, and certainly in any such city that has one-way streets. Besides that, I just turned 61, and I don't see well at night, which is when most

of these events are held. But Iraq Veterans Against the War recently sponsored an anti-war rally at 5 in the afternoon, so I sucked it up, climbed into my 1992 Bonneville and headed out on the interstate.

About seventy-five students showed up for the event. I was just there to represent VVAW and listen. When the two IVAW guys got up to talk, one of them graciously said to me, "Paul, come up and stand next to us. You've earned that." I was sincerely honored by the invitation.

When they finished their brief talks, I couldn't help myself. I said, "Gimme the bullhorn." I proceeded to rattle off a couple of less than real intelligent remarks, but ended with one I stole from our late comrade Bill Davis. "Never again will one generation of American veterans turn its back

on another generation of American veterans. Never again." Thanks, old friend.

I then got interviewed by the student newspaper, the *Daily Illini*. Since we don't get the DI down here, I have no idea to what if any extent I was correctly quoted, but here's what I said, loosely paraphrased. I got back from Vietnam in June of 1968, and two weeks later was enrolled for summer school at the University of Illinois. Many readers will realize that it was more than a little difficult for me to comprehend that, in two weeks' time, I had been transplanted from the 3/5 Armored Cavalry to a quiet Midwestern campus. It was the quiet part that bothered me. Walking around the university quad, I saw all these young men and women dozing, reading, or

playing frisbee with their dogs. I wanted to walk up and slap them and say, "Hey, goddammit, don't you realize that people are dying because of your government?" With my luck, I'd have picked a college football player, and everything would have gone south real quick. Anyway, forty years later, right before I showed up at this rally, it was déjà vu all over again: dozens of students playing frisbee with their dogs! I have nothing against frisbees, and I love my dog. But - sorry to be repetitive - don't these 2007 hot-shot mega-university kids realize that people are dying because of their government? There are something like 38,000 students at the University of Illinois, and apparently 37,925 don't, or don't

*continued on page 5*

# My View - On the 40th Anniversary

JOHN ZUTZ

VVAW celebrated a bit recently. 40 years ago a handful of veterans joined a peace rally and Vietnam Veterans Against the War was conceived.

Forty is one of those birthdays when people examine themselves. VVAW did the same thing. We remembered the ups and downs, the booms and the busts, the prides and the shames of those years. On balance there was more pride than shame.

We also looked to the future. The IVAW members who attended

seemed prepared to take the point. They'll have their own interests and they'll develop their own strategies, but they'll probably need guidance and support. We need to take their back.

There was some seemingly good-natured friction between the generations. There was a disrespectful age reference during the opening speech.

During lunch the IVAW members formed a rough circle in the assembly area and ate off their laps. When invited to move to the

open spots at the tables they replied that they were "saving those spots for the old folks." It made me start looking around for my cane.

But it's true. Forty is half a lifetime. We're getting older. Our time here is dwindling.

We were rudely reminded of that fact in a brief time following the 40th. Two outstanding leaders of VVAW passed away. Both Bill Davis and Dave Cline will be missed. Bill relied more on humor, Dave could remember minute details of things that happened

years ago. They both had the insight to state a problem in simple terms, and refused to settle for less than a reasonable solution.

When I worked in the hospital the nurses would tell us that bad news comes in threes.



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



## Notes from the Boonies

continued from page 4

care. That's the bad news.

Here's the good news. During the rally, I stood there watching these seventy-five U of I students, and they were fantastic. The speakers were articulate, knowledgeable and pumped-up. The audience was enthusiastic. How should I put this? It was 1970 all over. I almost felt young again.

As I was leaving, five real young kids stopped me. They were from Armstrong-Potomac High School, which is even tinier than Tuscola. Their history teacher had sent them over to cover the rally, and they interviewed me for a mini-documentary they were putting together for use in their class. The next day, I called the

high school principal to thank him. There are 37,925 college students at a major university who had better things to do than attend a short anti-war rally, and there were five high school students from a school nobody ever heard of who thought it was important.

Damn that made me feel good. We might win this thing yet.



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.



Students die-in at the University of Illinois

## Bill Davis: 1948-2007

RICHARD STACEWICZ



Bill Davis, Memorial Day 2000

Bill Davis died on September 5, 2007. I first met Bill on October 12th, 1992 to conduct an interview for an oral history of the VVAW. I was struck by his physical presence and disarming grin, which put me immediately at ease. He then went on to tell me the story of his life and in the process revealed a great deal about not only his life, but also that of VVAW. Bill epitomized VVAW.

Bill Davis was born in 1948 and lived with his maternal grandparents for most of his life prior to his tour-of-duty in Vietnam. Like many young men of his generation, he joined the Air Force as a draft-induced enlistee in 1966. He served at Vung Tau Airfield as a mechanic and part-time football player in 1968 and 1969 and was then stationed in Thailand with the Automated Battlefield Project and was discharged from active duty in 1970. Like most VVAW members, Bill began to feel uneasy about what he was seeing while in Vietnam and he embarked on the journey to make sense of his experiences that would lead him to take on the role of the Winter

Soldier.

Shortly after he returned to the states and moved to Columbus, Ohio, Bill enlisted in the VVAW and began working with the GI Press. Like many of his brothers who joined VVAW, he had returned, "Filled with pent-up rage and anger and frustration." He translated these feelings into a lifetime of activism for social justice and against imperialism and war. Bill's approach to activism is summed up best in his own words, which relate a very early experience in the anti-war movement, "We were denied entrance in the Fourth of July Parade in Arlington, Ohio which was one of these whoop-dee-doo suburbs (of Columbus) ... we were always denied access to the parade. They were saying 'these guys are radicals. They're going to disrupt the parade.' We said, no just let us in and we won't disrupt it. They wouldn't let us in so we really disrupted it. We kept on disrupting every year until they finally said, 'Jesus, let these guys in the parade.'"

Bill sought to disrupt the war with eloquent and reasoned argumentation, free of jargon that resonated deeply with all who heard him speak. His sincerity and commitment to ending war and fighting for veteran's rights was evident to anyone who knew him. He was also unwilling to countenance bullshit and was willing to confront injustice and hypocrisy head on when necessary. His charm and wit softened his deeply held convictions and disarmed his adversaries. He was truly a leader; an "organic" intellectual (in the Gramscian

sense) whose sharp critique of US foreign policy grew out of experience, discussion, and practice.

Bill's service in VVAW spans almost the life of the organization. He was involved in all of the critical historical markers, which define the organization and its legacy. While in Columbus, he worked tirelessly to build VVAW, organized active-duty GIs, worked with returning veterans to receive discharge upgrades and to heal from the traumas of war through the formation rap groups. He took an active role in the sit-ins at the VA to seek proper care for vets and he played a key role in bringing the effects of Agent Orange to light. Bill represented VVAW on trips to Japan and Nicaragua and marched on Washington again, and again, and again.

Since 1974, and after moving to Chicago with the new headquarters, Bill and a handful of his comrades worked to keep VVAW alive and active despite the internecine struggles and the exodus from VVAW that followed the end of the war in Vietnam. He helped to keep VVAW alive by staying true to his convictions and by carrying on the work of teaching, speaking and opposing America's ongoing conflicts. He has spoken to countless numbers of people in schools, at anti-war rallies and in numerous other venues. He was able to remain politically active while raising a family with Joan, coaching in the Shetland League of Oak Park Youth Baseball, and working for the

UPS and acting as chief steward for local 710 of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace workers. Bill last spoke at the VVAW's 40th Anniversary celebration in Chicago where he once again displayed his unique and powerful gifts to move a crowd despite his weakened lungs. Bill was truly a remarkable human being.

Bill Davis served his nation with great honor and dignity during his 37 years as an anti-war and labor activist, community leader, baseball coach and devoted father and husband. With his death, a big hole has been dug into the heart of VVAW. Yet that hole is being filled by a new generation of activists who have been moved to action by the words and deeds



21st World Conference Against A&H Bombs, August 1-10, 1975 in Tokyo, Hiroshima and Nagasaki (l-r) Dino Jones from Marianas Future Organization, Dang Quang Minh member of the Central Comm. of the NLF - Vietnam, Bill Davis of VVAW

of Bill and countless other VVAW members. That is the legacy that he leaves us and that we must continue to build on because we are still at war and lives are still being taken. It is up to those of us who remain to fill the void left in Bill's wake. It's a big hole, but we have to try to fill it to honor Bill Davis and all of the other brothers and sisters of the VVAW who have died. It is our turn to help the new generation of veterans to carry on with the work of ending war.

Peace Bill.



RICHARD STACEWICZ IS A PH.D. IN HISTORY, AUTHOR OF WINTER SOLDIERS, AND PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE AT OAKTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN ILLINOIS.

# My Tribute to My Husband Bill Davis

JOAN DAVIS

First of all I need to thank Jeff Machota and all those who keep the VVAW website going. The death of Bill was easier to bear being able to read the comforting words from so many of you. The sense of community forged from forty years of struggle has ebbed and flowed but was there when Becky and I needed it most.

Rather than recap Bill's achievement to the anti-war and peace movement I would rather try to explain why he was able to make such great contributions. Bill had the ability to work with all kinds of people because he truly loved people. While too often those on the left became consumed with

petty differences, Bill chose to overlook minor differences and helped everyone look at the big picture. He was also able to do this with his own life. Choosing to balance political work, union work and his family required an understanding that change will not happen over night. Bill taught me to stay focused, stay balanced, and stay positive - without these attributes people will not be able to be in the struggle for the long haul. Bill lived a life of meaning, helping so many people in some many ways. If we all learn by his example we will create a world of peace and justice.



Bill Davis at VVAW's 40th Anniversary, August 4, 2007



John Lindquist, Omar Cabezas and Bill Davis in Nicaragua, 1986



Bill Davis with Mayor Harold Washington in Chicago, 1983



Bill Davis at Memorial Day in Chicago, 1999



Bill Davis leading the march at Kent State 20th Anniversary, 1990

## Memories of Bill Davis

The following are excerpts from the Bill Davis Guestbook on the VVAW website at

[www.vvaw.org/billdavisguestbook](http://www.vvaw.org/billdavisguestbook)

### Ray Parrish

30 year old ripples

Bill Davis was the first VVAW vet I ever met. On a rainy evening in March 1978, he was the bus captain urging me to hurry up and board in a voice that flashed me back to basic. I was a freshman campus radio reporter joining a group of UIUC students going to an anti-KKK rally and march in Tupelo, Mississippi. When he discovered that I was a vet, he slapped a VVAW button on me. I told him of the help VVAW provided me in assisting a vet with an Agent Orange claim and how inspired I was by the Statue of Liberty action. When he found out I worked part-time as a vets counselor in the financial aid office, he laughed, hugged me and boomed out: "Welcome to the front lines! Good luck banging your head on the VA's wall." I never had the courage to disappoint him by quitting, so I've been doing veterans counseling ever since. And he was there supporting me at every step. I still feel his hand on my shoulder.

I will miss him and, in his honor, I will redouble my efforts to LEAVE NO VET BEHIND.

### Billy X. Curmano

I returned from Vietnam disoriented in 1969. Vietnam Veterans Against the War and the peace movement helped me find my way. I worked with the Milwaukee Chapter and met Bill

Davis early on. Our paths crossed frequently. Through it all, the good times and the bad, I think of him keeping a sense of humor and a smile as he fought for peace and justice. I got to know him better when we traveled to Nicaragua with the VVAW delegation. We posed together for a Nicaragua Solidarity photo at the 40th. I never would have guessed it to be my last moments with him. Life is fragile. Words can never fully express the admiration I've felt for him or the emptiness I feel with his passing. I am comforted in the possibility of a better life—one without pain and suffering. I believe Bill has earned it. He remains in my thoughts and prayers.

### Richie Manson and family Milwaukee VVAW (Brooklyn)

I write this with many tears flowing. Bill was one of the warmest, most sincere brothers I've ever met. I first met Bill in the 70's, and from the beginning he was wonderful to know. He and Joan always made sure I was fed at our July 4th campouts, as I typically came unprepared and hungry. A wonderful husband, father, friend, fighter for peace and justice for all til the very end. When I saw him at the 40th anniversary just a month ago, I knew he wasn't well, yet he smiled and had kind words, plus he teased me a bit, which I always welcomed from him. From rallies in Chicago, to beer drinking in Wisconsin, there was nobody better to hang out with than this gentle, beautiful man. Bill was ready, willing, and oh so very able to carry on the struggle. The world has lost a

great guy. My thoughts and prayers go out to Joan and Becky.

With love and respect.

### Jeff Machota

#### VVAW National Staff

I first met Bill sometime around the 20th Anniversary of Kent State in 1990. I was working with the Progressive Student Network at that time and gave Joe Miller a ride there. He crashed on Davis' hotel floor and that led to some great stories on the drive back.

Over the ensuing 17 years as I have worked with many in VVAW, especially the Chicago Chapter and the National Office, I have constantly been inspired by the activism, insight and comradeship of those in VVAW.

Bill has consistently been an inspiration over the years, willing to speak to an audience of 20 or 2000 if that's what it took. He was always open to speaking to youth and able to brush aside things said out of naivete. On the other hand, he definitely wouldn't suffer sectarian bullshit and knew how to deal with that as well. Bill knew how to keep a level head when the shit got intense and managed to do it with a smile. I saw that many a time, even at the 40th.

Bill also never let his views stagnate and constantly updated his analysis to the current situation. Whether it was VVAW at its peak, in its valleys or in its current resurgence, Bill was there. Bill's stories and speeches as well as his actions and his lifelong commitment to social justice continue to inspire me.

I am saddened immensely by the loss of our comrade, but also angered that we have lost a true leader before his time. We should have been able to enjoy the presence and leadership of Bill until at least the 60th Anniversary of VVAW, if not beyond.

It's great to be part of the VVAW family. Nothing can match the joy and passion of those committed to the struggle for social change.

Here's to you Bill. You will not be forgotten.

### Janet and Zoe Curry

Bill, your picture is up on the



Bill Davis, Veterans Day 2004



Bill Davis, Veterans Day 2006

bulletin board today in my 9th and 10th grade World and US History classroom. We'll be talking about veterans' and workers' struggles in your honor today, and we'll hold you in our minds as war and peace cycle through our work this year. Hope it feels like the best of the Appalachians where you are. I know Mother Jones, Joe Kinehan, Emma Goldman, the Bonus Army, and scores of others are glad to see you, but Zoe, Dave, and I wish they could have waited a few more decades.

Shalom.

### Annie Luginbill

Bill Davis – the name conjures up an image of a big, funny, smart, caring guy...a guy who was committed to his family, to his neighborhood, to his fellow workers and fellow veterans, and to the world as a whole. He could be wildly humorous (as when he described being introduced to VVAW via Pete Zastrow [and Pete's beer-stocked refrigerator and collection of medieval 'pornography'] or having FIVE [at least I think it was five] guys named Bill Davis drinking at a bar together after a VVAW demonstration) - yet he could also be as serious as the occasion demanded. It's hard to remember how many years we knew each other but it seems like forever - from the days of VVAW's NOSCAM forward. As others have written, Bill's compassion and activism touched many lives, and he was simply one of the best people I have ever known. My love and support go out to Joan and Becky at this time and always.

*continued on next page*



*Bill Davis and John Poole*

### **Ellie Shunas**

The words desert me as I try to express how I feel about such a devastating loss. Never to see him or hear his voice again is unimaginable.

I first met Bill in the early 1970's. I was trying to persuade VVAW to get more involved in the GI movement and Bill wisely advised that our efforts would be better spent working with the GI's themselves rather than the civilian organizers. Correct as usual.

As we grew politically, he always knew how to cut through the b.s. One had only to tune into Bill's b.s. antenna to stay on course.

As we all know, Bill had a wonderful sense of humor, on occasion he was just hilariously funny, sometimes the butt of his own jokes, but never mean (unless somebody really deserved it).

I remember so many Thanksgiving celebrations (started by those of us, like Bill and I, who had no family in Chicago). At one, we passed raw oysters back and forth across the length of the table grossing out everyone in between as we slurped them right out of the shells. At others he was the Trivial Pursuit sports trivia expert. Where did you learn all that stuff?!

I will miss Bill terribly, but never as much as Joan and Becky - my heart goes out to you. You have my love and support - Ellie

### **Carl Davidson**

I've known Bill for a long time, like many of you here, from the days of the rather goofy, carousing and always fun VVAW campouts in Wisconsin, to the latest peace march and more serious planning activities.

Along with the fun times, Bill was mainly about authenticity, and had little use for dilettantes. His quick smile and good humor was as honest as the day is long, but

was also a hook that could draw you into something much deeper, if you wanted to go there.

To my mind and many others, he was a textbook example of a good working-class revolutionary leader in every sense. He knew which class his feet were firmly planted in, and he knew who his adversaries were. But he also had a wider view of class that involved building broad alliances, of necessity, as the struggle demanded. He knew it was wise not to take on all your enemies at once. He knew the path had more twists and turns than he would have liked, and was longer than he had hoped--but he never lost sight of the final destination.

I drew that conclusion watching him give a speech at Loyola a few years back, as he explained imperialism in very down-to-earth terms to a new generation of young people.

They loved him. Many hadn't ever seen anything quite like him. But he talked about the Harold Washington campaign and the complexities of struggle, and how it was right to defend Harold despite the party label. Bill knew a fight against racism when he saw it, where he stood, and made a few sectarians in the crowd a little flustered. I made a point afterwards of shaking his hand, and giving him a "Right, On, Comrade!"

The last time I saw him was about two weeks ago. We were pulling together the Oct 27 Mobilization to stop the war in a new way, in a way that could bring out those who hadn't come out before. That meant the ACTUAL mass leaders of the working class and the Black and Latino communities--reform-minded or more radical, of whatever party--had to be in on the ground floor of launching this effort, and then they had to be inspired, nudged

and even pushed to do what we believed they could do.

Bill spoke to the point, and pledged to get the machinists of the IAM more deeply involved. I knew he was sick, and heard a weakness in his voice, but I had no idea how sick. After the meeting, he came up and gave me one of his bear hugs, and said in my ear, "Thanks for doing it this way." "Thank me?," I replied. "Thank YOU for getting all these union guys

here."

The next I heard was that he was in a coma in the hospital, then the following day that he had not made it.

I told Barry Romo this afternoon, there's two lessons here: none of us are here forever, and every life and every moment are precious.

Next May Day and thereafter, if you're around Chicago, take a rose out to Waldheim, to the hallowed ground of the Haymarket martyrs and other working-class heroes, and place it there for Bill, because he now lives on with them, continuing to inspire us all.

### **Linda Cooper Berdayes**

I met Bill in 1971 at a VVAW demonstration in Columbus, Ohio. He was recently out of the military and struggling in many ways to figure out how to forge ahead from Vietnam. For the next 3 years we worked hard together with others in building a strong VVAW chapter in Columbus and I'll never forget when he was elected to the national office and we knew it was a new era for him and the organization.

I am so happy for him because from reading all the the wonderful tributes I realize that he lived the life he hoped for. He

worked hard, he loved hard, and he laughed hard...but most of all he stood in the struggle for working people throughout the world.

It's hard for me to not just remember the young, high-spirited, and angry man I knew, but I can see that he was able to take all that anger and with the love of a wonderful family and good friends turn it into doing such good work and inspiring many.

I'm proud I knew him.

### **Richard Berg**

I had only turned 18 a bit earlier, but here I was three states away with a bunch a Vietnam veterans about to protest the building of the gym in Kent, Ohio. The governor had threatened to arrest us all! My parents would kill me. I was supposed to be studying. I was the first kid to go to college in generations.

Was I scared? Damn right! That is when I met Bill Davis. It is hard to describe. He was happy go lucky, but deadly serious about what we were about to do. Shortly after that the Ohio State Police launched tear gas at us. Our friendship only grew from there.

He was a little older and barely tolerated my support of the Green Bay Packers. We would see each other at protests against US foreign policy. We followed each others' progress in the labor movement.

The last time I saw him was at the big march on May Day, the international workers holiday. We were there to support our sisters and brothers in the immigrant rights movement. We laughed and told jokes at the labor feeder rally at Haymarket Square. Decades later and it is just like the day I met him, he was happy go lucky, but deadly serious about what we were about to do.

I loved him and will miss him. He was a great comrade.



*John Zutz and Bill Davis, Chicago 2006*

# Dave Cline: 1947-2007

BEN CHITTY

*This eulogy was delivered at David Cline's funeral, September 19, 2007, Jersey City, New Jersey. Ben Chitty is a long-time member of Vietnam Veterans Against the War.*

My name is Ben Chitty. I'm here on behalf of Vietnam Veterans Against the War to say a few words about my friend David Cline. There are people here who knew him longer, people here who saw him more often, people here and everywhere who speak better than me. But Dave Cline recruited me back into VVAW more than twenty years ago, and that's why I'm here.

Cast your mind back to the mid 1980s. Reagan was in the White House, and quashing our country's all too brief flirtation with a new kind of foreign policy. The CIA and the War Department were reviving old tricks and rehearsing some new ones – in Afghanistan, in Lebanon, in Grenada, in Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua. The lessons we had paid so much to learn in Vietnam were being rewritten, or obliterated entirely. Meanwhile the Veterans Administration seemed to have decided that the best way to deal with Agent Orange exposure was to wait until we were all dead, and no one seemed to know or want to know how many of us were homeless or incarcerated. Being a Vietnam veteran in America in 1985 could be a very surreal experience, especially for someone like me who had put all that aside when Saigon fell in 1975. Dave Cline and Clarence Fitch had set about reestablishing VVAW as a presence in the city where the organization had started nearly twenty years before and, among others, they found me – actually my wife introduced me to them.

Dave was energetic and charismatic. He was smart. And he had a very loud voice. But what made him a leader was his politics.

He had taken the experience of soldiering for the empire, analyzed it in terms of American history and politics, and seasoned it with his natural-born sense of solidarity with working people. He studied peoples' movements, liberation movements, veterans' movements. He thought long and hard about how veterans fit into the broader movement for peace and social justice.

He worked to defend and spread the legacy of VVAW. Sometimes this meant organizing the 20th reunion in 1987 and the 25th reunion in 1992. Sometimes it meant helping to organize the 25th reunion of the liberation of Saigon in 2000. Day to day and week to week it meant speaking to students about military service and about Vietnam. I guess he spoke to thousands of kids over the years.

He worked to organize veterans. He worked on the Agent Orange issue and, more generally, on military toxic exposures from atomic bombs to unexploded ordnance. He organized support for services for veterans. He organized forums and regional meetings, coalition after coalition. One of the projects nearest to his heart was the Jersey City Vietnam Veterans Memorial Committee, which he helped start ten years ago.

