



THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

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Kent State University: The Start of the Crescendo

MICHAEL AND CYNTHIA ORANGE

Forty years ago, I survived combat in Vietnam and returned to my college campus, Kent State University (KSU), to finish the degree the war had interrupted. Instead of the bucolic haven for higher learning I remembered during my two years there, I arrived at the start of an anti-war protest sparked by President Nixon's

announcement two days earlier that he had directed US forces to invade Cambodia, a neutral country in the war. The next day, protesters, or agent provocateurs, burned down the campus ROTC building, a rickety WWII-vintage barracks that was slated for demolition. Governor James A. Rhodes capitalized on this opportunity to

issue a strong law-and-order response intended to help him with the Republican primary battle he was facing, so he ordered the Ohio National Guard to take control of the campus and squelch student dissent.

The sight on Main Street of M113 APCs with top-mounted machine guns trailing live ammo belts followed by National Guardsmen with 10-inch-long bayonets protruding from their M1 rifles marching towards my campus sent me into knee-buckling dismay and anger. Two days later, after numerous futile attempts to disperse angry crowds of students chanting, "Guard off campus," the unit's Troop G regrouped at the top of a hill next to Taylor Hall, took up firing positions at the order of "Guard, prepare to fire," and then opened up for thirteen seconds on a crowd of unarmed students. Most of their sixty-seven rounds went over heads, but fourteen found their targets, killing four and wounding nine, one of whom never walked again.

My wife, Cynthia, and I returned to the campus to participate in the 40th anniversary of these historic events. We traveled with our close friend, Nic, another KSU alumni who was on campus on that fateful day, May 4, 1970. He was one of the students that Troop G chased. Nic had to climb a fence to get away but when he heard the volley, he raced back toward the Guardsmen and helped Sandra Scheuer, a hearing and speech student on her way to class. A 30 Cal. round had exploded in her neck and the bleeding was profuse. Nic and others stayed with her until an ambulance finally came. "Nic was just like a soldier," a mutual friend told us, through her tears, upon our departure for our pilgrimage to KSU. "He wouldn't leave his fallen comrade." After ambulances carried Sandra and the other dead and wounded students away, Nic turned to the place where a head shot had killed Jeffrey Miller. "Someone dipped a flag in the pool of his blood and

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Agent Orange in Vietnam: Recent Developments in Remediation

TRAN THI HOAN

Testimony of Ms. Tran Thi Hoan before the US House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, The Pacific And The Global Environment July 11, 2010.

The subject of this hearing is to understand the needs of the victims of Agent Orange. I would like to contribute to this discussion

because I am one of those victims. I would like to share my personal experience with you today. My experience is not unique. I am one of hundreds of thousands of young people whose lives have been marked by our parents or grandparents exposure to Agent Orange.

I was born, as you see me, without two legs and missing a

hand. I was born on December 16, 1986 into a farming family in Đức Linh district of Bình Thuận province in Central Vietnam. My mother was exposed to Agent Orange earlier when she was farming her plot of land which turned out to have Agent Orange canisters buried in the soil. My older sisters and my older brother were born without any problems, but my younger brother was stillborn in 1988, due to an abdominal wall deformity.

When I was young, it was difficult for me to play with the other children, or attend school because, at that time, people didn't understand about Agent Orange. They thought that my condition was a result of bad karma in my family.

When I was 8 years old, I met a local journalist who suggested I go to Tù Dũ Hospital in Ho

Chi Minh City so that I could get better care and an education. With my parents' encouragement, I moved to Peace Village II, the Agent Orange center at Tù Dũ Hospital.

Since then I have been living in Peace Village II. I share the ward with 60 children suffering from the effects of Agent Orange. Let me tell you about some of my friends who share my home. They suffer from spina bifida, congenital limb deformity, multijoint stiffness, different types of syndromes, microcephaly, hydrocephalus, cerebral palsy, etc. I also know others such as Phạm Thị Thuý Dung, who is 16 years old and Phạm Thị Linh Nhi, her younger sister, 14, and their sufferings, but I do not know how they are classified. Dung was born in

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Fraggin'

BILL SHUNAS

When the Reverend Jones announced he was going to burn the Quran on September 11, everybody from David Petraeus to Barack Obama to Sarah Palin criticized him and rightly pointed out the potential blow back against US troops. Fortunately he didn't carry out the burning, but some copycats did. While this opposition to the Quran burning received much attention at the time, little attention is paid to the potential damage to the troops because of the opposition to the building of the Muslim cultural center near Ground Zero.

In this column I have previously expressed the opinion that there are reasons which foster the creation of fanatics who wish to commit terrorist acts against Americans. These include: (1) having US troops stationed in the Muslim holy land of Saudi Arabia, (2) not getting a fair shake for the Palestinians in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, (3) being responsible and not apologizing for the massive loss of children in Iraq between the two wars as a result of the bombings and sanctions and (4) supporting some of the more repressive governments in the Middle East. To move toward peace with the Muslim world would require an effort to work on these problems.

We must add something more to the list. We must not allow the prevention of the building of the Muslim cultural center (with prayer room) just because it happens to be two and a half blocks from Ground Zero. What an insult to the Muslim world. What an insult to potential friends around the world. What an inspiration for young Muslims to be persuaded to take up arms against Americans.

It is not popular to say so, but we do create conditions that

cause some people to wish to attack the US and kill Americans. To suggest that there were US caused conditions that led to Al Qaeda attacking on 9/11 does not mean that we "had it coming" or "deserved it." Those civilians who died that day and in the aftermath did not deserve it. But we can't deny that US foreign policy and intervention makes us many enemies. And it is not because they don't like our way of life as some would have you believe.

On 9/11 there were stories from surprised reporters in Muslim countries that large numbers of people felt elated over the Twin Towers attacks. Supposedly the elation was due to someone having the audacity to attack the superpower that they didn't like. Many of these people felt deflated after the realization of the extent of the civilian damage became known, but their first reaction points to the visceral anti-American feeling out there in the Middle East.

When there are so many Muslims with a dislike of the way America has treated that part of the world, it is no wonder that this is fertile ground for Al Qaeda wannabees. Or, to put it another way we can compare it to Vietnam where our adversary was successful in part because of popular support. Their soldiers were - to use the Maoist concept - the fish swimming in the sea of people. The same principle applied to other anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist wars of the time, some successful, and some not. The Al Qaeda terrorists certainly aren't Maoist revolutionaries, and there aren't that many of them, but the analogy of fish in the sea applies. The bad guys can move around freely among their people. Those people won't help us if we keep pissing them off. The sea will

remain full for the terrorists.

The job of the US should be to - here's those words again - win hearts and minds in the Muslim world in order to eliminate the fanatics' base, to prevent them from running free and to shrink their pool of disaffected youngsters.

We aren't winning a whole lot of hearts and minds when our right wing nut jobs are trying to prevent the building of the cultural center in Manhattan. Remember, the whole world is watching. Unfortunately it isn't only the right wingers who oppose the cultural center. I think that there is some serious bigotry here that needs to be confronted. To say that the cultural center shouldn't be built so close to Ground Zero is to say that all Muslims are some how responsible for 9/11. The branding of everyone in the group (Muslims) for being responsible for the acts of a few is the kind of bigotry that alienates the Muslim world.

There have been questions raised about the integrity of the imam who is the force behind the building of the cultural center. Whether he's a good guy or not is beside the point. The constitution says that this country shouldn't discriminate on the basis of religion. It has nothing to do with personalities. Shutting up about the cultural center is the right thing to do.

Many of the same people who are out front about opposing the building of the cultural center are the folks who talk loudest about supporting the troops. By opposing the cultural center they are making it harder on our troops. They are alienating more Muslims which leads to anti-Americanism which leads to more terrorist recruits. This will lead to longer unwinnable wars in places like Afghanistan

or new wars in Yemen, Somalia, or who knows where. New unnecessary wars mean new, unnecessary casualties which is not exactly what "supporting the troops" means. Opposing the cultural center may not lead to a specific war, but it is a contributing factor to the anti-Americanism that spawns war.

Support the Troops.

Build, Baby, Build.

The claiming by some that Obama is Muslim is also an insult to the Muslim world because it implies that there is something wrong with being a Muslim president. Obama is Christian, but his defenders are weak. They're all busy trying to prove he's Christian when they should be saying that even if he were Muslim he has the right to be president.

Personally I think he's a Buddhist. He seems like a Zen and basketball type of guy. And I heard that he had a great-great-grandfather that was born in Siam. And the word is out about the birth certificate. He got it from a dude named Stuart. Stuart is the guy with a place upstairs over a pawn shop on the east side of Chicago. He's the guy sitting there in the almost dark except for one light behind his back. There are some bars between his desk and you. When you get to the top of the stairs you need to get buzzed in because Stuart don't take no chances and don't trust you and don't like you. His green eye shades hide his eyes so you can't tell what he's thinking. He's the guy - if you need a guy - to get any kind of paper, including birth certificates. I hear Rahm Emanuel knows him well.



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

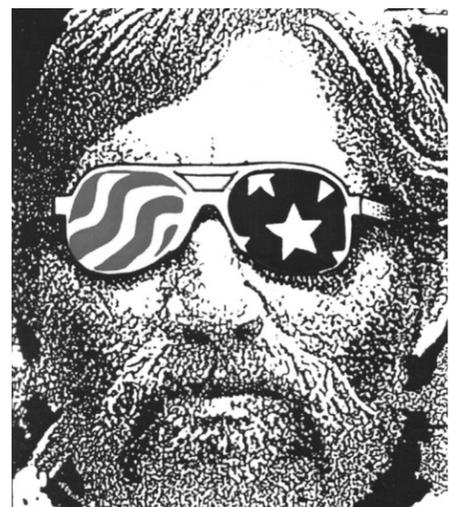
Booney Tunes

SUKIE WACHTENDONK

Hello everyone, just a note to let you all know that Jim's music and video's are now streaming online at Reverbnation.com. You can play individual songs/videos for free! Just go to the site, hit Artist Search & type in Jim Walktendonk. You can select and listen to 66 Songs and 5 video's including his HBO performance in DC in 1987. We're inviting you to become a fan, and part of his street team, by sending this to your friends if you can. We'd like to get his music out into the world. This was Zak's future plan for his dad - he wanted to load Jim's videos on Booneytunes.net before he died. So, Mission Accomplished, Son!

Please help us with this task...Go often to Reverbnation.com, play a few favorites, his ratings go up, and his music is heard by the masses - History you can dance to!

<http://www.reverbnation.com/#!/walktendonkjames>



Notes From the Boonies

PAUL WISOVATY

Sometimes the Army says stuff that's so stupid you almost feel embarrassed for them. Please note that I said almost.

According to an *Associated Press* story in early September, "At the height of the Iraq war, the Army routinely dismissed hundreds of soldiers for having a pre-existing personality disorder when they were more likely suffering from the traumatic stresses of war, discharge data suggest. Under pressure from Congress and the public, the Army later acknowledged the problem and drastically cut the number of soldiers given that designation...The Army denies that any soldier was misdiagnosed before 2008, when it drastically cut the number of discharges because of personality disorders and diagnoses of post-traumatic stress disorder skyrocketed."

So what accounted for the change of heart? In 2008, following an article in *The Nation*, "exposing the practice," the Defense Department suddenly found a whole lot more cases of PTSD and a lot fewer cases of personality disorder. Discharges for the latter dropped by 75%, according to *AP*, while PTSD diagnoses doubled. As Phil Ochs observed in "Talking Vietnam Blues," "Thank God for coincidence." Our IVAW friends will be forgiven for not having any idea what I just said.

Let's start from scratch here. I have never taken a course in psychology. Even having spent more than thirty years working with mental health agencies in my capacity as a probation officer, and having spent several years as a member of the local Mental Health Board, I know only slightly more about these issues than I know about quantum physics. I know less about mental health

than Sarah Palin knows about the English language. Fortunately for the reader, I am willing to acknowledge my ignorance and to ask for help when needed.

I therefore turned to my good friend Vanessa Duncan for assistance with this column. She is a former Marine and mental health professional with Douglas County Mental Health. I should add that, having produced a rough draft thereof, I ran it by her for review and approval before I sent it off to *The Veteran*. Had I not done so, I can only imagine her reading this, putting her head down on her desk, and thinking, "My God Paul, I thought I explained this all to you! What part didn't you understand?" So here's what I think I have figured out.

The *AP* story mentioned that soldiers routinely get some sort of mental health screening shortly after induction. If so, and if they are found to have this alarming "personality disorder," why is it not addressed prior to their deployment into a combat zone? I do not remember having undergone any such screening in 1966, although my guess is that, had I been Jack the Ripper, I would not only have passed the test, I would have been granted an immediate commission and deployed on the same plane with Lieutenant Calley. (Please reference "The Ballad of Rusty Calley," page 86, "Fear and Loathing In Las Vegas," Dr. H. S. Thompson, 1971.)

So what exactly is a personality disorder, and, the bigger question, can it easily be confused with PTSD? Apparently there are nine varieties of this disorder, all exhibiting different symptoms. The two most prevalent are avoidant and antisocial, and, interestingly, these two produce very different

sets of symptoms. The avoidant folks feel inferior, vulnerable to rejection, incompetent and socially inept. The antisocial ones feel superior to others, feel entitled to break rules, and believe that they can get by with it because they are charming and successfully manipulative. As may be inferred, neither, actually none of the nine, can be described as having a good grip on reality. Accordingly, they are unlikely to develop or find themselves for long involved in successful relationships, whether these be in a marriage, a job or a bowling league.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, as some readers are much more aware than I, is a completely different ball game. Vanessa has provided me with some very useful information on the subject, but space limitations prevent my sharing more than a small portion of it. Let's start with the obvious: "The essential feature of PTSD is the development of characteristic symptoms following exposure to an extreme traumatic stressor involving direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or threat to one's personal integrity, or witnessing" the same. Further, "The person's response to the event must involve intense fear, helplessness or horror." Intense fear, helplessness or horror? We're not talking about being bummed out because the Cubs missed the World Series again.

So what are the chances that a psychiatrist would confuse personality disorder and PTSD? I would think pretty small, unless, a big one, the veterans being interviewed don't want to talk about the "stressors" they have experienced. Sometimes we don't, you know, and I'm not just talking

about the Semper Fi folks. But if I'm the shrink, and I know that this vet has just spent a year in Iraq or Afghanistan, shouldn't I want to ask the vet about that? I mean, ask him or her more than once instead of just nodding my head and checking the no box on the PTSD questionnaire. Actually, it may be worse than that. I was told a few years ago, by two different IVAW vets, that a mental health professional does ask about PTSD, right before the vet is scheduled to fly home from the combat zone. The problem, if I'm lyin' I'm dyin', is that if the vet answers "yes" to those questions, he or she doesn't get to go home! They get to stay in country for counseling! And isn't that something to make the vet want to get into full disclosure?

In my line of work, I often work with vets who receive services from the Danville (IL) VA center, and occasionally from the center's PTSD unit. The PTSD people do a great job, and I'm very happy that they're there. Of course, vets can't get PTSD services unless they have that diagnosis. If they don't have it, they don't get the service, the benefits or, perhaps not irrelevantly, the thanks. They're just one more vet discharged with a personality disorder, which I'm guessing qualifies as bad paper. I'm almost surprised that the Army doesn't send them a bill for a year's room, board and MRE's.



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.



Iraq Veterans Against the War - Operation Recovery

The IVAW 2010 Convention Was a Huge Success!

MARTY WEBSTER

VVAW National Coordinator's Barry Romo and Marty Webster attended this year's IVAW annual convention, held at Huston-Tillotson University in Austin, Texas from July 8-11. Over 100 members and allies were in attendance. VVAW members Bill Perry and Ward Reilly were also in attendance. The 2010 Rise Together Convention weekend was a huge success!

The evening before the convention there was a protest outside the gate of Fort Hood which was covered by the *Killeen Daily Herald*. Members of the Fort Hood chapter--Jeff Grant, Michael Kern, Eric Jasinski, Victor Agosto, Kyle Wesolowski, Jake Wade--and Under the Hood Cafe Manager Cindy Thomas also organized GI outreach on and off base.

The meeting was called to order on Friday morning by Board Chair Geoff Millard. He offered opening remarks that highlighted IVAW's history of resistance and growth.

Marty Webster brought greetings from Vietnam Veterans Against the War and congratulated IVAW for a well run convention and how impressed he was with the overall maturing of the organization. He spoke in depth about the legacy of the Vietnam veteran and how this legacy will always be a part of IVAW.

The VA Health Care panel, moderated by Board Co-Chair Adrienne Kinne, featured VVAW's mental health provider Hans Buwalda and Paul Sullivan,

Executive Director of Veterans for Common Sense. The Reparations panel featured Caitlin Brown of Iraqi Health Now, Aaron Hughes of the Field Organizing Team, and Antonia Juhasz of the Chevron Program at Global Exchange, moderated by Geoff Millard.

The panels were followed by workshops covering VA benefits, gender and the military, organizing military families, corporate campaigns against oil companies, truth in recruiting, and developing a grassroots legislative agenda.

Marty Webster, VVAW; Deborah Forter, MFSO; and Denis Lane, VFP were appointed to the IVAW Advisory Board as the official representatives of their respective organizations. Ann Wright, Todd Ensign, Phyllis Bennis, Daniel Ellsberg and Ward Reilly were also appointed. Antonia Juhasz, Phyllis Bennis, Deborah Forter, Marty Webster and Ann Wright attended an inaugural meeting at the convention chaired by Antonia Juhasz

At night we had the opportunity to connect with local activists who are part of the Third Coast Activist resource center. Special thanks to Professor Robert Jensen and the Mamas of Color Rising for their hospitality and the amazing meal.

Saturday started out with a report from the IVAW Field Organizing Team (FOT) followed by a panel on Iraq and Afghanistan. The panel, moderated by NE Field Organizer Chantelle Bateman,



included Raed Jarrar, Iraq Consultant with the American Friends Service Committee, Phyllis Bennis of the Institute for Policy Studies, Ann Wright of Veterans For Peace, Kathy Kelly of Voices for Creative Non-Violence, and Tod Ensign of Citizen Soldier.

The FOT also led a workshop on building a GI and Veterans Bill of Rights campaign. A second workshop was led on war resistance titled "Ripping the Military a New Back Door."

In the afternoon, IVAW members discussed three important resolutions. The first, proposed by Victor Agosto, called for an end to the siege of Gaza by the Israeli military and government with support from the US

The second, proposed by Adrienne Kinne, was in support of immigrant rights and in opposition to SB 1070, the controversial Arizona bill.

The third, proposed by TJ Buonomo, was a call for prosecu-

tion of the Bush administration for war crimes. All three resolutions passed.

IVAW also voted in a new Board of Directors. Cameron White, Adrienne Kinne, Sara Beining, Jeff Key, Robynn Murray, Garrett Reppenhagen, Jeremy Stainthorp-Berggren, Joyce Wagner, TJ Buonomo, Robin Long, and Logan Mehl-Laituri.

In the evening, everyone traveled to the Under the Hood Café for a night of music and socializing with active duty personnel. \$3500 was raised for the coffee house and testimonies were heard from troops and military families.

Once again on behalf of VVAW congratulations to IVAW for hosting the 2010 Rise Together Convention.



MARTY WEBSTER IS A VVAW
NATIONAL COORDINATOR



Campaign Update

Banished Veterans Defense Committee

JAN A. RUHMAN

They deport US combat Veterans don't they?

You bet your ass they do, from Vietnam to Afghanistan and Iraq.

As I rush to meet the deadline to submit this update on the plight of US Military Veterans facing deportation I have become aware of two brothers in Colorado, both United States Marine Corps Veterans, who served in Vietnam, and two United States Marine Corp Veterans in California, who served in Iraq.

I think it is important to point out that since I began working on this issue in January of 2009 I have become acutely aware that every single vet facing deportation came from poor immigrant families and served in the combat arms branches of the US military, the Army and the Marines. They have names like Segovia, Castro, Valenzuela, Coombs, Cervantes, Alvarez and Nguyen just to name a few.

Not a single one of the hundreds I have met, spoken to, emailed or whom we have chronicled through accounts of family and friends, served in the Coast Guard, the Navy or the Air Force. That alone should tell us all we need to know about who

they are and why they have run afoul of the law, or have untreated PTSD.

But let's look a little closer at some of these men. First let's take a look at the two brothers in Colorado, former Marines who served in Vietnam:

Valente Valenzuela. USMC 1967-1969. One tour in Vietnam with GulfCo. 3/3 1968. Two Bronze Stars, Honorable Discharge. Rated by the VA with PTSD. Convicted of and being deported for domestic violence.

Manuel Valenzuela. USMC 1971-1974. One tour in Vietnam 1973. Honorable Discharge. Fighting with the VA for PTSD Disability Rating. Convicted of and being deported for resisting arrest.

Let's fast forward to today's warriors. Two Iraq Veterans, also former Marines, from Southern California:

Jose Roberto Benitez Segovia. USMC 2002-2006. Two tours in Iraq. Rated by the VA in Long Beach, California with PTSD. Honorable Discharge. Convicted of and being deported for false imprisonment in an attempt to stop his fiance from leaving his sorry ass. The second woman to do so since returning home to a grateful

post 9/11 nation.

Christian Castro. USMC 2003-2008. Two tours in Iraq. Honorable Discharge. Rated by the VA with PTSD. Convicted of and being deported for serious weapons charge.

Banished Veterans Defense Committee Mission Statement

To seek Justice for America's Military Veterans who served our nation in the Army, the Navy, the Marines, the Air Force and the Coast Guard who are facing arrest, imprisonment and deportation by amending the Immigration and Naturalization Act to grant all current Active Duty US Military Members and Veterans the status of "US Nationals" in perpetuity. Note, the INA provides that a non-citizen national is "a person who, though not a citizen of the United States, owes a permanent allegiance to the United States." 8 USC. 1101(a)(22).

To seek Justice retroactively for all those veterans banished from America's shores by repatriation and "Welcome Home" through education and lobbying members of Congress and the American People.

