



# THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

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Fall 2013

## Our War, Our Legacy

BILL BRANSON

### From the National Office

Welcome to the Fall 2013 issue of The Veteran!

Why are we Vietnam Veterans Against THE War? We have been asked – and have answered – that question often over the decades since the war ended. But the answers bear repeating.

The US war against Vietnam was the war WE fought in. Our experiences are not monolithic. Some of us served overseas, some never did. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, or National Guard. En-

listed or drafted. Whatever our experience, it is THE war, and our opposition to it, that defines us – and our generation, and our country – to this very day.

Some of us might not think about it every minute or every day, but it is still there. There are those of us who can't make it go away when we close our eyes. It's as if 40 plus years have never happened and we are still right there.

*The Veteran* has sought to be the place where VVAW members, supporters and family can tell their stories. Sometime those stories are

too hard to tell. Sometime reading or reviewing another book on Vietnam or recalling our "war stories" is just too painful. Sometimes the obituary of our mother, father, son, or daughter is too hard to write.

Death is never easy, it never has been. It came fast and all too often in the early days. Too many soldiers never made it home from the war. Many came back only to die from Agent Orange, drugs or PTSD. Some of us, our children and grandchildren, still suffer from Agent Orange. But now, those of us still here, have survived. By

whatever means we have grown to cope with our experiences. So now, each death of each member, supporter, or family member seems to reverberate even harder. Sometimes it is just too hard to tell those stories.

So for every article you read in this, and every issue of *The Veteran*, there are countless stories that were started and never finished, and stories thought about, haunting us, but never penned. The war – OUR war – will be with us

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## VVAW Meets With Vietnamese President

JEN TAYABJI

On Friday, July 26, 2013 Truong Tan Sang, the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, honored Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) with a meeting in New York City. The day before, President Truong Tan Sang and President Obama met for the first time to discuss a multitude of issues, including military cooperation and the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

The New York Chapter of VVAW and other organizations in the New York Vets Peace Coalition had been working for some time with the Vietnamese Ambassador to set up a meeting between veterans of both countries. In late July, VVAW was informed that the President himself would be in attendance.

President Truong Tan Sang had an intimate meeting with members of the Coalition before the larger reception and dinner scheduled that evening. VVAW

board members Brian Matarrese and Susan Schnall along with VVAW members Frank Toner and Ken Dalton were present.

Susan spoke about Agent Orange and the work being done. Frank shared his background on how he had once been in Seminary. When he left school he was drafted, sent to OCS (Officer Candidate School) and then to Vietnam. During his time overseas, he refused to carry a gun, and never did. He talked frankly about his experiences, both with those who wanted him court martialled and those who worked to support his decision to not carry a weapon. On a lighter note, Ken shared that he joined the Navy the same day President Truong Tan Sang joined the Community Party, bringing a smile to the President's face.

President Truong Tan Sang raised an issue that he is very passionate about. There are over 300,00 Vietnamese MIA. In the



VVAW members with Colonel Luu Van Hop, Deputy International Director of the Vietnam Veterans Association.

US we often see the POW/MIA flag and we know the myths and lies behind it. But in Vietnam, with so many Vietnamese soldiers missing in action after the war, the President is hoping to bring closure to as many families as possible.

He has asked for US soldiers who may have any items or artifacts that they brought home from overseas to give them to the Vietnamese government with information from where they came from, so that search and recovery could be carried out for as many of the soldiers as possible. President Truong Tan Sang also talked about organizing a trip to bring US Vietnam veterans back to Vietnam

to visit where they served.

After a short break, President Truong Tan Sang addressed several hundred people at the larger reception and held a question and answer session followed by a large buffet dinner for all the guests.

VVAW was honored to meet with President Truong Tan Sang and looks forward to further collaboration with the Vietnamese government towards peace, justice and the rights of all veterans.



JEN TAYABJI IS ON STAFF AT VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR AND LIVES IN URBANA, IL.

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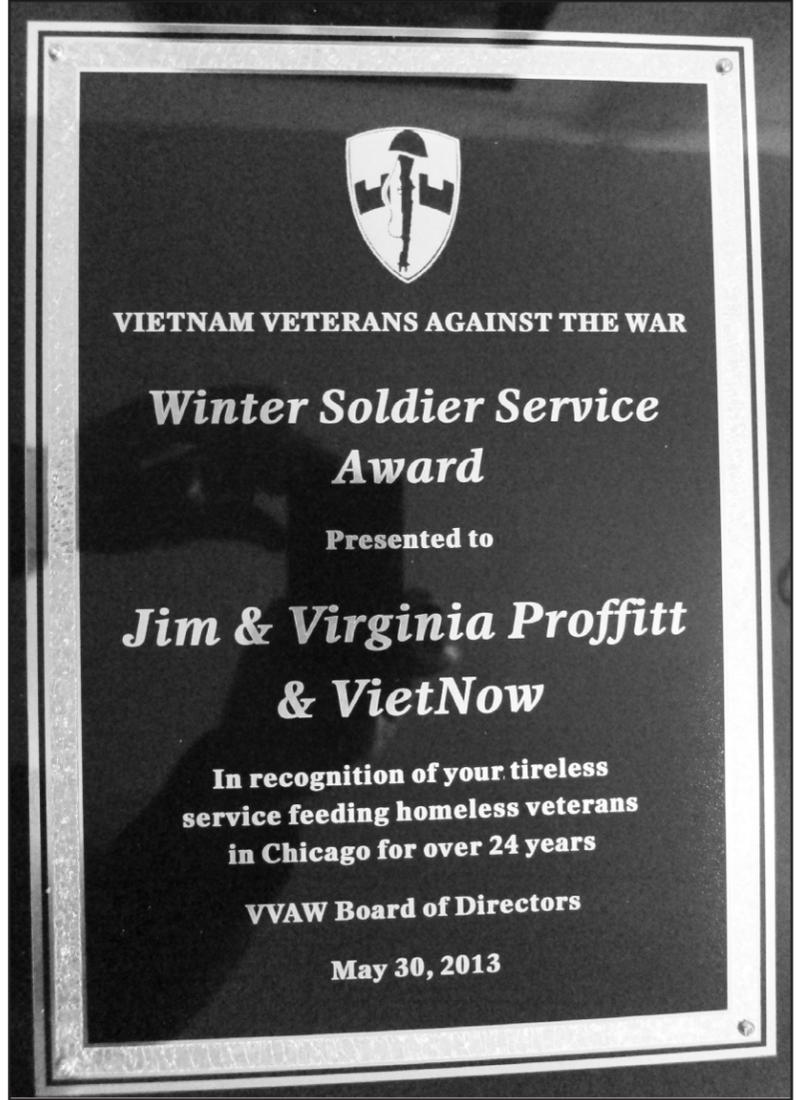
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vvaw@vvaw.org



# Winter Soldier Award to Jim & Virginia Proffitt



Virginia and Jim Proffitt along with VVAW board member Bill Branson at the Summer Veterans Homeless Standdown in Chicago.



Thanks to Jeff Danziger, Billy Curmano for their cartoons. Thanks to Barry Romo, Brian Matarrese, Ben Chitty, Bill Branson, Magnus Campbell, Paul Cameron, Elaine Elinson, Robert Halgash and others for contributing photos.

### Veteran Staff

- |                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Charlie Branson | Bill Branson |
| Jeff Machota    | Jen Tayabji  |
| Ellie Shunas    |              |

## VVAW Merchandise



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# Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc.