He looked for ways to confront the empire. Moral stances did not interest him, nor did imaginary impossibilities. But he did like to push the envelope, raise the ante, try something new. Like the 1987 Veterans Peace Convoy to Nicaragua. Dave helped organize the East Coast branch, led by the Mercedes deuce and a quarter diesel truck bought by the New York-New Jersey Chapter. The convoy challenged the US embargo on Nicaragua head on. After an epic confrontation with the Justice Department at the border in El Paso, the convoy slipped into Mexico and drove on



Dave Cline, 2006

to Managua. I heard a few years ago the truck was still running.

The Vieques campaign was another challenge to the empire. The Navy had been using the island for target practice for decades, and the people were determined to bring this to an end. In 1999 Dave started "Veterans Support Vieques" in New Jersey, New York and Puerto Rico to support the struggle. It became the longest-running civil disobedience campaign in US history, and ended finally in victory in 2003.

When 9-11 happened, Dave Cline was probably the single best qualified person in the world to take on the leadership of Veterans For Peace. So he did.

The Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh introduced me to the concept of the hungry ghost. In Vietnamese culture the spirit of anyone who dies and cannot be properly buried at home with his family is doomed to wander around angry and hurt, breaking rules, stirring up trouble, devouring sustenance without satisfaction, until his body can be properly laid to rest. Dave always seemed to me to be a hungry ghost. As it turned out the wounds he got in Vietnam were fatal.

But Dave's story is more than the biography of one person. He is representative of a generation of veterans. The Vietnam experience has been the hungry ghost of American society for all my

adult life. And because we never worked through what exactly that experience meant, we are making newer and hungrier ghosts every day in Afghanistan and Iraq. That story is far from over.

Dave was notorious for calling out cadences as he led contingents of veterans on marches and into rallies. A cadence keeps us in formation so we're not just strolling along the avenue. It trumpets our presence, heartens our friends, challenges our foes. It demands "who's the real patriot here?" and just asking that question answers it. And often it will get you on the radio, sometimes even on TV, which is cool.

A good cadence is deceptively hard to write and harder to produce in the heat of the moment. I should know – I wrote a lot of them which Dave didn't much like. They went on too long, got too involved, tried to make too many points. But I did write one which made it into his repertory, and that's how I'm going to end.

Lift your head and hold it high  
Veterans are passing by  
Tell me what we're marching for  
Freedom, justice, no more war  
Freedom  
Justice  
No more war

Hoah binh, Dave Cline. Go in peace.



Dave Cline, Operation Dire Distress, 2003

# Dave Cline Is Dead

DENNIS O'NEIL

Dave Cline died last night at his home in Jersey City, New Jersey.

In one sense it comes as no surprise to those of us who have worked closely with Dave in recent years. He had lived for two decades with a severely compromised immune system and had recently been battling both Hepatitis C and the Veterans Administration health care system, which did a shitty job of treating it.

Stan Goff reached me first with the news, crying at the loss. I have been surrounded by death recently--Stans's call came while I was sitting in a memorial service for an old friend, longtime fighter for socialism and Black liberation Vicki Garvin.

The news hasn't really sunk in yet, and I have no idea how it will hit when it does, or how hard.

But I do want to say a few things right now to set some context for what will surely be a great outpouring of sorrow and memory in weeks to come.

Dave Cline will someday, in a better world, stand recognized as one of the great figures in the history of the United States since the Second World War. After a tour in Vietnam as a grunt, where he was shot and shot at others, he returned to become a member and leader of Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

Through tireless organizing and dramatic events like Operation Dewey Canyon III, where hundreds of vets threw their medals on the Capitol steps, and the Winter Soldier Hearings into war crimes committed during the occupation of Vietnam, VVAW did much to finally doom the US government's murderous assault on the heroic people of Vietnam.

I have here on my desk a 1969 flier from SDS (the original one, not version 2.0) on the GI Revolt. It's an interview with Dave and another vet, fresh out of uniform and into the anti-war struggle. I am reminded by it to recommend that everyone reading this check out the recent documentary *Sir, No Sir!* Dave is featured in it as a young vet and as a present-day fighter against the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

And this last role is where Dave truly became great. He stayed active in VVAW right up to the present day, but also joined another organization called Veterans For Peace, which united vets from all eras in an essentially pacifist opposition to war, military recruiting, US aggression abroad and the neglect of those who had served in the armed forces.

Dave Cline was in his first term as president of Vets For Peace when the attack on the World Trade Center took place. He helped guide the small group through a period of war fever and jingoism in this country and growing concern as the Bush/Cheney regime prepared to attack Iraq--and did. Dave presided over the rapid, several-fold growth of VFP and its conversion into a dynamic and leading force against the war. He helped forge a tight alliance with Military Families Speak Out and birth the Bring them Home Now! campaign. The handful of young men and women just back from Iraq who initiated Iraq Veterans Against the War consulted with Dave on a near-daily basis and grew to become the most dynamic element in the alliance.

This alliance has played the role of spearhead in the movement to end the war in Iraq and bring the



Dave Cline, Clarence & Elena Fitch and Vietnam Vet Homeless Activist, 1987

troops home now. Without a sharp point, capable of cutting through defenses, a spear is just a fat stick, but without the weight of the spear, the whole anti-war movement, behind it, the spearhead lacks real momentum. Just weeks ago I was discussing with him the role this force could play in the Iraq Moratorium project.

Dave was the leader of this informal but vital alliance of forces with roots in the "military community" or, it would be more accurate to say, he gave it leadership. He could play this role because of his long experience, and because of how he had summed up and internalized that experience. That was in no small part a matter of style. Dave could be contentious but he had also become genuinely humble and thoughtful, always trying to avoid repeating mistakes he had made earlier in the struggle and also to help others avoid those mistakes or sum them up quickly and move on.

One instance where the breadth of his contribution can be seen most clearly is in the historic "Walkin' To New Orleans" march of veterans and survivors of Hurricane Katrina from Mobile

to New Orleans last year on the fourth anniversary of the invasion. The conception of the march, linking the horrors of the war with the horrors of Katrina and concretely working to bring the struggle of Black people in the South closer to the heart of the anti-war movement, that was Dave's. And, with Stan Goff and a handful of others, he saw to the planning and execution of the march as well.

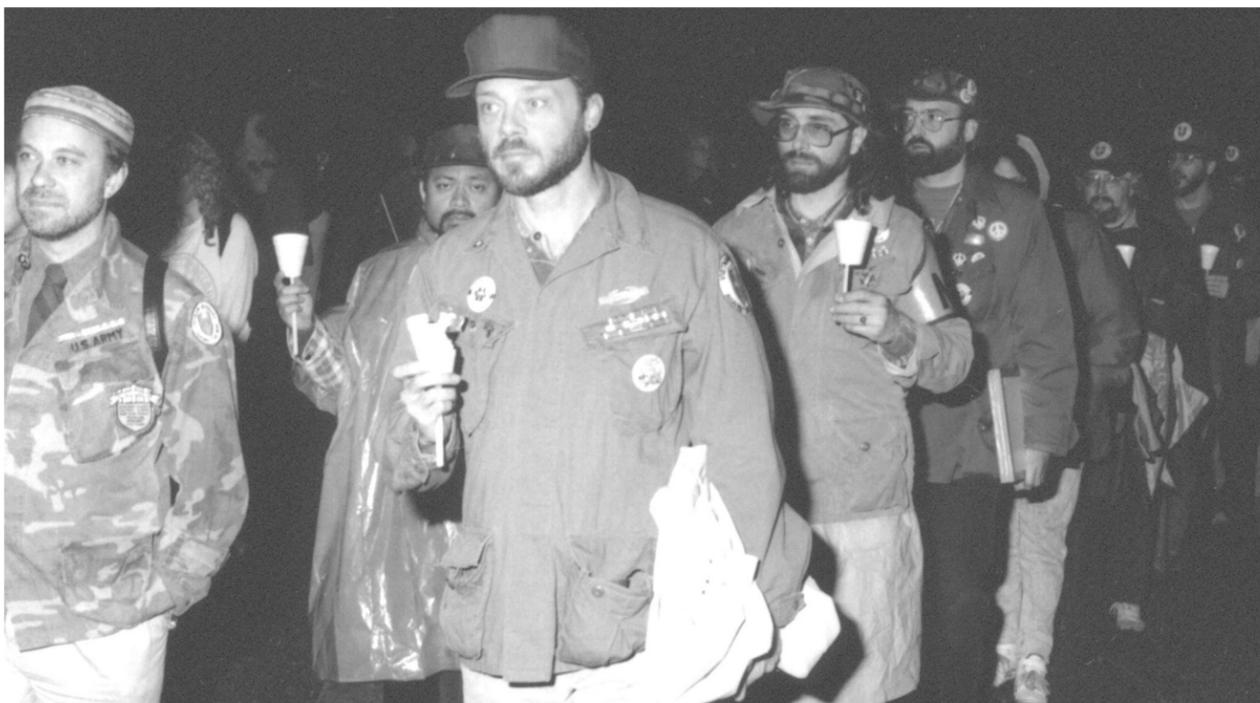
Hell, there's so much more I could say about Dave, now the floodgates are open, about his revolutionary stance until the day he died, of the arrogance of the young Dave and the kindness of the older one, concerning the drinking and the the clay feet, about the music.

But I will close by underlining my basic point: Dave Cline made a substantial difference in the world. He did it by struggling against oppression and militarism; he did it by drawing lessons from earlier battles and by living those lessons, so he, and all who worked with him, could fight better in the new struggles history presented us with.

Call it wisdom. Call it leadership. We have suffered a great loss, and those who feel that loss are just going to have to step up and try to fill the hole.



DENNIS O'NEIL IS A RETIRED POSTAL WORKER AND ACTIVE DUTY RADICAL LIVING IN NEW YORK CITY. HE WORKED CLOSELY WITH DAVE CLINE ON A RANGE OF ANTI-WAR, VETERANS, LABOR AND OTHER PROJECTS STARTING IN THE EARLY '70s. MOST RECENTLY HE AND DAVE HELPED BUILD THE BRING THEM HOME NOW! CAMPAIGN AND THE WALKIN' TO NEW ORLEANS MARCH OF VETERANS AND KATRINA SURVIVORS LAST MARCH.



Dave Cline, Kent State 20th Anniversary, 1990

## VVAW and 40 years

*continued from page 1*

outstanding job.

Friday, our hosts found us a great meal and atmosphere at the Thai Binh Restaurant, up on the north side. Oh well, you can't have everything... (says this old southsider). Beer, and speakers, (and some joints???...just a rumor), oh my! Cameras flashing. The place was packed with the young and the elders. Many activists that have had online friendships for years, finally got a face to face meeting and hugs, and the smiles were everywhere at this meal. Survivors, and warriors for peace, one and all.

Iraq Veterans Against the War members were also in attendance all weekend, and they stole the show on Saturday afternoon with their 6 member panel of speakers. WOW! is all I can say. Each view presented by the IVAW people was so powerful and non-repetitious. I don't think that VVAW has EVER gotten 6 such articulate speakers on one panel. :>) Seriously, these young troops are incredible.

We even managed to do a small street action on Saturday evening, with a few of the hardcore rabble-rousers of VVAW and IVAW, as Lollapalooza let out, and the young streamed by our corner.

I know for a fact that the

appearance of the IVAW panel has inspired some of the VVAW cadre into trying even harder to end this horrific occupation in the Middle East. I heard a few times over the weekend about "passing the torch" to these younger guys, and that is where I differ from some in the organization.

I still feel a strong need to fight on, or rather, a responsibility to fight on, neither leading, nor following the newest group of mind fucked vets that our government has produced. They are my brothers and sisters, and there is no way I will pass the torch to them unless it is during peace time.

We simply must continue to stand side by side and fight with the ENTIRE anti-war movement. We have a year and a half left to save our nation, in my opinion. If Bush and Cheney are allowed to retire into the (bloody) sunset, the USA is DOA, in concept. We can still get the job done.

Sunday found us at the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum, looking at some of the best art I have ever seen, and I've been in almost every major art museum in the world, in my travels. Nowhere can you find such intensified realism and stark surrealism, as can be found here in veterans art. Incredible works,



*Dave Curry at VVAW's 40th Anniversary*

and I only regret that there wasn't a comprehensive book available for purchase with all of that seriously heavy, and beautiful art, in it.

Let's hope that when IVAW has its 40th reunion in 2044, that they are celebrating 35 years of peace, instead of hosting members of the latest anti-war veterans group.

Thanks Chicago...thanks VVAW!

Fight on brothers and sisters, fight on.

Peace Out.



*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 WAS ACTIVE IN THE GI RESISTANCE, AND RE-UPPED IN VVAW IN 2001.*



*The Thai Binh Restaurant - VVAW's 40th Anniversary*



*IVAW panel at VVAW's 40th Anniversary (l-r) Eugene Cherry, Jimmy Massey, Aaron Hughes, Charlie Anderson, Geoffrey Millard and Garrett Reppenhagen (not pictured)*

# We're Still Here, Where and When We Need to Be

JOE MILLER

*I could not even begin this piece without a deep sense of mourning and loss at the passing of two of our comrades, two National Coordinators of VVAW, Bill Davis and Dave Cline. This recollection of my closing remarks at the end of a daylong series of panels at VVAW's 40th anniversary is a salute to both of them and a personal rededication to the work that VVAW needs to do.*

It had been a long day, full of emotion and good times with old and new friends. When I first arrived at Roosevelt University that morning, I was informed that it would be my task to make the closing remarks. Though I enlisted in the Navy in 1961, I have been "drafted" to tasks a number of times since joining VVAW in 1969. What was left to say, at the end of this electric day? So many had already said such powerful and meaningful things on panels and in individual presentations.

Now, the two-hundred plus people in the room were looking forward to a party, to a social gathering, where old friends could just be old friends and new friendships could be solidified. There was lots of movement in the room, as folks were getting a bit antsy. Dave Curry, a member of VVAW's national staff was attempting to introduce me, and all I could hear was Dave going on and on about me being such a nice guy. Barry and others joined in with the "Joe's a nice guy" routine, and I had my opening line.

"So, if I'm such a nice guy,

I should say fuck you all?" That got a laugh, and I managed to get people's attention. I then reminded everyone that this day, August 4, happened to be the 43rd anniversary of the second "attack" on US ships in the Gulf of Tonkin, the big lie that eventually got us more deeply involved in Vietnam. This period is always a little difficult for me each year, since I think about what I could have done, should have done, to blow the whistle on Johnson and McNamara's lie. How many might have been saved if I spoke up? Due to my own background in the Naval Security Group, I knew folks on the USS Maddox, and I knew why they were there. I can only say it was a shock to me, a shock to my belief system --- our generation was raised to accept authority unquestionably, and presidents just don't lie. What was happening here? That is where the questions began for me, and it took sometime for me to figure it out.

It is important for us to be together, veterans of our war, to remember and to rededicate ourselves to fighting against the causes of war. As for our work with Iraq Veterans Against the War, they are us forty years ago. It is our honor to continue to be here for them, to support them.

I reminded everyone that IVAW folks who spoke at their panel earlier in the day carried the seeds of their activism in their own humanity, and VVAW's role was to help them grow, to teach them the good (and the bad) things we



Joe Miller at VVAW's 40th Anniversary

learned by fighting against our own war. We also need to step back and recognize that IVAW has developed its own strategy for working against their war. We need to be there for them and to live up to the promise made by our late comrade Bill Davis that very morning, that "Never again will one generation of American veterans turn its back on another generation of American veterans."

In that light I reminded everyone in the room that we need to take care of ourselves. We have lots of work to do. We have survived much over these last forty years, including government attacks. We even survived various attempts by ultra left cults to use us for their own purposes, whether

they were Trotskyists, Stalinists, Maoists, or even the followers of "little" Bobby Avakian. We may be "old soldiers" (or sailors, or marines, or airmen), but we will not fade away.

Finally, in thanking everyone who came from near and far to join us in this commemoration and rededication, I suggested that we should look forward to meeting in another five years to celebrate the fact that we are finally winning. We could then have a real party!




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JOE MILLER IS A NATIONAL COORDINATOR OF VVAW AND A MEMBER OF VVAW'S C-U CHAPTER.



Barry Romo at VVAW's 40th Anniversary

# Memories of Dave Cline

*The following are excerpts from the Dave Cline Guestbook on the VVAW website at [www.vvaw.org/daveclineguestbook](http://www.vvaw.org/daveclineguestbook)*

## Joseph Miller

### VVAW National Coordinator

I first came to know Dave when I was elected to a National Office position back in 1991. Prior to that, my first Dave Cline "experience" was to witness a powerful speech he gave at Kent State in 1990 during the 20th anniversary commemoration of the murders of students there and at Jackson State. From then on, I could always count on Dave to cut through the crap with his speeches. We served together as National Coordinators of VVAW in recent years, and his clarity and commitment will be missed. To lose two great comrades in the space of a week and a half is a body blow to VVAW. But, as always, we will keep on keepin' on! Bill and Dave would expect nothing less.

## Billy X. Curmano

We've lost another inspirational point man. Words cannot express the admiration I've had for Dave Cline and his long and continuous struggle for peace and justice. I already miss his strong spirit, dedication, cadences, humor and guitar. In my heart, I am comforted in the possibility that there is justice somewhere in this crazy universe. I believe our comrade and brother, Dave, has found peace, tranquility and maybe even some sort of final reward for the sacrifices he's made. By the same token, may the greedy bastards that perpetrate every form of injustice he fought against get their just desserts.

## George McAnanama

I met Dave in 1973 and have considered him a brother veteran, a union brother, a mentor and sage analytical humane human. When I met David I still had my head in my duffle bag and he taught me in a very brief period of time what it meant to be a Winter Soldier. He led by example, though we had issues from time to time. He was and still is my brother. We marched together many times over the last 30 plus years and I always followed his lead and advice. I found him to be one of the most inspiring people I ever met. I thoroughly enjoyed calling cadence with him and then for

him, much of which he personally wrote. "Hey, Hey Uncle Sam, We remember Vietnam." As many know, I had a love hate relationship with the NYC Veterans Day Parade itself and the United War Veterans committee that runs, it but Dave kept pushing me into the breach saying we had to be there because our message was unique. "Bring Them Home NOW!!! And Treat Them Right When They Get Home."

...Tryanny like hell is not easily conquered...

Soldier On DC!

## Dave Kettenhofen

### VVAW National Coordinator

I first met Dave personally over lunch at a Kent State demo in 1990. He had just given one of the most powerful speeches I had ever heard and it brought the house down. He instantly became a hero to me in the veterans anti-war movement. Dave's relentless drive for righteousness should be emulated by us all. I feel privileged and honored to have served with him.

## S. Brian Willson

Dave Cline, along with Clarence Fitch who preceded Dave into the next world, are two of the most profound anti-war grunts I ever met who, in addition, possessed an astute structural understanding of how capitalist war-making society functions, decade after decade. Knowing them from the 1980s, each was always present nearly everywhere, so authentic and unpretentious, in their passionate journeys and struggles toward peace and their absolute disgust of war and the political/economic structures that profit from sending off men and women to kill and die for a lie. Each of these beautiful souls was very instrumental in validating my own shaky recovery from being a typically conditioned, obedient White Male, a journey that first started in a flash moment while witnessing the after effects of an inhabited village that had just been vaporized by napalm in Vinh Long Province in April 1969.

Presente! Presente! Presente!  
Your examples will shine forever!  
Thank you, thank you, so much for your example of walkin' the talk of truth and empowerment.

## Lisandro (Andy) Rivera

Goodby Compañero,  
I'll never forget the day we



*Dave Cline, Thai Binh Restaurant, Chicago 2005*

met in Vieques, Puerto Rico. You came with this bunch of great people: Gene Glazer, Gideon Rosenblum, and Vazquez among others. Your solidarity and constant help and advice will not be forgotten. How can I forget the help you gave to Rolando, one of the victims of the more than 40 years of bombing in Vieques? You took him to the best Doctors in NYC. How can we forget all the meetings where you presented the struggle of the Puerto Ricans against the abusive presence of the US Navy in Vieques? Your voice served as a loudspeaker of our struggle. But the longer I knew you the more you impressed me, your anti-imperialistic positions and the way you presented them, your defense of the veterans, and your devoted search for peace made you an example for all of us. You are a true soldier for peace, and the USA and the world lost a great man and citizen.

You'll live in the struggle.

Peace Bro. Un abrazo

## Jan Barry Crumb

I can still hear Dave's voice:

- calling cadence, Vets for Peace style;

- hoarsely shouting into a bullhorn to a rally crowd, VVAW style;

- nonstop organizing at a meeting, union style;

- and, afterwards, having an intensely personal conversation, old buddy style--

- such an optimistic voice, out of a life hammered by war and its aftermath.

Dave was a great inspiration for me and so many others.

## Michael Gillen

I first met Dave Cline 25 years

ago, at a demonstration against Nicaraguan policy in Washington, DC. That's when I also met Clarence Fitch and others, and first connected--a Johnny-Come-Lately, with the VVAW. Soon after, I started going into schools with Dave and other VVAW members in Manhattan and Brooklyn, New York and elsewhere doing counter-recruitment. The most memorable conversation with Dave was one year when the two of us drove up to Albany, New York to speak on a veterans panel. During that drive was when I first learned of Dave's combat experience in Vietnam. On another, sad occasion, after the funeral ceremony for Brother Clarence Fitch, we stood before the open grave and reflected on the life of Clarence and his own contributions to the cause. I know Dave and Clarence, from the same area and active in the same VVAW chapter, were pretty close. For me, Dave has become, like veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade who never wavered, never backed down, never stopped fighting for peace and justice in their later years, a model for many of us. Another good one has passed on, but not before making a difference and inspiring others to carry on.

## John Zutz

I met Dave in Vietnam - in 1988. We were part of the second "friendship tour" sponsored by VVAW.

As we landed in Hanoi our plane windows overlooked the bomb craters. My heart was pounding and I wondered what I'd gotten myself into this time.

We were staying at the Foreign Ministry guest house

*continued on the next page*



Stan Goff and Dave Cline, Walkin' To New Orleans, 2006

and I was afraid to say anything, worried about listening devices. Dave knew how to overcome. He gathered us in his room and discussed what we were trying to accomplish in Vietnam.

He concluded the meeting by singing "Ho Chi Minh was a deep sea sailor." I think he knew seven verses, and he repeated the refrain over and over, "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh."