It's clear to me that the

deportation of US Military combat veterans will continue unabated unless we continue our hard fought and successful efforts to build a National Banished Veterans Defense Committee. Similar to VVAW's National Campaign for the Gary Lawton Defense Committee back in the 1970's, raising funds for under paid pro-bono attorneys and coordinating lobbying efforts in Congress to change the law will put an end to it. I hope you can make a serious effort in your State, County and Congressional District to organize and bring justice to these veterans.



JAN A. RUHMAN WAS AN ACTIVIST MEMBER OF VVAW IN THE 1970'S IN LOS ANGELES AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AND SAN DIEGO CONTACT FOR VVAW, A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE BANISHED VETERANS DEFENSE COMMITTEE, MEMBER OF VFP IN SAN DIEGO AND OPERATIONS COORDINATOR FOR VETSPEAK.ORG A BLOG RUN BY FORMER MEMBERS OF THE US MILITARY WITH THE INTENT TO PUBLISH VETERAN'S VOICES. JAN. RUHMAN@VETSPEAK.ORG OR 858-361-6273.

Why We Do What We Do

STEVE CRANDALL

Every year, right around the Fourth of July, our California Central Coast VVAW Chapter does two Ventura County street fairs, back to back venues that can be a push for us "old" veterans. Sometimes we barely break even. Every year we ask one another, "Why do we do it?"

We set up a booth with our chapter banner, "Honor the Warriors, Not the War" across the back, stock it with issues of *The Veteran*, VVAW hats, shirts and pins and a pile of the new round "Honor the Warriors, Not the War" stickers. Agent Orange information sheets join Depleted Uranium and TBI-special hazards of today's wars, PTSD and the rising toll of suicide. A brochure rack holds fliers from the various Vets service groups.

Hand-lettered updates on the obstacles returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan must

overcome to re-enter a society that barely noticed their absence and doesn't understand what they have been through attract readers who engage us to learn more.

We raise an American flag at the corner of our booth, a funeral flag that belongs to Jack, Treasurer and Vietnam Navy veteran. Jack's father was a WWII veteran. A large map of Vietnam with pins of different colors for veterans of different services mark where they served in country. When people come by and stop, sometimes at a distance, and quietly look at the map for a while, we ask if by chance they were in Vietnam. As a result, we hear many stories as the pin is placed. We come closer together when it is realized that we have this era of life in common.

Carl, a former Seabee and chapter member takes his station at the front table to pass out our VVAW peace stickers. Shortly

after returning home from his second tour in Vietnam, Carl suffered a service connected disability and has to work from his wheelchair. He always keeps an upbeat presentation that matches his white beard and sparkling blue eyes. The peace stickers are a great hit with the youngsters and many adults, passing out stickers he reminds everyone to have a wonderful day.

Most of our interesting conversations are with Vietnam vets. But a gentleman from Hungary said he had been there with us, but on the other side working for NVA intelligence. We had conversations with Iraq and Afghanistan vets and the families of kids who are over there for their fifth or sixth tour. Liberal Ventura is the kindest to us. We typically take in more donations and product sales at the one-day 4th of July event than we do at

the two-day event in right-wing dominated Camarillo where we have to put up with the occasional stony stares and the even rarer Tea Party crazies. We didn't expect to get much support or interest this year since the media put the war on the back burner as well as the bad economy being a burden for many folks. But we knew no matter how it turned out that we would be there educating the public about veteran's needs and the true cost of war. This is what we do and having the opportunity to turn an ear or open up a mind to think about the prospects of peace instead of war is why we do it.



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

The Never Ending War

BARRY ROMO

*Barry Romo gave this speech at the Bavarian House of Parliament where he spoke as part of a visual arts program about war and its consequences created from the German book *abseits der Schlachtfelder* by Till Mayer.*

42 years ago my nephew was killed in Vietnam.
We served in the same area, at the same time.
I brought his body home to our family.
A flag draped, sealed military aluminum coffin.
Our family could not view his remains.
His death almost destroyed us with anger and sorrow.
35 years ago the U S war in Vietnam ended.
The bullets and bombs stopped but the casualties and the sorrow continue.
We sprayed Dioxin based defoliants with rainbow sounding names.
Agent Orange. Agent Purple. And many more.
We contaminated over ten per cent of their land.
But worse we contaminated the people.
Tens of thousands of deaths.
Tens of thousands of birth defects.
Continuing to this day.
In fact they are worse than land mines which can be found with detectors.

I have been fortunate to meet a number of victims from Vietnam.
These heroes have overcome their birth defects.
But without superpower help.

We have to support these victims.
Students around the world are taught when wars begin and end.
But that is not adequate.
Wars continue after the bullets and bombs.
Casualties continue, after the bullets and the bombs.
You may look at me and think, "not that bad for an infantry combat veteran."
But you would miss what's going on inside me.
You would miss the guilt and the pain of losing my nephew.
The pain of surviving.
I wish I was an isolated case.



BARRY ROMO IS A VVAW NATIONAL COORDINATOR.

Putting PTSD and Military Suicides in Perspective

JOHN KETWIG

Back in 2003 when America first invaded Iraq, those "Support Our Troops" magnetic stickers shaped like yellow ribbons were all the rage. This time would be different, the pro-war crowd beamed. This time wouldn't be like the Vietnam fiasco. This time the American people would let our military know that we, uhh, well, we support them. We didn't so much know what that meant as we recognized what it didn't. According to the myth, the American people had failed to support the troops returning from Vietnam. In fact, some Americans had reportedly even spit upon returning soldiers! The primary source of these stories was, surprisingly, the military itself!

Soon after the first GIs began to return from The Nam, American popular culture began to become aware of Vietnam Syndrome, a mysterious malady that supposedly infected Vietnam veterans. The symptoms included anger, bitterness, violence, withdrawal, depression and a universal reluctance to talk about their (our) wartime experiences. Not long after the first GIs began to return from Operation Desert Storm in the early 90s, we began to hear about Gulf War Syndrome with similar symptoms. When George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq came in 2003 there were a few weeks of patriotic pro-war hysteria, but all too soon the casualties began to return home and Gulf War Syndrome began to be a factor once again. This was

a time when those yellow ribbon "Support Our Troops" magnets were everywhere.

Sadly, as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have dragged on, the incidence of PTSD and suicide within our military and after the troops' return, has become a very serious concern. These are our children, loved ones and neighbors. The American people are terribly concerned. What has gone wrong?

In today's business environment, there is a huge emphasis upon exceeding (the customer's) expectations. Perhaps the flurry of pseudo-patriotism we witnessed in 2003 has given our troops an unrealistic expectation of what the war will do to their psyches. If there were no parades after Vietnam, this time will be different! They survive the war and return home feeling confident that they will not be subject to an adverse public opinion. Of course, back in the 70s the vast majority of public opinion was very favorable toward Vietnam vets and had little to do with our generation's problems. Public support can not and does not offset the trauma and horror of war, and today's GIs are exposed to traumas and horrors equal or greater than anything the Vietnam vets experienced. The Pentagon has developed far worse and effective weapons and the enemy has too. In our day, the President and Vice President of the United States would never have supported the use of torture.

In the current American

atmosphere of far-right pro-war fervor and phony, deadly patriotism, a depressed, damaged veteran does not exemplify the Be All You Can Be/Army Of One mold. Young Americans, returning from the horrors, are finding an environment far different from their expectations. They are alone, frustrated and angry. Hurting. There are few jobs, limited opportunities and their country is divided and hostile. Far from exceeding their expectations, we have created an unfriendly, hard and harsh economic, political and social environment. Today we have the Tea Bag movement idolizing Sarah Palin, waving their flags and espousing a philosophy that what's theirs is theirs and they will resist any attempt to create sharing, assistance or dialogue with those less wealthy. Returning vets hear, "This is not your daddy's America," loud and clear, and they are especially hurt by the realization that the America they were defending no longer exists. As are we all. America has not supported them, despite the yellow magnets still adhering to the rear of SUVs. There is precious little support available to the disadvantaged in today's America. An Iraq war veteran, just like a Vietnam veteran, has been used until his or her usefulness is gone, then discarded by an uncaring military machine. They are alone with their memories and nightmares. Few recognize the truth of the problem, and fewer try to help. Among those that

do, clearly Iraq Veterans Against the War and Vietnam Veterans Against the War are at the leading edge. It's not about patriotism, it's about humanity and respect and if those qualities no longer drive our country's politics they are at the very heart of one combat veteran's respect and caring for another.

Perhaps one day America's militarism will collapse. A financially and morally bankrupt nation will tire of the expense and the pathetic lack of real results from our country's adventuring. Perhaps one day we will not send recruiters into high schools to entice another generation of naive young people to suffer and bleed for the good of our military-industrial profiteers. Perhaps one day our government will admit that the Dioxin in Agent Orange is as toxic as the Dioxin in Times Beach, Missouri and the radioactivity in depleted uranium is as toxic as the fallout that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Until those days, our veterans will continue to bear the brunt of America's militarism and empire-building. As veterans, we can offset a great deal of the rhetoric and baloney by simply holding out a hand to today's returning vets. It is what they expect, and it is the foundation upon which VVAW has been built.



JOHN KETWIG IS AN AUTHOR, VIETNAM VET AND MEMBER OF VVAW.

Make New Friends But Keep the Old

MARTY WEBSTER

Text of VVAW National Coordinator Marty Webster's speech to the membership of VFP at their Annual Meeting and 25th anniversary at the Holiday Inn in Portland Maine.

This weekend you are here to remember and to apply those memories as you plan for the future. First of all I bring greetings not only from the national office of VVAW but from our entire membership. Most of all I bring our heartfelt congratulations on this the occasion of your 25th anniversary weekend.

Today I would like to speak to the Vietnam Veterans who are here today. Some are members of VVAW. Some are members of VFP. Some are members of both organizations.

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 called United States. 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 new 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 a sense of tradition and legacy. In many respects, the community of Vietnam veterans is diverse, in politics, in culture, in race, and in religion. 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 and VFP are 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 and Afghanistan has breathed new life into our organizations. Vietnam veterans are family and we must look 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. Vietnam veterans 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. The purity of our message must be maintained.

In the Old Testament, Jeremiah, known as the weeping prophet, complains to God concerning the current situation he is facing. "Let my eyes stream with tears day and night, without rest, over the great destruction which overwhelms my people, over her incurable wound. If I walk out into the field, I look and see those slain by the sword; If I enter the city, I look and see those consumed by hunger. Even the priest and the prophet forage in a land they know not. Why have you struck us a blow that cannot be healed? We wait for peace, to no avail; for a time of healing, but terror comes instead."

VVAW, VFP must stand shoulder to shoulder with IVAW as one impregnable veterans 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.

George Jessel (1898-1981) was a screen, stage, radio, and television actor and comedian. He also made over 300 after-dinner speeches in support of political, humanist, and social causes. He was nicknamed "The Toastmaster General" due to his appearances at many testimonial functions and dinners for various celebrities. He died on 24 May 1981 in Los Angeles, California, USA of a heart attack. He would always close with a toast utilizing an old girl scout song which I have slightly altered for this occasion:

Make new friends,
But keep the old.
One is silver,
And the other, gold.
A circle's round
It has no end
That's how long
We are gonna be friends.
A fire burns bright,
It warms the heart.
Many of us have been friends,
From the very start.

VVAW has one hand,
VFP has the other.
Put them together,
We have each other.
Silver is precious,
Gold is too.
and together
we will see things through.
Across the land
Across the seas
Friends forever
We will always be.

May God bless VFP. May God bless VVAW and may God protect and bring home safely our young men and women who have been placed in harm's way for a lie.



Shock Waves

RAY PARRISH (REVIEWER)

Shock Waves: A Practical Guide to Living with a Loved One's PTSD

Cynthia Orange

Hazelden Publishing (2010)

This is the most appropriately titled book I've read and I strongly recommend it. It's great reading not only for friends and family members, but also for veterans who are struggling with PTSD.

Unlike many books on PTSD which are heavy reading because of all the footnotes I just couldn't put it down. Much of the book could be a transcript of the calls I get on the hotline all the time. (If the NSA would release them.)

This work is full of reflections and advice from dozens of spouses, children, parents, siblings and friends. In addition, this book addresses every aspect of the

subject including issues raised by all causes of PTSD. This reminds the reader of how widespread trauma really is and helps them keep their own struggles with PTSD in perspective. I love the many checklists, poems and quotes. Especially noteworthy is that the 12 step program is explained for a "non-theist." This is one of a number of examples that makes this work appealing

to interested people. There are understandable descriptions of the many symptoms of PTSD, advice on finding help and extensive information on "self-care," addiction and attentive listening. I predict that this will be THE book most passed around among family members of veterans.



RAY PARRISH IS ONE OF VVAW'S MILITARY COUNSELORS.

Don't Ask–Don't Tell!

BILL JOHNSTON

I recently pulled out my Air Force enlistment record and discovered during my four years I was never asked!

When did the military and congressional homophobes start obsessing over gays in the military?

When I pulled my DOD discharge papers out of a basement filing cabinet I found transfer orders, training records, military drivers license, DD Form 214 (needed for any veterans benefits). I found a copy of my original enlistment form. Other than the fact I was an awful speller I discovered something else. Apparently in 1966 the US Military didn't care if anyone was gay. I searched for the question. Looked for any group listed that might tip someone off to a hidden proclivity – nothing, not a thing, zero!

No one it seems gave a hoot in 1966! What changed by 1992 when this incredibly idiotic

policy kicked in? An idiotic policy addressing a problem that didn't exist. Did it come about due to a combination of homophobic Army officers and theocratic right wing politicians? One can only speculate. Was it a draft dodging president, ill at ease around uniforms and harboring an embarrassment for running out as others in his generation served in a wartime military? Add to the mix Clinton's total lack of understanding of military law and you begin to understand how we got a really dumb policy on gays in the military.

How do I know there was no problem? Well, my job in the Air Force was as a Legal Specialist. I worked in the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate or more commonly known as The Legal Office. Any violation of the law or policy came through us, we knew about it! Every morning we read the police blotters for the military and civilian police. In 1967, I

was in charge of reviewing over 1000 Article 15's (the military equivalent of misdemeanors) for three major Air Force Bases. I saw attempted murder, rape, assault, incest, bad checks, adultery (punishable in the military) and gold smuggling – but never did I see any incident or policy violation involving homosexual conduct. Conduct that would have fallen under Article 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, widely referred to as "conduct unbecoming."

During my enlistment I was assigned to Judge Advocate Offices at Air Force Bases with thousands of Airmen. I lived in the barracks on three occasions (I took lots of showers with lots of guys) and within this band of brothers, no doubt, were gay Airmen. But we all did our duty, served our country, respected one another and found a common pride in the uniform of the United States Air Force.

The current policy of "Don't Ask–Don't Tell" was established to fix something not broken. It is a policy based on ignorance denying patriotic Americans the right to serve their country. President Obama should show the same political courage and moral sense Harry Truman did when he desegregated the US Military by Executive Order. The President needs to issue an Executive Order abolishing "Don't Ask–Don't Tell" policy now!

Surprisingly maybe more to the point is a quote from the father of modern American Conservatism and US Air Force General, Senator Barry Goldwater. He said; "If I'm in a foxhole I don't care if the guy next to me is straight or not—I just want him to be able to shoot straight!"



BILL JOHNSTON WAS A SGT IN THE USAF FROM 1966-1970.

“Don't Ask, Don't Tell” Decision Will Wait on Pentagon Evaluation



On Veterans Day, Acknowledge Grief as Well as Service

CYNTHIA ORANGE

"I hate Veterans Day and all days like it," the young veteran with vacant eyes and clenched fists confided. "I hate their parades, the yellow ribbons, being told I'm a hero. If they knew what I saw and did over there...I'm no hero."

"Over there" meant a tour in Afghanistan and three in Iraq. He came home with a heart filled with pain and a head filled with ghosts. Two of his buddies were killed in action in Iraq and five others committed suicide when they came home. He came home with four purple hearts, a traumatic brain injury and a raging case of PTSD.

We are a country of short memories and quick fixes. Have a headache? Take an aspirin. Fight a war? Get over it. Be proud. Smile when we wave our flags and thank you for your service. Be thankful you came home in one piece. Appreciate our patriotic gestures; let us feel good about ourselves for this one moment so we can get on with our own lives and forget about yours.

When I married Michael, I soon discovered I had also married Vietnam and the trauma he carried from his combat experience.

Throughout our 37-year marriage, we've both learned that so much about surviving trauma and loving a trauma survivor has to do with loss and grief. My conversation with my Iraq veteran friend

photograph his wife and daughter at the Wall, to trace the names of his fallen brothers. Now I know we just scratched the surface of loss on that pilgrimage to the Wall all those years ago.

relationships are not the same, and it's important to mourn what we have lost.

It's also important to acknowledge the enormous grief many of our newest veterans carry deep inside them. To realize that for many vets like my friend, praise on Veterans Day—although well intentioned—can be burdensome and confusing. Many like him (and like so many Vietnam veterans I know) don't feel praise-worthy. They say they feel angry and used by a country that lied to them.

Before we rush to extend a hand to veterans in gratitude for their service this Veterans Day, perhaps we should first offer them a compassionate embrace. Then pause to grieve together.

**War changes us forever—
all of us: veterans, spouses,
children, healers and citizens.**

reminded me of those lessons.

I remember when our family first visited the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC. It struck me as a large, dark, wing of death. Our daughter and I stood at each end of 1969-1970, Michael's tour of duty, and I was taken aback by the enormity of loss as I ran my fingers over the grooves of letters that formed the names of the dead.

These losses are tragic, but they are tangible, even touchable. I understood my husband's wrenching sobs of mourning, but my own sense of personal loss confused me. Michael did not die. He stood physically whole to

Michael and I recently facilitated a discussion about grief and loss at a VFP convention. "What does war take from soldiers, veterans and those who love them?" we asked the crowd. Their responses included things like: Innocence. Patriotism. Love. Relationships. Money. Jobs. Sanity. Security. Tranquility. Trust. Courage. Loyalty. Feelings. Self. Purpose. Laughter. Family. God. Country. Dreams. Future. Youth. Friends. Pride.

War changes us forever—all of us: veterans, spouses, children, healers and citizens. This doesn't mean we can't grow stronger and healthier. But our lives and our



CYNTHIA ORANGE IS AUTHOR OF *SHOCK WAVES: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO LIVING WITH A LOVED ONE'S PTSD*. SHE CO-FACILITATES A CAREGIVERS' SUPPORT GROUP IN ST. PAUL, MN. SHE AND HER HUSBAND, MICHAEL, ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED WITH *VVAW, VFP AND VETSPEAK.ORG*.

A Tidy Battlefield

When Sergeant Burns had his arm blown off,
someone picked it up and placed it on his litter.
Say what you like about our tactics in the 'Nam,
but we always kept a tidy battlefield, we weren't ones to leave the odd arm or leg
just lying around.

Intestines spilling out, skull cap gone AWOL,
nothing we couldn't manage,
nothing we couldn't gather.
Tagging and bagging, cursing and gagging,
we did our best to honor our pledge,
leave no one behind, not even a foot.

A lifetime of sleepless nights later,
I wish we'd been as diligent
with all the unexploded ordnance
we left behind,
land mines, bombs, artillery shells,
and those M79 grenades I fired
into tracer-laced darkness,
then walked away the next day,
leaving them in paddy muck,
undetected,
no return address,
no expiration date.

— Paul Hellweg

VA Health Care Presentation

JOHANNA (HANS) BUWALDA

This is the text of my presentation at the IVAW Convention Panel on VA Health Care, July 9, 2010 in Austin, Texas.

A few days ago, I was sitting on the terrace of a coffee shop in my neighborhood in Chicago writing this presentation, when one of those giant firecrackers went off that sound like a bomb. I jumped. 16 years ago I left the war zone I used to live in, and I still jump. But that is not my point. Two women with two little girls, maybe six years old, were sitting at the table next to mine. So this bomb-firecracker went off and the one woman told the girls: "That is patriotism." A conversation followed between the four of them that went like this:

First woman: "To show your love for your country, you clean it."

First little girl: "you put trees in it."

Second little girl: "you take care of your garden."

The other woman: "And you stop using so much gasoline."

It just struck me that there would be no need to write this presentation or have this convention if we had all had such conversations with our parents when we were six years old.

I want to acknowledge that there are many VA staff who are competent, motivated and compassionate. There also are many veterans who get their health care needs met at the VA. Some VA hospitals do a much better job than others.

That said, there are many veterans who do not get their needs met at the VA, many who won't even consider going to the VA, many who can't access the VA for various reasons. As IVAW understands well, this is a problem. After all, the third principle of IVAW is: Full benefits, adequate healthcare (including mental health) and other supports for returning servicemen and women.

I am a therapist, I don't work for the VA, but I have had the privilege to work with many veterans over the past few years. I would like to share a few things that I have learned as a mental health provider about working with veterans, that may be useful for the VA to know as well. Here is what I have seen while working with veterans who have difficulty

getting mental health services at the VA. Here is a letter to the VA:

Dear VA mental health services:

Outreach

Outreach is key. Waiting for veterans to come to your office is frequently futile. I know double booking takes care of the problem of filling all appointments, but it doesn't take care of all veterans. In fact, you may miss the veterans who need you most. I know you have established vet-centers, and that is a great step in the right direction, but they are still centers veterans need to go to. How about leaving your offices and going to meet veterans where they are at? I mean that quite literally. Go in the shelters, bars, under the bridges, veteran meetings, fundraisers, meet the leadership, listen for who may need help and offer it.

Checklists and Paperwork

I suggest that you put your checklists and paperwork to the side and listen first. My guess is that checklists and forms are an efficient way to learn about symptoms and that you want 'outcome measures.' However, your paperwork is also a very efficient way to turn veterans off. Checklists will tell you something about symptoms, but checklists will tell you nothing about a veteran's life, nothing about what veterans want for their lives and what they believe stands in the way of reaching their goals. Checklists and paperwork will not make a veteran feel truly heard and cared for. Military mental health services seem to operate with the goal of making service personnel 'combat ready.' I urge that the VA not operate with a similar goal of just helping veterans become 'civilian functional.' This goes beyond symptoms: veterans want to thrive.