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Below is a list of VVAW coordinators and national staff. If you need a speaker for an event, class visit, or interview, please contact the National Office at (773) 569-3520 or email [vvaw@vvaw.org](mailto:vvaw@vvaw.org) and we will put you in touch with the nearest VVAW member.

## VVAW

### National Coordinators:

Bill Branson	Joe Miller
Annie Hirschman	Susan Schnall
Brian Matarrese	Marty Webster

## VVAW

### National Staff:

Charlie Branson
Dave "Red" Kettenhofen
Jeff Machota

## Our War, Our Legacy

*continued from page 1*

until the last member of VVAW stands alone. It seems even harder for our young brothers and sisters of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars to put pen to paper. Their stories are out there as well.

The war still shapes us and shapes how we view current events. When the news broke of the recent NSA leaks or the increasing use of drones, we were not surprised. The methods and tactics never changed, only the technology.

Many of us had enlisted back in the day. When we were exposed to the lies and brutality of our war against the Vietnamese people, we were outraged at what our government had become.

Forty-some years later, it seems for every step forward there have been two steps backward. Our leaders are ready to missile and drone Syria over alleged chemical weapons. It's real simple, and real complicated. Our memories of the Gulf of Tonkin incident merge into the lie it was and the casus belli it became. We don't dwell often on the details of

just what was going down politically, who set the thing up, and why it was executed at just that time. The WMD farce is much fresher in the mind. The dance with the UN inspectors, the constant barrage of news coverage on how Saddam was just one step ahead, hiding his big stash of killer stuff from the UN, but not from the vigilant eyes of the lying-ass CIA. Finally, the clock ran out and the UN patsies were kicked to the side; no longer needed. Bombs and missiles – shock and awe – were on the way. Afterwards, while the great killing changed from a stand-up WWII battle to the now familiar guerrilla (terrorist) nightmare, nobody could find those WMDs.

Our amazement at being treated to the spectacle of yet another WMD-based operetta was only exceeded by the *déjà vu* of another "liberal" president directing the cast. We remember LBJ, the Great Society, and federal troops desegregating schools. We also remember LBJ buying into the expansion of the Vietnam holocaust; that is, those of us who

survived remember.

So the situation is real simple, the parallels are there for us, the lies transparent. We have seen this angle played at least twice before. In fact, many of us were involved in the first scam. We have the painful memories. But we also have the benefit of witnessing the exposés (back when there were real journalists), reading the Pentagon Papers and talking with our fellow vets, some of them were firsthand witnesses.

Of course, the Great Game in the Middle East is also very complicated. Who is really calling the shots? Why the sudden need for an all-out bombing campaign on this tin-pot dictator (it's not like there is a shortage of mass murders, or Assad even being the worst). Who really stands to gain from us plastering yet another country with high explosives?

So, we move, Zen-like, back to the simple. The people of the US and the World are not fooled. The primary question is not which bunch of terrorists (Assad or the so-called rebels) used the gas. The primary question is: Why in the hell is the US government getting involved, in the first place? More

fundamentally ... what could we accomplish? Finally and most importantly, why should a country sick-and-tired of 13 years of useless wars spend even more money blowing up some Syrian buildings, killing a whole bunch of people and pissing off the rest, when we need the money so desperately HERE! Witness the subsequent stoppage of the government, ostensibly over balancing the budget! Of course the people of this country said NO! Even the British Parliament, often the sidekicks for this kind of action, firmly rejected involvement. Nobody wants those missiles launched, except some rich guys.

Well, the fat lady has not sung yet. We remember the build up to the war in Iraq. Just having UN inspectors and techs certify that Assad's gas has been destroyed may not be enough. Somewhere, there is a lot of money, prestige and power riding on this deal. Don't be surprised to see the Oval Office and the CIA come up with yet another act, after the interlude.

We hope you enjoy this issue.



BILL BRANSON IS A VVAW BOARD MEMBER.



Long Island, New York, 1971.

# Fraggin'

BILL SHUNAS

In 1937 President Franklin Roosevelt traveled to Chicago to participate in the dedication of a bridge. Instead of speaking about the new engineering marvel, he chose the occasion to make a foreign policy statement. He basically said that the United States and allies must oppose the efforts of inhumane expansionism and violation of international agreements undertaken by Japan, Germany and Italy. At that time Japan had invaded China, and Germany and Italy were interfering in the Spanish Civil War. Roosevelt's opinions about warring with Japan and Germany were highly unpopular in this country which still had the horrors of World War I in mind.

This reminds one of today's debates where Obama pushed for action in Syria because of their inhumane use of chemical weapons which would also be a violation of the sanctity of international agreement. This came at a time when this country's people are sick of war because of Afghanistan and Iraq and want no more involvement.

Why do men (and women some day soon in the footsteps of Margaret Thatcher) like to self-righteously use their war toys to straighten out someone who's being inhumane? The thought might be commendable, but often the result is not. And sometimes saving someone from some dire consequences has been the excuse to send in American troops when the real reason was to promote the interests of American corporations. This is nothing new. We've always found a good reason to intervene.

After World War I, one of the most decorated soldiers up to that time, retired Marine Corps Major General Smedley Butler, spoke of his continual role in the process. "I helped make Mexico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested." Butler also

said, "I spent 33 years in the Marines, most of my time being a high class muscle man for big business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short I was a racketeer for Capitalism." Now we are in a new century, but the same thing goes on.

The armed services may have served as muscle men for big business, but can it be a force for good as the recruitment ads put it? I have been mostly unhappy with the Obama presidency, but one of the better things he seems to be doing is slowly extricating us from Middle East entanglements (except for those damn drones). Even though he made the major mistake of drawing a red line, maybe his intentions in Syria were for some kind of humanitarian intervention. We would send a signal that chemical weapons are forbidden. Maybe that's all he planned - nothing greater. I would imagine his advisors were and are having second and third thoughts about supporting the Syrian rebels.

When the United States sends troops or air power to intervene somewhere we always have righteousness on our side. So we say. There is a possibility that we may. However, even if there is a good humanitarian reason for US intervention, there will be blowback, the same as there was in places like Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic that Smedley Butler talked about. One of the more famous and hurtful examples of unintended consequences was the sending of aid and giving of training to the rebels in Afghanistan in the 1980s. From that came the corps of Al Qaeda.

The blowback could be and often is less obvious. A couple of years ago we intervened in Libya with air power to aid the rebels in overthrowing Ghadafi. Was that humanitarian because Ghadafi was a dictator or was it one of those self-interest things because Ghadafi was enabling African countries to become independent of western powers? Whichever it was, there was blowback. There was an unleashing of various rebel forces, and following that there was an attack on the US consulate last year in Benghazi which resulted in a dead ambassador.

Of course it would be nice to aid civilians and the democratic forces in Syria. It would be nice

to make sure chemical weapons no longer get used. Maybe we need a good war like FDR had. However, with humanitarian military intervention, there is a certain amount of illogic involved. Why take some actions and not others? Are more innocents dying in Syria or the Congo? Too many countries need humanitarian intervention. Some are allies. How do you choose a target? And if you take action, what force level and period of action is best? Nothing is sure. In Syria, what would be the best results? There's supposed to have been more than a thousand killed by chemical weapons. There's supposed to be about a hundred thousand total dead in the war. Do we take a chance of clouding the situation further and maybe increasing the body count to prove a point about chemical weapons? By the way, notice the rising body count in Iraq these days.