**Bob Gronko**

I met Dave Cline at a VVAW meeting a few years ago. I was new and quiet and Dave later encouraged me to speak up and

get more involved. Well I've been doing more of both ever since and will always remember that when a little more courage is needed.

Thank you Dave.

For the inspiration.

For the dedication.

For the determination.

For the perspiration.

For the duration.



Dave Cline, Bill Davis, Bruce Hyland - Chicago, 2006

## A Tribute to Dave Cline by his old friend, Martin Zehr

The union hacks in postal called him a "chronic malcontent;"  
And how right they were.  
Never giving up the fight, never conceding defeat.  
The work he did is our legacy,  
The vision he held our hope.  
A future without him is left missing a link,  
The chains he sought to break are weaker for his work.

Stand fast vets!  
Honor the combatants for justice,  
The malcontents who strive for better,  
March arm in arm  
Fists raised in defiance.  
End the ceaseless slaughters,  
stop the bloody carnages.  
Dave's work is done,  
our work remains.

Dewey Canyon III is the memorial  
That negates all the lies,  
Formed from the anger of GIs  
Never willing to surrender.

Chronic malcontents in their generation,  
Never satisfied by empty lies,  
Organizing for a better world,  
Leaving it with much undone.

The Russian poet, Tyutchev wrote:  
"Blessed is he who visited this world  
In moments of its fateful deeds:  
The highest Gods invited him to come,  
A guest, with them to sit at feast  
And be a witness of their mighty spectacle."

- Martin Zehr



Dave Cline  
VVAW 35th Anniversary  
2002

## Remembering David Cline

"That's no good. This is what I think."  
.. and a strategy would appear  
tailored perfectly, fitting the problem  
grounded solidly  
in the years-deep experience  
of this remarkable man  
who refused ever  
to accept an injustice  
-- or a half-baked idea  
of how to confront it.

"That's no good. This is what I think."  
.. words that could have raised my hackles  
if I hadn't respected  
the thoughtful objectivity  
that characterized perfectly,  
the man, David Cline;  
if I hadn't respected  
the humanity borne of suffering shared

driving him to labor  
in this difficult vineyard  
where the most abundant crop  
is weariness.

David listened, watched closely,  
wary of bullshit,  
challenging us all to think,  
to really know our minds  
before forging a message or  
designing an action.

"Yeah. That'll work." Or "Good idea."  
.. and the clouds of doubt would part,  
actions would form  
our struggles would elevate  
to new heights of significance.

David lead the unleadable;

the authority-phobes,  
the misfits, if you will,  
unwilling to buy lies  
or empty promises of glory  
and gain.

He led us well,  
with heart, with humor,  
with wit and wisdom  
and, most of all, with a keen  
awareness  
of the faults we all live to overcome.

Thank you, David Cline.

- Woody Powell  
September 17, 2007

# VVAW's Legacy

JAN BARRY

"I like your shirt!" a driver at a truck stop outside Erie, Pennsylvania called out in a voice that cracked like a bullwhip. Dark eyes blazing under his trucker's cap, the driver continued staring at the "Vietnam Veterans Against the War" t-shirt my friend was wearing. "I'm a vet too! Got two sons back from Iraq—they're OK, thank God."

In the midst of another bitter war, VVAW's legacy, four decades after its founding, is still actively providing a variety of ways for war veterans to collectively vent their anger and anguish. Some vent by wearing buttons and t-shirts with anti-war messages, such as the VVAW shirt that Stewart Nusbaumer brashly wore into the truck stop. Some vent by applauding those who speak out.

While some vent by diving deeper into drugs and booze or yelling at the TV, others find it healthier to vent by writing blogs on the Internet, emails, letters to editors, poetry, essays, books—and by speaking and interacting at anti-war gatherings.

Catching a ride home with Stewart from VVAW's 40th anniversary celebration in Chicago on August 3-5, my head was a swirl from memorable encounters. As one of the founders of the organization, I was astounded by the vigorous energy level of gray-haired geezers like me pushing retirement age. This was not a group looking to rest on its laurels, but rather aiming to reinvigorate peace activism among students, soldiers and government officials to end the war in Iraq.

All sorts of venting took place, as could be expected when anti-war veterans get together: bear-hugging reunions, emotional speeches, thunderous applause, passionate panel presentations and poetry readings, throat-catching tributes to dead buddies, spontaneous sidewalk displays of anti-war banners and banter with passersby, heated attempts at setting aside bitter political feuds. The venting was interwoven with vigorous networking, nonstop comparing of notes and astonishing flashbacks to our past lives.

A West Point classmate, Bruce Parry, ran into me in a busy hallway and recalled a critical conversation we had in 1964 on the escalating war in Vietnam. We each later left the Army rather than pursue military careers. Bob

McLane, whose Vietnam demons whirled through VVAW rap groups in the early 1970s as we tried to tackle what later was called post-traumatic stress, showed up selling copies of his autobiography, "Stop War America: A Marine's Story" (Corps Productions, 2005).

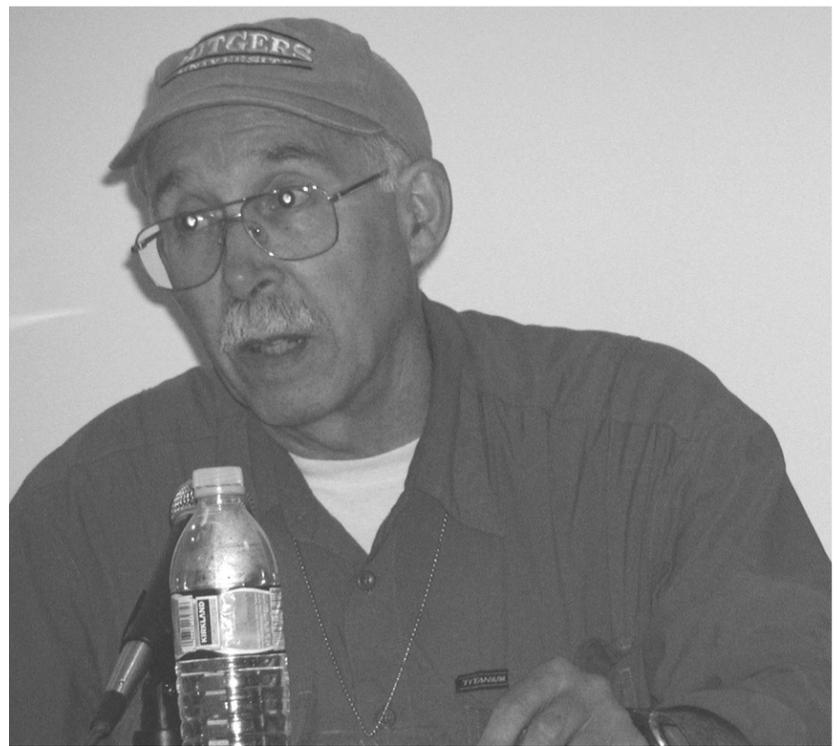
Carl Rogers, who helped launch VVAW in 1967, greeted the gathering with exuberant tales of the group's founding. Al Hubbard—back in the day, VVAW's equivalent of a sergeant major—paid tribute to many who helped revive the organization in 1970-71 in a series of creative peace actions that culminated in the Operation Dewey Canyon III encampment in Washington. Barry Romo, who may hold the record as the longest serving of VVAW's current national coordinators, hosted a Sunday morning tour of the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum, where war memories leapt off the walls.

A highlight of the gathering was a panel of Iraq veterans talking about their transformation from soldiers into peace activists. They thanked VVAW members and alumni for inspiration and assistance in the 2004 formation of the Iraq Veterans Against the War and its continued growth. One young veteran, a haunted-looking medic, said VVAW's legacy of speaking out and working for peace amid the disasters of war had saved his life.

The 200-some reunion participants were also regaled by remembrances in two tribute books—the official one and, typical of VVAW's spirit of dissent, an unofficial one.

"I personally feel that many, if not most of us, myself included, were dealing with undiagnosed PVS (Post Vietnam Syndrome) and that VVAW served as a defacto self-help group where we could talk it out to some degree. Something that the VA and the military had yet to embrace," Jan Ruhman, a Marine vet from California, wrote in the unofficial tribute book compiled by vetspeak.org. "I'm proud of so many things we accomplished together given the overwhelming odds and the power of the opposition that we faced from the US Government at the national, state, county and city level."

Others noted that we were not always successful at helping



Jan Barry at VVAW's 40th Anniversary

one another. "One time a young vet visited our ongoing irregular VVAW weekly meeting in St. Louis. He was discouraged, out of work and maybe strung out on drugs. We learned later that he killed himself shortly after that," Alex Primm, an Army vet from Missouri, wrote. "It was a terrible feeling for all of us. But it only strengthened our resolve and drew us tighter together. We knew the effects of hate and extremism all too well. We ourselves were the only people we could fully trust. No one outside of our group understood our rage at the betrayal of American ideals and useless deaths we had witnessed in Vietnam."

Many arrived at the weekend event at Roosevelt University in downtown Chicago still nursing rage at events during the Vietnam War, mixed with anguish over the war in Iraq. Carl Rogers vividly recalled Chicago police storming through these streets in August 1968 to beat bystanders with batons, as well as anti-war protesters, journalists and supporters of Senator Eugene McCarthy, who was seeking the Democratic Party convention's nomination for president.

In the official VVAW 40th anniversary book, Carl, a former Army chaplain's aide who hailed from Ohio, recalled the April 1971 morning when hundreds of Vietnam vets threw their war medals onto the front steps of the US Capitol in protest of the war that never seemed to end. "The words and emotions that poured out were the most poignant and angry words I had ever heard in

opposition to that dirty stinkin' rotten little war... I walked away from that moment in tears, but never more proud to have been a part of the founding group of brothers who created VVAW."

Frank Toner, a former Catholic altar boy in Middletown, New York, recalled his "complete disillusionment" in the Army in Vietnam before finding and joining VVAW. "We worked, we marched, we leafleted. We spoke the truth and it was heard. We influenced foreign policy, saved lives, and we did it creatively and without violence. All this we did while forming friendships that have lasted until today and will go on lasting. It was better than founding a church...."

"We have seen the positive impact a small group of people can have when they work together to promote peace, brotherhood and sisterhood," Frank added, his insights mirroring the theme of the reunion in Chicago. "Just a few thousand people can wake up the consciousness of a nation and help end a war. We know, we did it..."



JAN BARRY WAS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF VVAW AND A FORMER NATIONAL OFFICER. HE LIVES IN NEW JERSEY AND IS A POET, WRITER AND EDITOR. HE'S AN ARMY VIETNAM VETERAN.

# Honored to Attend the VVAW 40th Anniversary

AL HUBBARD

Seeing and having the opportunity to spend time with three of the founding heroes, Jan Barry, Carl Rogers, Jon Bjornson, was truly the highlight of my weekend. I was immediately transported back to the beginning of my incredible journey with the most dedicated heroes intent on ending the immoral, illegal war in Southeast Asia, and the immoral, illegal denial of civil rights to all the citizens of our country.

I was transported back to the very first time I visited the VVAW National Office, which in fact was a single desk in the offices of the Vietnam Peace Parade Committee. In that office that day, I found myself in the presence of the real energy of the anti-war movement. Bella Abzug, Cora Weiss, Flo Kennedy, Dave Dellinger, several others and most importantly, Madelyn Moore.

It was Madelyn who welcomed me and introduced me to the others. It was Madelyn who showed me where the VVAW desk was situated. It was Madelyn who informed me that Jan and a few other vets' were probably at a demonstration the War Resisters League was sponsoring in the Wall Street area. I thanked her and told her I would come back some other time.

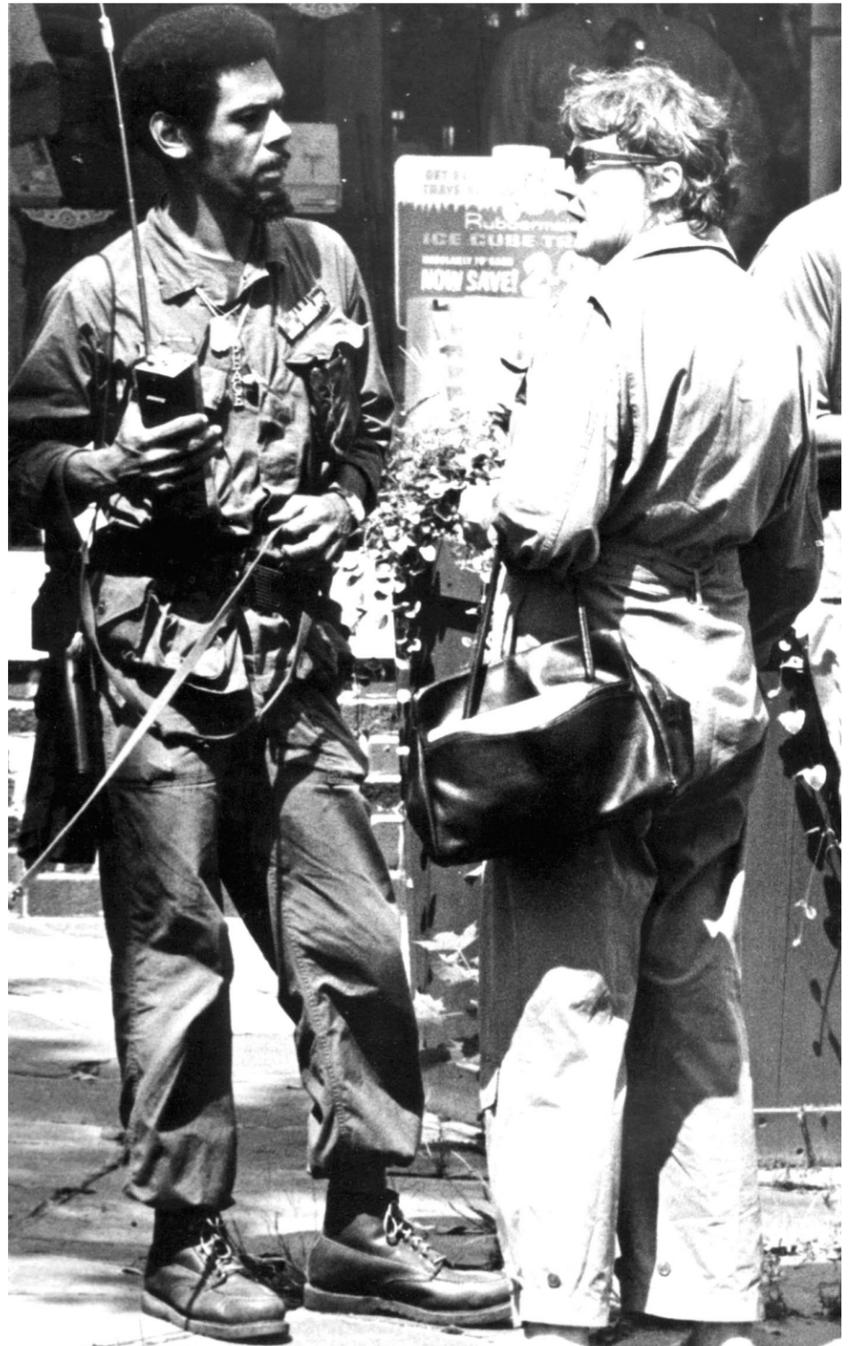
The next day I returned and was once again greeted by Madelyn. After wandering around the office chatting with various people and being overwhelmed by the discussions and exchange of ideas, I once again found myself gravitating towards Madelyn. I

asked her if the Vets were coming in sometime that day? She said they would probably be around at some point, then she said that desk should never be empty! I went over to the desk, hesitated for a moment, sat down and told her it would never be empty again. Madelyn looked into me as only Madelyn could and said if you mean that I'll sit with you, my son Scott was a platoon leader in Vietnam, let's see what we can do.

While the founders were my heroes, Madelyn Moore was my inspiration, and from that day forward the Mother of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. I tell you this because with all the respect and admiration I have for all those who kept VVAW alive and relevant, particularly Barry Romo, the Chicago staff, national coordinators and the entire active membership, it is my sincere belief that the 40th Anniversary of VVAW was possible as a result of the vision of the founders and the Motherhood of the grandest lady I've ever known, Madelyn Moore.

I will always be grateful for the opportunity afforded me to spend a weekend with the finest Americans I have had the honor to consider my brothers and sisters.

In closing I would like to express my sincere respect to the Iraq Veterans Against the War and to let them know that our country is still worth saving. VVAW was hugely effective in it's efforts to end the Vietnam War. I sincerely believe you have the opportunity and the responsibility to see to it



Al Hubbard and Madelyn Moore during Operation RAW, 1970  
(photo by Tony Velez)

that there will never be another wall as large as ours.

Madelyn Moore passed away on the morning of Friday, Oct 5, 2007. Anyone wishing to share your thoughts and memories of this monumental lady through

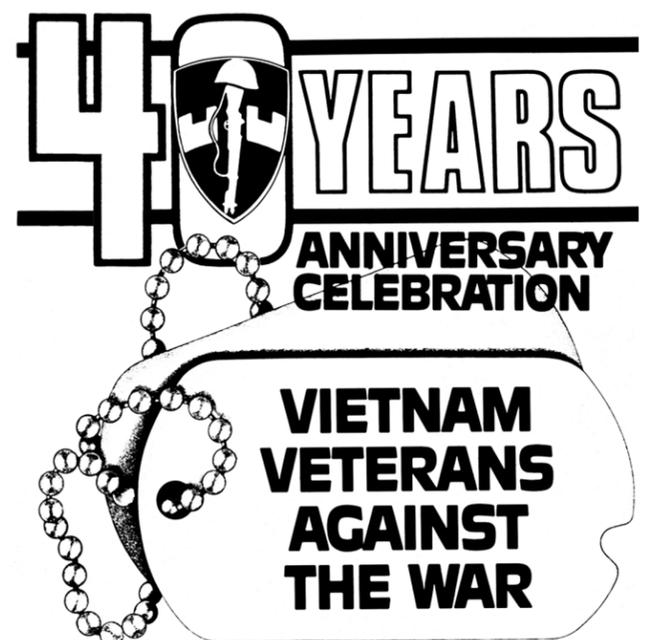
participating in an electronic memorial can contact Al Hubbard at [alhubbard1@comcast.net](mailto:alhubbard1@comcast.net).



AL HUBBARD WAS THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY AND A LEADER IN THE EARLY YEARS OF VVAW.



Al Hubbard at VVAW's 40th Anniversary



# After Action Report: VVAW's 40th Anniversary

WILLIE HAGER

Flyin' in Friday am. Spoken in the vernacular of The Day: What a trip!

The week following the 40th anniversary reunion was like a free fall through time: faces, flashes, mundane daily reality -- a venture into the surrealistic world of veterans' political activism and a world where even the most subtle nuances can carry or lose the day -- turned out to be more of what they call these days an experience in "closure" for me. Closure, at least, in the world of veterans' activism; a world I have been privileged to have had some small part in creating and shaping over the past forty years. A world where the adrenaline flowed freely and political agendas clashed and merged into unity of purpose against overwhelming odds.

But, that was yesterday and yesterday's gone.

Strange. I had expected to become fired up from sharing air with so many movers and shakers, not all peaceful feelin' like this. After all, next to the Objectives of VVAW and personal politics, force of personality was one of our most powerful resources back in The Day. With so many folks with similar histories, experiences and lifestyles gathered in one location, I imagined that I would just be totally overwhelmed.

This thinking was predicated on my own epiphanies born of the VVAW experience and the sharing of the reality of it with these same personalities so many years ago. Thinking predicated on images of a time when there truly was revolution in the air. I expected that somehow there would actually be uncomfortable, intense sideline sessions over long-past, but no longer relevant political disputes. I expected that in this historically volatile group, long-smoldering disagreements would flare, hopefully that would be emotionally patched up with hugs filled with political maturity, some tears, and a heartfelt warmth for all who had stood, and apparently were still standing. This, despite the coldness of the political winter that has once again fallen across our great land. So much for expectations!

Instead, I found myself experiencing an inner peace that has been lacking for many years. Instead of flare-ups and hugs, there were just lots of hugs, no political

rhetoric and nary a flare-up at least that I was witness to. More of a "tales-around the-campfire" kind of gathering, rather than an opportunity to air long repressed disagreements, I am pleased to report. All of the apprehension and tension fell away that first night at the Thai Binh Vietnamese restaurant on Argyle on Chicago's North side. The times have indeed changed! By the time we arrived at Thai Binh, there were only a few coveted '33's left for consumption. The crowd spilled out onto the sidewalk from overcrowding inside.

I arrived at the restaurant with Russ Scheidler, a Vet Speaker and the man behind the music of *Camo & Lace*, his wife Linda Crouch, and a new personal friend, vet Doug Drews. Doug is a recent, past president of Vets For Peace in the Twin Cities and the reader of Steve Hassna's words on *Camo & Lace*. These folks are all Diane's very close friends from the recording of *Camo* in 2005. We were there to not only "grip and grin" during the hospitality hours on Friday night, but to distribute our VetSpeak "unofficial" VVAW 40th commemoration publication that we had created just for the occasion. I use the term "we" loosely. Truth is, Diane was the soul of this project, putting in an incredible number of hours, and mustering resources from the most unbelievable, and greatly appreciated sources and support folks. Had it not been for all of her effort and creativity, our brave little band would probably have not made it to the Windy City to share in this historical occasion.

So, while Russ, Linda and Doug mixed it up with the crowd on the sidewalk, I squeezed my way inside to request clearance to distribute our "unofficial" publication. The place was SRO and rockin' out! I was able to easily find Barry Romo just inside the door and he was having a large time! Barry and I go back to our early VVAW days in Southern California when he was a major player in the San Bernardino Chapter. Back then we referred to that chapter as the Inland Empire. I was actively involved elsewhere in Southern California, mostly with the Orange County, LA and the CSUN (Cal State Northridge) chapters we liked to call the South Coast Surfers Empire. I



Marty Webster and Willie Hager at VVAW's 40th Anniversary

came to personally know Barry through our VVAW organizational efforts around the Gary Lawton trials. VVAW worked closely with the "Free Gary Lawton" community group headed up by Gary's wife, Chukia, a most impressive and incredible woman and consummate grassroots community organizer.

Until that very electric moment at the Thai Binh, Barry and I hadn't seen one another since back in The Day. To say that we once had some strong political perspective differences would be an understatement. But when we met again and hugged each other these thirty years later, I knew that I was reuniting with, and hugging to my heart, a Brother -- political perspectives be damned. A Brother who had remained in the fight, keeping the banner ever present and keeping the Principles of the VVAW Objectives alive and well for the major part of all of our lives. Barry has not only subscribed to the Principles and Objectives, from where I'm sittin', he lived them. And that works, for me.