Trust

Which brings me to another issue that seems to be understood by only a limited number of VA providers: trust needs to be earned. I don't envy you! Many of the veterans I work with see you as part of the same establishment that betrayed them every step of the way. You will have to work very hard, perhaps even harder than me, to earn that trust. I suggest that you take a good look at the

providers who are best liked and respected by the veterans in your hospital. I bet that you will find that these providers treat their patients with respect, kindness and patience. That these providers are welcoming, listen, follow-up, always remember their patients' names, and often their spouses' as well. And that they don't see their patients as non-compliant when they don't follow doctor's orders, but that these providers try to find what concerns the veteran has, what happened that the veteran decided or wasn't able to follow through. They probably always assume that the veteran wants healing. I mean, nobody wishes what some veterans suffer through every day to their worst enemy!

I can assure you, VA health care, that I try to practice all of these things. I have never felt used or abused by a veteran, not even those that you sometimes seem to be so afraid of, the veteran with addiction problems. My phone is always on. No veteran has ever called me at three in the morning for some frivolous reason.

Please, VA, get rid of the idea that veterans are out to cheat the system. Maybe some are, but in my experience the vast majority are not. Even if they are, remember that they were betrayed many times over. They served in our name and are going to be affected all their lives, they have the right to be cared for and receive the best care possible.

Anger

Many of you seem to be more afraid of anger than seems reasonable to me. I understand that you need to keep yourself safe, and I know that some veterans are afraid of their own anger because they know what they are capable of doing.

But maybe you need to understand that anger is much more than a symptom of PTSD, that veterans have very good reasons to be angry. Some of them feel cheated or dumb or gullible because they bought into what the recruiters promised, what they learned as children (the US is the greatest country, serving in the military is an honor, etc). They are angry about being forced to fight in an unjust war, angry about trusting a leadership that turned out not to be trust worthy. Angry about not being taken care of when returning, about civilians

not being particularly aware that a war has been going on, about not getting welcomed home after deployment, about being betrayed over and over again.

And I am sure that you know that veterans were trained to not express their sadness, frustration, anxiety, grief, unhappiness and other emotional pain. Only anger was useful in combat.

Believe me, I don't like anger very much either, but I know the veteran dealing with it likes it even less. In my experience, the anger is seldom if ever about me or even directed at me, and is almost always something that a veteran wants to talk about resolving. You have to handle anger and you have to learn not to get caught up in it. Also do not deny veterans services because they expressed their feelings with anger. They may actually need you the most during that time.

Moral injury

Some veterans have told me that when they tried to talk about their moral questions about the war, the US's involvement in the war, and their personal involvement and actions in the war, they are being told that the VA is not a place to talk politics. However, how can providers consider treating veterans without talking about the moral questions that veterans ask themselves every day? The questions that make it so hard to get up and face themselves? Am I still a good person, Will I still be loved if my family would know what I did out there? Will they be afraid of me if they knew what goes on in my mind when I am angry?

These are very hard to talk about, and very hard to listen to as a mental health provider as well. But these questions are at the heart of healing.

We are not dealing with internal issues only, as a provider we have to be willing to look at the larger social political issues surrounding the veterans' life.

If you cannot hear those stories, you cannot work with veterans as a mental health provider. I suggest though, that you practice very good and comprehensive self-care.

Military Sexual Trauma (MST) and Women

continued on next page

VA Health Care Presentation

continued from previous page

I want to say something about MST and women. I am so glad that some of you have realized how intimidating your VA medical centers can be for women. Just entering one of your hospitals can bring up a slew of memories of being a woman in a sea of males. Maybe my point here has more to do about outreach than MST and women. I let women choose where they want to meet because I want them to feel as safe as possible. Even though my office is in a very small wellness center, the women seldom choose to meet there. Even if you have separate women's clinics (and I applaud you for that), she still has to go to the pharmacy for example.

In my experience, 100% of women have some level of MST ranging from feeling unsafe to rape. But please don't forget that while women are still not supposed to be in combat positions, they are. Seeing dead bodies, losing buddies, and/or killing people,

has become gender non-specific. Please remember to deal with combat related issues. In women veterans, PTSD is not limited to MST.

On the other hand, please also remember that in male veterans, PTSD is not limited to combat. In my experience, 10% of male veterans have experienced some level of MST.

Racism

I have noticed that veterans of color who have used the VA have not discussed their experience with racism. Maybe this is not across the board and just limited to the veterans I have met. I hope so. But just in case it is not, I want you to know that when I meet with veterans of color, racism almost always becomes a topic of conversation. When discussing stressors and trauma while serving in the military and/or while deployed, experience with racism almost always turns out to

have a major impact on the mental health of that veteran.

Dear VA providers, some of you are going to say that I care too much or that I don't know how to keep appropriate boundaries. I don't agree with you. I believe that we should all care, we can't care enough. This country sent these, often very young, men and women out into grave danger in our name, for our sake. We have more than an obligation to care for them. They didn't go home at 5 o'clock thinking that the nation could wait being safe till tomorrow. They still can't go home at 5 o'clock free of suffering the aftermath of war.

If the VA doesn't have enough people to provide that level of care, they need to get more. It all boils down again to the fact that we have an obligation to those we sent out to defend us, regardless of how misguided these wars may be.

A couple of days ago, a veteran posted a video entitled "All is Not Okay (music by Seether)." The video was powerful, but it was actually a comment below the video that caught my eye. It

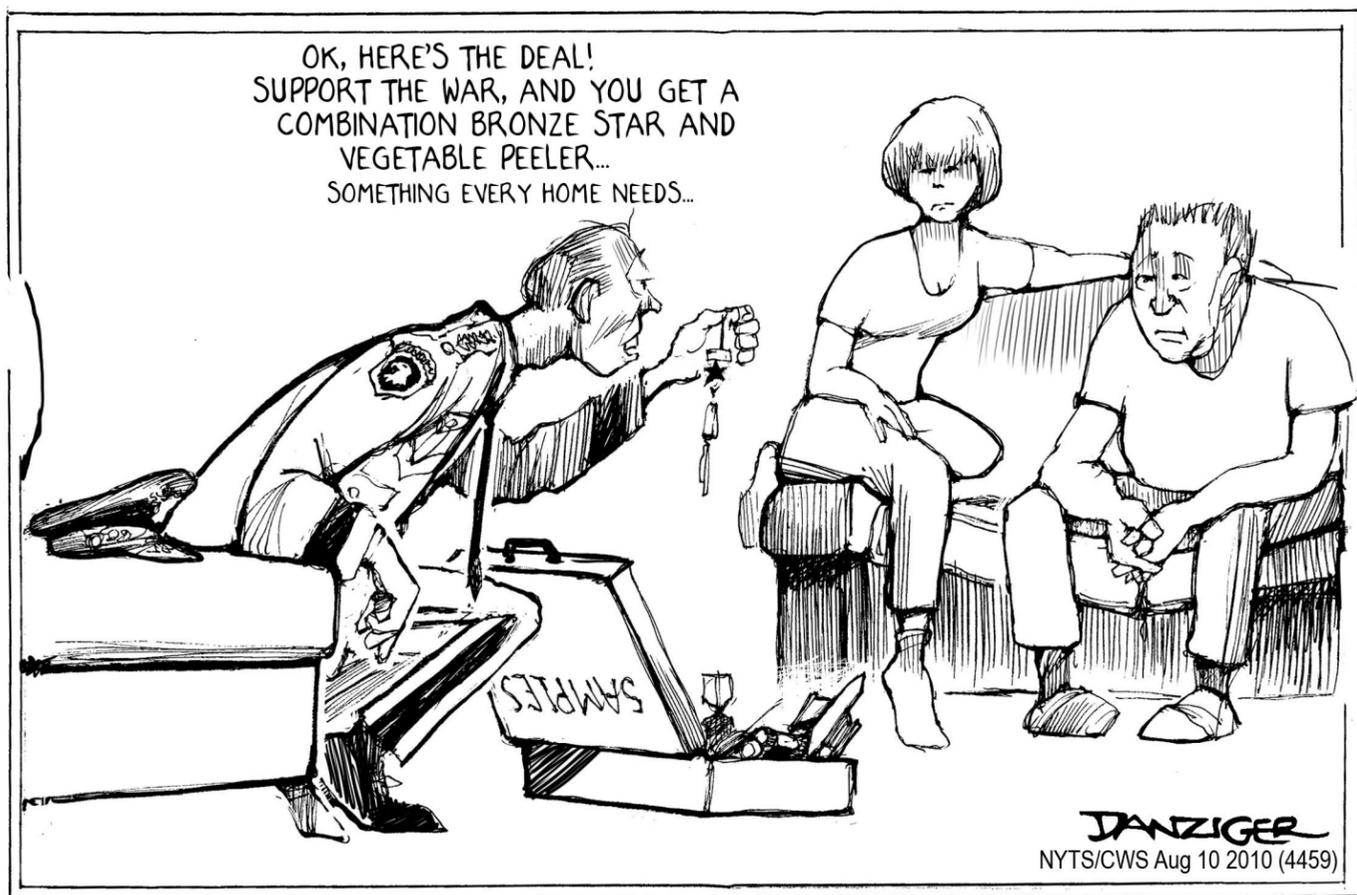
said: "Douglas Barber, an Iraq vet tried to get help from the VA for two years after his return from the Bush quagmire." That comment just struck me as being at the heart of the issue. Douglas Barber should not have needed to try to get help from the VA for two years. To me, it should have been the other way around. The VA should have tried to help Douglas Barber for two years or for as long as it took to support him. I mean, VA, is Veterans Administration, not Administration Veterans. If the VA, would truly be able to put Veterans before Administration maybe veterans like Douglas Barber would still be alive. Instead, Douglas Barber committed suicide.

Thank you for listening to me. Please feel free to contact me with any questions and/or concerns.



HANS BUWALDA IS ONE OF VVAW'S MILITARY COUNSELORS.

General Petraeus Finds the War is a Tough Sell



MAPS/MDMA

VVAW member Marc Levy sends the following info: The research group MAPS is well respected, FDA approved, its work has been published in various professional medical journals. MAPS studies the effects of low doses of MDMA (Ecstasy) on PTSD. National and international studies with war vets and other persons have shown very promising results; the risks are negligible. The Army has shown interest in this treatment.

A MAPS study will be held in Charleston, SC in the next few months. Interested combat vets with significant PTSD should contact principle researcher Dr. Michael Mithoefer at: mmithoefer@mac.com or 843-849-6899.

Accepted volunteers are given a hotel room, food and travel allowance. They can mention my name if they like. <http://www.maps.org/mdma/> <http://vimeo.com/12918400>

Warrior Writers

LOVELLA CALICA

"I remember when I stepped off the plane into the jungle..."

"I looked out at the desert and finally realized..."

You've heard these stories and told these stories.

Stories from military experiences need to be told, heard and read by our society, in order for us to better understand our veterans. Have you told your stories? Have you heard these stories? Are you ready?

"To get at the stories that we have, you have to strip away all the extraneous bullsh** and just tell it. Warrior Writers supports us in doing that." - Joshua Casteel, Iraq veteran, playwright

Warrior Writers provides veterans with opportunities to reflect on military experiences in a safe and supportive environment. Contrary to the sterile walls and stoic, unfriendly faces the VA offers, we host our workshops and retreats outside or in yoga studios or art spaces.

"I used to write before I went to Iraq, but while there I wasn't able to write. With the Warrior Writers Project I have been able to slowly find my words again and share my experiences. It's been a healing experience." - Eli Wright, Iraq veteran artist.

Warrior Writers exists to articulate veterans' experiences. We aim to provide an opportunity for a creative community of artistic expression among veterans. We witness the lived experiences

of warriors. In three years we published two books, facilitated over twenty writing workshops where over 150 veterans participated, organized dozens of art exhibits and performances and launched our award-winning website.

We have held events in St. Louis, MO, Fort Drum, Colorado, Vermont, New York City and Minneapolis among others. The William Joiner Center for the Study of War and Social Consequences at UMass Boston invited WW to host workshops and a reading. After the 2009 shooting at Fort Hood, we held a workshop at Under the Hood in Killeen, TX.

INSO-MANIA

Jon Turner, Iraq Veteran Artist

I haven't slept in three days.
I am tired.
Closing my eyes does nothing for me.
It gives me fear.
Fear gives me rage.
Rage makes my mind race.
My racing mind keeps me awake.
Staying awake drains my body.
My drained body still produces energy.
My energy makes me pace.
Pacing tires my legs.
My tired legs make me sit.
Sitting makes my back sore.
My sore back makes me lay down.
Lying down makes me tired.

Being tired helps me close my eyes.
Closing my eyes does nothing for me.

Our anthology, *Re-Making Sense 2008* features over 40 veterans and contains poetry, prose, letters, photographs and visual art. *The Army Times* reviewed *Re-Making Sense*. Selections from Warrior Writers books have become part of the curriculum for a handful of high school classes and a course on psychological trauma for paramedics, police and firefighters. Order *Re-Making Sense* at www.ivaw.org/store or warriorwriters@gmail.com. We are also selling our first book entitled *Move, Shoot and Communicate*.

An important partner, the Combat Paper Project utilizes art-making workshops to assist veterans in reconciling and sharing their personal experiences as well as broadening the traditional narrative surrounding service and the military culture. Through paper making workshops veterans use their uniforms worn in combat to create cathartic works of art. The uniforms are cut up, beaten into a pulp and formed into sheets of paper. Find more info at www.combatpaper.org.

We plan to publish a new anthology of artwork by veterans of the Global War on Terror next year entitled *Intrusive Thoughts* and hope that you can host a fund raising house party to contribute to the costs.

In Philadelphia, we're

partnering with the Mural Arts Program to create a mural that is envisioned and created by veterans, as opposed to being created for veterans by someone else.

Please join us this November for Chicago in War, a series of events, art shows, and performances that explores the continued rupturing of the traumas of war in everyday America. The *Intrusive Thoughts* art exhibit opening will take place on Veterans Day at the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum. *Intrusive Thoughts* will feature visual artworks by veterans of the Global War on Terror.

Warrior Writers is currently focusing on building its foundational structure by increasing capacity and raising funds to sustain our work.

WW is a welcoming place for both civilians and veterans we invite you to make us a part of your life. If you or anyone you know wants to help Warrior Writers, please email us TODAY at warriorwriters@gmail.com.



LOVELLA CALICA WRITER, PHOTOGRAPHER AND MULTIMEDIA ARTIST IS FOUNDER/DIRECTOR OF WARRIOR WRITERS. SHE RECEIVED TWO ART & CHANGE GRANTS AND THE TRANSFORMATION AWARD FROM THE LEEWAY FOUNDATION. SHE PUBLISHED A POETRY CHAPBOOK IN 2006 AND IS CURRENTLY COMPLETING ANOTHER BOOK. LOVELLA IS A CO-FOUNDER OF TATLO MESTIZ@S.



OAKLAND-EAST BAY VVAW / WSO OFFICE
Mike McCain (holding child), RIP (1946-2010)

Women Veterans Taking Charge of Their Well-Being

JOHANNA BUWALDA

On the first weekend of September 2010, a group of women, members of IVAW and allies, attended a retreat in a state park in Pennsylvania. One afternoon, sitting around a fire, we talked about ways that military service had affected our lives. We shared things we do to take care of ourselves, and discussed ways to select the kind of professionals we believe would be the most helpful to us.

We think that many of our thoughts and ideas can be useful to other veterans, so we decided to share these as widely as possible.

We found that our experiences with the military continue to impact our lives on many levels including how we:

- relate to our own bodies
- feel about our selves
- feel about our own actions
- view other people's actions
- relate to other people in general
- relate to men
- make choices about our lives
- feel about relationships
- stand in the world
- make reproductive choices
- and much more.

Self Care

Since our experiences in the military continue to impact our lives, we have needed to put things into place to keep going, deal with stress, cope with the results of trauma, and create a sense of well-being.

Here is a list of things we can do to take care of ourselves:

- Find other women who have similar experiences for peer support groups

- Go to the IVAW women's retreat
- Hang out in beautiful surroundings
- Take time for ourselves
- Create women-safe spaces
- Become aware of our physical limitations
- Be physically active (Jogging, walking, bike-riding, playing sports)
- Write (journal, poetry)
- Be intentional about having healthy women in their lives
- Bring our dog with us as our battle buddy
- Go get acupuncture
- Meditation
- Go into individual psychotherapy
- Go to a Reiki practitioner
- Go to the movies by ourselves
- Dance
- Go into couples counseling
- Go to a doctor or psychiatrist and take medication
- Go to a herbalist and take herbs
- Take supplements
- Get massages/bodywork
- Go to a church that is congruent with our spiritual beliefs and reach out to spiritual teachers

Selecting a Provider

Sometimes, it can be helpful to work with a professional provider. Maybe you want to work with a psychologist, a counselor, a massage therapist, a reiki practitioner, an herbalist or other provider. We talked about how to select a provider. Here are some questions you can ask a potential provider to help decide whether or not they might be right for you:

- What is your experience working with veterans?

- What is your experience working with (war) trauma?
- What is your motivation for working with veterans?
- What is your stance about the war?
- What are your gender politics?
- Do you accept the feminist point of view?
- What are your ideas about sexual orientation?
- What is the theoretical perspective that informs your work?
- How do you feel about psychotropic medication and/or Electro Convulsive Therapy (ECT)?
- How do you feel about medical marijuana?
- How do you feel about alternative health care?
- Do you take notes during sessions?
- What does a typical session look like? What can I expect?
- Can you tell me about your understanding of a good bedside manner?
- How much time do you usually take for your clients/patients?

Other considerations

- Does the provider charge for services (there are providers who offer free services to veterans)?
- If the provider charges for services does the provider have a sliding scale fee you can afford?
- Is the provider's office located in a place that is convenient for you?
- Are you likely to go?

Some things all veterans should know:

- You can fire your provider, even the VA has to assign you another provider if you request that

- If you are not comfortable with a therapist in the first couple of sessions, go to another one

Resources

• **Johanna (Hans) Buwalda**, M.Ed., M.A., L.C.P.C.
VVAW Military and Veterans Counseling
3411 West Diversey, Suite 1
Chicago, IL 60647
(773) 370-4789
storiesandart.com

Warrior Writers

warriorwriters.org The Warrior Writers Project brings together recent veterans and current service members to be in creative community and utilize art-making processes to express themselves.

Give an Hour, Giveanhour.org, is a data base of mental health providers who offer an hour of free services to military service men, women and their loved ones.

The Soldiers Project, (877) 576-5343, is a group of licensed mental health professionals who offer free psychological treatment to military service members (active duty, National Guard, Reserves and veterans) who have served or who expect to serve in the conflicts in Iraq or Afghanistan.

GI Rights Hotline, <http://www.girightshotline.org/>, 877-447-4487.



HANS BUWALDA IS ONE OF VVAW'S MILITARY COUNSELORS.

2010 Veterans Benefits Manual

RAY PARRISH

It's hard for me to tell you how excited you should be with the just published 2010 Veterans Benefits Manual by the National Veterans Legal Services Program. To me it feels like a magic wand that can win so many VA claims! The new VBM has significant additions that address the changes in law, policy and political debate that have happened this past year. This VBM will mean more vets will find it easier to win VA claims. It's now indispensable to both

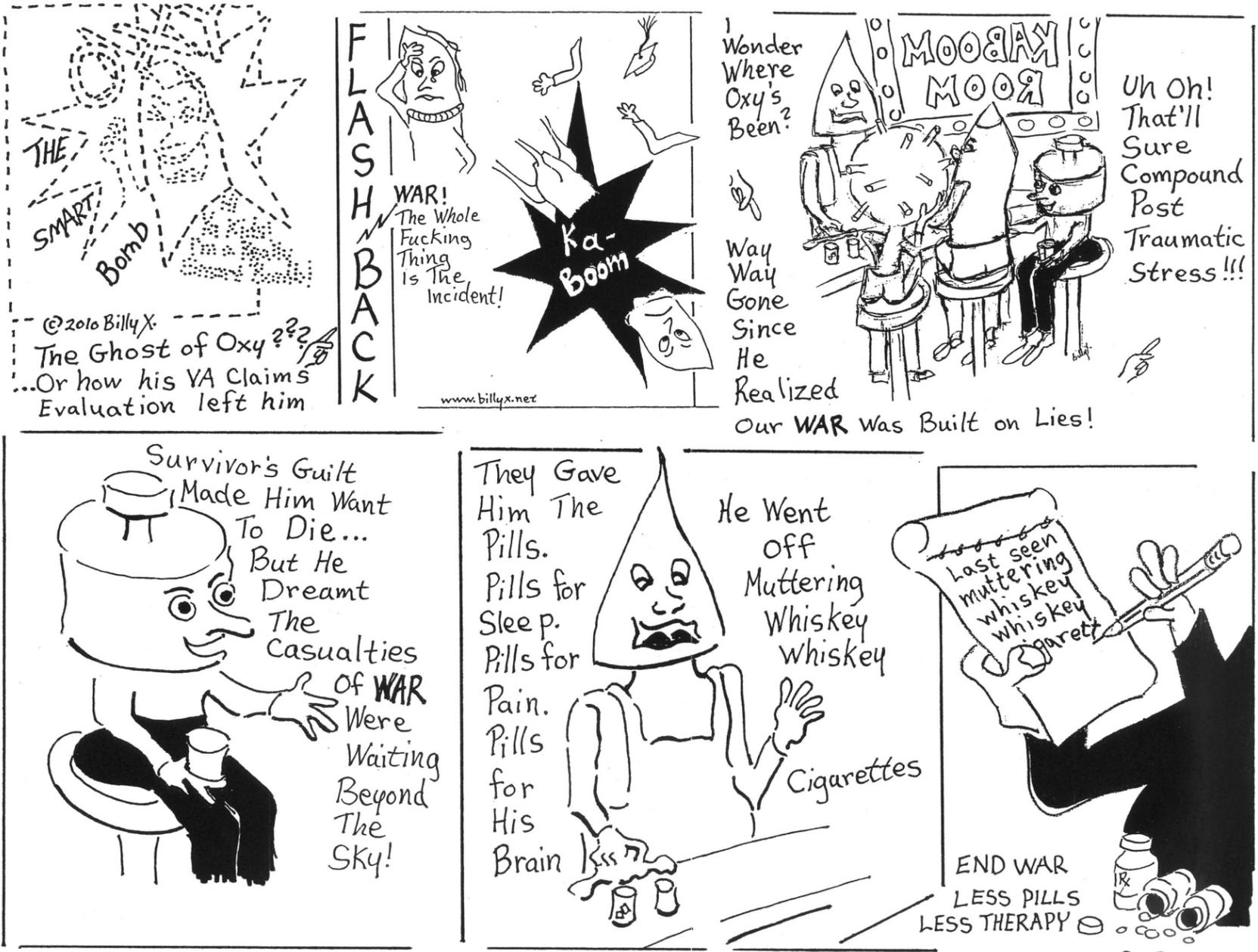
service officers doing VA claims and veterans' advocates staving off proposed cuts to benefits who want to know the system's details.