What I do know is that there seems to often be a knee jerk reaction by presidents, advisors and Secretaries of Whatever to use military force. This is usually force directed against anybody who doesn't fit into our geo-political

mode. This may include taking action for no other reason than to show the rest of the world that we mean it. It may or may not coincide with a righteous humanitarian intervention. If it does not coincide with a righteous cause, then we will certainly be told that it coincides with a righteous cause. And then whatever military action is taken will have unintended consequences.

By the way, we have problems here at home. The post World War II experience has taught many lessons. A main lesson should be that (sorry LBJ) we can't have guns and butter. This is an absurd situation. It is a double whammy. We overspend our treasure on our military adventures resulting in fatal blowback. At the same time we find ways to fail to use our wealth at home. The middle class continues to shrink. The poor are no longer mentioned. The writing is on the wall. It's time to stop pretending to be a superpower.



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



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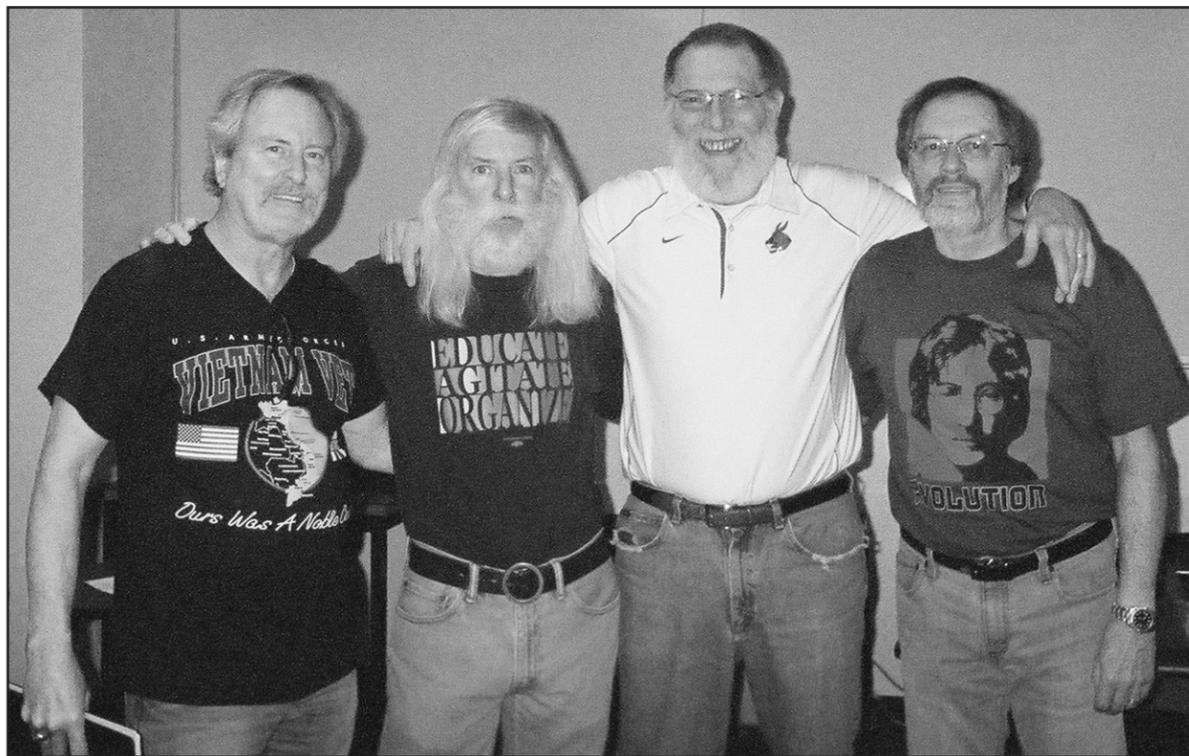
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# Vietnam War Veterans Discussion Panel

PAUL CAMERON

Each semester at Missouri Central State University-Warrensburg, Asst. Professor Stephen Ciafullo ("Dr. Love") conducts a Vietnam War veteran discussion panel for his Social Science unit on "The Sixties." The panel consists of three veterans from the 1968-1970 era of the Vietnam War. The "Chosen Three" are Michael Ciafullo (brother of Stephen), Dave McBee, and Paul "The Mad Bomber" Cameron. Annually, this group of crazed vets, entertain Dr. Love's class of 20-25 students in an interactive-type format. In the fall semester the panel meets with students in October or November and the panel re-convenes in March or April for the spring semester.



(l-r) Michael Ciafullo, Stephen Ciafullo, David McBee, and Paul Cameron

The panel is together at the front of the classroom and students are seated in a c-shape or horseshoe formation with the open end facing the vets. Professor Ciafullo opens the hour with a Vietnam War era recorded song on CD player to set the mood for what follows... an entire class period of flashbacks, emotional testimonials, and continuous interaction between these troubled war veterans and the "now generation." While the discussion is in process, Dr. Love injects both historical and philosophical items of the "Sixties" decade and the cultural make-up during this strange and crazy time

in America.

While the students are firing questions and the vets are returning their firepower of both experience and emotions, Vietnam War sketches/poems by panel member Paul Cameron are circulating among the class to enhance both visual and written expressions about the war. Some of the issues which have been addressed during these annual discussions include: What was it like to be drafted away from family, friends, and job? Were you afraid of getting killed or being permanently physically disabled? What was it like coming home after a year of

being in Vietnam? When you were called "baby killers," "murderers," or spit at, how did you feel? Do you still have issues or problems today regarding your war experience?...and the beat goes on. It is unbelievable how these students today respond to us veterans of a war which took place 30-40 years before any of them were born.

It is to the hard work and extreme understanding of Professor Stephen Ciafullo or Dr. Love, as he is known on campus, that his students are so well-versed in the 1960s decade. Prior to the Vietnam War veterans visit to class, the students had already researched

both the cultural and counter-culture of America during these "times they are a-changing." Not only the Vietnam War, but, the art, fashion, music, anti-war protests, civil rights, and other topics of that era were all addressed and re-addressed throughout the class unit. This is a remarkable experience for both war veterans and students in the classroom.



PAUL CAMERON, VIETNAM VETERAN, SERVED IN VIETNAM FROM 20 NOV 69 - 19 NOV 70 1ST INF DIV HQ AT DI AN, SOUTH VIETNAM LIGHT WEAPON INFANTRYMAN/TOWER GUARD SECURITY.

## Veterans and the Health Insurance Marketplace

JEN TAYABJI

In every state in the country, the Health Insurance Marketplace opened October 1, 2013. The health care law (Affordable Care Act, also called "Obamacare") expands health insurance coverage to millions of Americans.

For veterans and their families, it is important to know if the Health Insurance Marketplace is for you. As part of health reform, the individual responsibility requirement (the individual mandate) requires that individuals have health insurance starting in 2014 that meets certain minimum standards or face a potential penalty. There are exemptions to this requirement such as hardship.

If you have TRICARE, the VA Civilian Health and Medical Program (CHAMPVA), the Spina Bifida health care benefits program, or coverage through other veterans health care programs, you do not have to do anything! You have health insurance that meets the

new requirements. You should have received a notice from the VA recently about your coverage and the health reform law. Also, if you have Medicare, Medicaid, or insurance provided by your employer, you also do not need to do anything.

However, if you or someone in your family does not have health insurance, is underinsured, pays for an individual plan or policy, is on COBRA, or is a dependent on someone else's plan, you most likely have new and more affordable options for health insurance coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace.