A toast to you Barry, just for still bein' there: Together Then... Together Again... What Soul! A special thanks to you for your help with sharing our commemorative tribute publication and allowing us to make it available at the registration table.

Meanwhile, all around us, period music from The Day wafted in from somewhere unknown. The Thai Binh was alive and roaring with the cacophony of

other long overdue, one-on-one reunions -- not to mention the tales-around-the-campfire style of VVAW history, emanating as outpourings of an emotionally charged Open-Mic Night setting. To my eyes, everyone there was as cool, beautiful and as slightly menacing as they were back in the day. To my ears, words were waking history and refreshing long fogged memories. My Heart? My Heart told me that I really was surrounded by family. It's corny, I know, but that Vietnamese restaurant had a lot of love in it that night!

## A Full Next Day

Due to an over abundance of the internationally oriented brew at the Thai Binh festivities (followed closely by an iced-down trash can full of Bud long-necks back at my room), Russ pickin' tunes appropriate to the occasion and getting to better know my new friend Doug Drews, we fell out a bit late. So, by the time that we managed to arrive at the Roosevelt University meeting hall on Saturday morning for all the meetings and panels, things were well underway and the room was packed. We saw not only all those who had packed the Thai Binh's "Welcome to the VVAW 40th" rally the night before crowding the room, but a bunch more folks as well! I was knocked out by the number of people filling up that

*continued on next page*

## After Action Report

*continued from previous page*

large hall that morning. It was all just a little surreal, to me; just the way I've always liked it!

As we listened to the presentations of the opening panel (which consisted of a number of folks that I personally knew back in The Day but hadn't seen for over thirty years), the whole room was a kaleidoscope of shifting realities. Faces swirling around in my mind soon became recognizable after adjusting to the wear and tear of the years. Faces, at first a little hazy, then crystal clear as they were when I first encountered them back when revolution truly was in the air. And together, as an organization, we led the fray to bring to an end US involvement in SE Asia and peace for its people, ousting in most-deserved disgrace, the war criminal and political tyrant Nixon and his gang of thugs.

### **Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win!**

As the mental haze lifted, the words being spoken stirred up an incredible array of imagery reminding me of the applied power of those in the room. I couldn't help but think of all those who didn't make it to Chicago, through either attrition or choice. I wish that they all had been there. I wish that they could feel the validation that was beginning to put a very warm slant on the unfolding events. I wish that they could feel what I felt, and experience some of that "closure" that I mentioned. I wish that they could have heard the words that I heard. And with these words I write here, I wish to tell them how much we all missed them sharing this validation with us.

What I believed to be true when we were young, was totally reinforced by sharing this incredible experience with these incredible people. At our peak, VVAW was documented to have about 8,500 "active" VVAW members. In such a small group, far fewer than that imagined by the American public or the Nixon administration (but mightily feared by the oppressors for its ability to win hearts and minds), it is easy to realize why everyone knew everyone, then and now.

Every member from those days has a story to tell. Those stories are our history. That spirit permeated the entire proceedings in Chicago. It was the grassroots

membership that drove VVAW in The Day. And it was the grassroots membership that were given tribute in Chicago. To me, this is a testament of our effectiveness as an organization at the grassroots level, and our principled ability to present a unified front around a predetermined set of Objectives or Demands. This, in spite of the amazing number of political perspectives of the membership in the face of overwhelming odds. Those of us who made it to Chicago were simply living proof of this, gathered once again in one spot for one unified purpose. We comprised, as it were, a living monument to the validity of the principles of Unity, Struggle, Victory!

### **The Future of VVAW: Be There for IVAW**

Of course, being the occasion it was, there was discussion about the future of VVAW. With the impressive representation of the Iraq Veterans Against the War at the meeting, the decision was voiced all day by all in attendance: Be There For Them. IVAW put on a dynamite panel. They seemed to have a handle on where they want to go and how they want to get there. It all seemed clear to me: Continue to rally around the Objectives; understand how you fit in with all that history from our time: and share our experiences and resources with a new generation of anti-war veterans fresh from battle; an opportunity that was never there for us.

Early on, it became clear that their battles on the home front were becoming increasingly similar to ours. The Truth was bubbling to the surface, reminding the world that we were right in the Post-Vietnam Syndrome (PVS/PTSD) days: The government's version of PTSD was a whitewash diagnosis that put the loss of the war on the backs of the veterans who fought in it. Walter Reed is nothing new, not by a long shot! I think that the younger vets left our event convinced that we had their back -- and would as long as we draw breath.

Those young warriors brought out the old spirit, alright. Somewhere toward the evening, Doug Drews and a few others itching for action commandeered the dais banner and took it to the

streets. All that talking all day inspired an impromptu anti-war rally out on Michigan Avenue in front of the Roosevelt University. The turn out was great! We stood right across the street from the park where the Lollapalooza was being held, so we had lot's of exposure due to the ebbing and flowing of the concert crowd, mixed in with regular Saturday evening traffic in Chicago.

After dinner in the meeting hall, the music began. Anna Stange played music with some of the members. Russ and Diane Wood sang a couple of tunes from *Camo & Lace*. Russ continued with some of his original songs and some old labor songs like Solidarity Forever. He also sang a few Celtic tunes that he plays under the nomer, Hugin The Bard, which inspired some dancing in the audience. There was even a lilting version of Amazing Grace played on the bagpipes by the daughter of one of the members. And a little performance art done on guitar by cartoonist Billy X. Curmano.

But then, all too soon, the last dances were danced and it was Last Call. It was time to call it a day. And what a day it had been! Old friendships rekindled, lifelong political commitments renewed, love aged like fine wine flowing the whole time and most importantly, the torch passed on to a new generation of anti-war warriors. It don't get no better than that! Slowly, the lights dimmed, the crowd thinned, and the last of the musicians -- a little drunk with beer, history and emotion -- took their last turns trying to make the night last a little longer. And then, it was over. I swear that as I left the building, I heard people already talking about the 50th! What Soul!

### **The Last Day**

Sadly, on Sunday, our brave little band from Minnesota, Wisconsin and Florida were out of gas from all of that emotion, reverie and -- old age. I extend our apologies to all for our having missed that last important gathering, a brunch at the Vietnam Veteran's Museum. (We'll try and do better at the 50th.) In spite of all that I have written here, I have to admit I was glad to finally clear O'Hare for Florida after a long night in the airport and a 24-hour layover due to bad weather. But all that time in transit allowed me to ponder some of the things I learned on this most memorable trip: Real friendship will endure the tests of time, politics, and events. VVAW was and is the real deal and has remained true to the original Objectives. All the folks who were in Chicago for the 40th are very real (vernacular of The Day) people, and are an important part of America's history. And it is imperative that all of us continue to make our powerful history known as far and wide as we can.

It is imperative that all of us continue to make that powerful history known far and wide, as there is a whole new generation of warriors seeking answers...and those answers are in our history.

Semper Fi!



*WILLIE HAGER WAS VVAW REGIONAL COORDINATOR FOR CALIFORNIA & NEVADA 1972-1974. HE IS CURRENTLY THE ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR AND CONTRIBUTING EDITOR OF WWW.VETSPEAK.ORG. HE IS A PROUD MEMBER OF VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR AND JUST RENEWED OFFICIAL MEMBERSHIP AT THE 40TH...BUT REALLY HAD NEVER LEFT.*



*Annie Bailey, Hannah Frisch and Kathleen Taylor at VVAW's 40th Anniversary*

# Well, What Are We Still Fighting For?

HORACE COLEMAN

Forty years ago this year, a group of Vietnam veterans who'd met each other at anti-war rallies, marches and demonstrations started a group. There were fewer of them then you have digits on two hands.

They wanted to end a war. They wanted to dethrone the politicians and fire the bureaucrats who'd started and continued it. They wanted to change the mindset of the people who supported it, those who had fought in it and those who would be sent to fight it.

Getting the VA to provide better treatment for people affected by Agent Orange, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, the usual physical ravages of war and improving conditions that existed in too many VA hospitals was also a priority.

Forty years, as human things go, is a long time. Four times as long as the Vietnam War lasted. Ten presidential terms. Many marriages, bands and companies don't last that long. When VVAW celebrated its 40th anniversary more than a milestone was reached.

More time than a generation has passed. Styles, economics, politics, different national concerns as well as new nations—and new wars—have come about.

No longer is this "the land of the free and the home of the brave." It never really was. That statement was just jingoistic and chauvinistic trash talk set to music.

Certainly there are brave and free people here. But an entire nation of them? We're the land of the somewhat free where

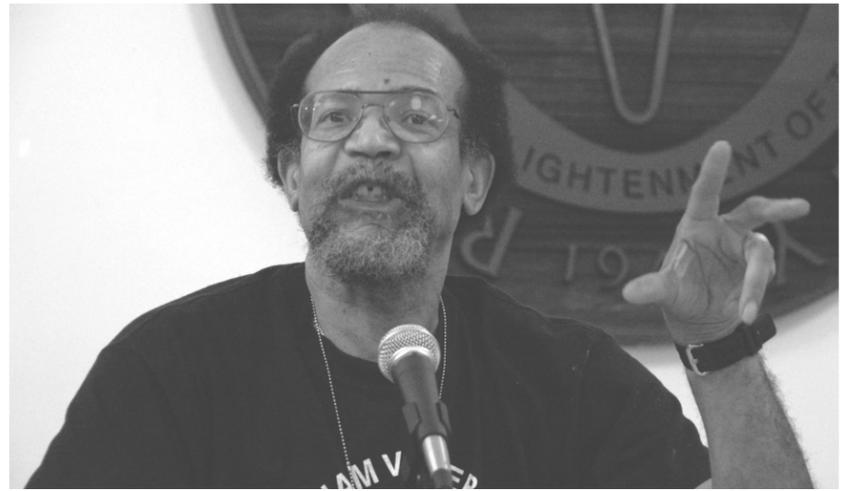
a minority of the world's brave live. War wimps, not all of them politicians, run and put on the show that an audience of mostly armchair patriots watch.

It's been that way since the Revolutionary War. There were Tories, people who were for whoever was in the area with force at the time and the basically indifferent everywhere.

There VVAW was in Chicago—more wear and less hair for some, varying health ailments for others—people who hadn't seen each other for years or never met but might have exchanged e-mail or phone calls. Those who were always up for a demonstration or a march or grunt work. The spirit was as strong as ever and the flesh was still willing.

There were those who counseled vets about VA issues or psychological difficulties or helped active duty service members (or a relative seeking help for them). Those who visited and spoke at high schools, colleges and churches. Or, provided literature, showed movies, took pictures, participated in debates, wrote articles or letters-to-the-editor, maintained and edited web sites. Those who organized and participated in stand downs. Those who did some or all of that—and more.

Founding members—like Jan Barry—and living legends like Al Hubbard and Bob McLane were present. Work horses like Jeff Machota were there. Willie Hager showed up with arm loads of a well put together tribute booklet that Diane Ford Wood edited and



Horace Coleman at VVAW's 40th Anniversary

she and Gerald Nicosia funded. Many vets wrote remembrances and shout-outs for it. W.D. Ehrhart, poet/writer, teacher, and anthologist read at a panel. VVAW stalwarts Marty Webster, Ann Hirschman and Ann Bailey were on a panel.

The booklet that VVAW put together for the 40th anniversary was crammed with historic photos, reproductions of newspaper stories, ads and flyers, prose pieces and poems by vets about key events, experiences and issues that happened during VVAW's existence.

The last panel of the 40th anniversary celebration consisted of Iraq veterans, most of them members of IVAW (Iraq Veterans Against the War), and was chaired by Aaron Hughes (president of Chicago's IVAW chapter). Being last on the program was proper. It made everything else an opening act.

They're veterans of another dubious war, more ignored than Nam vets because there's no draft now. Civilian chicken hawks preen and squawk as loudly as

politician chicken hawks about the need to protect America. Which doesn't require their precious participation. Veterans are still saddled with PTSD the Army too often attributes to "prior existing conditions," inadequate VA service, extended—and repeated—tours in the War Zone, new war related illnesses and diseases. The public's still primarily indifferent or thinks disapproval alone is enough to stop this stubborn stampede.

The Decider has decreed that 62 is "young" so VVAW will be around for awhile.

During the last visit I made to a high school, I said "I'm opposed to stupid wars." That's the essence of VVAW. That and changing the poor treatment given war veterans by the country they serve. Troops can't be the guard dogs that bite any time fools with bad judgment say "Sic 'em!"

VVAW still stands, "fighting for veterans, peace and justice," honoring the warriors but not the bad wars. ☺

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

## It Is Never Too Late To Get Involved

MIKE KERBER

Upon hearing of the 40th anniversary of the VVAW, I thought I would go and see what they are doing. Since the start of the Iraq war, I have been looking for ways to be more politically active.

Like many Vietnam vets, I was drafted and went because I felt some loyalty to my country, at least enough to not go to Canada. I figured our leaders would not send us off to fight a war if it was not necessary. After two weeks in Vietnam, I realized we did not belong there and we were doing more harm than good to these gentle people. My tour was spent in the very northern part of South

Vietnam from Camp Evans in the east to the Ashau Valley in the west with a 101st artillery unit.

When I returned all I wanted to do was forget Vietnam and get on with my life. Watching the VVAW protest on TV stirred emotions about how bad the war was and that it was great to see someone speaking up. However, I did nothing. I was "too busy" getting on with life. This guilt has always been with me.

Once I learned that a group of vets were going to ride bicycles from Chicago to St. Louis after the Chicago convention, I knew I had to go to Chicago to the convention and be part of the ride.

Lane Anderson was heading up the ride. The weather was going to be in the 90's on the week of his ride so he did not have many join him. Roland James had traveled from California to join the ride and end up in St. Louis for the Veterans For Peace convention. He and I joined Lane for part of the ride.

We were able to get Lane and Roland on my local NPR station in Bloomington and there were two articles in our local paper thanks to an anti-war reporter I know. They got the message across to the public about how this war is to protect our oil sources and that if we all conserve, we would not need to go to war.

I may be 40 years late, but it sure feels good to be protesting this war. I owe a debt of gratitude to those that sacrificed so much in the late 60's and early 70's protesting the war and working for the rights of veterans.



*MIKE KERBER WAS DRAFTED IN 1968 AND SPENT 10 MONTHS IN VIETNAM IN 1969 AND 1970. HE WAS WITH THE 101ST IN I CORPS IN THE ARTILLERY. HE LIVES IN BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS AND WORKS AS A COMMODITY BROKER. LOCALLY HE IS ACTIVE WITH THE BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL CITIZENS FOR PEACE.*

## Coaching Winter Track in Time of War

The boys are running "suicides"  
on the football field today:  
ten-yard increments out to the fifty  
and back again, push-ups in between.  
It's thirty degrees, but they sweat  
like it's summer in Baghdad,  
curse like soldiers, swear to God  
they'll see you burn in Hell.

You could fall in love with boys  
like these: so earnest, so eager, so  
ready to do whatever you ask, so  
full of themselves and the world.

How do you tell them it's not that simple?  
How do you tell them: question it all.  
Question everything. Even a coach.  
Even a president. How do you tell them:  
ask the young dead soldiers coming home  
each night in aluminum boxes  
none of us is allowed to see,  
an army of shades.

You tell the boys "good work" and call it a day,  
stand alone in fading light while  
memory's phantoms circle the track  
like weary athletes running a race  
without a finish line.

- W. D. Ehrhart



Bill Ehrhart at VVAW's 40th Anniversary

## Hey Hey Uncle Sam...

BY MARTY WEBSTER

Memory is one of humanity's supreme endowments. Each of us acts today, and hopes for tomorrow, in the light of past experiences that have been woven into a life-story. When we want to know someone else, we ask that person to tell us something of the story of his or her life, for in this way personal identity is disclosed. To be a self is to have a personal history. This is what defines one's uniqueness.

In a larger sense this is true of human communities, especially those in which people are bound together primarily by shared experiences rather than natural factors. In terms of today's insanities, our national self-consciousness must find expression in the remembrance of events that the Vietnam veteran has lived through, and the events that have given him a unique sense of identity and destiny. If, for instance, a visitor from outer space were to drop down on American soil and ask why this country is a United States rather than a mixed multitude, citizens would probably try to explain what it means to be an

American by narrating a history: the dramatic epic of the migration of the Pilgrims to the New World, the Revolutionary War and the Declaration of Independence, the Civil War, the conquest of the frontier. But how would the average citizen explain and justify the recent events that have thrust this nation into the center of the world arena? To be an American is to share a particular history, whose events are retold and relived from generation to generation. By the same token, this is true of the Vietnam veteran.

The most distinctive feature of VVAW is their sense of tradition and legacy. In many respects, the Vietnam veteran has always been diverse—in politics, in culture, and in racial characteristics. But the Vietnam veteran has a unique memory that reaches back through a long chain of tradition to the nightmares of southeast Asia, events that formed them as people with a sense of identity and a legacy that must never be silenced.

Whenever the National Anthem is played, whenever the Pledge of Allegiance is recited,

whenever parents discuss with their children the meanings of Memorial Day, or when Taps is sounded or Amazing Grace played at a military funeral or on Veteran's Day this memory must be kept alive.

Indeed, if historical memory were erased, our country would soon dissolve. VVAW is a vital part of a distinctive community with a long memory that reaches back through the years to the crucial events of the Vietnam war. In our hearts is an indelible record and witness. To be sure, this remembrance must focus especially on the future.

The history of the Vietnam experience may be expressed in many ways, but in the last analysis there is no substitute for retelling what the Vietnam veteran considers "the story of our life"—that is, the dramatic history to which society must bear witness.

The war in Iraq has breathed new life into the oldest and proudest Vietnam veteran's organization. Our membership is growing at a rapid rate, and the majority of our new members are Vietnam

in-country combat veterans. They say they are looking for that unique bond that only exists between Vietnam veterans. A bond that expresses itself in the fact that we have been there, done that, and the insanity must stop.

Our recorded story must be boldly understood in relation to the present conflict. VVAW must continue to remind the world that all legacies come with a price, and that price must give meaning to all in the face of such loss and grief. VVAW must continue to exist as a unique entity. The purity of our message must be maintained. As we have in the past, VVAW must once again stand shoulder to shoulder as one impregnable unit to help banish the evil that has overtaken our land.

There can be no honor in what we carry deep inside us, unless it reminds us that we have done something that has made a difference.

Hey, Hey Uncle Sam, We remember Vietnam.



MARTY WEBSTER IS A VVAW  
NATIONAL COORDINATOR.

# Here We Are

HORACE COLEMAN

To have existed, worked and struggled so long and so well for 40 years is no accident or miracle. People labored hard, sweated, persevered.

I salute you brothers and sisters, civilians, relatives, Nam vets, Vietnam era vets or veterans of other wars. Meeting legendary VVAWers was great. Seeing folk I hadn't seen in years was a treat. Meeting new members and those I'd only exchanged e-mails or phone calls with was good.

The National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum was rewarding. You could have just stood in the Museum's foyer. Above your head was what first looked like a metallic chandelier without lights. Then you heard the soft tickling of metal touching metal, saw the small chains and recognized dog tags. Thousands of them, representing Nam KIAs.

To your right was a mural of a heart monitor reading. At one end were the words "All gave some." At the mural's other end was a flat line and "Some gave all."

On the opposite wall was a poem attributed to Deng-Ming Dao, a Taoist monk who lived centuries before Christ:

If you hold a real weapon in your hand,  
 you will feel its character strongly.  
 It begs to be used. It is fearsome.  
 Its only purpose is death,  
 and its power is not just in the material  
 from which it is made,  
 but also from the intention of its maker.  
 It is regrettable that weapons must be used,  
 but occasionally, survival demands it.  
 The wise go forth with weapons  
 only as a last resort.  
 They never rejoice in the skill of weapons,  
 nor do they glorify war.  
 When death, pain and destruction are visited  
 upon what you hold to be most sacred,  
 the spiritual price is devastating.  
 What hurts more than one's own suffering  
 is bearing witness to the suffering of others.  
 The regret of seeing  
 human beings at their worst  
 and sheer pain of not  
 being able to help the victims  
 can never be redeemed.  
 If you go personally to war,  
 you cross the line yourself.  
 You sacrifice ideals for survival  
 and fury of killing.  
 That alters you forever.  
 That is why no one rushes to be a soldier.  
 Think before you want to change  
 so unalterably  
 The stakes are not merely one's life,  
 but one's very own humanity.

What more did you need to see? There were good things inside too, like photographs of troops in Iraq taken by troops.

This may be the land of the (relatively) free but it's the home of the mostly not too brave. Honor, and aid, the warrior—not the war wimps who waste lives, bodies and minds in wars that aren't worth a draft. How people who cry for victory would cry if they were sent to a combat zone?

The same ol' beat goes on for today's warriors. PTSD still troubles vets; another generation faces the VA/military runaround. Never before have so many taken so much from so few.

The eulogies and remembrances Barry Romo and others uttered put flesh on bones. Biographies, deeds done and recollections made the VVAW departed breathe again. Maude DeVictor, among others, was there in spirit. She was a VA benefits counselor who connected Agent Orange exposure to veterans' cancers and to birth defects in their children. The VA forced her into resigning after she had submitted papers documenting her findings.

Jan Barry wrote the opening essay in the VVAW 40th anniversary book. "How VVAW Began"—"I was mad as hell and nobody would listen." Barry edited *Peace Is Our Profession*. At the time it appeared, almost every thing about Vietnam was written by a member of "the literary establishment." Barry and W.D. Ehrhart co-edited the book *Demilitarized Zones*. Author of several books of poetry and memoirs, Ehrhart also edited the anthology *Carrying the Darkness*.

Romo's essay, "A Struggle Continues: VVAW Turns 40," begins "An empire makes a wasteland and calls it peace...and the struggle continues."