The new VBM reproduces the revised versions of commonly used VA forms that say "supersedes previous editions which will not be used." (The changes themselves are just as important as that warning.) There's a new chapter on finding military records. There's great advice on how to deal with new changes in the VA's "rating

schedule" on TBI. A new section on the recently added diseases presumed to be service connected to Agent Orange; ischemic heart disease, Parkinson's and more leukemia. Info on the new vet-friendly rules on PTSD claims. There are new instructions on two dozen ways to insure that you get all the benefits that you're entitled to and how to use the VA's new electronic filing system, which is especially useful to vets with OTH/BCD's in avoiding hospital

admission personnel who are unaware of policies ordering health care for service connected disabilities regardless of these discharges.

Maybe it's just the "policy wonk" in me, but this edition seems easier to use and I'm convinced that it enables more people than ever to help vets and their families to navigate the VA system and some may even learn enough to be able to make a living doing VA claims. Lexis Nexis 800-533-1637



Hands

Hands can tell the story of one thousand words never spoken. My hands were used for holding that of another, interlaced, a mere spark of passion yet to come. These hands have labored to write my thoughts and life.

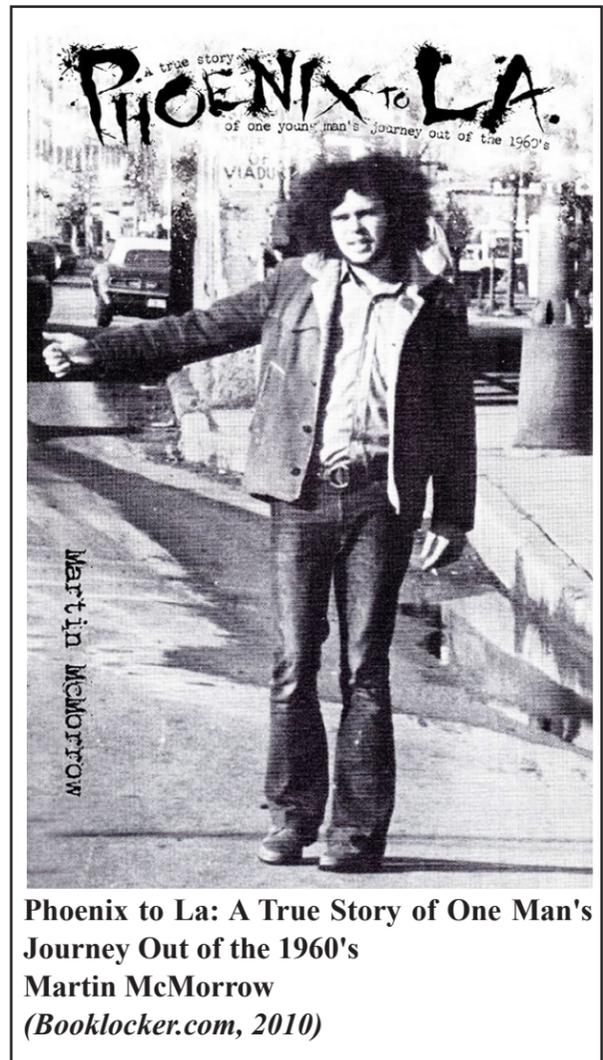
A person with rough hands is no stranger to work. A person with nails bloody and bitten is usually anxious and apprehensive. A soft manicured hand is not a construction worker.

My hands have held my nieces and nephews. My fingers have been on the trigger of a gun pointed at another human being.

They are bitten fingernails and rough palms. They are tattooed with a story of war, regret, yet pride. My knuckles read "Vet" to show the world the sacrifice I made for you. To show you I would have died for you. I want everyone to know.

I have broken rifles that are so much more than pictures to me. They represent my guilt, my disenchantment for the Army and most of all that I wish to never have my hands on any trigger or gun that could claim the life of another human being.

—Robynn Murray



VVAW Strong Presence at KSU 40th Anniversary

MARTY WEBSTER

On May 1-4, VVAW National Coordinators, Barry Romo, Buzz Doyle and Marty Webster joined Vets For Peace (VFP) and VVAW members for the 40th anniversary of the National Guard's opening fire on hundreds of students on the campus of Kent State University (KSU) in northeast Ohio. The unarmed students were protesting the Vietnam war. Four students were killed and nine were injured. VVAW members traveled from places as far away as Louisiana, Mississippi and North Carolina to attend the event.

This year KSU has taken new steps to acknowledge and make sense of the incident. An application to add the site of the shootings to the National Register of Historic Places — rare for an event less than 50 years old — was approved by the US Interior Department. A self-guided "May 4 Walking Tour," featuring trail markers and audio narration by civil rights leader Julian Bond, debuts next month.

Popular singer Country Joe McDonald presented two videos that were followed by a panel discussion with VVAW leaders Barry Romo and Marty Webster. Many military veterans were

present along with a mixture of current students and several of the students who had been injured during the shooting. After the event conversations continued and a special bond developed between the students and the Vietnam veterans.

Mark Rudd, Bernadine Dohrn and other former members of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) as well as former members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) participated in conferences presented by current KSU students who adopted the task of keeping the flame alive. Former Black Panther Party leader, Bobby Seale, spoke at the KSU Pan African Affairs Department.

In the KSU Student Center, an excellent Kent State activism history documentary film premiered entitled *Fire in the Heartland* by Danny Miller. A very moving film, entitled *Disturbing The Universe*, was also shown. A tribute to America's outstanding radical attorney, William Kunstler, the documentary was produced by his daughters Emily and Sarah Kunstler. The film was followed by a panel discussion featuring the Kunstler sisters/filmmakers

and Kent activists who worked with Bill Kunstler during 1970-1977.

The night before commemorative activities, there was a Candlelight march and vigil at the KSU Commons Victory Bell.

From Noon until 3pm on May 4, the 40th Annual Commemoration took place at the KSU Commons featuring speakers and musicians including keynote speakers Black Panther Party leader, Bobby Seale, and Gerald Casale of DEVO. Music was provided by Country Joe McDonald.

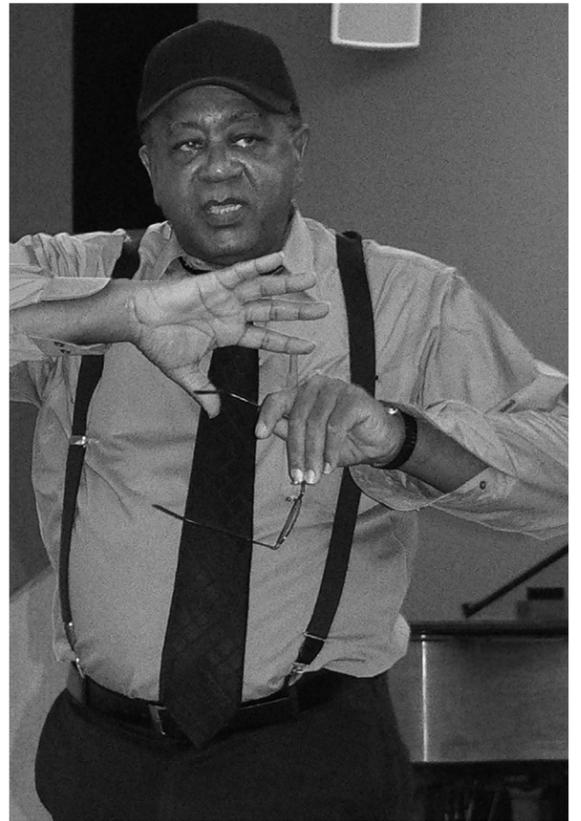
Other speakers included John Filo, esteemed 1970 KSU photographer, Gene Young, Jackson State massacre eyewitness, Russ Miller, brother of KSU martyr Jeff Miller, Florence Schroeder, mother of KSU martyr William Schroeder, Joe Lewis, eyewitness Chic Canfora, and Sanford Rosen, attorney

for KSU casualties' families.

VVAW Ohio Contacts, Bill Reynolds and Brian Slease, put on a VVAW picnic on May 3rd at the home of Al Long, a gracious host.



MARTY WEBSTER IS A VVAW NATIONAL COORDINATOR.



Bobby Seale



Buzz Doyle, Marty Webster, Alan Canfora & Barry Romo

Kent State University: The Start of the Crescendo

continued from page 1 wound.

kept waving it all around," Nic told us. "At first I couldn't believe what I was seeing, then the rage set in. I had so much anger. It was such a tragic abuse of power."

While many *Veteran* readers sacrificed in the jungles of Vietnam at the time, Nic and many like him sacrificed during the war at home. The residual poison of that day has haunted Nic ever since. It took him 40 years to return to KSU, his battleground. Like many combat veterans, he needed to confront his ghosts and tell his story.

Laurel Krause and her 84-year-old mother, Doris, also bear the scars of losing their 19-year-old sister and daughter, Allison, a committed peace activist and KSU student who was also killed that day. Laurel, who was just 15 at the time, told us she has PTSD from the trauma of having a loved one so senselessly and suddenly lost to them forever. Many others, townspeople, University administrators, students and their families, Vietnam veterans, Guardsmen, and police, still carry deep grief, anger and unresolved feelings about that tragedy. Laurel and her mother created a "Truth Tribunal" for the 40th anniversary, fashioned after the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission established by Nelson Mandela after the defeat of apartheid. From May 1st through 4th, all those who wished to could come to the space the Krauses' rented above the Franklin Square Deli in downtown Kent to record how their experiences at KSU affected their lives. Learning that these events had enormous effects on others helped Nic understand how trauma responses are normal reactions to abnormal occurrences. As he and many veterans have discovered, breaking silence can be like salve to a long-festering

Laurel Krause told us she felt lighter, even joyful, after being able to talk about Allison's life and death and offer others a chance to share their stories. Nic said it was wonderful to finally be ready to share this life-altering experience with his family. As a wise person said, "Trauma may always be with you, but you can learn to carry it differently."

Throughout our time at KSU, we kept crossing paths with fellow members of VVAW who had a strong presence during the anniversary events. One of these veterans told us how he vividly recalls being in Vietnam when he got the news of the killings. "I just hung my head and sobbed. I was supposed to be in Vietnam defending my country, supposedly fighting for democracy and rights like free speech. And then I found out our soldiers killed students for speaking out against the war we all hated?"

Over the course of the weekend, we were struck repeatedly at the toll war takes, whether one fights it on the battlefield or on the streets of American cities. The evening of May 3rd, we heard Congressman John Lewis, the keynote speaker for the anniversary events. He strikingly described the long history of people's movements in this country and the sacrifices progress demands. He threaded the martyrdoms of the civil rights movement to those of the peace movement. He honored names every American should know; names like Emmett Till, Medger Evans and the names of the four little girls murdered in the Montgomery, Alabama church bombing. He then linked them to Phillip Lafayette Gibbs and James Earl Green, murdered at Jackson State University and the names on the KSU campus memorials: Allison Krause, Jeffrey Miller, Sandra Scheuer and William

Schroeder.

"War is obsolete as a tool of our foreign policy," said Lewis. "We're in a struggle to redeem the soul of America and it is a struggle of a lifetime." He went on to remind the audience that we have a mandate from the "spirit of history" to remember what happened in Selma and Montgomery, Alabama, what happened in Vietnam, and what happened at Jackson State and Kent State.

After Congressman Lewis's powerful speech, we crossed the campus to hear Bobby Seale, founder of the Black Panther Party and one of the celebrated Chicago 8. Without notes and seemingly without taking a breath for two hours, Seale captivated an audience of all ages and experiences with his rapid-fire tales of the 1960s. His story of the Panthers' programs of community empowerment were in stark contrast with the descriptions from the FBI-inspired corporate media that smeared the organization. For example, J. Edgar Hoover described the Panthers' program of offering free breakfast for kids as a "communist-inspired conspiracy that would destroy the country."

The evening culminated with an hour-long candlelight procession around the perimeter of the campus. About 750 people walked in light rain and solemn silence in honor of the fallen over ground stained so many years ago by blood and tears shed by bayoneted and gassed students. At midnight, we arrived at the parking lot where the four students were so senselessly murdered. Like chalk lines at a murder scene, stubby light pylons outlined the exact locations where they fell. We both remarked at how the memorial at KSU was another Wall, another monument to the insanity of war.

A little after noon the next day, exactly 40 years later, the University's Victory Bell tolled for each of the students killed at Kent State and Jackson State. Following this was a full roster of speakers, from family and friends of the fallen at both Kent and Jackson State to professors and activists



Nic, placing a flower on the spot where Jeffrey Miller was killed.

who linked the events of the tumultuous 60's to the unsettled times of today. A professor of journalism, who was also a student on May 4, 1970, urged present-day students to move beyond apathy to action lest history repeat itself. She cautioned against overlooking or taking for granted the sacrifices that military veterans and veterans of the peace and justice movements made decades ago, sacrifices that still benefit us today.

The KSU shootings marked a turning point in the anti-war movement. While there is a long history of government violence against minorities and unions, Kent was the first time the weapons targeted white students. The anti-war movement ramped up after Kent State to the point where it shortened the war and thus saved lives. As historian, Howard Zinn, said in an interview in 2007, "I think the war ended because the protests in the United States reached a crescendo, which couldn't be ignored." Kent State started the crescendo that stopped the war.



CYNTHIA ORANGE IS A FREELANCE WRITER, EDITOR, AND WRITING CONSULTANT. MICHAEL ORANGE IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT AND HE TEACHES A COLLEGE CLASS ON SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING AND ANOTHER ON THE VIETNAM WAR. AS A MARINE SERVING IN VIETNAM, HE EXPERIENCED COMBAT IN NUMEROUS SEARCH-AND-DESTROY MISSIONS AND PATROLS DURING HIS ONE-YEAR TOUR OF DUTY (1969-70).



Doris and Laurie Krause, initiators of the Truth Commission. Mother/daughter of Allison Krause.

Agent Orange in Vietnam

continued from page 1

Bình Thuận province, 48 inches in height, 53 pounds in weight, bed ridden. She cannot speak. She gets sick when there is a change in temperature. Linh Nhi is 64 pounds, and 49 inches tall, she sleeps most of the time, and suffers from nutritional deficiency. Little Phạm Thị Thuỳ Linh, born 1994 without arms, now lives in Peace Village II. She writes with her toes. Her grandpa was an ARVN soldier who participated in the spraying of Agent Orange.

At Peace Village II we all live together and those of us who are able help those who are sicker. Some of my friends have died from their birth defects, like Nguyễn Thị Hạnh, born in 1997, who had multijoint stiffness, and died in 2007. Little Huỳnh Thương Hoài, born in 1996 in Củ Chi, without a left arm and without legs, had a heart defect, and suffered from epilepsy and multiple deformities and died in 1999 from total heart muscle failure. Victims of Agent Orange die every day. They need immediate attention and help.

The staff at Peace Village II is loving and kind, and does their best to create a warm atmosphere for us. There are many other children who could benefit from this treatment but there is not enough room for all those children who need this kind of care. Some of the residents, like me, can go to school and work but others will lie in their beds until they eventually die. All over Vietnam there are hundreds of thousands of children like little Dung and Hạnh, who lie at home without access to the services available to those at Peace Village II. I don't know what would have happened to me if I hadn't been able to come to Peace Village II. Without legs and a hand it would be difficult to farm, and without

education, other jobs would also be out of reach.

But I was able to go to school. I am now about to graduate from the Ho Chi Minh City University of Foreign Languages and Information Technology (HUFLIT) with a certificate in computer science. In fact, I took a week away from preparing for final exams to come and testify here today!

I am considering continuing my education. I had dreamed about being a doctor but I don't know if my physical condition will allow me to do this. But I am confident that I will be able to find a way to make a contribution to my society and to continue to help other Agent Orange victims.

I am one of the lucky ones! While I am missing limbs, my mental functioning is fine. No one knows what other effects of the dioxin in Agent Orange may develop in my body. But many babies, children and young people my age live lives of quiet agony. They are trapped in bodies that do not work. Their brains remain in infancy even as their bodies grow.

Most of these children have access to much fewer medical and rehabilitative services than me. Most live with their families in farming communities like the one I grew up in. Some of their parents – the generation directly exposed to Agent Orange – are also sick with cancers. Whatever their health, most parents of seriously disabled victims are poor. Needing to provide constant care for their children, they cannot work. Many must spend money they don't have each month for medicines. Some live in substandard housing.

Our government does provide assistance to the most seriously ill victims. But our country is still developing and the assistance

doesn't meet all the needs.

The organization that represents the victims, the Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin (VAVA), also assists the victims. VAVA as it is called, is building day care centers for young victims, rehabilitation centers and providing medical care and social services. I am part of the new generation of VAVA members around the country.

What do the victims need and want? We want those responsible for the terrible consequences of Agent Orange to hear our pain and then to respond as members of the human family. The chemical manufacturers who made the Agent Orange and the US government who sprayed and dumped it in our country should respond to this human tragedy by doing the right thing! It is a matter of justice and humanity!

Building more centers like Peace Village II in many regions of Vietnam is necessary, particularly for those with severe birth defects. For those who are somewhat better off, daycare centers, vocational and educational rehabilitation centers and aid to families to facilitate home care are crucial. Medical care specifically targeted to the conditions we face as well as prosthetics and other services is needed.

For our parents and grandparents exposed during the war, treatment for their cancers and other diseases is a responsibility.

A comprehensive approach will be required to meet these human health needs. Going along with this is the requirement that the toxic hot spots, where dioxin remains in the land, and water be cleaned up.

Agent Orange victims also want a say in how services for us are planned and delivered. That's why our organization, VAVA, should be central to the



Ms. Tran Thi Hoan

development of all assistance programs. Many youth like me were born after the war. Like other young people, we dream of having a family, getting a job and having a peaceful life. But the aftermath of the war destroys the dreams of many young Agent Orange victims in Vietnam. In this 15th year of relations between Vietnam and the US we ask the US people and their representatives to reach out your hands in friendship and understanding.

I am aware that the children and grandchildren of US veterans exposed to Agent Orange are suffering like us. We wish to share common experiences with them. We hope that they receive the medical care and assistance they need.

There is a Vietnamese saying Ngày mai trời lại sáng something like the American popular song—the sun will come up tomorrow!

I hope that this hearing will be a testament to the power of hope, of dreams and of assuring justice!

Thank you!



VVAW Works for Legislation with VAORRC

MARTY WEBSTER

So far to date, the Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign (VAORRC) has:

- organized a US veterans delegation to visit Vietnam;
- organized a national speaking tour together with the Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin (VAVA);
- helped to bring about the first ever hearing in the House of Representatives which included testimony from repre-

sentatives of VAVA and from a Vietnamese Agent Orange victim;

- worked on drafting a bill to be introduced by Congressman John Conyers;
- been featured in national and international media;
- and participated in educational events across the US grassroots organizing and Congressional Education.

We are in the final stages of working with Congress to draft comprehensive legislation to

achieve compensation of Agent Orange (AO) survivors. This legislation will provide for cleaning up the toxic hot spots in Vietnam, health care for Vietnam's AO victims, as well as medical assistance for children and grandchildren of US veterans and Vietnamese Americans suffering from affects of AO. This legislation is the focal point for our organizing and mobilization work from now on.

On July 15th, Dr. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Phuong, Vice President

of VAVA and Tran Thi Hoan, a young woman Agent Orange victim who participated in our women's speaking tour in 2008, were the first VAVA representatives, and Hoan the first Agent Orange victim from Vietnam, to testify before a hearing in Congress. (Dr. Phuong previously testified in another capacity.) The hearing was organized by Congressman Eni Faleomavaega, Chair of the

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Iraq Veterans Return to Iraq for Humanitarian Aid

GEOFF MILLARD

In 2011, two members of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) will return to Iraq on a humanitarian aid mission. IVAW will sponsor a shipment of much needed medical supplies that Geoff Millard and Hart Vigas and Iraqi Heath Now (IHN) will accompany to Basra, Iraq. The trip will be led by Haider Alsaedy, an Iraqi from Basra, co-founder of IHN and a camera person from Big Noise Films which will be with us to ensure full documentation.

IVAW recognizes that the war in Iraq is not over despite another presidential declaration of victory and that our obligation to the people of Iraq does not end when the last US service member leaves Iraq. We are bound by international law and common decency to ensure that the damage done during our occupation is repaired so the people of Iraq can have a

chance at true self-determination. For IVAW this means payment of reparations by our government to the people of Iraq and rebuilding the Iraqi infrastructure on the American dime. What this does not mean is sympathy payments or contracts to US corporations that will only further the US economic occupation presently developing in Iraq, which is exemplified by US pressure for an oil law.

For many of us who served in Iraq, the process of reparations is not merely a dry political battle in the halls of congress; it is a deeply personal journey that begins with the realization that what we did was wrong, moves to acts that are ending the war and finally looks down a very long road of redeeming ourselves trying to rebuild Iraq. For us, saying "I'm sorry" does not cut it. It is truly possible that nothing we ever do will make up

for the wrongs that we have done. This overwhelming weight should not lead us to inaction. We must try to find meaningful action that will help make Iraq whole again one small act at a time.