You can now apply for, and enroll in, health insurance coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace through March 31, 2014. Health coverage starts as early as January 1, 2014, if you apply by December 15, 2013. Depending on your family size and your household income, you may

be eligible for financial assistance such as Advanced Premium Tax Credits or cost-sharing reductions.

Through the Marketplace:

- There will be new, affordable insurance options available.
- Financial help is available so you can find a plan that fits your budget.
- Insurance companies cannot deny you coverage because of a pre-existing condition and they cannot charge you more because of your health or if you are a woman.
- All insurance plans will have to cover doctor visits, hospitalizations, maternity care, emergency room care, and prescriptions.

If you are currently on Medicare, you will not use the Health Insurance Marketplace to purchase supplemental, advantage or Part D prescription plans. Medicare will still have annual

Open Enrollment for these plans, which occurs from October 15 through December 7 each year.

For more information on the Health Insurance Marketplace, or to enroll, please visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov) or call the National 24/7 Call Center at 1 (800) 813-2596. If you have questions about your eligibility or about applying, you can call the above number to find in-person help in your area.

For more information on VA health insurance programs, and to see if you are eligible, please visit [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) or call 1 (877) 222-VETS.

For more information on Medicare, please visit [www.mymedicare.gov](http://www.mymedicare.gov) or call 1 (800) MEDICARE.



JEN TAYABJI IS A COMMUNITY ORGANIZER WITH CHAMPAIGN COUNTY HEALTH CARE CONSUMERS. SHE IS ALSO ON STAFF WITH VVAW.

# The Agent Orange Bill and the "Budget Crisis"

PAUL COX

The proposed military budget now before Congress for the 2014 fiscal year is \$512 billion. If you add in the secret budget (\$56 billion), the nuclear weapons budget (\$8 billion), the military housing construction budget (\$11 billion), the "Overseas Contingency Operations" (aka, the expected costs of our wars, \$86 billion), and the Veterans Administration budget (\$156 billion), it comes to around \$830 billion, or \$1.6 million per minute. To visualize this number: if you papered a full-size football field with dollar bills, it would take stacks of \$2,000 to reach a mere \$1 billion. Then you would need 830 such fields to equal next year's defense spending. Note that this immense number does not include the interest and principal that we pay each minute on the many billions in 30-year bonds the US government sold to finance previous wars and military expenditures. When the Republicans say the Gummitt spends too much money, they really nail it.

Of course, they squawk the squawk, but they don't walk the walk: their version of the DoD budget is \$3.1 billion more than even the Obama Administration asked for, while in September they just cut many billions of dollars from the food stamp program for the poor; but I digress.

Currently, according to some credible sources, the US spends

more on its military and its wars than ALL other countries combined. I include the Veterans Administration budget of \$153 billion because taking care of our veterans is part of the true costs of war. Another cost of war—a small part really—is the true cost of cleaning up the mess we created during the Vietnam war in spraying Agent Orange over large sections of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

As almost all Vietnam veterans know, from 1961 to 1971, the US sprayed and spilled more than 19 million gallons of dioxin-laced herbicides—Agent Orange—over the jungles of Vietnam in the largest chemical warfare campaign in history. Ten percent of those herbicides were Agent Blue. Containing arsenic, Blue was fundamentally different than the rest of the herbicides; it was specifically formulated to kill rice. Even by the slippery legal conventions at the time, it was a war crime to attack food stocks. The generals' intention was to deny cover and food to an elusive enemy who we could not otherwise locate and destroy with our overwhelming firepower. It did not work, however; the Vietnamese outlasted our ability to pour treasure, ammunition, and troops into destroying them. But we did leave a deadly legacy of environmental destruction to the jungles, and poisons in the ground that continue to affect the health

of people forty years later.

This legacy affects around 3 million Vietnamese and hundreds of thousands of US veterans with serious and deadly diseases. The legacy of our exposure continues both here and in Vietnam among our children and grandchildren who suffer birth defects.

The Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign, with the strong support of VVAW, helped write a new bill that addresses the major portions of that legacy. It was introduced into Congress in June by Congresswoman Barbara Lee. Called H.R. 2519, Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2013, the bill provides assistance to the children of US veterans, Vietnamese and Vietnamese Americans of all ages, cleans up the contamination in Vietnam, and mandates research that will help US veterans ill from AO.

It is the most comprehensive bill ever put forward to clean up this one small legacy of war. It is a modest attempt to get our government to be accountable for and pay one small cost of war. You can read the bill at our website, [www.vn-agentorange.org](http://www.vn-agentorange.org).

What is needed now is to gather co-sponsors, and that is where YOU come in. Generally speaking, our elected representatives are most responsive to three interest groups: campaign contributors, well-funded lobbyists, or the voters from their district.

Each person reading this report is in at least one of those groups. We need you to write your congress member and use your considerable influence with him/her to get them to co-sponsor this bill.

No government ever wants to pay the true cost of war. They miscalculate; they engage in all forms of greed; they think they can benefit in some way from the next war; they lie to their people; they send their young and their treasure on adventures; and then—win or lose—they try to walk away from its effects.

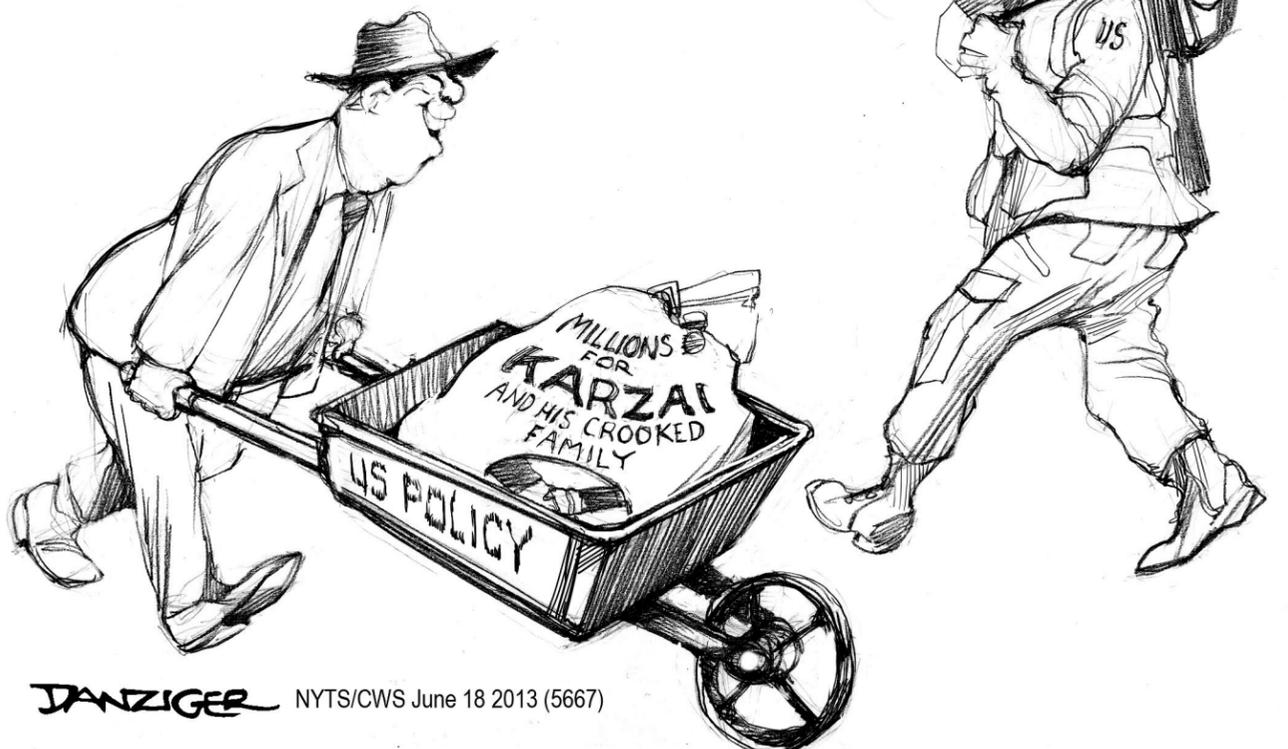
One way for citizens to prevent war, one way to work for peace, is by making sure that governments—Our Government—recognizes, is held accountable, and pays the downstream costs for war. If you can help in this effort, please contact me or the Campaign for more information and resources. We will help you be more effective in your effort to help the victims of Agent Orange. Wage Peace.