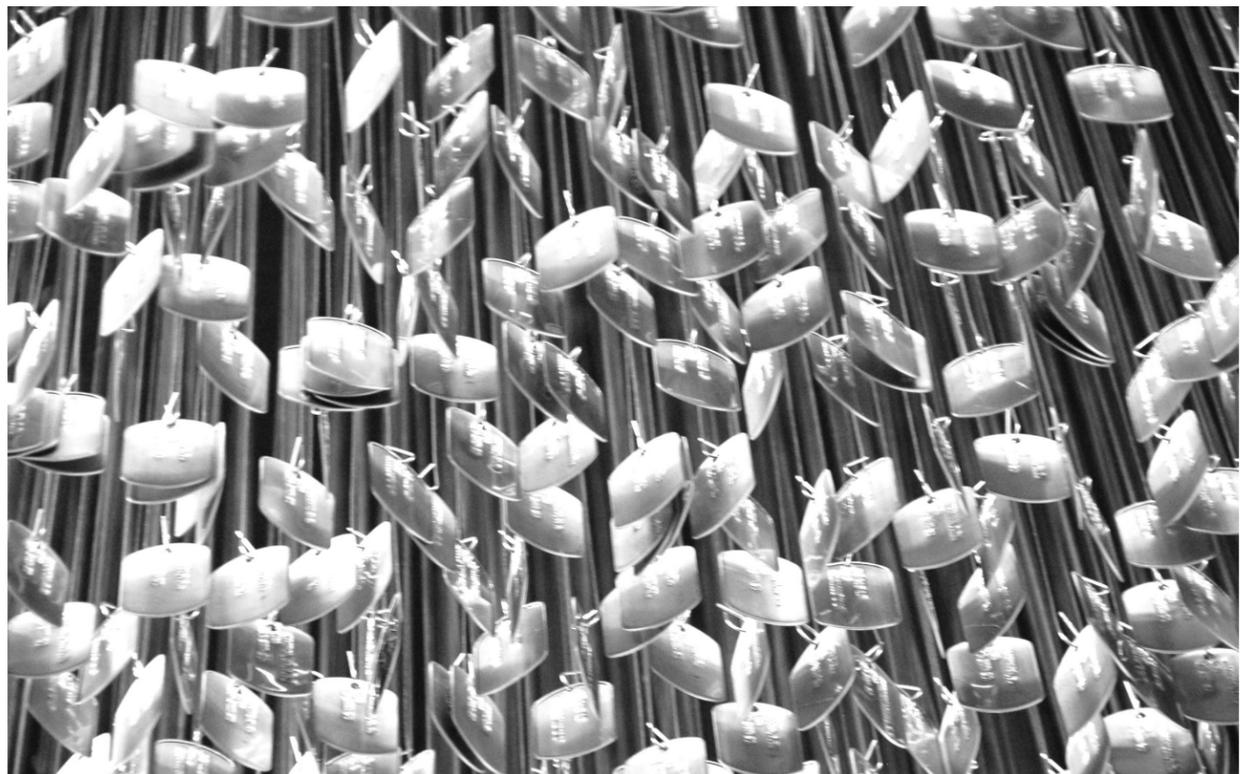
My son, a veteran of Uncle Sam's Middle Eastern adventure, wrote this while deployed:

## DARK DAYS

When you see the writing on the wall and you choose to forget what you have read,  
 Dark days are ahead.  
 When the world around you becomes unpleasant and you just turn your head,  
 Dark days are ahead.  
 When you know what must be done but do nothing instead,  
 Dark days are ahead.  
 When there is no denying the harsh truth and you must face what you fear,  
 Dark days are here.

- Drake Coleman

A luta continua (the struggle continues). And a good time was had by all.



# Why I Fight

TOM BAXTER

Now at the fourth anniversary of the proclamation of "Mission Accomplished" and the "end of major combat operations" of "Operation Iraq Liberation," I have been standing on Thursdays and Sundays in front of Florida's Old Capitol with my anti-war signs for almost six years in the "Eternal Peace Vigil." People have asked, "Why?" Some of the reasons are the lives and deaths of Dwight H. Johnson, David Funchess and Jeffrey Lucey.

Three brave men. Three men who believed our government's lies. Three dead men. Killed In Action in a combat zone. Three men whose names will never be engraved on a war memorial's marble wall because the mortal wounds they bore were not visible. Dwight, AKA Skip, a few months younger than I, was born in Detroit and raised in the projects by a single mother. A good soldier, a draftee, made E-5 on his first enlistment as a tank driver. A month after I arrived in Vietnam and a few miles North of my base, Dwight, trying to catch up with his platoon, came upon them being destroyed by an enemy battalion. He stopped the battalion. When reinforcements arrived, they took him off the battlefield pumped full of morphine in a straitjacket. A few days later, he was on the streets of Detroit, wandering jobless, teased because he missed TET. Months later, an MP asked him if he had been arrested since he got out. He said no. Then the MP said come to DC and we will give you a Medal

of Honor. He reenlisted, his first job out of the service. Got married. Used as a recruiter and public relations flack, he tired, started acting out. Wife in the hospital. Home and car being foreclosed. Walked into a liquor store, pulled a gun. Popped some caps, missed every time. Shot four times. Died on the table. His mother said, "Sometimes I wonder if Skip tired of this life and needed someone else to pull the trigger." His wife received a raise in her pension as he was not conscious of his actions. I shook Charlie Litkey's hand that shook Dwight's. I might have met Johnson in Vietnam. Guys from his company came into my compound to pick up trucks and parts. We both drove the hairpin curve in the An Khe pass. One degree of separation.

David Funchess, also a few months younger than I, a Marine, I never would have met him in Vietnam. I might have met him in Jacksonville where we both grew up in Jim Crow, Florida. I did meet some black guys working construction at the shipyards. Young gofers I had more in common with than the mechanics. His stepfather was a vicious and mean bastard. David came back from Vietnam with a Purple Heart, scars from an IED, PTSD and a habit. Later he got a dishonorable discharge, i.e., no VA benefits. Twitchy, he slept in foxholes under his mother's house, later in cars. I asked politically correct friends and they said I could call David, "nuts." You

would not let your daughter go out with him. Ted Bundy would be OK. But not David.

David also was involved in a liquor store robbery, except he killed two folks. Bad luck for David, PTSD had not been legally discovered. Since it was not mentioned in trial, it could not be used in appeal. So, David died in "Old Smokey," the same place as Ted Bundy, becoming the first of many Vietnam veterans judicially murdered in the United States. I worked on appeals for his clemency and shook his lawyers' and friends' hands. One degree of separation.

As Dwight and David died in Vietnam, Jeffrey Lucey died in Iraq. He was my daughter's age. He had a lot going for him. He was white, middle class, with parents that were willing to pay his way through school. He did not need the service to get out of the ghetto. Like Dwight, he killed face to face. Couldn't get over it. A year back from Iraq, a few visits to the shrink, some involuntary confinement, Jeffery hanged himself with a garden hose in his parent's basement. His death is the result of my failure. I failed to stop the war. I did not talk to him as I do every Iraq veteran and veteran-to-be that comes up to talk or argue in front of the Capitol. I tell them, I don't know what your particular hell looked like, but we did stuff our mothers, our fathers, our teachers, our preachers told us never to do: Kill people and destroy things. It messes with

your mind.

I may not look like very much, ugly, wrinkly, white haired, balding, running to fat, old fart, but I'm what you want to be forty years from now. I'm alive. I can bounce kids on my knees. I can make them laugh. I buried a bunch of guys over the years who can't. If you ever think about thumping yourself, your wife, your girlfriend, your kids, remember your parents want you to bury them not the other way around. Your wife doesn't want to be a widow. Your kids don't want to be orphans. When it gets real serious, folks want to talk to you. They want to help you. I can tell you meds work. I stopped having nightmares thirty years ago. They came back five years ago. Meds stopped them. I'm not very happy. But I've got a job, trying to stop the creation of more folks like Dwight, David, Jeffery and me. And I haven't been doing too good of a job of it.



*TOM BAXTER, LIFE MEMBER OF VVAW AND VETERANS FOR PEACE HAS BEEN PART OF THE ETERNAL PEACE VIGIL STANDING IN FRONT OF FLORIDA'S OLD CAPITOL THURSDAYS AND SUNDAYS SINCE 2001. HE DID HIS PART TO HELP KILL 3 MILLION VIETNAMESE WHEN HE WAS IN THE USAV FROM 1967 TO 1969 AND IS NOT PROUD OF IT. IN FACT EVERY TIME HE THINKS ABOUT THE MEGATON OF UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE WE LEFT BEHIND, THAT WILL BE KILLING CHILDREN FOR CENTURIES, HE GETS PISSED OFF.*

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Mr. Kettenhofen,

Thank you for the prompt delivery of bumper stickers that I recently ordered. That kind of swift mail delivery normally only comes in the form of bills!

I'm not a 'Nam vet, but did lose my brother John at FSB Ripcord, July 22, 1970. He hated that war, but loved his country and went to fight when he was called up. He died saving a buddy's life as a Cobra opened fire in error.

Two years ago I learned of the existence of a book, *Ripcord*, by Keith Nolan. Because of that book I've met many of the guys my brother lived and fought with 37 years ago. The Ripcord guys have a reunion each year around the time the firebase was abandoned (7/23), and they've unofficially taken me in as one of their own... their little brother!

I hope that in some small way I can do my part to end the senseless destruction of life such fiascos cause.

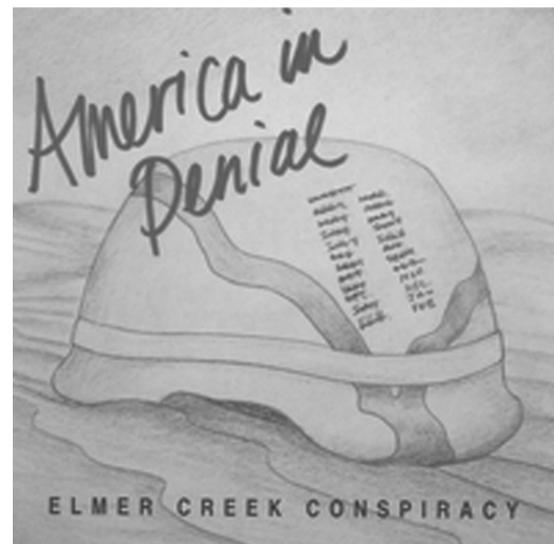
I saw my dad sitting on the front porch crying when he found out that my brother had died. My dad never cried. Dads all across this country are crying tonight, unfortunately.

Currahee,

Dave Kreckel

### 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](http://www.elmercreek.com)

# Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc. National Contact List

For email addresses, go to our website at [www.vvaw.org](http://www.vvaw.org).

If you need a speaker for an event or class visit or someone to interview, please contact the person nearest you.

If there is nobody in your area, contact the National Office at (773) 276-4189 or email [vvaw@vvaw.org](mailto:vvaw@vvaw.org).

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# SECTION B

## The Veteran

Volume 37, Number 2

Fall 2007

### Operation First Casualty - Part IV

AMY MEYERS

Monday June 18, 2007 marked history with Operation First Casualty (OFC)—part IV, Chicago, Illinois. As IVAW members were coming into town, organizers were finishing last minute details. Participating IVAW members were from Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania, DC and Indiana. IVAW participants and volunteers endured 5 hours of training the day before the action; this type of training was new for many, intense for all and a spectacle for those passing by.

The action itself began at 7:00 am at Union Rail Station, fished through the rush of Chicago's corporate downtown workforce and to the shopper's delight of the "magnificent mile" of Michigan Avenue. Acting out major scenes at 15 strategically planned locations, as well as many more spontaneously. We closed the action with a press conference and final action at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The patrol consisted of 9 Iraq war vets, in full DCUs. Another 7 IVAW members wore matching IVAW t-shirts while leafleting, with the purpose of informing passerby's of OFC. Volunteers playing the role of "civilians" were broken into 2 groups of 8 individuals each. There were actions/scenes between both civilian groups and the patrol together or one civi group with patrol separately, as well as, actions focusing on only the patrol

in various locations.

VVAW and VFP members participated by maintaining other support roles. There were "peace marshals" on hand to preoccupy any security or police long enough for the scene to happen and for us to move out onto the next, drivers following the civilian and patrol routes in cars, with water, snacks, medic supplies and a change of civilian clothes for patrol members to "get out of character" if necessary. Chicago's National Lawyers Guild provided 2 attorneys acting as volunteer legal observers. Seasoned local organizers took the role of legal mediators with Chicago Police Department and as press conference coordinators. Other volunteers assisted in leafleting, photographing and filming the action. An amazing selection of food and drinks were provided by Chicago's Food Not Bombs, the Chicago VVAW chapter and Marcia, a local activist.

Iraq Veterans Against the War's Operation First Casualty can easily be identified as the most intense action to sweep the nation since Vietnam Veterans Against the War did Operation RAW (Rapid American Withdraw), a similar action in small towns along the east coast in 1970. IVAW's OFC started in March 2007 and has so far been brought to the streets of Washington DC, New York City, New York, Santa Monica,



Operation First Casualty, Part IV - Chicago

California, Chicago, Illinois and Denver, Colorado.

Having an imaginary M16 pointed in your face, being pushed to the ground, having your head hooded and arms zip tied behind your back, or watching your brother or friend being thrown to the ground and taken away, all the while yelling and chaos is going on around; the cries out, confusion, aggressiveness and fear became a natural response. "Acting" was not as hard to do once the action was underway. Everyone involved took this operation seriously and stayed in character for the entirety. Those on the streets or seeing the news clips probably would not have guessed the patrol and civilians were actual comrades only acting, albeit in a surreal far less extreme portrayal of a day of life under war and occupation.

Following the action and press conference, IVAW members had their Warrior Writers Workshop for the remainder of the afternoon; leading to the official art opening containing pictures, paintings and poetry of IVAW members at the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum. The turn out was great and the exhibit, beyond words, a very powerful way to end the weekend's events; an emotionally tiring and somber weekend filled with achievement, substance and despair. To see and feel the guilt and hurt felt, as both a soldier and a civilian, engrained permanent marks on many souls. The poems were heavy and hard and astonishing. The emotion and vulnerability displayed by warriors gripping humanity left most speechless and

many in tears of shared sorrow and encouragement.

VVAW and IVAW have been an inspiring force for many and the most prolific anti-war organizations. Appreciation of VVAW's historic significance and leadership has met and guides their generation's sons and daughters in IVAW now, joining together and continuing the fight for the truth, peace, justice and GI rights.

As much as veterans are called on for speaking at events and heading demonstrations and marches...everyone in "the movement" must show solidarity by donating support, time and money to them. Follow their lead and help ensure the long term success of our shared goals, wrapped up in a very clear and simple request "end the war and occupation, troops home now!"

Bringing "the truth of the war home," a glimpse into the reality, brutality, confusion and pain of a war and occupation from the civilian and soldiers' perspective, is not easy, but absolutely necessary.

For more information on IVAW and Operation First Casualty check: [www.ivaw.org](http://www.ivaw.org)

You can find further articles and video footage on the internet by performing a Google search and checking [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), keywords IVAW OFC or Operation First Casualty.



AMY MEYERS IS A MEMBER OF VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR — CHICAGO CHAPTER AND THE CHICAGO COALITION AGAINST WAR & RACISM.



Operation First Casualty, Part IV - Chicago

## Befriend a Recruiter

CATHERINE MILLER

Every day, all across the country, military recruiters are lying to persuade young people to sign up for the military. Proponents of the policy in Iraq are quick to point out that everyone in the military volunteered, but what does that mean if most soldiers were tricked into enlisting by the lies that recruiters tell? How can we use the truth to counter slick ads produced with the military's multi-billion dollar recruiting budget?

Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) has kicked off a nationwide Truth in Recruiting effort. With Truth in Recruiting, we can force a choice between no military, or one that is used responsibly. Truth in Recruiting means ensuring that anyone considering enlistment gets to make their decision about whether to sign up for military service with all of the relevant facts. IVAW has fact sheets available to pass out to potential recruits at high schools and recruiting stations.

The Befriend a Recruiter campaign is another easy way to get involved. By flooding recruiters and recruitment centers with phone calls, appointments, questions, and smiling faces, recruiters will waste their time and resources on you. By calling and asking every question you can think of about all the false opportunities the military is offering, you are stealing away recruiters' ability to recruit. Your age or veteran status is irrelevant; you can ask about information for your (real or imaginary) children or classrooms.

On Monday, September 17th, the Chicago chapter kicked off the Befriend a Recruiter campaign at the Armed Services Recruiting Center located at Clybourn and Division. In the shadow of remnants of Chicago's infamous public housing project Cabrini Green, IVAW members along with a dedicated group of supporters shut down one of Chicago's busiest Army and Navy recruiting

stations. The group slowly sent members into the recruiting office in order to occupy recruiters' time with questions about enlistment, benefits, jobs and the like. Veterans and civilians alike did their best to befriend a recruiter.

After about two hours of occupation it was clear to the recruiters that these were not people legitimately seeking to be employed by the green machine (likely due to the crowd of people and cameras on the sidewalk outside). Befrienders in the midst of befriending overheard potential recruits over the phone that they shouldn't come to the office because they were having a "meeting." Media was abundant and many interviews were granted with such outlets as the *Sun-Times*, *Fox News*, *National Public Radio*, *Labor Beat* and *NBC News*. Success on day one.

On the south side of the city, a Befriender asking about medical school was offered an Army teddy

bear, free dinner, and a trip to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio to tour the base and hospital. She also witnessed a group of high school students being tutored in basic math to pass Army entrance exams. Couldn't these kids get tutored to pass college entrance exams elsewhere? Counter-recruitment is not simply about ending the current war, but shifting our culture away from relentless militarization of youth.

Warning: this campaign is not for the easily persuaded. Recruiters will want you to sign up. Let them know you are not ready, but really interested in talking about the possibilities. **DO NOT SIGN ANY PAPERS!!!**

For more information, visit [www.befriendarecruiter.org](http://www.befriendarecruiter.org) or [www.ivaw.org/truth](http://www.ivaw.org/truth).



CAT MILLER IS A MEMBER OF THE CHICAGO CHAPTER OF VVAW.

## VVAW Recognizes May 4 Task Force at Kent State

BRUCE HYLAND

At Kent State on May 4, 1970 a murderous 13 seconds of gunfire by the Ohio National Guard killed 4 students and wounded 9. This event contributed to a tipping point for the Vietnam War and the ultimate failure of a criminal White House administration. Working parallel with this historic massacre was an ever increasing activity in VVAW beginning late in 1969.

The cowardly May 4th actions of the Ohio National Guard along with other factors helped create a greater sense of urgency within VVAW toward ending the war. Some students at Kent State were Vietnam Vets and VVAW members. This was the early stage of a bonding legacy between Kent State and VVAW.

Recognized commemorations for the May 4th shooting started in 1971 on the Kent State campus. By 1975, an insensitive KSU administration thought 5 years of recognition was enough. Fortunately a strong student activism prevailed and convinced the Kent State campus, administration, and Kent community otherwise. This was the beginning of the Kent State May 4 Task Force.

Since forming in 1975 dedicated students of the Kent State



Bill Davis leading the march at the 20th Anniversary of Kent State in 1990

May 4 Task Force have organized commemorations every year. This past May 4th, VVAW honored these dedicated students, past, present, and future. The VVAW Winter Soldier Activism Award was presented to the May 4 Task Force, and also to charter members Alan Canfora, Dean Kahler, and Robbie Stamps.

When this award presenta-

tion for the May 4 Task Force was made at Kent State, it was intended to be a concerted effort between yours truly and Bill Davis. As life is not perfect Bill was not able to make it to Kent that day, but memories of him remain.

All Hail, the Kent State May 4 Task Force

BRUCE HYLAND IS A MEMBER OF THE CHICAGO CHAPTER OF VVAW, A VIETNAM ERA VET, US ARMY 1ST BATTALION 3RD US INFANTRY REGIMENT (THE OLD GUARD). ONE OF HIS LAST JOB ASSIGNMENTS WAS DOOR OPENER FOR THE CRIMINAL PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON'S LAST DAY IN OFFICE.



# You Can't Wage Peace with the Barrel of a Gun

PAUL MCGUIRE

Thank you for inviting me this evening and allowing me to speak on behalf of Iraq Veterans Against the War. My name is Paul McGuire and I am an Army Veteran, former officer in the 82nd Airborne Division, and was an unfortunate participant in the initial invasion of Iraq. I am sure you have heard and seen your share of veterans talk about their experiences in Iraq and if you have not then let me be the first to tell you that I too did not find those "weapons of mass destruction." So if you were expecting some vindication on my part of our current administration, you are not going to find it in this speech. I should also mention that I was not among those who were greeted as liberators, I cannot recall ever being handed a flower for my involvement in the war, and I do not remember my unit or any of the surrounding units every running into Al Qaeda, and the only aluminum tubes I ever saw were the ones we were using to set up tents to shield us from the scorching heat and suffocating dust storms...but don't you worry about those things called facts and reality because you have the "Decider" as president who has our military spreading democracy... so there's not time to discuss or second guess the fabricated pretext for going to War or its subsequent aftermath especially when you are fighting yet again the re-declared "war on terrorism."

I hope you detected my sarcasm because for me speaking about Iraq does not always come that easy. You see, satire is sometimes necessary for those to understand the truth when their so called leaders habitually avoid it. I spent a year in Iraq and now some are doing 15 months. This is nothing short of torturous or should I say, nothing less than an "extraordinary rendition" of a deployment. This "surge" will no doubt increase the deaths of American service members and Iraqis, and pilfer more tax dollars all in the hopes of creating a client state, with privatized oil that we can use as leverage to start more war and conflict aboard and "blowback" here at home. However, the question remains, "Who will bear the largest brunt of this?" Well I can answer that question unequivocally; it will be our military, its veterans, and families.

I look back and wonder how

could this all happen? Why was their no disclaimer on my infantry or Ranger school graduation certificates that read, "will prepare you for intense combat" but not liable for draft dodging presidents, their multiple war deferment vice presidents, their crooked crony politicians and warmonger pundits – should they get you into a war. Well, as I found out all it takes is an administration's fear mongering, and an insatiable appetite for war and a natural resource in a region that was once called "the richest economic prize in the world in the field of foreign investment." Couple that with one-sided news and pundits spinning even the vaguest of "intelligence" and you have a full out invasion and war that has now left over 3,700 Americans killed, over 27,000 wounded, and some estimates of more than a million Iraqis killed with millions more as refugees.

That being said, troops are coming back with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and traumatic brain injuries in what the DoD is now calling the "signature injuries of the Iraq War." Depleted Uranium is now thought to be the cause for cancer in some veterans as well as a contributing factor to the five fold increase of cancer among Iraq children and an overall increase of 38 percent for all Iraqis dating back even to the first Gulf War. I suppose we shouldn't worry though because depleted uranium only remains radioactive for 4.5 billion years. At any rate the tragedies continue, with a recent report that suicide rates among Army soldiers are at the highest levels since 1980. In fact, one IVAW member has already committed suicide so this tragedy is real and hits close to home for IVAW. There is also a crisis in mental healthcare with 38 percent of soldiers reporting psychological symptoms and that number increases to 49 percent among National Guardsman after having served in the Middle East. There is also the Walter Reed scandal. Finally, researchers have established for the first time a clear link between returning veterans' depression and family problems. This is not just their problem, it is America's problem, and we are all complicit in letting it continually fester to a point where we may be overwhelmed as a country.