Iraqi Heath Now has been working for years to take those small meaningful steps. They provided aid when the bombs were still dropping overhead. They have proven that they are not in this for personal fame or fortune. That is why IVAW's reparations committee has chosen to work with IHN on funding and accompanying a shipment back to Iraq. The shipment will be of goods directly requested from the Iraqi people and donated by people in the US, 100% of donations (material and monetary) will go to the Iraqi people.

It is our sincere hope that this trip will lead to many trips for

American veterans to return to Iraq and do work rebuilding as part of a reparations and reconciliation plan. To be involved in planning of future trips email TJ Buonomo via reparations@ivaw.org; to donate to IVAW's reparation fund place reparations fund in the special projects line on the donate page of ivaw.org or in the memo line on checks sent to IVAW.



GEOFF MILLARD, IRAQ VETERAN, HAS SERVED AS THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD AND DC CHAPTER PRESIDENT FOR IVAW. HE HAS VISITED WITH IRAQI REFUGEES AND WORKED IN IRAQI REFUGEE CAMPS IN EGYPT, JORDAN, SYRIA AND IRAN SINCE HIS RETURN FROM IRAQ IN 2005. HE IS NOW WORKING AS THE DIRECTOR OF A HOMELESS VETERANS POLICY INITIATIVE IN WASHINGTON, DC.

VAORRC

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House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment. Their testimony was very well received by the Congress members in attendance and by the media.

During their time in Washington DC, Phuong and Hoan, along with VAORRC leadership, met with members of the House and Senate and with Congressional staff. Members of VVAW and other groups have lobbied their Congress people. The overall positive responses from Congress indicated that there is building momentum for resolving the AO issue, with some representatives agreeing to sign on to the bill we are working to have introduced. The AO issue is highlighted by a report initiated by the Ford Foundation calling for money for victim assistance in Vietnam. Both former President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have addressed the issue in recent statements.

Agent Orange Justice Tours

In April-May, 2010 Nguyen Thi Hien, President of the Danang Chapter of VAVA headed a delegation to the US which also included AO victim Pham The Minh and an interpreter. The delegation visited eight cities and met with a wide range of community activists. In Los Angeles, the delegation

took part in a protest at the Dow Chemical Live Earth Run to focus attention on the responsibility of Dow and the other chemical manufacturers to compensate their victims. Also in LA, Pham The Minh spoke to about 1,000 people at a memorial service for Howard Zinn and spoke at the Ventura veterans Summit organized by VVAW and other veterans organizations. In New York, Minh spoke at a 20,000 person rally for nuclear disarmament and we met with the head of the National Council of Churches who promised support for legislation and educational work. In our first visit to Atlanta, we met with civil rights leadership and received print and broadcast coverage.

As part of our grass roots organizing, we got signatures on orange postcards to be delivered to members of Congress and now have several thousand signed.

Veterans Delegations to Vietnam

In March of this year, we sent a six person delegation, including members from Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Veterans For Peace, Iraq Veterans Against the War and from our Campaign on a working visit to Vietnam at the invitation of VAVA. The delegation, which received much press coverage in Vietnam, visited AO victims and programs across Vietnam and met with Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, who underlined the importance

of achieving justice for AO victims.

Future Plans

On August 10, we commemorated Agent Orange Day with a statement and email blitz.

This fall, we are planning for the introduction of our legislation. At that time, we will host a high level leadership delegation from VAVA and intensify our media work. We are planning a National Congressional Outreach Day as well as organizing meetings with members of Congress in their districts. We will also be rolling out new educational materials for this stage of our work and revamping our website.

We will send a VAORRC Board delegation to Vietnam in late 2010 or early 2011.

The growth of our work has meant organizational expansion, with our Board at more than 50 members and our Core group now at 9 people. In the next period, we will be further activating our organization through in-person Core and/or Board meetings and through recruitment of more Core members and local leaders.

Financing the Campaign

We have been able to fund our work to date thanks to the generous contributions of VVAW and other major donors.

This stage of our work requires more financial resources for both national grass roots

mobilization and activities directed at Congress. We anticipate needing to hire a Washington DC staff person in addition to a part time worker in New York. Media outreach to bring this issue into the living rooms of the American people will also be crucial to gaining significant popular support.

VVAW National Coordinators Barry Romo and Marty Webster are board members of the Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign. Marty is also a VAORRC core member and serves on the organizational committee.



MARTY WEBSTER IS A VVAW NATIONAL COORDINATOR WHO LIVES IN OHIO.



IVAW Fights For Soldiers Right To Heal From Trauma

MAGGIE MARTIN

In January of 2010 we came together in Albuquerque, NM for a strategy planning session to build our campaign Operation Recovery: a campaign to stop the deployment of traumatized soldiers.

We have learned from our past that it takes more than getting people to show up for events or pulling off a really great action to affect change. We knew that we had to start thinking strategically. IVAW has been using its resources to build strength within our ranks. The field organizing team (sponsored by VVAW) has put much effort into leadership development including helping our membership develop the skills necessary to fight and win.

Many of our brothers and sisters are sent into war despite suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Military Sexual Trauma (MST). Many of us within IVAW have faced or are currently facing, deployment despite severe trauma. IVAW is determined to find out who is responsible for this and to hold them accountable.

We know that the Military has been ignoring and covering this issue up. They use programs like the Wounded Warrior Project to get positive press while still deploying thousands of traumatized soldiers to Iraq and Afghanistan.

These troops are not

disposable and we are going to ensure that the Military can no longer continue these occupations depending on a force of injured troops who are being denied their right to heal. IVAW is creating space for injured troops to say enough, I won't deploy again.

On October 7th, the 9th anniversary of the invasion of Afghanistan, IVAW publicly announced this important campaign. We have worked to identify the responsible parties, where our power lies and how we can put an end to this inhumane practice once and for all. Now, we are well prepared and ready to take action.

We will stand behind our brothers and sisters as they say no to the violation of their rights.

Service members have the right to heal.

Because the military is desperate for warm bodies in the field, and the VA doesn't have enough resources to serve all those in need, too often, service members are conveniently denied care or access to quality mental health screenings. We say, service members with PTSD, TBI, MST and combat stress have the right to high quality health care. They have the right to seek care and pursue treatments in the best interest of their health and well-being.

Service members have the right to receive medical care from medical professionals.



Zack Choate - IVAW's Operation Recovery

Often, a commander's "medical" opinion supersedes that of military medical professionals when it comes to the well-being of our troops. No military authority should override the advice of medical professionals regarding the health care of service members.

Service members who experience PTSD, TBI, MST and combat stress have the right to exit the traumatic situation.

Too often, service members are forced to redeploy back into dangerous combat or train in situations that re-traumatize them. Individuals suffering from trauma have a right to remove themselves from the source of the trauma. Service members who are not physically or mentally healthy should not be forced to deploy or continue service.

We know that without the repeated use of traumatized soldiers on the battlefield the occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan could not continue. Those responsible for the deployment of traumatized soldiers will do everything they can to hide the truth but we are prepared to make demands and back them up with collective action.



MAGGIE MARTIN IS A VOLUNTEER ORGANIZER FOR IVAW AND WARRIOR WRITERS. SHE IS A TEAM LEADER FOR THE CAMPAIGN OPERATION RECOVERY. FORMER PRESIDENT OF IVAW SAVANNAH, GA CHAPTER MAGGIE IS CURRENTLY ORGANIZING TO START A MICHIGAN IVAW CHAPTER. MAGGIE IS WORKING TOWARDS A MASTER'S DEGREE IN SOCIAL JUSTICE AT MARYGROVE COLLEGE IN DETROIT, MI.



Joyce Wagner - IVAW's Operation Recovery.

Civil Society's Role in Shaping the United States' Long Term Relationship with Iraq

T.J. BUONOMO

While mainstream media outlets have focused on President Obama's announcement of the withdrawal of all but 50,000 troops from Iraq, many critical foreign policy questions remain regarding the US-Iraq relationship. First, who will be responsible for oversight of the private security contractors surging into Iraq? Will they be held to the standards of international human rights law or will they be a law unto themselves? Will private contractors be responsible for training Iraqi security forces to respect human rights, as is fitting of a country that aspires to govern by the rule of law or will they simply train them to the brutal but efficient standards of the Ba'ath Party?

Thus far the Iraqi government has not sufficiently distinguished itself from its predecessors regarding torture and other abuses. As long as the US maintains a training and advisory mission in Iraq it should have high expectations and lead by example. If American business executives and their counterparts in government are willing to operate in Iraq in an environment of impunity, civil society should be prepared to hold them accountable.

Looking beyond the security situation, American citizens should begin to shift their focus from military operations and the Department of Defense to economic and financial negotiations, for which the Department of State has primary responsibility. Business newspapers and journals are important sources of information that grassroots organizations should be increasingly attuned to in order to develop a picture of the foreign investment situation in Iraq.

Iraq will need to significantly boost its oil production and export capacity to support economic development and job creation, which is critical to its long term political stability. No less critical is the Iraqi public's confidence that it's elected and appointed officials are maintaining their independence from foreign interests, particularly in relation to the oil sector. Oil revenue comprises roughly 90% of Iraq's federal budget and two-thirds of its GDP. The oil industry is a symbol of deep national pride that will provoke a violent reaction if foreign powers attempt to gain ownership stakes in it.

It is in the American national interest for Iraq to expand its oil production and export capacity to meet rapidly increasing global demand and the price increases that will accompany it. This does not require international oil companies to gain ownership stakes or contracts enabling them to control production levels however. American citizens should closely monitor the State Department, which has remained opaque on this issue, to ensure that its policies remain independent of oil company objectives. (To give some idea of the lack of transparency in US foreign policy, nearly 18 months ago I submitted a Freedom of Information Act request to the State Department on its influence over the US-Iraq oil negotiations and have yet to receive a written statement on how far along the request has been processed, notwithstanding multiple inquiries from various congressional staff members.) The IMF should not require Iraq to open its oil industry to foreign ownership as an explicit or implicit pre-condition for continued financial aid, as some media outlets have reported.

Other important sectors that should remain under Iraqi control include its financial and agricultural sectors, its water supply and other critical public infrastructure. The terms of international financial aid should be closely scrutinized given Iraq's continued dependence on foreign aid to compensate for budget shortfalls. Members of the Senate and House foreign affairs committees should be held accountable for any onerous strings attached to foreign aid from the US directly or via the IMF and World Bank.

As long as the United States maintains an embassy in Iraq, American officials should advocate just as strongly for labor rights as for free markets. Despite its frequent public advocacy for privatization since 2003, the US embassy in Baghdad has been silent on Iraqi labor rights. Iraqi unions are still denied legal recognition by the Iraqi government and union leaders in the oil and electricity sectors in particular have had to deal with harassment in the form of office raids, seizure of communications

and financial assets, trumped up criminal charges, forced transfers and physical assaults. US officials are responsible for mediating such disputes in cases where American business interests play a role in exacerbating conflict between unions and Iraqi government officials.

Lastly, the US government has a responsibility to provide long term financial assistance without strings attached to victims of a war that had no basis in international law. This includes, at a minimum, continued direct payments to the families of civilians killed in Iraq, economic aid to stimulate job creation and the resettlement of millions of refugees and internally displaced Iraqis, environmental remediation of areas contaminated by depleted uranium, and forgiveness of all remaining debt incurred under Saddam Hussein or under the US occupation of Iraq.

Some members of Congress have indicated an unwillingness to

continue this aid, complaining that the US has financial obligations of its own. The failure of US officials to properly oversee our financial system should not be used as an excuse to abandon victims of a criminally negligent occupation. The United States has a responsibility to Iraq and should fulfill that responsibility in keeping with our better human nature, if not our public officials' sense of moral obligation.



T.J. BUONOMO IS A FORMER MILITARY INTELLIGENCE OFFICER, US ARMY AND PRESIDENT OF THE REPARATIONS COMMITTEE OF IRAQI VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR, WHICH ADVOCATES FOR IRAQI ECONOMIC SOVEREIGNTY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND A LONG TERM US FINANCIAL COMMITMENT TO IRAQ AS AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO THE COUNTRY.



Chantelle Bateman - IVAW's Operation Recovery

Responding to Atrocious News

JOSH STIEBER

Outcry, understandably, poured out just before the summer began when a clip called "Collateral Murder" chilled viewers worldwide with the scenes of helicopters opening fire on Iraqi citizens below — a few armed, most not. As summer comes to a close, another disturbing story haunts the military. Details have emerged of an Army "kill team" killing for fun and collecting body parts as trophies. With the documentary release of *The Pat Tillman Story* sprinkled in, it's been a summer of enough bad military publicity to rival the shallow, cosmetic announcement that combat operations have ended in Iraq.

As the public glimpses the reality of war, veterans young and old have a chance to influence civilian reaction. I have a personal connection to two of the three stories above: I was in the company shown on the ground in the "Collateral Murder" video. It was my battalion commander who notoriously explained that the Tillman family couldn't blindly accept the death of their son, not because of the misleading cover-up, but because they were atheists and couldn't accept the fact that their son was now "worm dirt." Together with a veteran from my old platoon, Ethan McCord, we've taken a cue from previous veterans to redefine how "Collateral Murder" was understood, just as Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans have throughout these wars.

When headlines buzzed in the late 60's over the My Lai massacre, VVAW helped to redefine the public understanding from one of "a case of bad apples," to a symptom of the larger system. Self-righteousness can run high when cases of military atrocities become public. A speaker at a rally for Bradley Manning, accused leaker of "Collateral Murder," said any soldier who doesn't do what Manning did is a coward. The temptation is strong for civilians to look at the rotten fruit and not the tree from which it came. But veterans continue to step forward to look at the institution which desensitizes its members. Killing for sport is appalling, but without looking at the training which teaches young people to scream "blood makes the green grass grow" and "kill them all, let God sort them out" and holds reflexive Rules of Engagement once deployed, then the rotten

fruit will continue to grow from a dehumanizing tree.

An Open Letter of Reconciliation and Responsibility to the Iraqi People

From Current and Former Members of the US Military

Peace be with you.

To all of those who were injured or lost loved ones during the July 2007 Baghdad shootings depicted in the "Collateral Murder" Wikileaks video:

We write to you, your family, and your community with awareness that our words and actions can never restore your losses.

We are both soldiers who occupied your neighborhood for

what we were trained to do and what we carried out in the name of "God and country." The soldier in the video said that your husband shouldn't have brought your children to battle, but we are acknowledging our responsibility for bringing the battle to your neighborhood, and to your family. We did unto you what we would not want done to us.

More and more Americans are taking responsibility for what was done in our name. Though we have acted with cold hearts far too many times, we have not forgotten our actions towards you. Our heavy hearts still hold hope that we can restore inside our country the acknowledgment of your humanity, that we were taught to deny.

Our government may ignore

Solemnly and Sincerely,

Josh Stieber, former specialist, US Army

Ethan McCord, former specialist, US Army

When asking "what can be done about these outrageous stories?" the easy initial reaction is to condemn individual soldiers. But examples of other veterans have prompted many of us younger veterans, from these instances to the IVAW's Winter Soldier testimonies in 2008, to share our full stories. We want to look at how injustice is taught, not just what it looks like when it happens. We want, in small steps, to learn and act on the example of reconciliation with those we've wronged.

Having met numerous Vietnam War Veterans who have returned to Vietnam or been involved in reconciliation projects, the example of not forgetting about the people at the other end of our weapons was put into practice. Ethan McCord and I wrote our Letter of Reconciliation and Responsibility (www.lettertoiraq.com) and have been aided by civilian friends from the Civilian Soldier Alliance www.civsol.org to begin a reconciliation process of our own, working with NGOs that do ground work in Iraq.

The wave of press about brutality in the military, aided by the example of older veterans, has been an opportunity to highlight the workings of a broader system. Through the painful experiences of our past, we have the power to inspire others challenged with the present and transform those experiences into healing and reconciliation for the future.



JOSH STIEBER IS A VETERAN OF THE INFANTRY COMPANY SHOWN ON THE GROUND IN THE "COLLATERAL MURDER" VIDEO. AFTER LEAVING THE ARMY AS A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR IN 2009, HE AND ANOTHER VETERAN BICYCLED ACROSS THE US TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGE ASSUMPTIONS. STIEBER IS CURRENTLY A STUDENT, BUT CONTINUES TO SPEAK, WRITE, AND ORGANIZE WITH IVAW AND THE CIVILIAN SOLDIER ALLIANCE.

As the public glimpses the reality of war, veterans young and old have a chance to influence civilian reaction.

14 months. Ethan McCord pulled your daughter and son from the van, and when doing so, saw the faces of his own children back home. Josh Stieber was in the same company but was not there that day, though he contributed to the your pain, and the pain of your community on many other occasions.

There is no bringing back all that was lost. What we seek is to learn from our mistakes and do everything we can to tell others of our experiences and how the people of the United States need to realize we have done and are doing to you and the people of your country. We humbly ask you what we can do to begin to repair the damage we caused.

We have been speaking to whoever will listen, telling them that what was shown in the Wikileaks video only begins to depict the suffering we have created. From our own experiences, and the experiences of other veterans we have talked to, we know that the acts depicted in this video are everyday occurrences of this war. This is the nature of how US-led wars are carried out in this region.

We acknowledge our part in the deaths and injuries of your loved ones as we tell Americans

you, concerned more with its public image. It has also ignored many veterans who have returned physically injured or mentally troubled by what they saw and did in your country. But the time is long overdue that we say that the value of our nation's leaders no longer represent us. Our Secretary of Defense may say the US won't lose its reputation over this, but we stand and say that our reputation's importance pales in comparison to our common humanity.

We have asked our fellow veterans and service-members, as well as civilians both in the United States and abroad, to sign in support of this letter, and to offer their names as a testimony to our common humanity, to distance ourselves from the destructive policies of our nation's leaders, and to extend our hands to you.

With such pain, friendship might be too much to ask. Please accept our apology, our sorrow, our care, and our dedication to change from the inside out. We are doing what we can to speak out against the wars and military policies responsible for what happened to you and your loved ones. Our hearts are open to hearing how we can take any steps to support you through the pain that we have caused.

Anti-War Leaders Launch New Strategy Inspired by Workers' Human Rights Movement

GREG ROSENTHAL

Last month, I joined twenty veterans and nineteen other civilians at a training organized by Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) and Civilian-Soldier Alliance (Civ-Sol). The week was devoted to community building, strategic planning, leadership development, and sharing stories of hope, struggle, hardship and commitment.

The training focused on transformative organizing, leadership development and campaigning, reflecting aspects of two leading poor people's human rights organizations, the United Workers and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW).

The training is a long way from IVAW's humble beginnings as a speaker's bureau in July of 2004. Along with the anti-war movement, the organization grew and picked up momentum.

Through their strong presence at the Democratic and Republican National Conventions, IVAW demonstrated that they are a determined and significant force that will not be silenced. From 2004 to 2010, scores of chapters were built, Conscientious Objectors were supported, and countless actions were held to highlight the horrors and inhumanity of war and our country's inadequate care for veterans.

Although in 2003, *The New York Times* quipped that the massive anti-war demonstrations were emblematic of a second "superpower," there has been no shortage of shocking disappointments for the organization and its supporters. Yet with every event, action or march, IVAW believed that each effort would bring about an end to the wars. A strategy rooted in ending the war in Iraq, and, later, Afghanistan, only brought disappointment. The lack of a longer-term strategy or vision proved to be demoralizing and demobilizing for IVAW and the anti-war movement; this morale deficit proved to be a weakness when President Obama "ended" the war in Iraq. What becomes of IVAW when the war in Afghanistan "ends"?

IVAW's identity as an explicitly anti-war organization has also hamstrung the organization, limiting its opportunities to speak

to the majority of veterans, who don't identify as being anti-war. This false dichotomy of pro-war vs. anti-war serves solely as coded speech among those who already identify with that ideological construction. If the goal is to organize as many veterans and GI's as possible, than selecting a narrow ideological framework closes doors on potential leaders and members. The construct also carries with it the weight of the anti-war movement (predominately white and middle class), which is not necessarily reflective of the veteran and GI community.

This is why organizing around universal values as opposed to ideology can speak to a much broader base of people. Through the universal values of dignity, respect, and human rights – the same values the highly successful United Workers and the CIW incorporate into their organizing models – communication can occur across ideological or partisan barriers.

The Civilian Soldier Alliance has been active in the anti-war movement for at least as long as IVAW. Their work has been crucial in supporting the work of resisting veterans and service members throughout the years. In 2007, they formed an alliance with IVAW, looking to the Student/Farmworker Alliance's (SFA) relationship with the CIW for a partnership model focusing much of the work that many of these committed civilian peace activist were already doing.

Civ-Sol was subject to the same hopes and frustrations faced by other players in the national anti-war movement, yet, like IVAW, has weathered the challenges with a core group of highly committed leaders. Like IVAW, Civ-Sol, found themselves rushing from protest to protest to fill the larger anti-war movement's leadership gap, hoping that their next protest would end the war.

Thanks to Obama's brilliantly managed "peace" campaign, by 2009 there were few peace groups to speak of left on the scene. IVAW and Civ-Sol's momentum had also been stagnated by the 2008 presidential elections, but, unlike other groups, they emerged with a strong set of leaders ready to dive into an honest

assessment of their work's impact. Members studied the anti-war movement's shortcomings and its history during the Vietnam War, sought advice from like-minded organizations, and reflected on the history and organizing during the Civil Rights Movement. Their synthesis resulted in two significant documents: IVAW's organizing model and the Civilian Ally organizing manual.

By week's end, the group had collectively identified an issue to start a campaign around. IVAW announced on July 11 that it will focus on advocating for adequate PTSD and mental health care for veterans and GIs and against deployments of traumatized veterans – a clear shift from the previous strategy of trying to create bigger and bigger events to end the war. The change will help focus organizational resources and unite veteran and peace organizations, while also exposing the federal government's neglect for the health of veterans and service members.

On many fronts, IVAW along with Civ-Sol are pushing forward in a much more strategic, intentional and sustainable way that has the potential to organize a broad-based peace movement led by veterans and GI's capable of shifting the power relations that create poverty, war-profiteering, and killing at the expense of fair development and dignified healing.