PAUL COX SERVED AS A MARINE IN VIETNAM FROM 1969 TO 1970 AND IS A MEMBER OF VVAW. HE IS ON THE NATIONAL BOARD OF THE VIETNAM AGENT ORANGE RELIEF AND RESPONSIBILITY CAMPAIGN. HE CAN BE CONTACTED AT [INFO@VN-AGENTORANGE.ORG](mailto:INFO@VN-AGENTORANGE.ORG)

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# Kent State May 4th Visitor Center Dedication

BRUCE HYLAND

The May 4th Visitor Center located at Kent State University was dedicated this past May 4, 2013. The long overdue center was the result of a dedicated and continuous effort from many people within and outside of the university. The list of the acknowledged, including VVAW, shows the wide support the center has been given. With the Visitor Center now in place (located in Taylor Hall) people can not only tour the site, but also learn further from the video and additional information contained within the center itself.

The dedication was attended by several VVAW members, such as VVAW board member Brian Matarrese, Barry Romo, and former VVAW Kent chapter member Ken Johnson. VVAW's support for the Visitor Center continues a longtime connection to Kent state and the events

of May 4, 1970. A number of Vietnam veterans who were Kent State students at the time were also present at the time of the shootings, some lending assistance to students with gun shot wounds. The Visitor Center will provide a living document that can only become more valuable as further information becomes exposed concerning the tragic and historic events of May 4, 1970.

Those that have not been to Kent State will find a visit thought-provoking, especially while walking the grounds of this important and historic site. Those that have not been back for awhile will find some good change, and much more information available with the addition of the Visitor Center.

While some in power would like to continue to ignore the uncomfortable history of May 4th, the Kent State University

administration should be commended and encouraged to continue its recognition of May 4, 1970. The families and friends of the slain and the surviving students themselves were galvanized by the May 4th events into a coalition respectfully seeking truth and justice and ultimately a better world for all.

The hard work of all the families, friends, students past-present-future connected to May 4 should have our respect and continued support. The nine wounded students who have gone on to lead diverse lives that reflect high social values and well-being for all, can not be commended enough. The hard work of Kent State professors Carole Barbato and Laura Davis should especially be recognized for helping make the Visitor Center a reality. The classroom work of Carole and Laura, along with the wounded

students and VVAW members, continues to ensure a more complete picture of Vietnam War history.

As has been the case since 1975, the May 4 Task Force continues to organize commemorations at Kent State. These dedicated Kent students have been recognized in the past by VVAW and should continue to be recognized for the work they do. If you have not been to Kent State I would highly encourage you to go. If you have not been back for some time, go again. I find it good for the mind, and good for the soul. Peace.



BRUCE HYLAND IS A MEMBER OF VVAW AND A VIETNAM ERA VET, US ARMY 1ST BATTALION 3RD US INFANTRY REGIMENT (THE OLD GUARD).

## September 11, 2013, Twelve Years After

Twelve, a most significant number  
 Twelve Jacobian elliptic functions and twelve cubic distance-transitive graphs  
 Twelve items in a dozen and a dozen dozens in a gross  
 Twelve cranial nerves in the human body  
 Twelve hours in the a.m. and twelve in the p.m.  
 Twelve days of Christmas and twelve months in a year  
 Twelve signs in both the Western and Chinese zodiacs  
 Twelve Olympians in the Greek Pantheon and twelve sons of chief Norse god, Odin  
 Twelve tribes of Israel and the age when a Jewish girl becomes a woman  
 Twelve disciples of Jesus and twelve Imams, legitimate successors of Mohammed  
 Twelve names for sun god Surya and twelve petals in the Heart Chakra  
 Twelve steps and traditions guiding recovery programs

Twelve years since the buildings of the World Trade Center were blown down  
 Twelve years since I drove into La Guardia airport as a Red Cross volunteer  
 Twelve years since the long plume of death-black smoke trailed over Brooklyn  
 Twelve years since I watched the blood-red sky sparking over Manhattan  
 Twelve years since I cringed as sirens shrieked both ways on Grand Central Parkway  
 Twelve years of lies piled high on high piles of lies  
 Twelve years bankrupting people and cities but not Wall Street nor corporations  
 Twelve years of mainstream propaganda supporting the troops in pageantry  
 Twelve years of mounting veteran suicides and insufficient care  
 Twelve years of negating constitutional precedents and prerogatives  
 Twelve years rolling back rights and privacy of citizens on the home front  
 Twelve long years of endless war--only two more Axis of Evil countries to take down

HOORAH -- USA, USA, USA . . .

September 11, 2013  
 Seaside, Oregon

—Thomas Brinson is a retired Veterans Activist living in Seaside, Oregon where he writes about and contemplates the folly of endless war he has participated in and protested against since he returned from service in Vietnam on April 4, 1968, several hours after MLK had been assassinated.

# Selective Memory of Our Quagmire-Prone History

J. MICHAEL ORANGE WITH CYNTHIA ORANGE

We stood together on the grassy knoll, silent and reflective after our visit to the Texas Book Depository Museum in Dallas, when a BBC reporter approached us. He was doing interviews for an upcoming documentary that will mark the 50th anniversary of President John F. Kennedy's assassination. Among other things, he asked, "What if Kennedy hadn't been killed? What might have changed?" My wife, Cynthia, paused for a moment, looked at me, and said, "Maybe Michael wouldn't have gone to Vietnam in 1969. Kennedy wanted to pull the troops out. Maybe we would have avoided the death and destruction, and my husband and so many others wouldn't still be haunted by the ghosts of that disastrous war."

I, like so many veterans of so many wars, have asked these same "what if" questions. The stop in Dallas was the second in our quest to see how—or if—key decisions were handled in three museums we visited; decisions that resulted in the death of 58,000 of our troops and six million people in Southeast Asia (about 85% of whom were civilians). Alternative choices may have avoided thirty years of war that continues to claim the lives of US veterans through suicide.

We began with a visit to the Truman Presidential Library in Independence, Missouri. I've taught classes about the history of the Vietnam War, so I knew from my research that at the end of WWII, President Franklin D. Roosevelt publicly promised to de-colonize Third World nations, and he specifically opposed France's efforts to retake its colony in Indochina from Japan, which had taken control during the war. After he died in 1945, the new President, Harry S. Truman, reversed FDR's positions citing his fear of communism and, after the end of the civil wars in Korea and China in 1950, the Domino Theory. This led to the bankrolling by the Truman, and later the Eisenhower administrations of France's war of aggression to recapture its former colony during the First Indochina War (1945-1954). It ended with the resounding defeat of the French at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954 by the forces of Vietnam's leader, Ho Chi Minh, who was more a nationalist than a communist.