IVAW's unity points are quite lucid, we want:

1. Immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces in Iraq not in six months or a 10 years or some other plan that leaves thousands of troops in Iraq or that redeploys them to Pakistan or to fight another hegemonic battle in Iran; But Now!

2. Reparations for the destruction and corporate pillaging of Iraq so that Iraqi people can control their own lives and future;

3. Full benefits, adequate healthcare including mental health, and other supports for returning servicemen and women. A majority of Americans have proven they can blindly follow their leaders into war but now as statistics show overwhelming opposition to the war and its surge, how about for once proving we as a majority can lead and end this war and bring our troops home now.

A week and a half ago IVAW held a successful second annual convention. At IVAW, we now have over 500 members, 24 chapters, including one at an active duty installation at Ft. Drum, New York. The unity, teamwork, and passion amongst the IVAW members is unmatched and would make any high ranking officer or NCO happy, because hey we were all trained by the best, right? We seek to reinvigorate the anti-war movement, a movement that does not pander to politics but puts service men and women first by eliminating the root cause of their grief and distress...and that is unjust, unsolicited, mismanaged, profit making, imperialist War.

Let me be clear there is nothing masculine about war, and those who glorify it under an umbrella of piety, tacitly approve or normalize it are not showing bravado but ignorance beyond reproach. These "pro-War hawks" as they are called are either so insecure or bloodthirsty their displays of apathy for those in uniform, the American people, and other countries citizens are reprehensible. The absurdity of being "Pro-War" and for the troops is about as ludicrous as saying I'm pro crime, arson, and fire and yet support our police officers and firefighters. Those authoritarian personalities that hold the highest offices in this country and push militaristic doctrine and policy, along with neoconservative ideals and political agendas are hurting our military and its veterans.

Among the few responsible intellectuals, journalists, and common citizens of the US, they know that the easiest way for a president and many politicians to take this country to war is by talking about peace but documentation and their actions have proven without a doubt to be the exact opposite. I too helped wage peace with the barrel of gun along with many others and I'm here to tell you...IT DOES NOT WORK!

I would like to leave you tonight with a quote I came across a while back that draws some ominous parallels to what I have seen prior to invading Iraq and to what I see happening again. Unlike most speakers who end with a quote from one of our founding fathers, presidents, poets or philosophers, tonight I will not. It's actually from a former top official and military leader sentenced to death during the Nuremberg Trials. In a candid conversation this official told an intelligence officer:

"Why of course the people don't want war. Why should some poor slob on a farm want to risk his life in a war when the best he can get out of it is to come back to his farm in one piece? Naturally the common people don't want war neither in Russia, nor in England, nor for that matter in Germany. That is understood. But, after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the peacemakers for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country."

These eerie words resonate in my head as it appears to have happened already in the 21st century in our United States... a supposed democracy! The question is, will we let it continue and escalate...or put a stop to it because God forbid it should ever happen again. Thanks for you time. 

PAUL MCGUIRE IS A MEMBER OF  
THE CENTRAL ILLINOIS CHAPTER OF  
IVAW.

# War Supporters "Spit" on Iraq War Vets in DC

WARD REILLY

Fifty Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans, members of Iraq Veterans Against the War, led 100,000 other American citizens in a huge demonstration and march in Washington DC on September 15. They were exercising the Rights that they thought they had just earned on the battlefield. Behind them, thousands of other military veterans, including many members of VVAW and VFP followed.

IVAW marched as in a military company, in formation, with a 7 man honor guard front and center, all in their military uniforms. They carried the US flag, as did many of the vets and citizens, in the position of "distress."

ALL of them were called "cowards," "traitors" or "disgraces"... there were hundreds of "fuck you's" screamed at them, and there were even screams of "we'll kill YOU later" coming from the pathetic group of 1,000 pro war citizens that formed a thin line in a few small areas along the route of the march, and the pro-war group ALL claimed that they "supported the troops."

Does anyone else see the extreme irony here?

This "proud" group of fanatics even took the time to stomp on the father of an Iraq war KIA, as he was walking back to his car after the march had ended. They kicked him a dozen times when he was down on the ground, and shredded the picture of his son that he carries on top of the coffin that he was pulling. I guess the "Eagles" support "Gold Star" family's too. And not a cop in sight.

The police were all waiting for us at the Capitol I guess, protecting an empty building against the petition to end the war that was signed by about 1,000,000 people, that we wanted to leave there.

Apparently "spitting on the troops," as it were, equates to "supporting the troops," at least if you are a so-called "Gathering of Eagles" or "Move America Forward" member, which are pro-neocon, pro-war groups. This gang is given support by the national media, in the form of Michele Malkin and Rush Limbaugh, among others... 2 more military experts that blindly suck Dick Cheney's ass. Two more war freaks that never served a second in the military.

The "Eagles" even had bright red arm bands, just like the nazis used to wear, except with black eagles instead of swastikas. I swear.

The Cheney and Bush fan club.

They are more like the "Gathering of Vultures," if you ask me. They support the genocidal slaughter of innocent people. They support killing kids and torturing innocent humans. They support the sending of our children into an unjust occupation, where they are hated for being occupiers, so their minds will be screwed forever. You know, troop and flag support. But the troops know the truth.

This is one group of eagles that is fortunately on the endangered list, and becoming extinct soon.

In that there were 1,000 of them, vs. 100,000 anti-war attendees at the march, you can get a true representation of the



IVAW in DC, September 15, 2007

percentage of the nation that still supports having troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. 99% against the occupation, and 1% for the occupation. The majority rules here, right?

I love it when these folks show up to scream and hate. I'm from south Louisiana, and they give any protest march sort of an Mardi Gras feel. Anti Mardi Gras that is. I felt like throwing them something...doubloons, beads, or maybe my old military medals or awards. I want to tell them "thanks for your support," you know?

Can you even imagine standing on the side of the road for 5 hours so that you can scream "fuck you traitors" to a bunch of military veterans as they walk by? How sick is that? All that troop support is going to give those eagles a heart attack someday, and it can't be soon enough.

What they have done by spitting on the troops, especially by hating the Iraq and Afghan vets,

is simply traitorous. Just like their heroes are. And the way that they conduct themselves represents the Bush administrations policies perfectly.

Thanks for showing up, Eagles, the anti-war movement needs your type of "support" to stop the wars. Keep it up, FOX is watching you. And you taught these newly returned vets, and thousands of our new radical youth, who really spits on the troops, and who really supports the troops.

To see a video of the "Gathering Of Eagles" members "supporting our troops," or if you have any doubts about the claims in this article, go to: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlbU5ubDy30](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlbU5ubDy30)



WARD REILLY IS THE SOUTHEAST NATIONAL CONTACT FOR VVAW.



The Eagles "supporting the troops"



# The Game of the Century: IVAW vs. The Neocons

WARD REILLY

"War Is Not A Game!," I heard 75 members of Iraq Veterans Against the War scream out, as they stood at attention in company formation at a protest they planned, taking place near a display of military vehicles, recruiters, civilians, and active duty troops in St. Louis on Saturday, August 18th.

IVAW members were attending their 2nd national meeting, and they decided to do a street action when they learned of the military exhibition going on nearby. It was a beautiful action, done in military style, except using reality as ammo.

I was most fortunate, as a member of VVAW and VFP, and as a supporter of IVAW since day-one, when they formed back in the fall of 2004, to have been allowed to sit in on their (closed) national meeting, and to take part in their demonstration. I also took part in their board-member election by counting the votes for them. IVAW Executive Director Kelly Dougherty asked me to help them with that easy chore. It was a golden opportunity for me to become corrupted, but I couldn't find a single member that was willing to bribe me. DAMN!

Seriously, this is the most important fight of the century, folks. In one corner, it's Iraq Veterans Against the War, also known as "The Truth," and in the other corner it's the Neocons, also known as the "Death Machine." WWF you ask? Hardly. This is the war for peace. The prize for the winner of this battle will not be a trophy or a belt, rather it will be the concept of the United States, and what the common people believe in.

This fight will NOT be seen on FOX television.

The losers, should it be IVAW, will be EVERY US citizen that lives today, for we will forever be known as the "New Nazis," in the eyes of the world. If Bush and Cheney are allowed by Congress, and we the people, to get away with their genocide, without justice being served to them, our nation is finished, period.

By default, IVAW can only win if Bush and Cheney are brought to justice before the next presidential inauguration. Anything short of a resignation and/or their indictment before then, means that the Constitution is lost forever. The USA will be DOA. Preventive warfare will



IVAW in St. Louis

now be the world standard, and who poses the biggest threat to world today with 25,000 nuclear bombs? We do, of course.

Iraq Veterans Against the War are the most legitimate voice of the anti-war movement, period. Young men and women that have been to Iraq or Afghanistan, and know the truth about what is happening there. Brave, beautiful, and mad. Intelligent, damaged, and spit out by a lying administration. Sickened by what they know to be the real story of Iraq, that being that the US military is being used as an oppressive police and occupation force, to protect the mercenary oil-army of the Neocons, at the cost of our soldiers sanity.

IVAW has served. Their enemy (all residing in Washington) is ruthless. Their enemy is bloodthirsty. Their enemy is clueless to reality. Their enemy never served anything but themselves, but controls the military.

IVAW is ready to make a stand. They are organized, willing, and able to lead the anti-war movement to victory. We can only help them as much as possible, and hope that they can win this fight for peace and justice.

"War Is Not A Game," and IVAW isn't in the mood to play any longer.

I encourage every so-called leader, of EVERY organization against the war, to seek them out. Send them money. Bring their members to your people and to your actions. Watch, listen, and learn about how we can stop the war pigs, by allowing IVAW into their rightful, and hard earned

position, as leaders of the anti-war movement. They lead with the truth, and they are all on-message.

We need these Iraq and Afghanistan vets speaking in Congress NOW. We need them on *60 Minutes* NOW. By my way of thinking, as of August, we have 17 months until the next presidential inauguration, which means IVAW, and the USA, has 17 months left to win, to save the nation, and to survive this Neocon-induced disgrace, aka the occupation of the Middle East.

The time for any political correctness has come and gone. We marched against this war before it started, and the politicians said F#@K YOU!

We voted that the war to be stopped last November, and the politicians told all 300 million of us F#@K YOU!

We've done everything that we could, by peaceful means. Now

we must change tactics. It's time to "storm the Bastille."

IVAW represents the America we dream of. The Bush administration are war criminals, that resemble Hitler in action, and they will bring us ALL down in shame if we don't stop them BEFORE they retire into the (bloody) sunset.

"WAR IS NOT A GAME" I heard IVAW scream.

"The surge is a success" I hear General Betray-us wimper.

It's David vs. Goliath, and Goliath has 25,000 nuclear bombs at his disposal... but David has the truth.

It's winner-take-all time folks, and it's time to rise from your seats and work for "The Truth." If I recall the story correctly, David wins.

Peace is not a game, either.



When you've had all you can take, it's time to take over...

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# Camouflage Blues

RAY PARRISH

Instead of the rather "dry" information and advice column that you usually get from me, this time you get to hear the story of how VVAW's Military Counseling Service helped a couple of courageous, stressed-out people; a young GI, Spec 4 Eugene Cherry, and his mother, Cozy. I want you to share their journey thru the military's broken system of dealing with PTSD and their joy at avoiding a Court Martial for a 15 month AWOL and getting a General Discharge under Honorable conditions (and keeping his E-4 rank!)

Cozy Cherry first called me in early 2006 looking for help for Eugene. He came home to Chicago after going AWOL from Ft. Drum, New York following his return from Iraq. In those first phone calls with Cozy, reassurance of support and info about PTSD and the UCMJ was what both she and Eugene needed most. After a few phone conversations, Cozy was able to convince Eugene to talk to me. At first, his calls were sporadic. Soon he was calling regularly. Regs and symptoms were given equal attention. I didn't press him for details of his combat experiences, since that is best done during treatment, but we spent a lot of time exploring the many ways that PTSD can mess up your life. He came to understand the need for treatment and the possibility of recovery. These discussions allowed Eugene to feel empowered enough to plan on turning himself in after getting a PTSD evaluation from a civilian psychologist. I got to know Eugene. His initial enthusiasm after getting trained as a medic was challenged by his initial stateside assignment doing medical disability paperwork.

Then came Iraq.

After a few months in Iraq his combat stress related behavior was brought to his attention. Eugene was a combat medic so he knew enough to seek help while he was still in country. His experiences in the field caused the typical symptoms that most combat vets have to deal with; depression, sleepless nights, rage and nightmares. When he took this to the doctors he got the usual treatment; anti-depressants and sleeping pills. These, of course, provided little relief and he continued to suffer. Just before his return to the states he re-enlisted in order to get transferred to Germany to join his fiancée.

Upon reporting to Ft. Drum, he asked for treatment for his problems. Ft. Drum's "behavioral health" unit told Eugene that it would be several weeks before he could get an appointment to be evaluated for PTSD due to understaffing. His relationship with the German woman fell apart after his transfer came thru. Stress on top of stress, compounded by regrets and frustration. The severity of the symptoms convinced him that he couldn't wait, so, instead of going to Germany, he came home to Chicago looking for help.

It took awhile for him to take the steps necessary to get that help. And the reality is that it was only the persistence of his mother that got him moving. He finally agreed to meet with a psychologist. Even though he had grave misgivings about how he would be treated, after months of conversations with the psychologist, his mother and me, he left for Ft. Knox, Kentucky to turn himself in with a medical opinion in hand explaining how his service connected PTSD caused

the UA.

Since Eugene had been transferred to Germany, he turned himself in at Ft. Knox, Kentucky, which is supposed to handle such AWOL's. They had no record of him being AWOL! It turns out that the only records that the Army had were the records that they gave Eugene to hand carry to his new duty assignment. The people at Ft. Knox told Eugene that he had to return to Ft. Drum since he hadn't completed his transfer by reporting to the base in Germany. They gave him a bus voucher but didn't even give him a ride to the Louisville bus station. Eugene was in a panic! I got lucky with a few phone calls and Eugene was joined in the station by Linda England and her husband, local MFSO members who happened to be in the area. They bought him dinner and boosted his spirits.

Then Eugene began his efforts for decent treatment and justice at Ft. Drum and my daily phone calls with both him and Cozy. At first they put him up at an off base motel saying everybody was on leave. Then they moved him to an empty barracks and blocked his attempts to go to sick call. Eugene decided that it was time to call in the "big guns." Eugene faxed to Sen. Barack Obama's office a signed request for assistance in his attempt to get appropriate medical treatment and a discharge from the US Army for his totally disabling Post Traumatic Stress Disorder caused by his service in Iraq.

The command lied in their reply to the Senator and continued to interfere with his attempts to go to sick call and even to scheduled appointments for mental health treatment. That's when the Senate began having hearings on the military's mental health system. And, of course, the overworked staff there could give him little more than pills and a few minutes of their time. He was told that they couldn't put him into any treatment programs since they didn't know how long he was going to be around.

It was at this point that they finally filed Court Martial charges for AWOL and Eugene was introduced to his defense attorney. We got lucky. The Captain had just a few months of active duty left and had seen too many PTSD GI's like Eugene so he was willing to go the extra mile. It was also at this point

that Eugene got involved with A Different Drummer (the local GI coffeehouse), IVAW, Todd Ensign and Citizen Soldier, all of which proved invaluable. This was the start of Eugene's "political therapy" which continues with his current involvement in peace and justice work. In addition, Cozy started to get involved with MFSO and went to AFSC's Eyes Wide Open boot exhibit. They were both extremely anxious during these four months because of the day-to-day uncertainty. We did "what if" planning constantly.

The crucial point came when, with a little prodding from Todd, the military defense got a "sanity board" convened. The problem is the difficulty of getting evidence of PTSD introduced into the Court Martial Record prior to the "punishment phase" when mitigating circumstances can reduce the sentence imposed. The board determined that Eugene was "sane," which was expected, but they also acknowledged the existence of his PTSD and severity of his untreated symptoms. This meant that the judge could consider this evidence before the Court Martial even began.

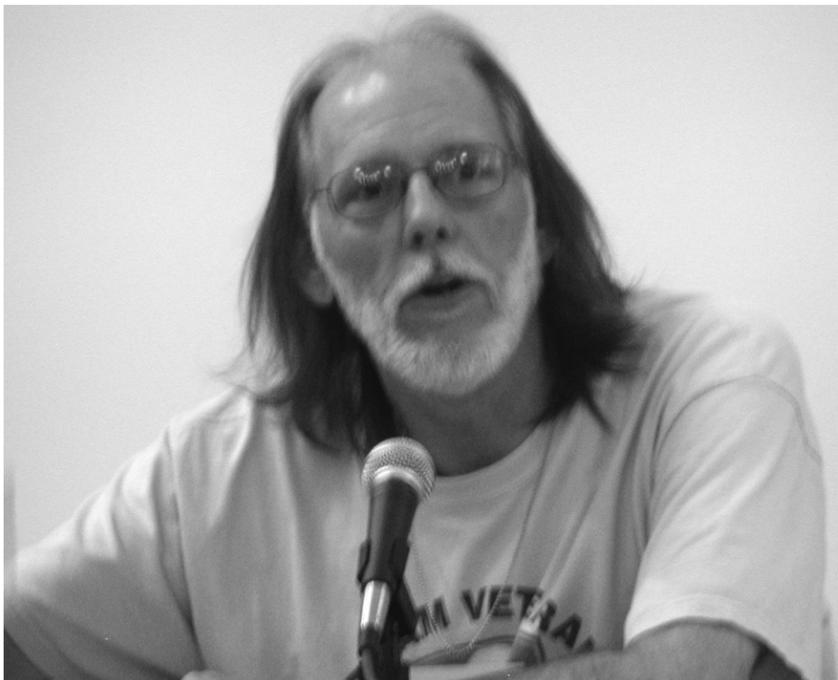
Given all of the publicity about the overwhelmed military and VA mental health systems, it's my feeling that the prosecutors didn't want to risk the judge saying that the AWOL was justified and dismissing the charges. So, the day before the CM was scheduled to start, Eugene accepted the prosecution's offer of a General under honorable conditions discharge in lieu of court martial. He was home in his mother's arms a week later.

Currently, he battles the unemployment office because the Army says the job termination was justified. While his claim for VA disability benefits winds its way through the uncaring bureaucracy, he's getting involved in local IVAW actions and veterans support work.

I look forward to my frequent meetings with Eugene and I think you will enjoy the next chapter of Eugene's story, which will be written by him.



RAY PARRISH IS VVAW'S MILITARY COUNSELOR AND CAN BE REACHED AT (773) 561-VVAW OR CAMIBLUE@VVAW.ORG



Ray Parrish at VVAW's 40th Anniversary

# Meeting Our Congressman

STANLEY CAMPBELL

The local peace group, Rockford Peace and Justice Action Committee, asked me to join them as we went to lobby our congressman. They want him to stop the war in Iraq and bring our troops home.

Yes, I know: "Fat chance." The Representative from the 16th Congressional District in Illinois, the "Honorable" Donald Manzullo, has consistently supported the President since the invasion of Iraq. He didn't support the non-binding House resolution against the surge. He may even support expanding the war to take on all the Islamics. And the worst thing he did: he refused to meet with a Gold Star Mother because he knew she was gonna give him hell. Rosemarie Slavenas' son was killed when his helicopter went down. The first thing I did was put out a media release accusing Manzullo of being a chickenhawk of the worst kind.

I reported this case to you about two or three issues ago. You folks were great. You inundated his Washington DC office with calls and letters. He met with us.

I believe we gotta try to encourage our representative to be more peaceful, even if he supports war. Maybe we could get him to agree to more specific

and less "controversial" stuff: like investigate where all that money went. Hundreds of billions of dollars and Congress didn't watch for war profiteering (there's always profit to be made in war). Some of the war contracts made it to the 16th Congressional District here in northwest Illinois. Some of the war contractors have donated to the Congressman's campaign war chest (I don't see why he needs so much money – rarely has the opposition put up any candidate and his district is gerrymandered so he will remain our congressman for life). The least he can do is keep half an eye on our military money.

When we met, we came with only 20 folks, five of whom knew they were gonna speak (Rosemarie got some more Gold Star parents and got a whole hour by herself).

We asked Manzullo to keep an eye on the private contractors who are flourishing in this war. One of them, Blackwater Corporation, is operating a training facility in western Jo Davies County (part of Don's District). Having private corporations take on military jobs really crosses a line, and increasingly the military industrial complex is really complex. Or very

simply: more war, more profit for Blackwater.

Our next concern the Congressman should have supported: more counseling for returning veterans. Instances of American soldiers who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan killing themselves are increasing. At least one is from Manzullo's District: a soldier shot himself instead of returning for a second tour. The military must keep adequate records to show what is happening to veterans. Counseling is a must. Officers who ignore warning signs and say "ship 'em back to the front" should be retrained and paramedics must be trained to identify stress.

Those are our demands. He said yes, but voted no. Can they lie like that?

And finally, we wanted Manzullo to vote for a resolution that will keep the President from bombing Iran. What's scary is Don may want the President to invade Iran (it's just next door and they have more oil than Iraq). I believe he thinks a war against the Muslim nation is inevitable.

I don't know what your Congressman is like. Ours is all friendly until he gets on the floor of the House, then he forgets his promises and votes like Attila the

Hun. His voting record is 100 percent with both the Christian Coalition and the American Conservative Union. It is zero with the environmentalists, 7 with anti-war groups.

Some of our peace members do not want to meet with the Congressman. "Why waste the Time?" Why indeed? Because if we can get the Congressman to support a more peaceful approach, we will save lives and money. We have to learn how to lobby. We've got few options. Our representative should at least hear the other side of an issue. Has your Congressman become callous over the years? Yes, he met with the gold star mother who lost her son and she got angry about it. I don't envy him that part of his job, but he deserved every bit of it, and more.




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*STANLEY CAMPBELL IS A MEMBER OF VVAW AND IS CONSIDERED TO BE THE "ONLY PAID PEACE ACTIVIST" IN ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS (HOW UNFORTUNATE FOR THEM). "AND IT'S THE UNITED METHODISTS THAT PAY ME," SAYS MR. CAMPBELL.*



*"If looks could kill" - Gold Star Mother Rosemarie Slavenas glaring at Congressman Manzullo while one of his aides run interference*

# VVAW California Central Coast Chapter in Full Swing

STEVE CRANDALL

We are veterans and the friends and family of veterans of the Vietnam War, and in May, 2007 we were proud to become the California Central Coast Chapter of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. The patriots of the VVAW have served our country for 40 years, first in combat overseas and then at home. It has always been our understanding that the patriot-warriors' call to service did not end when we were discharged. Our place is - as it has always been - at the side of the combat veteran, whom all Americans honor, but most Americans ignore.