As it stands, both organizations identify the core of their strategic visions to be an end to the military war and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. This has been and may continue to be a barrier for them to establish long-standing, effective organizations. Wars can be ended rather abruptly by presidents and by mass media's perception management – as evidenced by President Barack Obama's "end" to the war in Iraq. If an organization's chosen war was ended, then its mission would be "achieved" and its relevance subsequently imperiled. I would like to see these organizations around in thirty years, not because the US is still in Iraq and Afghanistan, but because members fight for the human rights of veterans and build power to transform national priorities

toward peace and reconciliation.

Great efforts are being made to pursue a transformative organizing model where people engage in struggle not out of self-interest, but to participate in collective struggle for something much larger than themselves. Poor people's human rights organizations like the United Workers organize through universal values that speak to a larger struggle toward realizing the full human potential of all – values of respect, dignity, and sanctity of life. In heeding this lesson, the anti-war movement's base of veterans and a select group of civilians could expand beyond the polarized pro-war/anti-war ideology and connect with people around shared values and cultures.

The two groups should also continue to prioritize critical reflection and analysis, especially in the early stages of the campaign, and – taking yet another lesson from the CIW and United Workers – construct a compelling campaign narrative to make their struggle epic, and lay the groundwork for power-building through perception in a story where the movement gets to be the heroic underdog rather than a reactive, powerless force of protesters facing off against police.

IVAW and Civ-Sol can be the new leadership we need for a more vibrant peace movement. If they continue along their current path, they will move from being a reactive anti-war force to a proactive, pro-peace force for a more just, humane, and dignified order, not solely for veterans and service-members, but for everyone, at home and abroad.

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GREG ROSENTHAL IS A HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZER AND EDUCATOR IN BALTIMORE, A LEADERSHIP ORGANIZER WITH THE UNITED WORKERS AND GRAD STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND BALTIMORE COUNTY. HE CAN BE CONTACTED AT GREG@UNITEDWORKERS.ORG.

Fallen Angels

CHRIS ARENDT

It is easy for a veteran to go homeless. All it takes is a few questionable decisions, or worse, mistakes. Suddenly one can find oneself very free of the normal economic bracket. I didn't find it hard at all. The hard part comes when you fall out of the habit of paying rent, having a job and bills and organizing your life to suit the modern world's demands and you still find yourself trapped... in a much more strenuous and uncomfortable system.

In this way the rebellion of the homeless vet becomes allegorically intertwined with the story of Lucifer and his Fallen Angels who were thrown from the graces of God through a hole in the floor of heaven into a substrata of existence, Hell. After the rebellion the demons, under the leadership of Lucifer, found themselves again entangled in God's all encompassing plan. Like a demon, the homeless vet soon finds that they are every bit as bound up in the economic plan as they ever were, but now at the high cost of damnation. Homeless Hell is a mile long line outside of the Salvation Army in the early fall sleet with a hand rolled cigarette dangling out of your mouth while you smoke and think about how you've got nowhere else to go and nobody left to care about you when you get there.

Worst, in this twisted metaphor, is that the homeless vet is left to prostrate themselves while still in the presence of the

system that they left with all of its fancy expensive food and cups of coffee that take five minutes to order. It is as if Hell and Heaven all happened in the same place, yet the demons and the angels of this world barely even see each other, as if some unconquerable divide separated them.

I don't want to be homeless any more. I don't want to rebel against the plan. I want to go back to the plan. I want a job and a house of my own. I want to be able to buy fancy food and smoke manufactured cigarettes fresh out of the pack, but once you go through that hole in the floor there is no turning back.

It's always some problem. Where you going to get the money? First month and security deposit. One thousand dollars. You need a job but you've got no dress clothes for the interview, you smell like stale smoke, dirty feet and infrequently washed clothing that has spent some time in some filthy places. There is dirt on you you can't clean off. If you get the job you will still have that swagger, that attitude, because after all of that time being your own person out there where nobody cares about you probably changed into a much meaner, much more survival oriented version of your former self. And where in the Hell are you going to live while you work? What will you eat?

There are programs, which you will have figured out. Food stamps, rent assistance, things like

that. The food stamps are easy to get but hard to spend because you don't have a kitchen to cook your food in but at least you can eat. You got to dance for the rent money, though. They want you to have a job, but they also want to see you in their office once a week so that you can fill out a stack of papers. If you're homeless chances are you were never very good with papers to begin with. Then you have to find a land lord that also wants to fill out a bundle of papers and then wait for the VA to finally send them some money. I dropped out of the HUD/VASH program after all the ride requests destroyed my relationship with the woman who was letting me stay with her.

Long story short, it is an impossibly long road back from the streets and nobody from the MGMT is going to help you out. The independent will that forced you through the hole in Heaven's floor in the first place continues to gnaw at your soul, making you angry and the constant need is making you crazy and that makes the chances of getting a job ever slimmer.

Everything is looking in my favor. I've got part of an education. I'm smart and young and my muscles still work. I am not addicted to any serious drugs or alcohol. I have a good record. No trouble with the law. Honorable Discharge. I'm not even all that dirty. I still have my friends and they don't let me sleep on the street. They say that it takes eight years

to burn our all of your bridges and I've only been at it for two so the fires have only barely begun. But I still can't seem to figure it out.

I thought that it would be fun and that I would be free and that when I wanted to come back it would be easy. I thought it would just happen like magic and that I could be the person that I was before the Fall. I would tell all the other Fallen Angels who were riding on the many Greyhounds that carried us between our failures past and our failures to be that I was going to be a writer some day and they would tell me their pipe dreams but there was always this feeling in my stomach and presumably theirs that we will never make it out of this condition alive because we bear the mark of the malcontent.

No freedom here! Everything has been accounted for in "the Plan." Behind every alluring glimpse of autonomy is the crushing reality of heteronomy. Our fundamental lack of responsibility to the whole leaves us to occupy the many layers of hell whose boundaries are marked only by paperwork and the refuse of our vices. We stare in rheumy eyed disbelief that the Makers of this Plan could have built us to rebel with such a bitter punishment as a "reward" for doing what we were made to do.



CHRIS ARENDT IS A MEMBER OF
IVAW.

The Old Picture

In an unparalleled universe,
in an old war in an old corps,
below the Delta and Can Tho, Soc Trang, Bac Lieu,
east of the U Minh forest the Viet Minh never left,
north of the Swift Boats,
well west of the prison floating on a river,
clouds reflect the South China Sea onto Ca Mau
and the same same named peninsula.

The province chief doesn't allow
fighting on his plantation.
Monsoon night rat hunts fill
junior officers' empty time.
Local whores souvenir GIs with diseases.
The Vietnamese supplied water flows
sporadically to the compound--on purpose.
We keep filled 50-gallon barrels and empty
#10 cans by toilets to flush the blues away.

Hootch maids shine boots, wash and iron.
The mess hall workers season food with bugs.
It's plush for Nam and quite calm.

There's a Free Fun Zone
every where the town kids are.
They don't worry about ARVN or
VC interrogators and press gangs--yet.

Bored as a spoiled child,
guilty as a drunk,
I transfer out.

What ever happened to them?
What ever happened to us?
Some of them grew up.
Some of us got older.

Most lived in incensed times.

—Horace Coleman

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War, Sex and Fantasies of Betrayal

ERIN MCMANUS (REVIEWER)

Hanoi Jane: War, Sex, and Fantasies of Betrayal
Jerry Lembcke
(University of Massachusetts Press, 2010)

As with most books, one must be wary of the misleading seduction of covers. Jerry Lembcke's *Hanoi Jane: War, Sex, and Fantasies of Betrayal* is no exemption. Consisting of two iconic photos of Jane Fonda—one from her role as space-traveling vixen in *Barbarella*, the other from her notorious trip to Hanoi in 1972—the cover lends itself to the feeling of a Fonda-centered biography. Yet Lembcke has no interest in revealing "the behind the scenes" Jane Fonda. Such an endeavor would be challenging in its own right, but the book takes on something more enigmatic. Instead of writing about the person Jane Fonda, Lembcke's work is much more a biography of her infamous persona, Hanoi Jane.

Yes, that's right, it's that Hanoi Jane, the traitor bitch, the commie slut, the threat to a nation, the woman with innumerable epithets—emblematic for losing the war—the book is about her. But more than Jane Fonda, it is about how and why she has come to be what she is, immortalized as the symbol of American treachery and betrayal and loss.

Contrary to the received wisdom, Lembcke insists it is not Fonda or her activism so much as American culture—its collective history, its social and political character—that is responsible for crafting her into the myth of America's villainess responsible for losing the Vietnam war.

This cultural emphasis is what distinguishes *Hanoi Jane* as a truly unique book with a large vision. However, the reader may find that Lembcke's meditations on

his subject walk a thin line between the insightful, the convoluted—and at least for this reviewer—at times the conspiratorial. He occasionally insinuates the experience of one POW as symbolic of all. Lembcke appears to suggest that front line female NVA/VC were imagined or exaggerated by combat GIs. Lembcke notes the collaboration of Vietnam war POWs with the enemy to gain favored treatment. This phenomenon is well known in Holocaust literature as identification with the aggressor

We discover that what Fonda did was noteworthy, but hardly unusual. She merely followed in the footsteps of three hundred activists who had made similar trips to Hanoi before her. Lembcke artfully inspires in readers the right questions. If Fonda's actions were not exceptional, then why was she so despised by veterans of Vietnam and by large segments of the public? Who are these aforementioned three hundred activists, what did they do and why have their efforts slipped through

the reader at times satisfied, at other moments bewildered or conflicted.

Lembcke, a sociologist at Holy Cross, dedicates a chapter to each of his concepts on the myth of Hanoi Jane.

Perhaps most troubling is the first, where commonalities are drawn between Vietnam POW narratives and early American captivity narratives to reveal the American fear of the Other. This "fear of the Other," a simple apprehension to foreign cultures, is no anomaly. Yet Lembcke connects Fonda's Other status as a female with POW's fears of becoming the Other (i.e. the enemy), generating a further reason to hold her in low regard. This seems a tenuous argument at best, an example of Lembcke's tendency to overemphasize the simple.

In a chapter critical to Lembcke's use of mythology as a means to explain the enduring derision of Fonda, we see her through a tradition of female figures of wartime betrayal, starting from the ancient Greek drama, *Lysistrata*, to the Mexican legend of Malinche, the female spies of the Civil War, Mata Hari of WWII—all women who used their sexuality as a tool in political duplicity. In essence, Fonda, as Lembcke would have it, fits an already present model of gender dynamics, one that equates duplicity with femininity.

In another chapter, it is Fonda's rejection of traditional gender roles, casting off *Barbarella*, and sliding into feminism and activism, that our patriarchal society was not prepared for.

Elsewhere, Lembcke asserts that the working class was resentful of Fonda's class status, wealth and privilege in relation to her political activities. Fonda's economic independence, her ability to slide into various occupations, activist, actress, capitalist, created resentment amongst those subjected to the draft, who had no cultural or monetary assets to liberate themselves from the fate society designated.

Perhaps most importantly Lembcke shows that Fonda's demonization was part of a Right Wing effort to reconstruct history, to blame activists for the loss in Vietnam, to deter critical inquiry

continued on next page

... Fonda's demonization was part of a Right Wing effort to reconstruct history ...

and it is to Lembcke's credit that he acknowledges these aspects of the POW experience are contrary to popular belief.

The book is adorned with anecdotes, frequent divergences into distant pockets of American history, literature and mythology, which while often thought provoking, seems to amass a lofty cosmology more revealing of the author than of his subject. Further, the critical reader is given the impression that more than once Lembcke makes his multiple theories fit an agenda both factual and ideological. However, before diving into the murky realms of the abstract, Lembcke wisely begins his book on a concrete historical foundation.

Readers are brought back to the scene of the crime, to the era where it all began, describing Fonda's notorious 1972 trip to Hanoi with skillful pragmatism. Stripping the story from its usual conflation of fact and fiction, Lembcke informs us of how the trip was covered by the media, perceived by the public, and how it fit into the larger scope of the peace movement altogether. His references to the suppressed documentary *FTA*, in which Fonda and a troupe of vaudevillians (including Donald Southerland) visited US stateside and Pacific bases to the rousing cheers of anti-war GIs, is much appreciated.

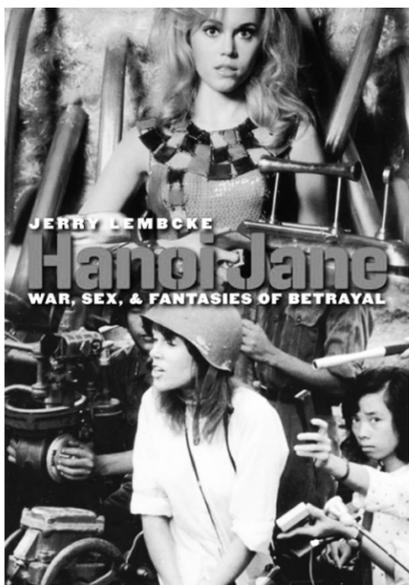
To Lembcke's credit, his revised history successfully demystifies Fonda, generating a more understated and humane image of her as a political figure.

the cracks of memory? Lembcke answers these questions by first detailing that Fonda's vilification began several years after the war. Secondly, this vilification helped to mask the efforts of the late Howard Zinn, Father Dan Berrigan and peace activist delegations. Lembcke offers their work, their struggles, and their impact, in *Hanoi Jane*—exposing as well as filling in a historical gap that may be empty to Americans of various stripes.

In fact, the attention Lembcke gives to these peace activists may be one of the book's greater strengths, in that it indicates a generational insight on behalf of the author. For many younger Americans, as with this reviewer, the history of the Vietnam War and the peace movement has been generally left an untouched mystery by America's educational system.

One is tempted to say that because of these moments of historical reflection, *Hanoi Jane* is accessible to multiple generations of readers, and that it is a potential teaching tool. But the point of the book is not to address or rectify disparities in our sense of history. Rather, such particulars are only a means to an end, a platform for Lembcke's multiple, occasionally over-elaborate theories behind the endurance of the Hanoi Jane legacy.

And it is these theories, arriving in all shapes, sizes, degrees of clarity, plausibility and convolution, that both mar and grace the overall narrative, leaving



W. D. Ehrhart's *The Bodies Beneath the Table*

JACK MILLER (REVIEWER)

The Bodies Beneath the Table
W. D. Ehrhart
(Adastra Press, 2010)

When I first read W. D. Ehrhart's poetry in high school it was simply "war poetry," because of its vivid descriptions of his combat experiences in Vietnam. Of course Ehrhart wrote quieter poetry, too, on a range of topics, but the visceral clarity of his war poems brought me somewhere shocking, a place in the soul I hoped I'd never have to visit in person.

A quarter-century later, Ehrhart's latest collection of poetry, *The Bodies Beneath the Table*, is almost nothing but quiet, though it's a restless silence. Graphic depictions of wartime horrors number few, outstripped by childhood memories, father-daughter exchanges and hushed reflections on what he's lost—the innocence of his early years, a parenthood free from the haunting of old ghosts and the people who have gone from his life, taken by death or ideological distance.

The book takes its title from the one "war poem" in the collection, which does show us the bodies—those of a Vietnamese couple "bloated like Macy's Parade balloons, / only unrecognizable lumps on / shoulders where heads should be." They had crawled under a table, the only shelter they had from the bullets, and huddled together to wait for the inevitable end. The poem's final stanza colors every other poem in the book—not "war poetry," but the

poetry of everyday life that's been permanently stained by war:

All these years I've wondered

how they died. Who were they.

Who remembers.

Ehrhart remembers them without knowing them. With a wry nod to an endless cycle, the poem's dateline of "Hue City, 1968" continues with "or was it Fallujah, Stalingrad, or Ur?" Cycles are important to Ehrhart; are everywhere in these poems. In one, he calls out the President for saying "we must teach our children...that violence is not the answer" while simultaneously bombing Belgrade. In others he notes that he grew up learning "to be angry all the time," only to find that he's raised an angry child himself; that he teased kids at school and now his daughter is likewise teased to tears.

There's a clear sense of frustration when he describes these repeating patterns, as several poems relate an intolerable situation with no apparent exit, ending with "I don't know how" or "now there's nothing I can do." This imbues the poems with a certain cynicism, but it's a smart cynicism and never lapses into despair.

He rejoices, for example, in spending Christmas Eve with his daughter, "tonight I'm a man who knows / what he's got." In one of

the book's strongest pieces, he waits up all night for the arrival of a friend who "freaked," nervous because of his rage and gun—it ends not with gunfire, but a quiet breakfast, as Ehrhart says, "I only know you were always a friend / I'd bet my life on. I did. And I won." It's clear that he hasn't lost hope.

He also hasn't lost his sense of humor; there's a vein of dry wit running through all the poems. Some are downright funny. "Oh, Canada" is a self-aware rant about imported paper cups. "Life in the Neighborhood" is a whimsical account of how he tames a pink rhinoceros in a neighbor's garden when the police do nothing. "Turning Sixty" is literally his poem "Turning Thirty" with a little gray hair thrown in. Again a cycle—thirty years later, he still asks the same questions: "what causes laughter, why / [do] nations go to war, who paints the startling / colors of the rainbow on a gray vaulted sky, / and when [will I] be old enough to know[?]"

Ehrhart's questions beget our own. Had I not read his poetry in high school, would the Nintendo-like blips on CNN a few years later have been as horrifying? When the anchormen said Baghdad was "lit up like a Christmas tree," would I still have cried tears of frustration and disgust? Would I have stayed up all night to protest, had Ehrhart not shown me the bodies so carefully kept off-camera?

As a nation we continue to experience a "life during wartime"

The Bodies
 Beneath the Table



W. D. Ehrhart

free from visible consequence and rife with distractions: as we grow older and more tired, as we grow preoccupied with college costs and variable-rate mortgages, how do we keep the notion of trading a few foreigners' lives for a little extra sleep from starting to sound almost rational? How do we break these cycles?

Ehrhart would insist that he doesn't know, but he at least points us in the right direction. This is not "war poetry"; it runs deeper, and its honesty keeps us honest.



JACK MILLER IS NOT A VETERAN BUT IS A POET. BY A STRANGE COINCIDENCE, ONE OF HIS POEMS RECENTLY APPEARED IN SAN PEDRO RIVER REVIEW ALONGSIDE "ARTSY FARTSY, WHISKEY & GIRLS," ONE OF THE 41 POEMS IN EHRHART'S *THE BODIES BENEATH THE TABLE*.

War, Sex and Fantasies of Betrayal

continued from previous page

from incompetent military and elected leadership, and to try to uphold the ideals of America.

Hanoi Jane is an important book, though likely it will find its niche with historians and academics. More precisely, Lembcke's too often dry academic tone detracts from what is to this day a highly emotionally charged issue and thus limits its appeal to a broader audience. In this regard, it is unfortunate that Lembcke leaves out the notion of war trauma as a significant force behind the reactions of Vietnam veterans to the (myth of) Hanoi Jane. Additionally left out are the voices of Vietnam and Vietnamese combat veterans regarding their feelings (and the explanations of such) toward Fonda. On the other

hand Lembcke includes the release of Special Forces POWs due to the direct negotiations of Fonda and her then husband Tom Hayden with the government of North Vietnam.

In conclusion, this book is significant to our understanding of this time, but it is only one man's perception, insightful but not wholly objective; it further necessitates, through the case of Jane Fonda, and the Vietnam War, our need to continually reexamine how heroes and heroines in history are made.



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The Old Picture II

Browner than a garden gnome,
 but taller and clean shaven,
 a gaggle of boys frame him
 (naked, peaked hat, mini flip-flops).

A more serious youngster
 with a slightly startled gaze
 (haloed by a bicycle wheel)
 looks at the American freezing them all
 (including the laughing woman behind them)
 in the instance.

Another youngster, wary but watching,
 peeks between two taller boys.
 The centered one, his recently infant
 belly bulging slightly,
 is a serene young Buddha.
 Looking at the future;
 ready to encounter
 all that comes.

—Horace Coleman

Myths of Vietnam War Persist, But Could Its Truths Be Repeated?

MICHAEL PETERSON

It was with mixed emotions that I read Francis "Bing" West's commentary, *The Vietnam Myth*, reprinted from the *Free Lance-Star* in the *Eugene Register-Guard*.

Many readers must have groaned "not again!" as another historian, conservative, revisionist, whatever, resurrected the hoary ghost of the Vietnam War and so revived the pain and divisiveness of that era. Given recent events, perhaps it is time to review some history, even if it means raising ghosts.

I write this response to West's article also with mixed emotions because I disagree with much of what he says. I also empathize with him very deeply, for West was not just another Marine infantry captain in the war. He and I are veterans of the Marines' Combined Action Platoon program, perhaps one of the most unique contributions of the US military forces in Vietnam. He, like my skipper, Capt. Edwin Goedde, along with more notable colleagues such as Lt. Col. William Corson, Col. David Hackworth and Col. John Paul Vann, were the "Young Turk" leaders of the Vietnam war. All were outstanding officers, worthy of everyone's respect. It is with that respect I now critique West.

West focuses his discussion on debunking three myths: (1) that we were defeated on the battlefield; (2) that protesters against the war were the moral equivalent of the US soldiers; and (3) that "losing makes little difference."

Taking the last myth first, I don't know where West got the idea that there is such a myth or one that is so widely held. It's a no-brainer, losing does make a difference. Most people, liberal historians included, agree that in some wars like World War II, there are clear winners and losers.

Not All Protesters Were Hippies

As for the second myth equating the moral equivalence of protesters and soldiers, West falls into the bad habit of stereotyping protesters of the war with the participants of Woodstock. It's a cheap shot. It ignores those people who were deeply committed in their opposition; people ranging from traditional religious pacifists and

progressives to Cold Warriors who saw a tragic error in policy unfolding; from Martin Luther King to former Marine Commandant and Medal of Honor winner David Shoup.