Our visit to the Truman

Library revealed only two panels that dealt with this history. The panel on the Truman Doctrine included the following: "But Truman also made a broad pledge 'to support free peoples resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.' Years later, critics argued this sweeping language helped guide the nation into a conflict in Vietnam that did not involve America's national interests." Apparently, his Doctrine exempted "subjugation by outside pressures" by the French.

The site of President Kennedy's assassination (our second stop) is chilling, and the museum contains a wealth of information about the Kennedy years. But, here again, references to his role in Vietnam are scarce. I knew that after the French defeat, the Geneva Accords temporarily divided Vietnam in half and required a reunification two years later through general elections in 1956. However, both the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations prevented the elections from happening because they were convinced Ho would win and establish all of Vietnam as a communist state.

We found only one panel that addressed Southeast Asia. It said, in part, "Deciding against direct intervention the Kennedy Administration encouraged all parties in the country to agree to a coalition government and withdrawal of all foreign troops. But Kennedy continued direct American involvement to contain the spread of communism in Vietnam ... and increased the number of American advisors there from 5,000 to 17,000."

What the museum ignored was that President Kennedy launched an air and ground war against the Viet Cong resistance forces in South Vietnam in 1962, in blatant violation of the Geneva Accords, primarily through the US puppet government under South Vietnam President Diem. This was after seven years of efforts to impose a Latin American-style terror state, which had killed tens of thousands of people and elicited armed resistance. The US Air Force began extensive bombing and chemical defoliation in South Vietnam, aimed primarily against the rural areas where 84% of the population lived. This was part of a program to drive several

million people into strategic hamlets, where they would be surrounded by armed guards and barbed wire. Had Kennedy not intervened, the insurgent forces would probably have overthrown the puppet government in a brief time and allowed the elections and reunification under Ho Ch Minh.

Kennedy began withdrawing US advisors and troops in the fall of 1963, and he approved the coup that assassinated President Diem on November 1st of that year. Weeks later, he was assassinated (11/22/63). The new President, Lyndon B. Johnson, chose to reverse course and further escalate the war. The Tonkin Gulf Incident nine months later (8/4/64) gave Johnson the smoking gun rationale, even though it was based on lies and misinformation, and it paved the way for Johnson's subsequent escalation and the launch of the air war on North Vietnam in 1964. This was an eerie echo of Truman's decision to reverse the policy of his dead predecessor.

In contrast to the other two museums, the LBJ Presidential Library in Austin Texas (our third stop) included many displays relevant to the Tonkin Gulf decision. One panel, titled "1964 Aftermath," summarized the major events and stated, "After consulting with his advisors, President Johnson announces retaliatory air strikes against selected targets in North Vietnam." Other panels included the official reports of the second "attack" from John J. Herrick, Captain of the USS Maddox, one of the two ships in the Gulf: "Review of action makes many reported contacts and torpedoes fired appear doubtful. Freak weather effects on radar and overeager sonarmen may have accounted for many reports. No actual visual sightings by Maddox." A second report by the captain made half an hour later referred to the other ship in the Gulf: "[USS Turner] Joy also reports no actual visual sightings ... Entire action leaves many in doubts except for apparent attempted ambush at beginning."

While most of the information supported the President's decisions, the library also included opposing views. For example, this prescient, formerly top secret memo from Under Secretary of State, George Ball (7/1/65) stated, "The South Vietnamese are losing the war to the Viet Cong. Should we limit

our liabilities in South Vietnam and try to find a way out with minimal long-term costs? The alternative is almost certainly a protracted war involving an open-ended commitment of US forces, mounting US casualties, no assurance of a satisfactory solution, and a serious danger of escalation at the end of the road." Another quote attributed to George Ball (3/25/68): "The disadvantages of the bombing outweigh the advantages. We need to stop the bombing in the next six weeks to test the will of the North Vietnamese. As long as we continue to bomb, we alienate ourselves from the civilized world."

Of the three museum/libraries, the LBJ Presidential Library clearly was the most thorough and objective as regards the decisions that led us to full-scale war in Vietnam.

We didn't have the time or the stomach for visiting the new George W. Bush Presidential Library in Dallas. We doubt that it will honestly document the lies from the Bush Administration and the military/industrial/media complex that led to the spending of trillions of public dollars to destroy property worth billions of dollars, and most tragically, to the deaths of a million people, the vast majority of whom were civilians.

Our voluntary amnesia, to some degree perpetrated by these museums, keeps ensuring the repeat of our quagmire-prone history.



*AS A MARINE IN VIETNAM, MICHAEL ORANGE EXPERIENCED COMBAT IN NUMEROUS SEARCH-AND-DESTROY MISSIONS DURING HIS TOUR OF DUTY (1969-70). IN 2001, HE PUBLISHED A MEMOIR OF HIS EXPERIENCES, FIRE IN THE HOLE: A MORTARMAN IN VIETNAM AND IN 2003, HE COMPLETED NINE MONTHS OF THERAPY FOR COMBAT-RELATED PTSD.*

*CYNTHIA ORANGE IS AN AWARD-WINNING WRITER WHO HAS PUBLISHED HUNDREDS OF ARTICLES, COLUMNS, AND GUEST EDITORIALS IN NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, AND LITERARY JOURNALS. SHE IS THE AUTHOR OF SEVERAL BOOKS, INCLUDING SHOCK WAVES: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO LIVING WITH A LOVED ONES PTSD (HAZELDEN, 2010), WHICH WON A NAUTILUS BOOK AWARD.*

# Whistleblower Patriots?

MICHAEL F. CASCANET

Whistle blower Patriots or Anti-American Spies? PFC Bradley Manning and Edward Snowden are both low-level operatives in a bloated US Intelligence system consisting of several million military, homeland security, state department and civilian contract workers who hold top secret security clearances. Manning and Snowden compiled and caused to be published classified documents, as Daniel Ellsberg did with the "Pentagon Papers" during the Nixon administration. Ellsberg is correctly remembered as a patriot while Manning is awaiting a long prison sentence and Snowden is running from prosecution as a traitor.

It is impossible for me to argue in this article whether the release of these documents by Manning and Snowden caused any harm to the intelligence gathering community or to the security efforts of the United States. For one, such a discussion would take thousands of words. For another, to make such an argument using the facts would require full access to top secret classified documents, sources and methods which, of course, are unavailable to us.

Rather, I will argue a few key generalities about the Manning/Snowden affairs that are obvious to me as a former low-level Army Security Agency translator/cryptanalyst/foreign language voice intercept operator in the 1970's. My experience, the

historical record as it applies to Daniel Ellsberg, as well as the historical record of executive branch overreach from Nixon to Obama in the security realm, all suggest that most of the real mistakes and infractions of the law for which we as a country are ready to imprison Manning and Snowden, rest squarely on the shoulders of the managers of the US Intelligence community.