In 2007 we are back in public view, raising the historic VVAW symbol of patriotic resistance to wrong, because the crisis we face as a nation today is a tragic repeat of the disaster that brought us together in 1967. We have not forgotten our homeless comrades from both the Vietnam and Korean Wars who are still on the streets wrestling their PTSD demons. For us there will be no "Mission Accomplished" until all vets are honored and treated properly.

We watch a new generation of combat veterans, who are facing what we did and more, being subjected to the same mistreatment and neglect as they return from the soul-searing horror of combat. We hear our country calling us to service once again, to offer our experience and dedication in support of the new veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. We join with our younger brothers and sisters demanding a return to the values of respect, compassion and fairness towards our veterans and towards the world that are the true American Way.

We fought for our country and will fight for her again if the call to a just war is made. But we will continue to teach the real lessons of the Vietnam War - that opposition to senseless military adventures is the duty of every true patriot. We remain committed to the struggle for peace and for social and economic justice for all people.

In the name of all veterans, but especially in the name of those who faced death and carry permanent wounds from their service to our country, we once again exhort America to stand with our warrior patriots and Honor the Warrior, not the War!

## Supporting the VetStage Foundation June 2007

The CA Central Coast Chapter showed up in force to attend a play to help support the VetStage Foundation. The play was at the Falcon Theatre in Burbank, CA. Gary Marshall, owner of the Falcon Theatre and Penny Marshall's brother, donated 100% of the proceeds to the VetStage Foundation. The play, "The Value of Names" starred Jack Klugman, Liz Larsen and Dan Lauria (also a Vietnam Vet 1972-73).

The VetStage Foundation was founded by Sean Huze. Some may remember Sean, a troubled Iraq Vet suffering from PTSD in "The Ground Truth." We met with Sean after the play and will be getting together with him to help support the Foundation as well as work to unite Iraq veterans with Vietnam veterans. We also made other connections that we hope will lead to our involvement in documentaries about veterans.

We also talked to Dan Lauria about the sad state of affairs of our troops continued redeployments to Iraq and how much it relates to our service in Vietnam. VetStage Foundation ([www.vetstage.org](http://www.vetstage.org)) was created to provide fellow veterans a creative outlet to process their experiences. The CA Central Coast Chapter is looking forward to working with Sean. We will keep all posted on our progress with VetStage as well as the progress on our involvement in the making of the documentaries.

## Camarillo Fiesta July 2007

We had a fantastic weekend at the Camarillo Fiesta. It's like a street fair/carnival. The booth was co-sponsored by the various local peace organizations and of course the California Central Coast Chapter of the VVAW. It was a very positive experience, lots of good energy. We only had one negative person and his talking point was "We have to fight them there so we don't have to fight them here." Like we have never heard that one before. The Republican booth was across the street from ours. They received several negative comments and closed down early on both days.

The hot item was the peace stickers. We gave out the stickers without a request for donations

and before we knew it they became a draw to our booth by young and old. Then we started moving VVAW buttons and bumper stickers. People were picking up the *Veteran* and good conversations were happening everywhere. It was hard to believe our 50/50 town of conservatives and liberals had finally shifted to the bright side. And in a big way.

I can say that being a carne can be good. In fact I might be known as the "Carne Asada" of Camarillo. For those of you east of the Colorado that means "a great carnival operator" for those west of the Colorado we will keep the meaning to ourselves.

## Patriot Duty Done by All at the Stand Down 2007

All of Ventura County should take pride in the successful Stand Down held for the homeless veterans on July 27-29, 2007 at the California National Guard Armory in Ventura. For the fifteenth time, an all-volunteer organization brought together Ventura County social agencies, veterans' organizations and volunteer groups for the annual event. A carefully organized temporary military encampment provided two nights and three days of hot meals, shoes and clothes, haircuts, medical and legal help for some of our homeless comrades who never emotionally "came home" from Vietnam, as well as other veterans in need. It was community action at its best.

Volunteers from the Disabled American Veterans, American Legion, Veterans Administration, Veterans For Peace, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Ventura County Veterans Services, CACI

and Veterans of Foreign Wars amongst others all joined together to staff this yearly act of compassion towards those who have so long been lost and forgotten by the county they served. The newly formed California Central Coast Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War was proud to be a part of the annual event for the first time this year. We look forward to a year of building greater outreach to the homeless vets, not only our comrades from Vietnam, but the newly discarded veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan wars as they begin to appear among the homeless and helpless.

Our thanks to the Stand Down staff for a job well done. It was the patriotic duty performed on behalf of us all, it was the least we could do, and we were proud to be part of it.

## September 2007

We had Judith Broder, M.D. speak about the Soldier's Project at our Democratic Club on behalf of our VVAW Chapter in Camarillo. We have her husband, Don Broder M.D., scheduled to speak at the October meeting about war and health issues of the Iraqi people.

The CA Central Coast Chapter plans to continue its work to honor the warrior, not the war. We will not rest until while the war in Iraq rages on and we will continue to work to bring the troops home now.



STEVE CRANDALL IS A VIETNAM VETERAN AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE CALIFORNIA CENTRAL COAST CHAPTER OF VVAW.



VVAW at the Camarillo Fiesta

# Here We Grow Again

MARTY WEBSTER

Since our last issue we have appointed four new regional contacts. "Welcome Home" guys and welcome to our VVAW family.

**Dana W. Hall  
San Jose, California**

Dana has resided in San Jose, California since 1999 when he relocated from Redding. He has a 22 year old son living in San Francisco, and a 23 year old daughter living in Redding. Prior to 1999, he managed an engineering and construction firm in Redding for a period of 15 years. He specialized in water resources. Prior to that he worked for two engineering firms after college graduation in 1980.

Dana enlisted in the USMC from high school for three years. Initially trained for radio repair, he received schooling in power generators when he arrived in country. He served TAD from 1stFLC DaNang installing remote power generating equipment. Dana also served in I Corp from 10-26-70 thru 04-08-71. Dana attended Shasta JC and California State University at Northridge between 1974 and 1980 utilizing the GI Bill. Dana attended the VVAW 40th Anniversary in Chicago recently, and said, "I cannot tell you how much I enjoyed the 40th, being a part of it was the most important thing that has happened in my life in quite awhile."

**Michael Burke  
Atlanta, Georgia**

Long Island native, Michael Burke, has resided in Atlanta almost 30 years. He's currently semi-retired from print publishing and working as a travel-writing

team with his wife, Renee. Presently, they are completing their eighth book together on Georgia retirement places.

Until his Vietnam 1968-69 combat tour of duty, Mike was a career Army enlisted man, serving for almost 10-years, with tours of duty in Germany, Korea and Vietnam. He served in-country as an Infantry Operations and Intelligence NCO and was assigned to MACV IV Team 65 in Sadec Province in the Mekong Delta. He was awarded a Bronze Star and Combat Infantryman's Badge.

Michael and Renee Burke have been peace activists for as long as they've been married, some 35 years now. They helped re-form the Peace Network at UUCA in Atlanta in 2002, prior to the invasion of Iraq. In addition to his VVAW membership, Burke is also a member of Georgia Peace and Justice Coalition, Veterans For Peace and Vietnam Veterans of America, Atlanta Chapter 883.

**William Reynolds  
Southeastern Ohio**

After Bill finished at Kent State in 1970, he enlisted as a CO and did a tour of duty (1970-71) in "the great hot house," as he calls it, where he served as an Army Combat Medic.

He helped start the local chapter of Vietnam Veterans of America and has worked at a local museum. Bill lives in Waterford, Ohio near Athens, Ohio site of Ohio University. Bill will be working with our VVAW members at Ohio University and the surrounding area. Bill will also be organizing in the Parkersburg, West Virginia area. Bill and some of our members from Ohio



Veterans for America President and former VVAW activist Bobby Muller spent two days at Utah Valley State College in Orem, Utah to talk on the human costs of war. Utah VVAW members Larry Chadwick and Rick Miller welcomed Bobby, along with Vietnam vet Dr. Robert Littlehale. (photo by VVAW member Aaron Davis)

University are planning a joint venture with the Ohio Valley Regional Chapter in Cincinnati. Following the event there will be a getting to know each other BBQ.

**Aaron Davis  
Salt Lake City, Utah**

Those who have read the last issue of *The Veteran*, will recall that Aaron Davis is no stranger to anti-war organizing in Salt Lake City and the surrounding areas in Utah. Aaron has been involved in Veterans outreach in Salt Lake City from 2003 to the present. He is a Vietnam era veteran, has been active with the GI Rights Hotline since November 2006, and is in the process of formulating a local VVAW GI Rights outreach.

In the past four years Aaron has facilitated 30 classroom presentations (including psychology, human behavior and development, and history classes)

at the Salt Lake Community College and the Utah Valley State College. He has helped sponsor and table *Sir, No Sir!*, *Winter Soldier*, and *Inside Iraq* on several occasions. Aaron organized four protests when Bush visited the AL and VFW conventions. He has helped organize five forums at the university of Utah and Utah Valley State College. Aaron has also helped to organize and participate in three rallies, four marches, and four dinners.

Vietnam Veterans Against the War in Salt Lake City, Utah will kick off its initial "We're Back Campaign" and will lead the Fall Mobilization march from the state capital to the city-county building. VVAW member and Vietnam Vet, Larry Chadwick, will speak at the rally following the march. Larry goes back a long way with VVAW, and organized with Jack McCloskey on the west coast years ago. The event, organized by the Wasatch Coalition for Peace and Justice, and We the People, will begin at the state capital at noon October 27, 2007 with a march past the federal building to the city-county building. VVAW members will have a table at the event and pass out information on IVAW, veterans outreach, the GI Rights Hotline, and depleted uranium. Aaron can be reached at the GI Rights Hotline (801) 556-0599 or e-mail aaronmdavis1950@msn.com



MARTY WEBSTER IS A VVAW NATIONAL COORDINATOR.



VVAW Kentuckiana members (l-r) Edison Farmer, Carol Rawert Trainer, and Harold Trainer

# Chicago Memorial Day 2007

KEN NIELSEN

On an uncharacteristically beautiful day this May in Chicago the recently formed local chapter of Iraq Veterans Against the War (with a little help from visiting members) took over the traditional VVAW Memorial Day ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and left an indelible impression on an eager and fired up crowd. MC'ing and organizing speakers for the event, IVAW Midwest and Chicago chapter coordinator Aaron Hughes led the crowd through engaging and emotional presentations of numerous Iraq war veterans.

Fresh off a bus from New York City where these IVAW members had just participated in bringing the war home in the form of street theater with Operation First Casualty II, the tired and hoarse young veterans picked up the torch from VVAW and proceeded to light up the day. The first speaker, Martin Smith, who served in the Marine Corps from 1997 to 2002, connected the commonalities of the Vietnam and Iraq wars. Speaking about the innocence lost, imperial overreach and how the government failed and is failing the people, Martin brought it all back to the healing power of resistance, of working against the forces that don't represent the people. Now a student at University of Illinois at Champaign, Martin is a co-coordinator in the Midwest for IVAW. With the help and guidance

of VVAW member Joe Miller Martin is in the process of putting together a second IVAW chapter downstate in Illinois.

A very recent IVAW member, Vince Emanuele who served in the Marine Corps in Iraq during 2004 and 2005 gave an extremely emotional account of his experience in Iraq. Four and a half years in the Marines did nothing to prepare him for dealing with the consequences of killing. Vince described his feelings after killing an Iraqi man and then having a close friend killed, "I found out real quick what killing and the tragedies of war were like, all within a 72 hour period of time." Summing up his feelings of his participation in the Iraq War, Vince said, "There are a million ways to describe war: unneeded, useless, tragic, horrific. I would also say missing and sad. Missing is a piece of me that I will never, ever get back. Sad is the state of affairs in the world in which we live today. That piece of me and that empty sadness that fills my heart is and forever will be in Iraq and in my memory for eternity."

From Pittsburgh, IVAW member Paul Abernathy served in the Army Reserves. Paul's time in Iraq was 2003-2004. With an exceptional oratory presence Paul engaged the crowd by correcting the popular hawkish justification behind ending the war in Iraq. "Have these dead died in vain? It's a question that every generation



Vince Emanuele on Memorial Day, Chicago

experiencing war must no doubt ask themselves. Sadly today it is a conversation that has become deluded by those who would have us use their losses to justify illegal and immoral government policies that are forced on our brothers and sisters thousands of miles away from us."

2007 saw the passing of many influential and loved people who dedicated themselves to peace and education. Kurt Vonnegut was one of those people. He did it in his own sarcastic and sometimes bitter way, but he reached a lot of people and was admired greatly. We were fortunate to have editor Joel Bleifuss from *In These Times* (a magazine that Vonnegut often wrote for over the past 10 years) read from some of Vonnegut's articles from the magazine. A prisoner of war during World War II and in Dresden during the Allied bombing of that city, Vonnegut was charged as a prisoner to clean up burnt German corpses. He knew first hand the destruction and terror of war. From one of Vonnegut's articles Joel read, "In all our wars have soldiers never been so mistreated by the Commander in Chief... so heartlessly."

The ceremony's last speaker, VVAW's Barry Romo, tied together the line from VVAW to IVAW. He recalled that veterans returning from Vietnam had to look hard for other veterans and he was able to find them in some of the veterans

of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade of 1936. Nearly 35 years after their service during the Spanish Civil War these veterans showed returning younger vets who fought in Vietnam like Barry that one could engage in political activity and not lose hope for something better; that it is possible to struggle against injustice and not become cynical. These are some of the things that Barry hopes that IVAW takes from their older brothers and sisters. Romo then turned on the crowd with a pointed impassioned appeal, "Things don't change because that's what should happen. Things don't change because we pray. They change because we do something."

As tradition dictates for Memorial Day in Chicago, we ended the ceremony with a moment of silence to remember those who have sacrificed their lives willingly and unwillingly. We all then dropped flowers into the Chicago river and left the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial charged and thoughtful from an amazing group of speakers.



KEN NIELSEN IS A MEMBER OF VVAW AND VETERANS FOR PEACE AND AN ACTIVE SUPPORTER OF IVAW. HE SERVED 1991-1993 AS AN INFANTRYMAN IN THE 4TH BATTALION 9TH INFANTRY REGIMENT OF THE 6TH INFANTRY DIVISION.



IVAW members honor the fallen on Memorial Day, Chicago

# Memorial Day 2007 in Columbus, Ohio

MARK HARTFORD

The Saturday before Memorial Day 5/26/07 found veterans, active duty soldiers, wives of soldiers and mothers of soldiers declaring their support for the Active Duty Call for Redress of Grievance. The event began with a march from the Veterans Memorial at the statehouse to the Federal Building in downtown Columbus. It was attended by about 75 people plus all the major media in Columbus, Ohio.

It was the first item reported on all three major news programs that evening. Mark Hartford, VVAW contact for Columbus, was featured by two of the three TV stations covering the event.

The vets and active duty soldiers were called to attention and marched to the steps of the state

capitol building by an active duty soldier back recently from Iraq.

Standing just yards away from the Ohio Veterans Memorial the group read the call from soldiers for their removal from Iraq.

The mother of an Iraq veteran read Eisenhower's comments pointing out the loss of resources for addressing hunger, education and other important social needs that come with war spending.

The event ended with a call by an active duty soldier's wife to bring all the troops home now. The group included veterans from WW II, Korean War, Vietnam, '91 War, Kosovo and the current American War in Iraq.



VVAW Ohio Contact Mark Hartford is interviewed by the local Media



An active duty soldier's wife calls for bringing all the troops home now



Aaron Hughes emcees on Memorial Day, Chicago

# The New Private Warriors

MARTIN SMITH (REVIEWER)

## Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army

By Jeremy Scahill

(Nation Books, 2007)

*Blackwater* is a tour de force of investigative journalism and a work that should be read throughout the anti-war and emerging GI resistance movements. Currently, the employees of the 180 "private contractor" companies operating in Iraq, who supply everything from logistical support to security services, comprise more employees than US combat troops. While American forces have relied on mercenaries in previous wars, the government's campaign to privatize the war effort is distinctly new and has grave implications.

Scahill points out that the current push towards "guns for hire" is neither an accident nor the flawed strategy of an errant president. Rather, the use of private contractors dates back to the early 1990s with the downsizing and restructuring of the armed forces. Both Republican and Democratic administrations have taken part in it. The military began a massive privatization drive under then-Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney during Bush Sr.'s administration. According to Scahill, "The idea was to free up the troops to do the fighting while private contractors handled the backend logistics. More contractors meant fewer troops, and a much more politically palatable troop count." By August 1992, Halliburton, soon to be headed by Cheney himself, led the support work for the military for the next five years, during Bill Clinton's presidential tenure. Clinton continued the privatization agenda, and Halliburton received lucrative contracts for services during the Balkans and the Kosovo conflicts. The Clinton years helped open the door for the Rumsfeld Doctrine, which promoted the use of private contractors for all aspects of war, including combat.

Erik Prince, a former Navy

SEAL from a wealthy establishment family, saw financial opportunity in these developments and formed Blackwater USA in 1997. While privatization schemes for the military crossed party lines, Prince and the crew at Blackwater are decisively partisan. Prince is a participant in and major donor to fundamentalist religious and right-wing causes, while the upper echelons of Blackwater's staff reads like a who's who of the extremist theocratic Right, including Paul Behrends and Joseph Schmitz.

What began as a training facility for law enforcement personnel and special operation forces in North Carolina has become a corporation providing the world's most powerful mercenary army, what Scahill terms the "Praetorian Guard for the Bush administration's 'global war on terror.'" Blackwater currently has forces deployed in at least nine countries, including over 2,300 mercenaries. Moreover, private contractor companies are now hiring the most notorious global thugs, including Chilean commandos who served under General Augusto Pinochet and white apartheid-era South African Special Forces.

Blackwater's success, Scahill writes, has grown from two key factors. One, through Prince's connections with Christian/Republican causes, he has garnered a powerful lobbying arm composed of well-connected former federal officials and military brass. Through these ties, Blackwater has been able to win key government contracts and shift its services to meet the cutting-edge needs of a growing security-industrial-complex. Two, Blackwater has benefited from the post-9/11 geopolitical climate. Scahill explains how the "war on terror" has proven to be a boon for Blackwater and a "key ideological underpinning of legitimating private contractors and security."

Beyond this, the instability in Iraq has benefited the entire

mercenary industry, diverting expenditures away from reconstruction. The more effective the Iraqi resistance becomes against US regular forces, the greater the call for increased private security services. On March 31, 2004, four Blackwater contractors were ambushed and their bodies mutilated by an angry mob in Fallujah. To date, Blackwater has evaded prosecution for its negligence in how their employees were sent out on a mission ill-equipped and unprepared.

Yet rather than calling into question the role and mission of private contractors, the incident played into the war propaganda machine by providing the pretext by which to exact revenge and launch one of a series of devastating military attacks against the people of Fallujah.

A week after the ambush, Prince met with key members of the Senate Committee on Armed Services. "The mercenary gold rush was on," as Scahill put it. With the reality of a resistance movement on the rise in Iraq, "Blackwater was thrust into the fortunate position of a drug rep offering a new painkiller to an ailing patient at the moment the worst pain was just kicking in."

At the same time, Blackwater won a contract to begin operations in the oil- and gas-rich Caspian Sea region. Acting as a "backdoor US military deployment" instead of sending in divisions of the US Armed Forces—which might be politically unpalatable to Russia—Blackwater served a dual function. They both protected the oil and gas operations in the region and laid the foundation for a possible forward operating base to attack Iran.

On June 2004, Paul Bremer passed the infamous Order 17, which granted sweeping immunity for the actions of contractors in Iraq. That is, mercenaries were now no longer accountable under any military or national laws or codes of conduct. Contractors had free reign to potentially commit atrocities or war crimes with impunity. Scahill points out that at the time, the United States began to move towards "the Salvador option," the use of death squads to foment sectarian divisions in Iraq, with the appointment of John Negroponte as ambassador to Iraq. Facing no criminal prosecution, mercenaries were free to potentially

utilize assassinations, repression, and torture as methods aimed to stoke divisions in Iraq and pacify the resistance.

Scahill includes a brilliant chapter on Blackwater's rapid deployment to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, pointing out the irony that guns for hire arrived faster than government relief and rescue services. Preying on the racist fears of the white elite, Blackwater marketed itself as a force capable of protecting business interests from Black "looters" and "criminals." As Chris Kromm, editor of *Gulf Coast Reconstruction Watch* described, "That's what happens when the victims are black folks vilified before and after the storm—instead of aid, they get contained." Blackwater was able to utilize Katrina to further expand its ever-widening list of services, which now included "humanitarian aid" and domestic security details for natural disasters. While Louisiana's National Guard was in Iraq, Blackwater was on hand to provide so-called "relief" via black t-shirts, wraparound sunglasses, and guns.

Scahill does not shy away from asking the larger questions. What are the consequences for democracy when military services are outsourced to corporate entities with no accountability? What are the implications of a government that relies upon paramilitary organizations that flout US law and potentially the Constitutional rights of its citizens?

While some may argue that the use of mercenaries represents the telltale sign of the decline of US Empire, Scahill's work puts Blackwater and private contractors in a different light. The rise of the security-industrial-complex represents the potential staying power and resilience of US imperialism around the globe. Scahill's *Blackwater* is a clarion call to the anti-war movement to redouble its efforts by demanding not only that coalition soldiers be pulled out of the Middle East—but that, in addition, that all occupying foreign forces, including those of Blackwater, withdrawal immediately as well.



MARTIN SMITH, FORMER SGT. USMC, IS MIDWEST REGIONAL COORDINATOR OF IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR.



Martin Smith on Memorial Day, Chicago

# Veterans' Testimony

ANNE PYBURN (REVIEWER)

**Vietnam: Our Father  
Daughter Journey**  
By Ed and Zoann Murphy  
(Philmark, 2006)

**The Last Dead Soldier  
Left Alive**  
By Richard Boes  
(iUniverse Inc., 2007)

**The Making and Un-Making  
of a Marine**  
By Larry Winters  
(Millrockwriters.com, 2007)

As our nation fiercely debates the proper causes, objectives, and end point of yet another war, three veterans of the previous generation's battle have stepped forward to offer powerful testimony: how they got there, what they saw there, what it did to them - and the struggle to come all the way home.