West's main assertion, that we were never defeated on the battlefield, is offered as refutation to the myth of defeat, and it is true. Col. Harry Summers said the same thing to his North Vietnamese counterpart after the war, to which the officer replied that it was true "but it is also irrelevant."

The war was much more than a series of set-piece, large scale military engagements. To be sure,

we lost no regiments and divisions in battle, but neither did we win strategically decisive battles, the enemy survived to fight another day. Moreover, the Vietnam War was one of small unit operations, and there the picture is murkier.

Worse for Wear

While the young American soldiers acquitted themselves well, in those situations where the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army initiated contact, we were often the worse for wear. As examples, the 2nd Viet Cong (VC) Regiment in West's Chu Lai area, or the North Vietnamese Army and especially their sappers, which the Marines faced along the DMZ, constituted some of the best light infantry in the world. We never defeated them decisively.

But our loss, or rather error, was strategic. Gen. William Westmoreland planned to defeat the enemy through attrition with search and destroy tactics. Here he blundered twofold:

(1) The enemy out-attritted us by forcing us to suffer casualties to a level that became unacceptable to Americans.

(2) Search and destroy had the side effect of uprooting and destroying many if not most Vietnamese hamlets, the

very center of the Vietnamese identity. The resulting disaffected population made a great recruiting base for the National Liberation Front. Interestingly, early in the war, the Marines, under Victor Krulak, disputed Westmoreland's strategy, advocating a war to be waged in, not on, the Vietnamese hamlets. He was basically overruled, and what operations the Marines attempted to conduct were mostly peripheral.

Here the Tet Offensive of 1968 is as instructive as it was decisive because the enemy was able to strategically surprise Westmoreland by mounting a

**Given recent events,
perhaps it is time to
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if it means raising ghosts.**

nationwide offensive after both our military and political leaders had assured our country we were winning. The enemy was not totally routed during the offensive, contrary to the assertions of some historians. They had enough resources to mount a mini-Tet a mere two months later. Westmoreland largely did not act on CIA assessments and warnings, but his deputy, Fredrick Weyand, did, moving his battalions away from the peripheries to Saigon. Had Weyand not done so, there could have been a real disaster.

So here is the problem of this murky war: For every point West raises, someone else can raise an equally valid counterpoint. Yes, we helped the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) beat back an NVA offensive in 1972, but the enemy seized Quang Tri, once the Third Marine Division's headquarters site, and held it for six months. The vaunted 1st ARVN Division broke and ran. Interestingly, a line was held by a hodgepodge of ARVN tankers, joined by the local, despised, lowly CAP trained militia.

Yes, it didn't help the South out in 1975 when we cut off our aid. Instead of giving out what would be the last transfer payment of \$1 billion, Congress "slashed"

it to "only" 700 million.

Finally yes, the communists were emboldened in 1975 to begin what would be the final offensive, and, for sure the Americans had left Vietnam in what one Australian general called "a bugout." But weren't the communists also emboldened by an almost reliable incompetence of the senior ARVN echelons? Didn't they have hints as indicated by the above poor performance by the 1st ARVN (under the command of the usually competent Ngo Quang Truong) and the disastrous 1971 ARVN incursion into Cambodia, Operation Lam Son 719? Here was another source of frustration to the Americans, after all those years and billions in aid and training; with a few exceptions, the ARVN still could not defend their country. An interesting statistic, the ultimately victorious NVA, having scored in the mid-teens as the best equipped army, shot to number four as a result of the fall of the South in 1975.

West is right about one thing. There are more than enough myths going around about the war. Politicians stole it from the generals and lost, or we could have won with just a little more sacrifice, or the US soldiers were just a bunch of baby-killers. And West is absolutely right in honoring our comrades.

But before we lay this ghost away one more time, consider this haunting parallel. A stampeded Congress has given the President a Tonkin Gulf-style resolution to wage an open-ended war against a constellation of terrorist entities, some of which are vaguely defined and our forces are being committed piecemeal to engagements overseas.

The Vietnam quagmire was no myth, but a brutal reality. Will this again be our fate?



MICHAEL PETERSON IS A MEMBER OF VFP, CHAPTER 159 ("EMERALD EMPIRE" CHAPTER, EUGENE, OR) HONORARY MEMBER, VFP IN 1989'S FIRST VETERANS VIETNAM RESTORATION PROJECT TO VIETNAM (VUNG TAU) AUTHOR, THE COMBINED ACTION PLATOONS: THE US MARINES' OTHER WAR IN VIETNAM.

Vet's Benefits

HAROLD TRAINER

I am a Vietnam era veteran. In May President Obama signed a new law for veterans care. One which would create an extensive program for caregivers of post 9/11 veterans injured in the line of duty. This includes money, health care, education and other benefits for caregivers.

However, the caring for veterans of previous wars like Vietnam or the Gulf War are not included in these important benefits. No money, education or

health care for these caregivers. Congress debated equal treatment to all veterans but they determined it would cost too much. So they said no.

The inequity is angering many veterans locally and nationally. You don't set one generation of veterans against another. If you are going to send our men and women to war you need to pay the total cost for them. For Obama and congress to leave the Persian Gulf kids and the older vets out is

wrong. Are they any less than the Iraq vets? Basically, you have to run a nursing home for many of our veterans and that costs a lot of money. Most veterans cannot afford it.

When we challenge our young men and women to put on a uniform and risk their lives for our country the country needs to take care of those who answer the call. I urge everyone to let our government know that you believe all veterans should be included in

this new law so that all can receive full caregiver services. If we can afford to send them to war we can afford to take care of them.



HAROLD TRAINER IS A RETIRED AIR FORCE OFFICER AND VIETNAM VETERAN AND LIVES IN PROSPECT KENTUCKY. HE IS AN ADJUNCT INSTRUCTOR OF BUSINESS AT JEFFERSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

You Can't Always Get What You Want

HORACE COLEMAN

--- and some times (like now) might not get what you need either!!

The right run-off-at-the-mouth reverend in Florida who wanted to burn Qurans on the anniversary of 9/11 showed that all religious fanatics—regardless of religion—have something in common. He didn't burn any holy books but some like minded loonies did—like the Kansas boobs who like to go to the funerals of troops KIA in Iraq or Afghanistan and say the departed deserved it because the military has gays in it.

When the going gets weird, the weird get weirder, evidently.

What was the media's excuse? Did a slow news day make the Quran burning story go viral? Pack mentality? Who didn't know that some religious fanatics are violent? Or, that some not too tightly wrapped people might not take kindly to having their holy books burned and act up?

The *NPR* program Morning Edition ran stories on September 16, 2010 about housing foreclosures hitting the highest level since the banking crisis started

three years ago and illegal drug usage hitting a ten year high. The local *NPR* affiliate station I listen to gave stats about national drug usage. Meth use: Up more than 60%. Ecstasy use: Up more than 50%. Marijuana use: Up 9%. There was a slight drop in cocaine usage, though (too expensive for some?).

Many people are under extra pressure these days. Foreclosures, job losses, sky rocketing higher education costs, finding a job after graduation (high school or college), keeping a job, more expensive medical care, putting off your retirement, delaying an oil change, minor surgery or a tune-up, etc. As a calypso song says, "Time tough!"

Check your local news and you might see a story like this: A man doesn't like the way his wife cooked his eggs so he kills her. Then he visits some neighbors and kills them before returning home to shotgun himself. Could something else have been on his mind? Misplaced aggression (like some nation we know)? Or, despair?

There's been another "natu-

ral" disaster in California. A natural gas transport pipeline breaks and erupts flames. The automatic shut-off valves don't work. A neighborhood, and some people in it, burn. Fires in Colorado burn thousands of acres. The Tea Party gives the GOP fits. Reggie Bush gives his Heisman Trophy back.

Banks fail, the housing bubble bursts, the stock market dropped like a hot rock through 401K plans, union membership declined, Harley-Davidson union members signed a contract with management that allows the hiring of temporary workers so the plant won't leave and they can keep their jobs—for now. A few dots like that make a nasty pattern.

Ever wonder how it is that as crime in the streets goes down—supposedly—crime in the suites goes on without remorse? Evidently, nothing is really excessive if it makes an excessive profit.

There's another slap to the national ego as *Newsweek* magazine runs a story saying the US is not only not Number One --or even second rate--but actually 11th of the 100 best countries

to live in. Of course that's their opinion. Though prices, the poverty rate and the trade deficit did go up last month.

We need to calm down, see, think clearly and act positively while considering long term effects before we act. And, grow up. Not to worry; we can always trash a mosque and set our minds at ease—for a moment—while the nation's hangover lasts a while longer.

Or, the country can straighten (sober) up and fly right. We're still the world's number one arms dealer. You betcha!! And, you're personally not in Afghanistan or Iraq. Yeah, things could be worse. And, the primary reasons things are as they are is us. So "us" will have to clean up our own mess.

As Shakespeare put it "Men at some time are masters of their fates: The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves if we are underlings."



HORACE COLEMAN WAS AN AIR FORCE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER / INTERCEPT DIRECTOR IN VIETNAM (1967-68).



IVAW Training, Aaron Hughes on the mic.

Teaching Tim O'Brien's Vietnam in Japan

KOKI NOMURA

I teach English and American literature at colleges in Japan. A scholar of war and trauma in American literature, I earned my Ph.D. with a study of Vietnam veteran-novelist Tim O'Brien's work. In 2006, I began to teach a course on American war literature in which we appreciate O'Brien's *On the Rainy River* and *The Man I Killed* (both from *The Things They Carried*), James Jones' *The Thin Red Line*, Ernest Hemingway's *Soldier's Home (In Our Time)* and others.

I remember Vietnam War literature courses first arrived on American college campuses in the late 1980s when I was a 20-year-old, Japanese-born English major at a small state college in South Jersey. Unfortunately, my school didn't offer any such courses, but my interest in Vietnam never faded. I thought Vietnam vets deserved respect; the men had answered their nation's call and did what they had to do in Vietnam, period. Don't get me wrong: I'm neither a war lover nor a crazy patriot. It's just that, to me, war is a place where our courage gets measured, and if I were to get drafted today, I might not be able to say no to it. Yes, courage is one mysterious thing.

Twenty-some years after my wonderful days in America, I'm now teaching Vietnam War literature in Japan. When I first started this, I kept asking myself, "with no military experience, do I

have the right to discuss Vietnam in my classroom?" I soon found myself writing this same question in the guest book of Tim O'Brien's official website. Months later he replied: "I'm delighted that you are teaching my work to students in Japan—that means the world to me—and I'm very grateful." This e-mail from my hero almost gave me a heart attack, but it

... I kept asking myself, "with no military experience, do I have the right to discuss Vietnam in my classroom?"

surely convinced me I was doing something right, so I gave it a small green light.

One of the students' goals in this course is to feel what it is like to fight in a war, as well as to gain an understanding of history, trauma and literary techniques. I've received positive responses from students thus far, who all claim they're dragged into those war stories. Many, for instance, can identify with protagonist Tim's agony in *On the Rainy River* (1990), O'Brien's masterpiece on the reluctant draftee's prewar conflict and spiritual shutdown. One female student wrote in her essay, "I see my boyfriend in Tim, a man under extreme pressure." Her boyfriend, a 25-year-old Ground

Self-Defense Force (Japan's army) member, was leaving Japan for Iraq to provide rear area support. This elite soldier believed the war in Iraq was wrong, but he also felt pressure from his company and enlisted with the troops going to Iraq, feeling both obligated and confused. The girlfriend was worried, not because he could be dead on his first day in the rear,

but because she was carrying his burden. I asked her to share this story with our class, but she didn't like my idea. No, college courses aren't like Oprah.

Yes, the Japanese military was in Iraq too, and yes, we sent our troops overseas in contravention of our constitution which was written by the Americans in 1945. But let's put the historical ironies aside. The bottom line is that this fellow cast aside his personal beliefs in order to remain a man of action, and he came home highly decorated. All of us in the world call this "duty" and "sacrifice" (sure, he's in the military, isn't he?), and a country should be built on those values. O'Brien closes *On the Rainy River* with upside-down heroism: "... I

came home, but it wasn't a happy ending. I was a coward. I went to the war." A country, he tells us, is also built on things like agony and sorrow.

My students' favorite, *On the Rainy River*, has something very universal: we hate war but we also feel obligated to our country, and our obligation stems not from our desire to kill but from the fear of being called chicken when our country really depends on us. So this story is perfect material for twenty-year-olds to ponder the mystery of courage. Asked what they would do if they got drafted, their minds, like Tim's, get jammed between two hells, becoming a shameful pacifist or becoming a courageous dead man. However, Tim O'Brien's latest stories tell us of the life of a survivor who can shoulder the burdens of the past and forge ahead with his life in company with the dead.



KOKI NOMURA, A JAPANESE NATIONAL AND GRADUATE OF SALEM COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN NEW JERSEY, RECEIVED HIS PH.D. FROM HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY (JAPAN) WITH A DISSERTATION ENTITLED "VIETNAM, PSYCHOANALYSIS, AND AESTHETICS IN TIM O'BRIEN'S WORKS." HE NOW TEACHES ENGLISH AND AMERICAN WAR LITERATURE AT SEVERAL COLLEGES IN JAPAN.

Hanoi Jane

JOHN ZUTZ

Hanoi Jane: War, Sex, and Fantasies of Betrayal Jerry Lembcke (University of Massachusetts Press, 2010)

Over the course of her life Jane Fonda has been transformed from a Hollywood darling sex kitten into an icon that is reviled, scorned, condemned and hated by a wide portion of the population. Judging by the outrage she causes in some circles one would think she slept with Ho Chi Minh.

College of the Holy Cross sociology professor, and VVAW member, Jerry Lembcke, progresses through Vietnam War mythology from *The Spitting Image*, where he showed that Vietnam veterans most likely

weren't spat on. In his latest book he bursts the balloon of another popular Vietnam veteran myth by examining the legend of Hanoi Jane, an image that has influenced our current occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

After Lembcke's examination of Fonda's actions in Vietnam, and the memoirs of the POWs with whom she interacted, it's clear that Fonda isn't guilty of many of the charges leveled against her by conservative groups.

She didn't commit treason. She didn't betray POWs to their captors. She didn't provide aid and comfort to the enemy any more than the hundreds of other peace activists who traveled to Hanoi during the war.

Though Lembcke's

description of Fonda's life is rather superficial, his inspection of the Hanoi Jane myth is quite thorough. Lembcke differentiates Jane Fonda, the person, from Hanoi Jane, the legend. He compares Hanoi Jane to other classical female betrayal myths – Delilah, Mata Hari, Tokyo Rose and others.

Though he doesn't directly refer to Genesis, legends of female betrayal go all the way back to Adam and Eve.

First, Lembcke debunks many of the charges tied to the various historical women. Then he demonstrates how the perceived "wounds" inflicted by them were used to define the warrior cults of their day.

He shows that sex and danger

have always mixed in military training and military society. He stirs in other Vietnam era myths like Jodi taking your girl at home, and razor blades in Vietnamese vaginas.

He goes on to show how the Hanoi Jane image was a concoction of the militaristic right wing to help justify losing the war.

The first few chapters of the book have quite a few typos that get annoying, but it's worth reading to help understand the interaction between the sexes and how legends grow.



JOHN ZUTZ IS A MEMBER OF THE MILWAUKEE CHAPTER OF VVAW.

Soft Targets, Part 1

JOSEPH GIANNINI

East Hampton, New York
Nov. 10, 2004
0600 hours.

I wake suddenly. Something I learned to do in the Marine Corps. My wife Nikki has the alarm set for 0700. I pull on sweats, head for the kitchen. Cody, our Lab Chesapeake mix, follows close behind. Give him a Milk Bone. Let him out back and Mr. Hobbes in from his nightly rampage. Pour some cat food into a bowl and milk into another.

Turn on the Weather Radio to get the Montauk Buoy Report. Listen while I get the coffee going. The surf is building. Right now it's at seven to eleven feet. But the wind's not right. Onshore. It'll be offshore late tonight. I'll do a Dawn Patrol and catch it in the morning.

I click off the Weather Radio and turn on the regular radio, set to NPR for the morning news. It's a broadcast from a woman reporter embedded with the First Battalion Third Marines in Fallujah, Iraq. I served with 1/3, aka the Home of the Brave, in Vietnam. I listen to her report while I brush my teeth, shave, shower and get dressed. 1/3 has been in Iraq only two weeks. Most of the Marines are 18, 19 and 20 years old. Never been in combat. Soon after they arrived In Country one of their vehicles hit a land mine. Eight Marines were killed. Nine seriously wounded. Not a good way to win their hearts and minds. The reporter describes the ongoing assault into Fallujah. 1/3 is cutting a swath of death and destruction. It's "get some" time.

My mind goes back to Nam. Booby traps and mines were a deadly problem there too. The Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army used a number of different kinds. They even booby-trapped our dud artillery rounds. Buried them and rigged a trip wire to a detonator installed in the nose. In Iraq the insurgents are booby-trapping 155mm rounds, detonating them remotely with cellphones. The V.C. also booby-trapped land mines, normally used to destroy tanks and trucks, to explode when a person tripped them. Most Marines who set off a booby-trapped artillery round or a land mine were killed or severely wounded. Some survived severed in half.

In Nam we rarely had mine detectors. On patrols we kept the interval, five meters between each Marine. An attempt to limit our casualties. We cut bamboo branches into walking sticks. Used them to prod the ground ahead. Our walking sticks saved many lives. Mine was one.

Quang Tri Combat Base
Vietnam
Jan. 31, 1968
2400 hours.

Vietnam's New Years Eve, known as Tet. The Year of the Monkey. A weeklong truce will follow. Doubtful. 1/3 has been defending

Each step a loud thud that shakes the Earth. White-hot shrapnel zings. I've dug a narrow deep hole. Making as small a target as possible. I'm facing a dance with death. No heroics. No sacrifice. No glory.

"Please, please God stop it," I say out loud. But the dance continues unabated through the night. The first rays of dawn start etching across the Base. Still no enemy ground attack. I'd rather have one. Then we could fight and die like men.

The next day Delta Six, Captain Hendricks, our Company Commander, gets a radio message from Battalion Headquarters. An

operator to call for an ambulance. Then I radio the Rangers. Let them know help is on the way.

The ambulance driver arrives. Tells us he's parked on our side of the tarmac, about 50 meters from the Company bunker. I decide to go along with him to help move the Colonel. We leave the bunker, start running toward the ambulance. At 15 meters away, swoosh. I dive into the soft sand. Boom! A rocket explodes in a large fireball to my left. The earth shakes. White-hot shrapnel spins by. Swoosh. Boom! Swoosh. Boom! We're caught in the open. No bunkers or holes. Swoosh. Boom! Swoosh. Boom! Silence for about 20 seconds. A lull, they're making an adjustment. I jump up and run for the ambulance. Dive and roll underneath.

Swoosh. Boom! Swoosh. Boom! Swoosh. Boom! Rockets exploding on the tarmac. No sign of the driver. He must have turned back. Fuck. I'm outta here. I have to get away from this airstrip. Find some cover. Silence again. Another lull. They're probably moving the rocket launchers. I roll out from under the ambulance. Rise and run away from the strip, into the Seabees' area. Still no incoming. I start back toward Delta's Command bunker. Almost there, I kneel down alongside a Seabee Bunker. Ready to make a final sprint to my hole. From inside the bunker, a Seabee says, "Did you see that crazy bastard out there?" Fuck, I'm that crazy bastard.

I take off. Make it to my hole. Jump in. More rockets, most hitting the strip. Some overshooting into our area. Finally it stops. I crawl out. Cautiously enter the Company bunker. The Company R.O. hands me the radio handset. It's a Ranger. He wants to know where the ambulance is. I respond that I'm working on it. Turn and order the R.O. to find the fucking ambulance driver. Several minutes pass. Another call from the Rangers. No hurry. The Colonel is dead.



JOSEPH GIANNINI, A CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEY, SERVED IN VIETNAM FROM 1967 TO 1968 WITH THE FIRST BATTALION, THIRD MARINES.

We cut bamboo branches into walking sticks. Used them to prod the ground ahead. Our walking sticks saved many lives. Mine was one.

the perimeter at Quang Tri Combat Base since mid-January. I thought it would be a hus, a break, from chasing gooks all over the boonies. It hasn't been. The incoming - rockets, mortars, and sniper rounds - is incessant. Keeps us awake most of the night.

I've been In Country seven months. Less than a week ago I was transferred from Bravo Company to Delta. I picked up a rifle platoon, Delta Three, and a Seabee platoon. The Seabees are helping us man the lines. Delta's Executive Officer is on R&R. I've assumed his duties until he returns.

Midnight, New Year's Eve. I step out of our Company bunker. The night is cool and clear. Stars sparkling in a huge black cave. The New Year begins with fireworks arching over Quang Tri City. Suddenly the sound changes. Thump, thump, thump. Followed quickly by rockets crashing into our perimeter. I dive into my hole. The enemy is firing 122mm rockets armed with delayed detonating fuses. They burrow deep before exploding. We have no defense. Death dances amongst us. Choosing partners at whim.

Army Ranger Battalion is landing inside the perimeter. Just across from us, on the other side of the tarmac. Captain Hendricks wants me to make contact with them when they come on board. Give them the scoop. The Rangers chopper in just before dusk. They're probably thinking they can stand down for the night. I radio over. Tell them we get hit every night. Rockets, mortars, probes and snipers. I tell them to dig in. I know the area. Soft sand. The Rangers will be a large cluster of soft targets.

Just past 0100 hours a barrage of rockets slams into our positions. We run for cover. I jump into my hole. Alone. Immobile. Cornered. Struggling to control my fear. Survival a matter of luck. Even so, I close my eyes and pray. Several more barrages. Then quiet. I wait. No incoming. I climb out. Walk slowly to the Company bunker. An urgent radio call comes in from the Rangers. Their Colonel, the Battalion Commander, has been hit. A priority shrapnel wound to the chest. The Rangers want our help moving him to the Base Field Hospital. I tell the Company radio

My Heart is Broken...

WILLIE HAGER

On Thursday, September 16, 2010, my brother Sgt. Wayne wrote: "Cathy Kniffin passed at 6:30 PM yesterday."