A key commandment of the intelligence community when I was a member of it was called "need to know." Besides having the proper clearance, I was required to have a clear "need to know" in order to acquire any information from the intelligence community besides the very limited raw information that I was privy to in my day-to-day military operations. Several times during my tenure as a Cambodian linguist I formally requested background information about a certain topic and was denied access. Even in my own Army Security Agency overseas facility where I worked with the French linguists who translated Cambodian diplomatic radio traffic, I was not allowed to read their daily transcripts. All of that was denied me by the NSA under "need to know." Another example was that on the first of the month sometime in 1972 a Cambodian field command that I had been decrypting, translating and forwarding to NSA changed its cypher key. In other words,

the "secret" writing they had been using to hide the text of their message so that only the writer and the intended reader could understand it I also knew and could use it to reconstruct their message in Cambodian. When the Cambodians changed the key I asked NSA for the new one and was again denied under "need to know." I was cleared enough to translate their messages but not to have the key to decrypt it. Bottom line, I found out that it wasn't a violation to crack the code myself, and so I did which allowed me to send translations of their radio traffic in English to NSA.

Need to know was a pain, but it was also the law. It prevented one person from gathering tons of information that if disclosed, might be detrimental to the security of the US.

Manning and Snowden gathered thousands of pages of documents of military, diplomatic and homeland security importance. The blame for that lies not with them, or any other PFC or GS-5 with a clearance. The fault for that lies with the President, the Director of Homeland Security, the Director of the NSA, The Secretary of Defense, and whoever else allowed such low-level workers with a top secret security clearance to access such a broad and deep portion of the US Intel data base.

Homeland Security has grown way too large. There

are too many civilian contract workers in the security mix. The NSA and CIA have been allowed to carry out programs (data mining, domestic phone intercept, domestic internet intercept, drone missions, rendition, third party torture) that are unconstitutional.

What happened to "need to know?" What high ranking government civilian leader or military general grade officer decided to ignore "need to know" as a key intelligence commandment and give open access to tens of thousands of classified US documents to E-3's and contract civilians?

Why are Manning and Snowden subject to imprisonment while not one of their senior officers, supervisors, executive branch bosses or congressional overseers questioned or accused?



MICHAEL F. CASCANET, CPT, CA, USAR (RET.) ACTIVE DUTY US ARMY SECURITY AGENCY 1971-1973, SP4, CAMBODIAN LINGUIST @7TH RRFS, THAILAND. US ARMY INSCOM, 1975-1979, SSG, CHINESE MANDARIN VOICE INTERCEPT OPERATOR @USAFS KOREA. US ARMY RESERVE 1980-1996, CPT, SIGNAL OFFICER, CIVIL AFFAIRS OFFICER @LIVERPOOL, NY. DRAFTED OUT OF COLLEGE 1971, TOP SECRET, SI SECURITY CLEARANCE 1971-1979. SECRET SECURITY CLEARANCE 1980-1996.



Veterans Memorial, Chicago, Illinois.

# I Had Ray Davis's Job, in Laos 30 Years Ago Same Cover, Same Lies

ROBERT ANDERSON

The story of Raymond Allen Davis is one familiar to me and I wish our government would quit doing these things. They cost us credibility.

Davis is the American being held as a spy working under diplomatic cover out of our embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan. You can understand why foreign countries no longer trust us and people are rising up across the Middle East against the Great Satan.

In the Vietnam War the country of Laos held a Geo-strategic position, as does Pakistan to Afghanistan today. As in Pakistan, in Laos the CIA conducted covert military operations against a sovereign people.

I was a demolitions technician with the Air Force who was reassigned to work with the CIA's Air America operation in Laos. We turned in our military IDs cards and uniforms and were issued a State Department ID card and dressed in blue jeans. We were told if captured we were to ask for diplomatic immunity. We carried out military missions on a daily basis all across the countries of Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam.

We also knew that if killed or captured, we would probably not be searched for and our families back home in the US would be told we had been killed in an auto accident of some kind back in Thailand and our bodies not recovered.

Our team knew when the UN

inspectors and international media were scheduled to arrive. We controlled the airfields. We would disappear to our safe houses so we could not be asked questions. It was all a very well planned operation, 60 years ago, involving the military and diplomats out of the US Embassy. It had been going on a long time when I was there during the 1968 Tet Offensive. These operations continued, until we were routed and had to abandon the whole war as a failure.

In Laos, the program I was attached to carried out a systematic assassination of people who were identified as not loyal to US goals. It was called the Phoenix program and eliminated an estimated 60,000 people across Indochina. We did an amazing amount of damage to the civilian infrastructure of the country, and still lost the war. I saw one team of mercenaries I was training show us a bag of ears of dead civilians they had killed. This was how they verified their kills for us. The Green Berets that day were telling them to just take photos of the dead, leave the ears.

Mel Gibson made a movie about all this, called Air America. It included in the background the illegal drug operation the CIA ran to pay for their operations. Congress had not authorized funds for what we were doing. I saw the drug operation first hand too. This was all detailed in "The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia" by Alfred McCoy. I did not connect the drug smuggling with the Phoenix program until Oliver

North testified about it at the Iran-Contra hearings. Oliver North was a leader of the Laos operation I was assigned to work with.

Our country has a long history of these types of programs going back to World War II. We copied this form of warfare from the Nazis in WWII, it seems. We justified it as necessary for the Cold War. One of the first operations was T.P. Ajax run by Kermit Roosevelt to overthrow the democratically elected government of Iran in 1953 and take over their oil fields.

In that coup the CIA and the State Department under the Dulles Brothers first perfected these covert, illegal and immoral actions. Historians have suggested that Operation T.P. Ajax was the single event that set in motion the political force of Islamic fundamentalism we are still dealing with today.

Chalmers Johnson, also a former CIA employee, wrote a series of books on these blow backs that happen when the truth is held from the American public.

If we had taken a different approach to our problems in those days an approach that did not rely on lying to our own and the people of other countries and killing them indiscriminately our country would not be in the disastrous situation abroad today.

I was young and foolish in those days of the Vietnam War, coveting my Top Secret security clearance, a big thing for an uneducated hillbilly from Appalachia. We saw ourselves much like James Bond characters.

But now I am much wiser. These kinds of actions have immense and long reaching consequences and should be shut down.

I see from the Ray Davis fiasco in Pakistan that our government is still up to its old way of denying to the people of the world what everyone knows is true.

When will this official hypocrisy end, when will our political class speak out about this and quit going along with the lies and tricks? How many more of our people and others will die in these foolish programs?

Davis is in a bad situation now because most of the people of the world, as we see across the Middle East, are now aware of the lies and not going to turn their head anymore.

I say "most" everyone knows, because our own public, the ones supposed to be in control of the military and CIA, is constantly lied to. It is so sad to see President Obama repeating the big lie.

*This article originally appeared in Counterpunch.*



ROBERT ANDERSON LIVES IN ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. HE WAS AIR FORCE EOD, E3, IN SEA 1967-68. LAST STATIONED OFFICIALLY AT NKP, THAILAND WHERE HE WAS ASSIGNED TO WORK OFF AND ON WITH THE CIA IN THE COVERT WAR IN LAOS. GOT OUT, HELPED START THE VVAW IN ALBUQUERQUE. HE NOW TEACHES POLITICAL SCIENCE AT A LOCAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE.



IVAW at Chicago Memorial Day event.

# Another Look at "Intelligence"

THOMAS F. BAYARD

From 9/67 to 9/68, I was in the 66th Engineer Company, Topographic. We made maps covering about three quarters of Vietnam. We didn't usually get "intelligence" material for this task, just the usual map-making information from our Surveyors, old French maps, and USAF aerial photography. Once in a while, we got a request for something specific, and that mostly concerned the photo maps we began making in early 1968. These were not the kind of maps you could get in a gas station. They were made up of photographs cleverly joined together to look like single, huge photos of areas in country, with lines printed on them to give locations that went with our "regular" maps.