It's worth noting that all three of these Hudson Valley authors volunteered. Murphy, who served as an intelligence agent, left a Paulist seminary to join the military and was already convinced that the war was wrong

before he ever arrived. Winters and Boes both joined up because it seemed like a better option than staying home. Whatever illusions any of them might have had of glory were soon blown sky high by the reality on the ground.

Murphy began working with Vietnam Veterans Against the War soon after discharge, and his book is the most political and academic of the three, though not oppressively so. His numerous return trips, one of which included daughter Zoe, left him with a passionate love of the land he'd been sent to fight and a large dollop of Buddhist philosophy flavoring his spiritual life. Numerous photos help us to experience this unlikely love affair through his eyes.

Larry Winters was a Marine grunt, bunking in a tent referred to by the rest of the platoon as "The Wild Kingdom" for the shenanigans and radical politics of its inhabitants. A young poet in the making, his belief in God and Country shortly shot to hell, he lived to come home and then found homecoming to be a struggle all its own. His journey led him to

study psychodrama and become a therapist, and that perspective informs his look backward into his life before, during, and after The Nam.

Like Murphy, Winters returned, as one of a group of psychologists there to study Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. And like Murphy, he sought and found a sense of atonement. Yet both books make one thing abundantly clear: we should think at least twice before we teach young men to kill, and expecting them to do so for the wrong reasons is tantamount to spiritual rape.

Richard Boes has written a ripped-from-the-heart memoir of the years of struggle, substance abuse, and failed relationships that followed his combat experience. It's painful and yet richly rewarding. Imagine sitting down in a pub next to a slightly scary-looking fellow who buys you a round and then begins to talk, words spilling out in a heated rush, things bottled up within him all flooding to the surface - and although some of what he is saying may be hard to hear, it is made compelling

by his wry, ironic perspective and his stream-of-consciousness style, akin to Henry Miller or Jack Kerouac. At closing time, you'd be inviting him home for a nightcap to hear the rest - no matter if it disturbed your sleep for weeks to come.

It has taken these men decades to process their various experiences into art, and powerful art it is. It is a truism that any organization will be badly run unless the men in the boardroom understand the perspective of the folks in the trenches; one senses that if the current cabal of neocon opportunists had had to go where these three had been, there would never have been an invasion of Iraq. And what they are offering us will become ever more valuable as more and more young men- and women- return from the unforgiving desert needing a light on the path homeward.



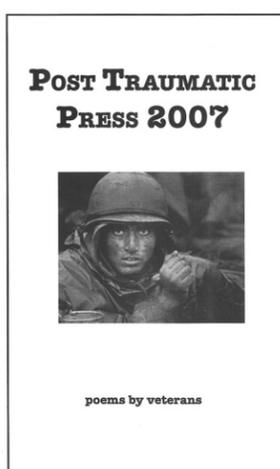
ANNE PYBURN IS A SUPPORTER OF  
VVAW.

## poems by veterans

This book tells the stories of veterans with direct experience of the military. For some, the intense experience of war can only be expressed in poetry, while others are driven by the need to say something openly political. It includes veterans from World War II, the Cold War, Korean War, Vietnam War, peace time and the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Soldier-poets contributors: Camillo "Mac" Bica, Richard Boes, Thomas Brinson, Michael Embrich, Michael Gillen, Marc Levy, Bob Lusk, Gerald McCarthy, Jim Murphy, Fred Nagel, Ron Thompson, Robert "Tack" Trostle, Jose Vasquez, Jay Wenk, Sam Weinreb, Dan Wilcox, Larry Winters and Dayl Wise.

"...Above all I am not concerned with poetry. My subject is War, and the pity of war; the poetry is in the pity." - Wilfred Owen



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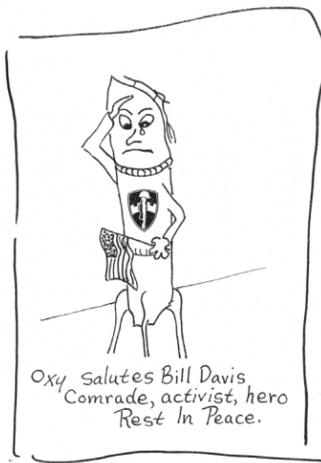
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**Post Traumatic Press**  
Dayl Wise, Editor  
104 Orchard Lane North,  
Woodstock, NY 12498

Ron Osgood is completing interviews with Vietnam and Iraq War veterans for the documentary "My Vietnam Your Iraq" and is looking for still photos, film, audio recordings or videos that can be used in the project. These can be from Vietnam or Iraq. If you have anything you'd like to share, contact Ron at [osgoodr@indiana.edu](mailto:osgoodr@indiana.edu) or 812-855-5096. Ron will make a digital copy of your materials as a thank you.



The V.V.A.W. Generation ... passes the torch to another generation caught up in War.



Not to worry! V.V.A.W. will continue to march (Okay... Maybe scoot) and fight as long as there is War & Injustice!



Meanwhile, the rats jump ship!

"Say Son" lyrics from **Billy X: Solo Set** available at [cdbaby.com](http://cdbaby.com) used with permission.  
 Special thanks to Barry Romo for his 40th Anniversary scooter idea.  
 Send "Oxy" your ideas: [billyx@acegroup.cc](mailto:billyx@acegroup.cc)

**New from Steerforth Press**

**BLOOD, DEBT & FEARS**  
 CARTOONS OF THE FIRST HALF OF THE LAST HALF OF THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION  
 BY JEFF DANZIGER

"Jeff Danziger is everything a great political cartoonist should be in this over-represented age." — John In Carré

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Hello, My name is Charles Spelman and I am a High School Social Studies teacher in Clearwater, Florida. I will be teaching a class on the History of the Vietnam War. However, the school district that I work for does not have enough money to fund my class. As a result, I have no textbooks or readings for my students to use. Can your organizations help me find some information to use or recommend any books I can use in my class?

Sincerely,

Charles T. Spelman  
 SPELMANC@pcsb.org

## Savage Grace Unplugged

"There was a time so long ago, that seems like yesterday.  
The day the children lost their lives, a day for which I'll pay."

I placed my self behind these walls because of what I'd done.  
I prayed some days, in several ways, to be denied the sun.  
For the longest time I tried to find answers to ease the pain  
Self medicating every day to eliminate the rain

I placed myself behind theses bars to lock inside my guilt  
And now I find, I'm lost in time, I have begun to wilt  
Many years have passed away never to be seen  
I hesitate to ask myself is this just a dream

I placed myself inside this void so empty, deep, and cold.  
Tortured by the memories wrapped inside my soul  
And now I feel the pressure the time is closing in  
I pray once more, this life to die, another to begin

These walls I placed myself behind although some years ago,  
seem to crumble more each day some light begins to show  
The pain that dwelt so deep within will rise and dissipate  
The rain that poured will be no more now that I'm awake.

These bars I placed myself behind have now begun to rust  
No longer caged by fits of rage a lesson learned in trust  
As for the years that came and went unnoticed and unseen  
I find myself looking forward, no more the impossible dream

This void I placed myself within it too has begun to fill  
My soul refreshed anew a strengthening of my will  
As I soar above the clouds no more lost in time  
I thank you Lord for now I know I'm alive and doing fine.

- Mike Pounds

## September poem and porn

J'ever notice?  
How stay at homes  
best stay the course?  
How easy it is to bear  
the suffering of others if  
you've never felt that weight,  
been in that state,  
lived that fate,  
don't look at,  
listen to or  
encounter the troops  
(unless they're  
in a parade  
or at a funeral)?

While they steam and dream  
of being home to stay,  
sleeping through the night  
(or even during the day)  
without a piece under the pillow,  
a blade beside the bed, with  
some one who's loving and at  
ease about being next to them—  
or whatever floats their boat.

J'ever notice?  
How those who wear no uniform,  
except Chicken Hawk feathers,  
know exactly what norm people  
in cammies should swarm to?  
J'ever notice how no lever  
ever gets them  
out of that chair to  
find the facts hiding  
behind their backs?

J'ever?

- Horace Coleman

### Good News - Bad News



# Mistake

MICHAEL NELSON

It was a hot spring day. The air was clear. The sky was a deep cobalt blue. It was strange that I was walking on Highway One and no one was in sight. It was strange that the only things moving were the distant palm trees. It was strange that it was so quiet. The only sounds were my feet on the pavement and my occasional sigh. It was so very strange that I made a mental note to myself to never forget this moment. That this would be a great way to begin a story...

NOTE TO SELF: remember the day you were hitchhiking to the war.

That very same April day that I was hitchhiking to the war... was the very same day a group of Vietnam veterans were marching on Washington chanting "Hey Nixon, you can't hide, we charge you with genocide." It was the day that John Kerry asked congress "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?" Of course, my main thought on the day I was hitchhiking to the war

was "is this going to be the place I die for a mistake?"

Just as John Kerry knew it was a mistake...we knew it was a mistake...there never was a doubt that it was a mistake. Everyone just wanted to live through the mistake, go home and do something different. Some didn't get to do something different...the mistake ended them. Some made it back...but the mistake crippled them physically. Some made it back...but the mistake crippled them mentally. Some made it

back...but the mistake crippled them spiritually.

The definition of mistake is misguided or wrong. We're expected to learn from our mistakes...it appears that we haven't learned a thing.



MICHAEL NELSON WAS A CHAPLAIN'S ASSISTANT WITH THE 212TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION STATIONED AT DONG HA AND MARBLE MOUNTAIN IN 1971.



Late 60's VVAW marching



Dewey Canyon III, 1971



Miami Republican Convention, 1972



Second Statue of Liberty Takeover, 1976

# VVAW Kentuckiana 2007 Summer Activities

CAROL RAWERT TRAINER

I've been contacted by the GI Rights Hotline to be a resource here in Louisville for returning AWOL soldiers to Ft. Knox and providing them free legal counseling. Ken Nevitt, a lawyer from the Louisville Peace Action Community (LPAC), will provide free legal support and I believe I can get a few more lawyers involved. Volunteers from VVAW and LPAC will do the driving. We've been looking for some worthwhile projects and this seems to be one.

We have been involved in the "Iraq Summer" and "Americans Against Escalation in Iraq" efforts here locally to end the war. On Tuesday, October 28 we participated in the Bellarmine University event (with our banner hanging next to the stage). Andrew Horne was one of the speakers. During his speech, he recognized me and VVAW for "Taking a Stand." Over 700 attended the event in the auditorium calling for Sen. McConnell to "Take A Stand." A couple hundred marched to his home where we were met by some Gathering of Eagles types. Cops were there. We had a candlelight procession and a vigil/protest in front of Mitch McConnell's home. About 250-300 participated. We gave McConnell quite a scare. He was afraid to leave the house whenever we were around. He paid some thugs to appear in front of his house to support him. I would have been embarrassed if I were him.

I was also featured in *The Nation* magazine. Bob Moser spent a week here in Louisville watching the political and activist scene. I apologize that VVAW was not mentioned. My association with VVAW is what I'm most

proud of! I did mention it many times. But anyway, it is a good article about our local scene. He was very impressed with our activism and said we were the most active with the most members across the country. I do believe my arrest set the fire under some who were at the burn-out point, including me. You can see it at [www.thenation.com](http://www.thenation.com)

I had my third court appearance regarding the Memorial Day incident and all charges have now been dropped. Now I have to focus on the grievances I want to file against the Sheriffs Dept and the Metro PD.

The Kentuckiana chapter was involved in the march in DC September 15th.

As Harry (aka Harold) and I were taking the Metro from Bethesda Naval base, Maryland to Washington to attend the September 15 march I met and spoke to the sister of SSgt Jeremy Murphy who was also on her way to the march. Jeremy was one of the 7 soldiers who wrote the article "The War As We Saw It" that was in the *New York Times* on August 14. He was shot in the head by a sniper before the article was in print his sister told me. His sister invited me to visit Jeremy which I did on Sunday morning before we flew home. His parents (from Seattle) were also in the room with him. They along with his sister have stayed by his side for over a month. They were visibly worn out but said that the worst was behind them. He was sleeping but they woke him so he'd know I had been there. I spoke for a few minutes and told him how proud of him everyone was that he spoke out about the truth as he saw it. I told him that he had many supporters

that wished him the best.

So I just want to let everyone know about him and ask that if you have a minute, please drop him a card, letter or note to let him know how you feel. I am sure it will do wonders for him. He was very lucky to have survived. He has a very long road of treatment ahead of him. In addition to disfigurement he has severe traumatic brain injury. Two of his friends and co-workers who wrote the article with him died last week when their vehicle had a blowout and overturned. His sister said at first they wondered if it were a conspiracy to punish them for speaking out, but after contacting those who were there and in the know they said that the vehicle was speeding and went out of control when they had a blowout. It was an unfortunate accident. Now he is also mourning the loss of his friends.

I have learned that SSgt Jeremy Murphy was transferred recently from Bethesda Naval Hospital. He is in Casa Colina rehab center in Pomona, California. You can reach him at:

SSgt. Jeremy Murphy TLC (*circle TLC next to his name*)  
255 E. Bonita Ave  
Pomona, CA 91767

There were a lot of people and there were a lot of speeches that went on way too long. Everyone waited two hours in line to get the march started and they were chomping at the bit to get started. They kept screaming "March Now!" I learned we were waiting for Iraq Vets who were still speaking at the rally to lead us. One veteran came up to me and asked to hold the banner because

he wanted to be part of it. He was very proud to hold it. He was from DC. Then the police barricaded our march route and made us go to the front of the capitol, changing all the plans for the die-in in the road. It was complete chaos. No one knew what to do or what was going on. Finally some did die-in on the capitol lawn but it angered those who wanted to get arrested for dying-in on the street. So they had to charge the capitol steps. We left at 4pm. Unfortunately Harold was sick with a cold and we had to get out of there while he had the energy. I'm not sure how much the march accomplished but we did it.

On September 19, Insight Cable TV came over to film Harry and I for a program that aired on Channel 2 in Louisville called "Veterans: Our Front Line Heroes." We had a 30 minute interview about our military experience, but mostly we talked about our anti-war efforts and mentioned VVAW. I also wore my VVAW pin.

A group of us from the Kentuckiana chapter attended the 40th annual reunion. A HUGE thank you to everyone who made the weekend a success. It left me feeling very sad that here we are 40 years later and we (US) didn't learn a damn thing! I am fired up and ready to go again!

Anyway, that's about it. Never a dull moment.



CAROL RAWERT TRAINER, USAF 66-68, IS A VIETNAM ERA VETERAN AND IS THE LOUISVILLE, KY CONTACT FOR VVAW.



Dave Cline (center) 1989

## A Salute to Moe Fishman

BILL DAVIS

Moe Fishman, according to Peter Carroll, Chief of the board of governors of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, spent his entire life holding the Brigade together and led the fight to have the label of subversive organization removed. In 1950, Harry Truman had his Attorney General label the organization subversive,

requiring them to register with the government. This led to the mass resignation of the entire executive committee of the Brigade. Moe Fishman stepped in to become secretary-treasurer and began a two decade battle to reverse the subversive label.

After a federal court removed the subversive label in the 1970's,

Mr. Fishman wrote a colleague that the change might not be so good. He wryly suggested doing something subversive so as not to appear irrelevant to rebellious youth.

From a progressive veterans point of view, Moe and the forty surviving members of the Brigade, need do little to enhance their lives

for us. Their decision to fight in Spain, earning them the moniker of "prematurely anti-fascist," lives forever. We last saw Moe along the parade route of the Labor led anti-Iraq war march in New York City. He and the other Brigade members present were saluted by the veterans contingent as Moe is saluted by us all today.



## Our Louisville Contact Arrested

MARTY WEBSTER

On Memorial Day 2007, our Louisville Contact spent 12 hours in jail.

Following is a guest editorial statement that Carol presented live on TV on July 17, in Louisville Kentucky:

*I am a veteran, grandmother and member of Vietnam Veterans Against the War and Louisville Peace Action Community.*

*On Memorial Day I was arrested for protesting the Iraq War at the Abbey Road on the River Festival. The event organizer explicitly approved my protest. I believe in law and order and fully support law enforcement. I also believe in my right to speak out against my government when it is wrong. These beliefs are part of our democracy. On Memorial Day these beliefs collided and I spent 12 hours in jail. I was peacefully demonstrating against the war. Some did not like my message because it interfered with their enjoyment. They complained and*

*trashed my "End the War" sign. I objected. The sheriff, paid by the event organizer, removed me and a conflict occurred. Two charges were dismissed and I am completing community service to expunge a third charge. I remain proud that I stood up on Memorial Day against the war. People need to speak out against wrongs like the Iraq War. We need to remember our troops by ensuring they are not put in harm's way for a mistake. And our police and justice systems need to prevent collisions between law and order and free speech. This is critical to our way of life.*

I first spoke to Carol last summer when she called me and asked me to speak at a political luncheon she was hosting prior to the elections. I have had the pleasure of visiting Carol's home and the extreme privilege of joining with and her husband Harold in several mutual anti-war endeavors. Carol is 60 years old and I am 63. We are a growing

number of members in that age bracket or pretty close to it and for some of us our age is beginning to take a toll and our ranks are starting to thin. Some will say that at times it is becoming more and more difficult as an organization to stand the vigil.

In January of this year Carol Rawert Trainer picked up the banner and decided to form the Kentuckiana Chapter of VVAW. I traveled to Louisville to help support several of her early events and I proudly marched and demonstrated with her in DC. What I witnessed was a highly respected enthusiastic activist in action.

Carol told me she was very impressed with the 40th anniversary. She said didn't know what to expect since she never attended anything like that before. But, for Carol, the event was better than she ever could have expected. "Everything was perfect," she said, "the discussion panels, the layout and the food! It was great

to put a face with the names I've been seeing on the email list all this time." VVAW can be well proud of such a woman for she represents all that we could hope for in a Contact.

As our ranks begin to thin I truly believe it is the Carol Trainers of the world that will keep VVAW in the vanguard of the anti-war movement. Thank you Carol for standing up and filling the gap in our ranks, and thank you for allowing me to stand shoulder to shoulder with you as we oppose this insane war and the madness that pervades the White House and our Nation's Capitol. Thank you for joining our VVAW family, and thank you again for representing us in such a more than adequate and honorable manner.



MARTY WEBSTER IS A VVAW NATIONAL COORDINATOR.



Joe Miller and his Aunt Shorty, Eleanor Wayman, at VVAW's 40th Anniversary

# 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 ultra-left 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.

**Editorial Collective**  
 Barry Romo                      Joe Miller  
 Charlie Branson                Ellie Shunas  
 Jeff Machota                    Marty Webster

**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

## Absent of Grace and Mercy

RICH RAITANO

May 8, 1968

My thoughts were wildly conflicted as I sprinted through the maze of screened wooden hooches of 2nd Surgical Hospital in Chu Lai. Delta Company had made contact and the wounded and dead were on the way. I waited uneasily at the pad for Dust-Off to arrive. My heart pounded in my ears and my lungs sucked in the heavy night air.

One of our medics was a casualty. Andy, Fred, and Leroy were medics with Delta Company. In the distant darkness the familiar cadence of blades slicing into the dank air worked its way into my anxieties. I watched with pained anguish as Dust-Off approached, touched down, and the wounded were off loaded and rushed into the ER.

Gathering myself, I took a deep breath and followed them into the ER. The smell of blood and torn flesh filled the room. Doctors, nurses, and hospital medics went from litter to litter treating first those with the best chance of survival.

I slowly made my way to each litter taking names and assessing wounds while searching for the medic. He was not among them. One of the wounded told me that "doc was hit" but could tell me nothing more.

I rejected the thought of

where he could be and struggled with the persistent gnawing truth as I made my way out of the ER and trotted down the darkened road to Graves Registration. I had done this so many times before and I knew he was there, but I would not say it; I would not dare think it.

The reefer room was dimly lit and cool. I had come to appreciate this room and the macabre opportunity it offered for escape from the hot and oppressive air outside its walls. On most occasions the attendant would pull cool beers from an empty drawer while I examined the bodies of fallen comrades. With emotions shut down it had become nothing more than a daily routine: assess and evaluate the dead and wounded, drink a beer and exchange small talk. Such is the stolid necessity that separates the living from the dead.

GR was nothing more than a grim crypt with a never ending supply of dead. Time and countless visits had kindly dulled my senses. But that night, May 8th, the room would not willingly receive me. Struggling against my desire to turn and walk away, I made my way to the desk and asked about the recent delivery. The attendant led me to a drawer, pulled it open and unzipped the body bag.

It was Fred.

I stepped back as the hopelessness of his death struck me. The room went silent, and my head filled with an incredulous roar as the sinister, cold specter of death rushed past me once again; looked me in the eyes and moved on.

"GSW to the back of the head," the attendant reported with a casual indifference as he turned and went about his business; his own senses numbed long ago.

A tight, knotted pressure began building in my chest and my head ached as I looked on the lifeless body of my friend. His face was unshaven and sweat streaked...and warm still to the touch. I gently lifted his head and located the entry wound. No exit. I wept silently for my friend; his life now gone. My tears fell on his lifeless body.

I was just two months into my duties as a Casualty Reporter and I had seen much death and mayhem already, and much more would follow before my tour was over, but this one was personal and filled with cruel irony.

In mid-January, 1968, while pulling guard on LZ Sue, the word had come to us that another friend, Dave, had been killed. It was a friendly fire incident. As the platoon was moving through rice paddies, Dave reached up and grabbed the barrel of Fred's M-16

to pull himself up. A shot rang out and a round entered Dave's chest under his arm. In a matter of seconds he was dead.

Fred was devastated and noticeably changed when I saw him again sometime later. He was more subdued; quiet. The weight of that death hung heavy and hard on his spirit.

And now he was dead.

I turned and walked into the humid oppressive air. My body shook with anger and grief while the past, present and future collided in my head. I was physically and mentally exhausted from the goddamned daily bloody mayhem of torn and shattered bodies and watching men die. I had had enough.

I screamed at God that night as I made my way up the road. I could no longer contain my rage or my tears. I wanted the forces of Heaven to explain this to me.

The urgent cacophony of busy choppers was the only reply I heard that night as I made my way back to the ER under a star filled sky. God was silent...and Heaven was far from near. ☺

*RICH RAITANO SERVED IN RVN AS A MEDIC WITH THE 4TH BN / 3RD INF. RGT. (OLD GUARD) / 11TH LIB 1967-1968. HE WAS ASSIGNED THE DUTY OF CASUALTY REPORTER FOR HIS BN AND TASK FORCE BARKER THE LATTER PART OF HIS TOUR.*

Pentagon Can't Account for 180,000 Rifles and Pistols in War