As painful as it is for all us... and it's really fuckin' painful...my heart and my eyes are filled with tears...she was one of the very special angels, as well as a warrior princess who never flinched in the face of tyranny; but take heart, she is in a better place, her soul now rejoined with John's. What a pair they were...Texas VVAW, Oleo Strut, Last Patrol, Gainesville 8 (12) Trial, TTU face off with the Swift Boat crowd in 2005. What an example she leaves for myself and others that I have met since the VVAW 40th Reunion and who are just finding their way back into the anti-war veterans movement and are looking for some direction for their re-kindled energy. Like my biker friend and San Diego VVAW brother Mutt would say, "she was a for real VVAW patch wearer." She lived the old school VVAW 10 Objectives...hell, she helped write them...and by her example inspired many others in VVAW, including myself.

Above is a photo of a smiling Cathy...that's her on the far right (in the picture, not politically)... at the 2005 TTU 5th Triennial Vietnam Symposium, which she was instrumental in bringing about. With her in the photo, L to R, are; Nancy Miller Saunders, Alex Primm, Terry DuBose (standing), Calixto Cabrera, myself, and the ever smilin' Kathy. I'm thinkin' it was Sgt. Wayne taking the picture, but either way, he was there with us, as were Scott Camil and Gerry Nicosia. (Video of the presentation can be found at www.VetSpeak.org, in the Video



Locker sidebar)

It was all happening thanks to Cathy and her commitment to maintaining VVAW's legacy, and commemorating John and his personal legacy. What a woman! It was she and John who helped carry forward VVAW's continued participation at TTU, right up till the time we presented there. It was sorta John's last hurrah. After he passed from Agent Orange complications, she picked up the banner and carried on the project, and threw the gauntlet at the feet of the Swift Boat Veterans and then assembled the panel pictured here to face off with them regarding their lies about VVAW's history, and their trashing of John Kerry regarding his 1970s association with VVAW, during his last presidential campaign.

I'm forever grateful that I got the opportunity to share the time with her there at TTU, after having not having seen her or talked to her in over thirty-five years...what a rush! It was she who made it possible for me to be able to travel there and participate. For those who didn't know Cathy personally. The photo is how I will

always remember Cathy; in the thick of the fight, and smiling...

Others remember her with fondness as well, as is reflected in this obituary from a local Texas newspaper. I can't lend attribution, as my memory buds fail me on which paper it was, and I didn't record it with the copy of the obit...so, sue me. At any rate, here's what other's in her life knew about her:

Obituary for Catherine G. Kniffin

Catherine Goodnow Kniffin passed away Wednesday, September 15, 2010 at Christopher House in Austin. Born an Army Brat in Champaign, Illinois, she lived many places – Philippines, Texas, Kansas, Paris, France, and Florida. She received her BA in music therapy from Alverno College, Milwaukee, in 1966.

In 1970 she married John Kniffin, a Marine Corps Vietnam veteran, with whom she was active in anti-Vietnam War protests. Cathy and John settled in Brenham where she worked for the Brenham State School for thirty years. John preceded her in death 8 years

ago.

Cathy spent her life in service to others—always mindful of those less fortunate. She lived her life passionately, fully, and freely. What she believed, she believed strongly. Whether marching for civil rights, or in protest of the Vietnam War, or taking care of her many animals, (from the tiniest spider to her beloved horses), or faithfully preserving the ecological balance of her environment, she was completely dedicated and purposeful.

The family will hold a memorial ceremony at Cathy's ranch near Brenham at noon on Sunday, 19 September. Her survivors are her mother, Jane Goodnow; her sister, Elisabeth; Brothers John, Michael, Stephen; three nephews and five nieces.

Remembrances may be made to the Best Friends Animal Society, www.bestfriends.org, the Sierra Club, or similar organization of your choice.



WILLIE HAGER IS CURRENTLY THE ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR OF VETSPEAK.ORG.

Mr. Gates Moves to Cut Pentagon Budget



Chris Malloy Remembered

RAY PARRISH

Chris Malloy died July 6 of this year and I agreed to write this obit, but it's hard. His life can't be described with dates; graduated from Evanston THS in '63, John Hopkins in '67 and then Vietnam and forty years with VVAW. His loss has extinguished a light of peace that we all need so desperately at this time. He will be remembered and missed by a lot of people because he touched (or graced) so many lives.

I loved him for so many reasons, like all who knew him. His enthusiasm for life was contagious and he was always a joy to be around. Listening to his vivid story telling of his travels around the world with Pat gave me a new appreciation for oral history and made me long to travel with him. His presence in otherwise emotional meetings seemed to cool us all down and to evaporate all evil thoughts. He took great delight in helping us see ourselves more clearly with deft comments

that caused the therapist in me to smile. Maybe his passion for hot air ballooning helped him see the world from a perspective few of us have ever had.

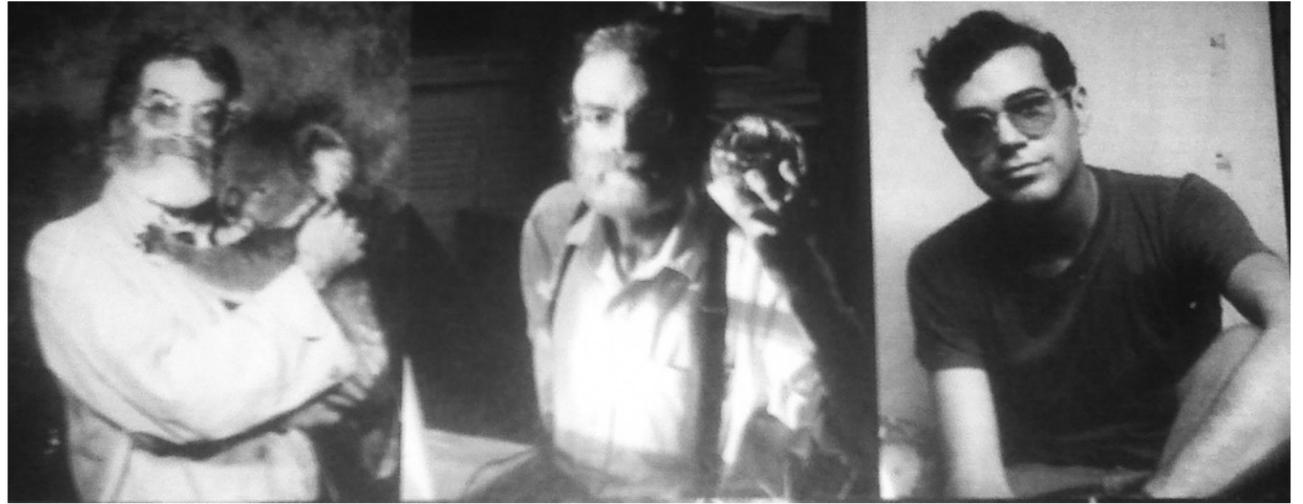
Which brings us to those damned helicopters in Vietnam. I thought of Chris as a PTSD success story since he was such a gleeful participant in Life, was an example that many fellow vets emulated and he never asked for

help. Watching the war slide by from the air for him must have been so different than for most of the younger GI's back then. Someone with as much life experience under his belt as Chris had at that time, apparently enabled him to better deal with those Nam memories that last a lifetime. So he made sure that he had a fulfilling life despite those experiences that have killed or crippled so many

other vets. In the end, he died as the result of "complications" from the VA's treatment for his Agent Orange diseases. It just goes to show you...war will get us all in the end. Teaching and leading us even in death. Peace and Love now and forever, Chris.



RAY PARRISH IS ONE OF VVAW'S MILITARY COUNSELORS.



Bill Hammaker – Professor of Peace and VVAW Life Member Gone but Never Forgotten 1908-2010

STEVE CRANDALL

I first met Bill at the Camarillo Democratic Club. Bill was the Club's designated Peace Promoter and I quickly learned that promoting peace was Bill's pleasure and passion in life. Bill had been promoting peace for over 70 years.

His strong desire for peace did not spring up with America's invasion of Iraq, Vietnam or Korea. His convictions predate all of these conflicts.

Bill talked about a speech he gave while standing on the steps of Gilman Hall at Johns Hopkins University where he was working as the Executive Director of the student YMCA. He gave this speech in 1936. His speech was not about the rumblings of war in Europe but rather about peace, because he believed it to be the only way to live. He also talked about the meeting he and his wife had in the West Wing of the White House with Eleanor Roosevelt.

Bill's interest in the peace movement began when he read a book, *The Fight for Peace*, by Devere Allen published in

1930. The book outlines the work of the peace movement from its beginnings to that date. After reading the work, Bill became a life long disciple of the peace movement. To satisfy this "passion for peace" he joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) over seven decades ago. FOR officially began its work in 1915 but its idea sprung from a chance meeting a year earlier that took place in a railroad station in Germany. Henry Hodgkin, an English Quaker, and Friedrich Sigmund-Schultze, a German Lutheran attended an ecumenical conference in Switzerland which sought to prevent the start of World War I, but before the conference ended, war had broken out.

In 2007 I ran into Bill at a peace rally in Ventura, CA. I told him about VVAW and gave him a copy of *The Veteran* to read. He later called me and said he had joined VVAW as a Life Member, Bill was 99. I thought why would a person join as a Life Member at 99 but that was the way Bill looked at life.

He was an avid reader and writer so anytime I got a letter published or wrote an article I would get a call from Bill congratulating me and urging me on.

From a letter from Bill to FOR's national office, "Our purpose, peace, is the best goal

on our planet. In fact, if we fail to achieve it, nothing else would matter." That was Bill.



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



Bill Hammaker and Steve Crandall.

How I Came to VVAW

JIM BALDRIDGE

I reported for duty on 6 Jan 66 and was "Riffed" early on 6 Nov 69. In between I was stationed near Memphis for aviation electronics school and was then sent to a VP squadron in Norfolk. I was a crew member on P2-V's, and then P3-B's based at Patuxent R. Naval Air Station.

We deployed to the NATO base at Keflavik, Iceland, for 6 months in 68 and again in 69, which was extended to 8 months. I read Zinn's *Vietnam – the Logic of Withdrawal* and then many other books and documents. I was transformed from an apolitical Nebraska and Ohio Republican anti-communist "patriot" to an anti-war, anti-Republican (and anti-Democratic) activist of undetermined allegiance or ideology for the remaining two years of my four-year enlistment.

When I realized that the Tonkin Gulf "Incident" was phony, I was PO'd! When I realized that other so-called justifications like the SEATO Treaty and Geneva Accords were exaggerations, distortions and lies, I began looking for explanations for why the President and Admirals and Generals and others were lying to get kids like me to sign up, kill and die, I

wanted to know WHY!

I subscribed to several underground GI newsletters; that's where I first heard of VVAW, in 1968 I think, in an article about a demo in NYC where half a dozen Vietnam vets decided such an organization was needed. The anti-war and underground GI movement was talking about it and I was digging it.

I decided to put out my own little newsletter during our second deployment. I liberated mimeo masters, typed up news of GI activities stateside and in Vietnam, added my own ideas and arguments about the war, ran it off on a hand-cranked mimeograph machine in the middle of the night. I then distributed it, "surreptitiously" as Dave Cline described it in *Sir, No Sir!*, on base.

As you might imagine, Iceland wasn't a hotbed of war resistance and insurrection. I was pretty much by my lonesome in this. Others in my unit quietly agreed with me but I was outspoken so I had the "rep", I was the Squadron Radical.

The success of the GI resistance movement didn't depend on what I did in Iceland or in southern Maryland. The resistance in

Vietnam or places like Ft. Hood DID matter. I wanted guys in my unit to know all about it, even if they wouldn't openly speak out or resist. I was a part of the war resistance, one small spoke in a big wheel, a part of the active duty anti-war movement.

When I was released from active duty I heaved my sea bag into a dumpster and headed for Baltimore, where I jumped right into the university-based anti-war movement. I never thought about joining VVAW. There were Vietnam vets around who could and did form and do stuff as VVAW, but I wasn't sent to Vietnam, so I left that part to them and worked against the war as a vet and a worker.

I eventually joined VFP, but when Bush/Cheney invaded (THEY didn't invade anyone, those chickenhearted bastards) Iraq, VVAW wasn't represented in the movement in Baltimore and I thought it should be. When I was in the service, I didn't get sent to Vietnam, but I was involved in the war resistance movement, I spoke out publicly in uniform, so I figured, "why the hell not?" I went to the VVAW website, checked out the eligibility requirements,

paid my dues.

I got some other Vietnam and era vets together who agreed with me that the VVAW voice needed to be a part of Baltimore's anti-Iraq and Afghanistan voices, and here we are. It's hard to get folks who are already over-extended activists to add another organization to which we want them to commit. But as long as these wars continue, and as long as there are vets who resisted in Vietnam or during Vietnam, there is a need for VVAW. As long as there are new vets, especially IVAW vets, with whom we can work, there is a need for VVAW. We'll keep up the fight until we win or are gone.

I want to be and am a part of the effort to organize VVAW while there are Vietnam and era vets to organize. Before long we'll be dropping like flies, so we need to get out there for people to see and join NOW! Time's-a-wastin', Brothers and Sisters!



JIM BALDRIDGE, VIETNAM-ERA VETERAN, BALTIMORE CONTACT FOR VVAW AND LIFE-MEMBER OF VFP WAS STATIONED AT NORFOLK NAVAL AIR STATION, PAX RIVER NAS AND KEFLAVIK NATO BASE IN ICELAND.



The IVAW board of directors.

Off To War

continued from page 36

I would like to spend a few months here. It was not to be. I reported to my squadron duty officer aboard Enterprise, was assigned a space in the Junior Officers' bunk room and then informed that we would steam to the Philippines the morning after next. I could no longer dodge

reality. I was going to be flying combat sorties in a few weeks, despite not being sufficiently trained. Dying now seemed closer. Denial was no longer an option, I was off to war.



MATT WARTHEN HAD A COUPLE OF WRITINGS PUBLISHED LAST YEAR: THE ENEMY AND WHY CAN'T I REMEMBER. HE WAS A NAVAL AVIATOR FLYING A-7'S IN VA-215 IN WESTPAC IN 1969 AND THE MEDITERRANEAN IN 1970. HE WAS THEN A FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR

IN BEEVILLE, TEXAS UNTIL RELEASE FROM ACTIVE DUTY IN 1972. HE BELONGS TO THE VIETNAM VETERANS WRITING GROUP WHICH MEETS IN SEBASTAPOL, CA AND THE OAKLAND VETERANS WRITING GROUP.

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

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

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

many Agent Orange victims. Today our government still finances and arms undemocratic and repressive regimes around the world in the name of "democracy." American troops have again been sent into open battle in the Middle East and covert actions in Latin America, for many of the same misguided reasons that were used to send us to Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, many veterans from all eras are still denied justice—facing unemployment, discrimination, homelessness, post-traumatic stress disorder and other health problems, while already inadequate services are cut back or eliminated. We believe that service to our country and communities did not

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

Insignia of Vietnam Veterans Against the War



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

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

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

Beware of VVAW AI

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

SUPPORT VVAW! DONATE OR JOIN TODAY!

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

Membership Application

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

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

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

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

Signature _____
 Date _____
 Total Amount Enclosed _____

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

RECOLLECTIONS

Off To War

MATT WARTHEN

Everything had happened so quickly after I received orders as a "must pump" to replace a pilot injured during the fire on the USS Enterprise. I was rushed to complete my first live bombing hop, my first night air to air refueling, finally night carrier landings. My bombing was barely acceptable, the refueling took the maximum number of attempts allowed and my night arrestments were marginal at best. As I walked up the air stairs on the tarmac, it was all starting to sink in. I was on my way to join a squadron going to Vietnam and I was nowhere near ready.

I could still taste the cheap yellow champagne and burnt hotdogs as I boarded the DC-8 at Travis AFB. Jay and Kaye had sent me off with a little going away party just before we drove to my flight. My cousin Jay knew what it was like to go off to combat. He had been a Naval Aviator flying missions in Vietnam. Although we never talked much about the war, I followed him into the Navy and flying, thinking it would be exciting and challenging. The afternoon chartered flight from Travis was full of soldiers, marines and a few sailors; a motley mixture of navy blue, army green and marine olive drab. I wore my favorite uniform, the service dress khakis decorated with my lone

"alive in '65" National Defense ribbon, my brand new Lieutenant jg silver bars and Navy wings. I carried only my sea bag which contained some toiletries, swim trunks (which I never used), a working khaki uniform, a couple of flight suits, my helmet, underwear and some jeans and t-shirts. I was one of the few officers on board this flight.

The flight to Hickam AFB in Hawaii was about five and a half hours on this April day in 1969. There were pretty stewardesses in short red and blue skirts to help all of us forget that we were only going to stopover at a beautiful vacation spot. Our real destination was war. We were treated like special passengers by the friendly crew, given more steak and chicken than we could eat and asked the usual questions about our hometowns, girl friends and schools we'd attended. I ended up talking to another Naval Officer who was reporting to a destroyer for duty. We planned on renting a car together and driving around the island, since neither of us had ever been to Hawaii.

On that long flight, I finally had time to ponder my situation. What would happen to me on this combat cruise? Well the answer to that seemed pretty simple: I was going to die over there. I had the absolute minimum of training,

not like most Naval Aviators who would have about 6 months of training with their fleet squadrons before deployment. I was one of two in my A-7 class to be "must pumped"- both of us were bachelors and obviously more expendable than the married pilots. I was not in a panic about dying in combat, probably because it still seemed so far in the future. I was joining a ship that had sustained considerable damage in a fire. I would have some fun times in Hawaii, and maybe even get more training with my new squadron before deployment. When I think back, I was in a state of denial. Something bad would probably happen, but it was a long way off. As it turned out I was able to enjoy only one full day in beautiful Oahu, touring the island in a rental car before a drunken going away party of mai tais and martinis. The ship weighed anchor the next day as I slept off my hangover.

What did I think about fighting a war in Vietnam, dropping bombs and killing people? I didn't think about it at all. I was not politically interested in the war before training, thinking by the time I was awarded my wings it would either be a war fully supported by our country or it would be over. The increasing anti-war protests and the fact that many of my friends had found ways

to avoid the war strangely didn't affect my decision to fly Navy. After flight training started, I was immersed in the day to day flying that was both challenging and demanding. I don't ever remember a conversation with other aviators about the morality of the war, the domino theory or the legitimacy of the Diem government. As it turns out, aviators are some of the least patriotic of all the military. We like the rush of flying, especially off carriers, and the war we fight is by far the most detached and impersonal of all the armed forces. I would learn, like most who experience combat, that war is about not letting your fellow aviators or soldiers down. It is having the courage to do what everyone else has to do, knowing you could lose your life doing it. But this insight would come long after my flight to Hawaii.

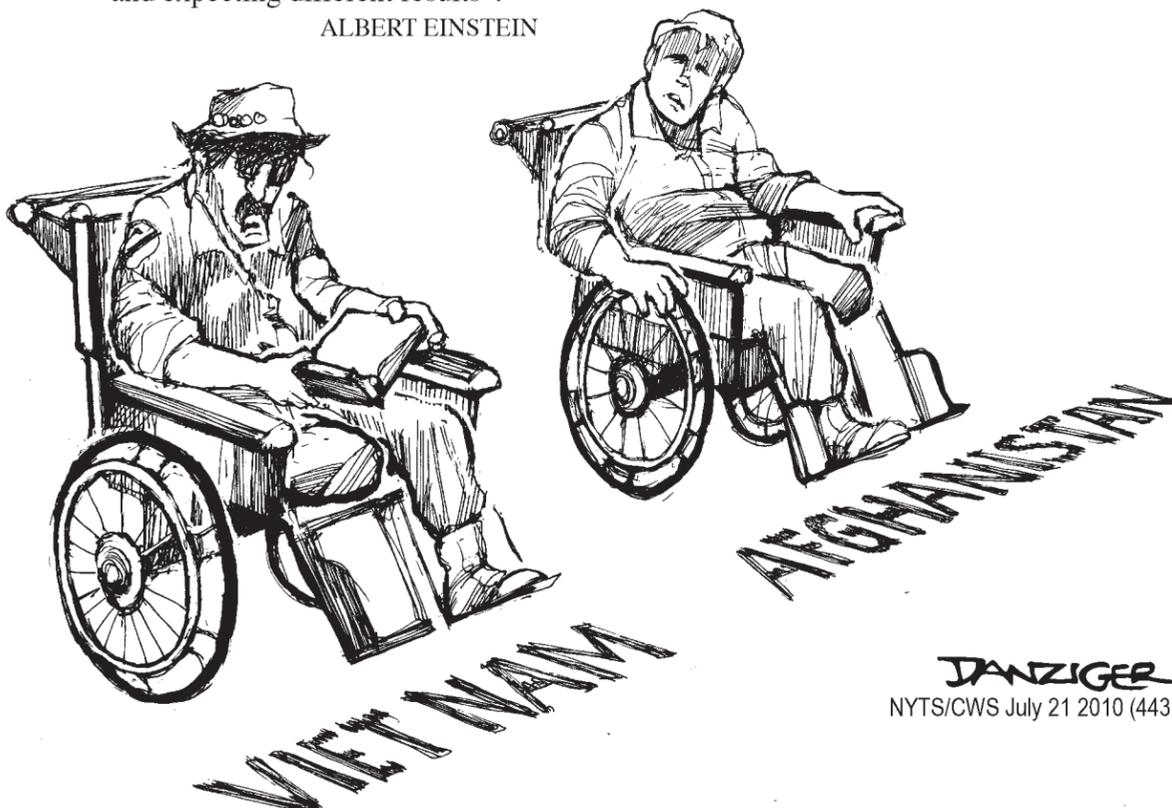
As we touched down at Hickam, the sun was low, the turquoise water shone bright against the glittering sand and Diamond Head stood like a sentinel guarding Honolulu. It did seem like paradise, especially compared to Kingsville, Texas, Meridian, Mississippi and Jacksonville, Florida. I breathed in the warm, moist air as we deplaned, thinking

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AH... HERE IT IS:

"The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results".

ALBERT EINSTEIN



DANZIGER

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