This is where, sometimes, we were involved in "intelligence" operations. In fact, some of our work, once we were finished with it and the maps were printed and sent to a distribution point, were "classified" above our own levels, so we couldn't see them anymore (this for security). The second day of the Tet Offensive, I was called away from my position on the line defending our tiny unit and asked – asked! – if I would go to our

operations area and make prints from a new batch of film taken over Saigon in the last day or two. I couldn't very well refuse, but I was not happy to be all alone in my photo van, working on these new materials, about fifty yards from where the VC attack on our area had begun the morning before, all locked up in the dark.

This new film was from a much lower level than our ordinary USAF stuff. From it, we would eventually make photo maps showing much greater detail than ever before and allowing, for instance, armed helicopters to hit one building rather than another, getting the VC without having to take down a whole block of a city. Again, once we made these maps, we never saw them again, because we didn't have the requisite security clearance. Ironically, all the VC and/or NVA had to do was dress up like ARVN's, get a jeep, get the right chits, and get brand new 66th ENGR CO, TOPO maps from our very own Map Depot. We knew it. We could see this happening right before our eyes when we were on daytime guard after Tet.

The most hilarious bit of

"intelligence" silliness I saw was concerned with making the USAF film more secure by blanking out details of film showing airbases like Bien Hoa and Tan Son Nhut. I was told to gather up and give to some intelligence person particular rolls of film I had in the photo van. When they came back, I could see that every single aircraft shown on our own film had been marked out with ink. Of course, the odd-shaped planes with very long wings and short fuselages were U-2's, the planes in the revetments – which were not marked out – were all fighters, etc. and so on. I could hardly stop from laughing. The other bit of "intelligence" work we did concerned that ocean-going ship found about fifty clicks from the sea, somewhere in Vietnam. Just to see if anyone ever checked our work, we put this ship on one of our photo maps and finished and printed it. To this day, we have never heard about it, so, somewhere in the Army archives, is this map with a ship steaming along in about five feet of Vietnamese water.

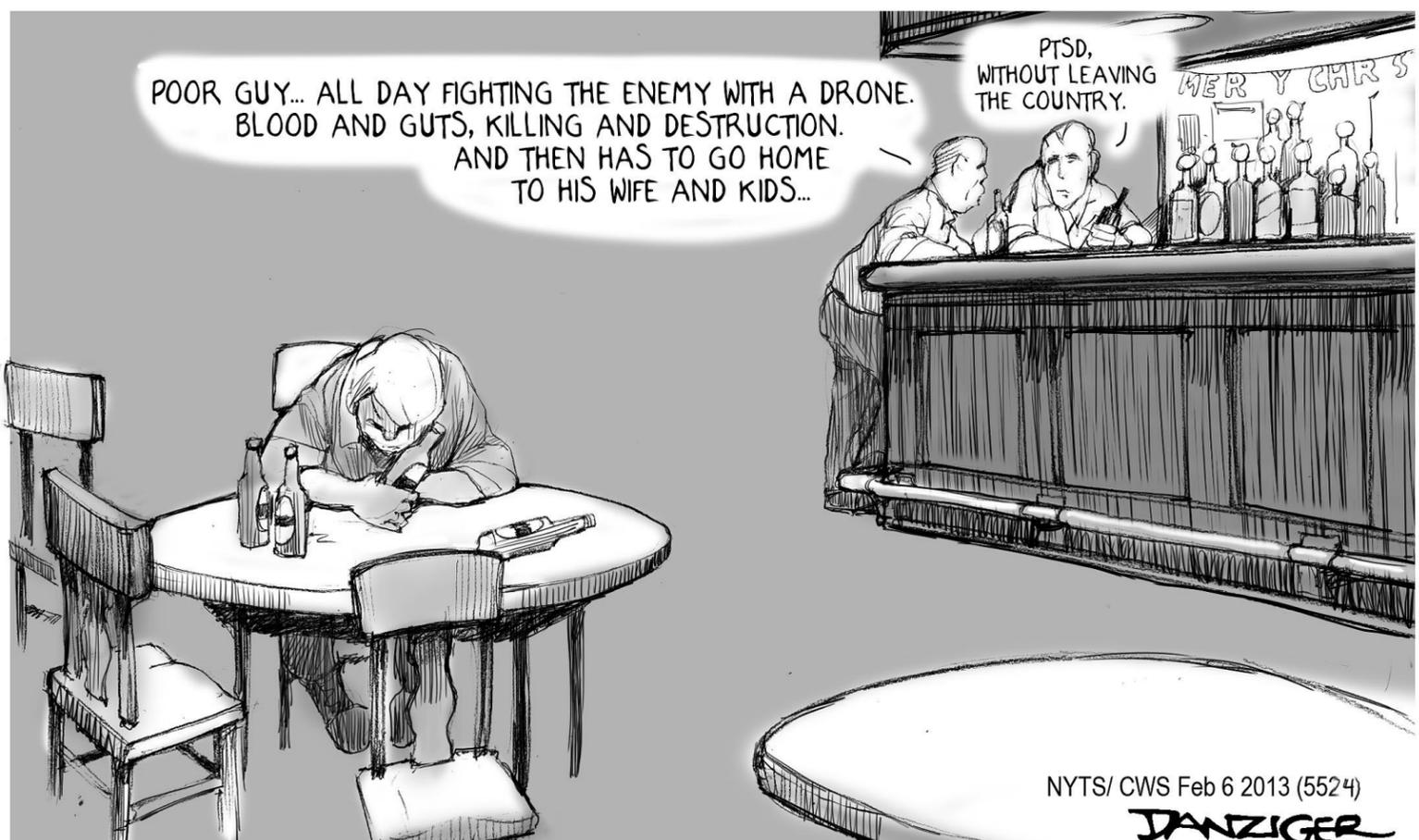
The last example I have of "intelligence" work at my unit again concerns aerial film brought

to me to print up. This time, along with the new roll of film, I was given the number for a roll I already had. I duly printed both sets of negatives. It was impossible not to notice that the older set was of a village somewhere in South Vietnam. The new set was of the same village, I was pretty sure, but now it was just a series of round marks all through the area. This was, in fact – and I was never told this straight out – a series of before-and-after photos of a village that was bombed by our B-52's. It had been a mistake: the bombers had been given the wrong coordinates. This was never made public. So much for intelligence.



*THOMAS BAYARD WAS THE PHOTO VAN OPERATOR OF THE 66TH ENGINEER COMPANY, TOPOGRAPHIC, FROM 9/67 TO 9/68, WORKING MOSTLY ON CONTACT PRINTS OF AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY DONE BY THE USAF. HE HAD A SECURITY CLEARANCE, AS DID EVERYONE IN THE 66TH, BUT NOT HIGH ENOUGH TO SEE HIS WORK ONCE IT WAS PUBLISHED.*

## Midnight at the VFW



NYTS/ CWS Feb 6 2013 (5524)

**DANZIGER**

# The Leave Some Vets Behind Law: A National Disgrace

RICK STAGGENBORG

In 1995, Congress codified as Public Law 95-126 the VA policy denying benefits to veterans who receive less than honorable discharges, including those who served in combat in Vietnam and subsequent wars of choice. These veterans can only receive services by going through a difficult, painful and often unsuccessful process requiring them to debase themselves by begging their former military service to upgrade their discharge status. In the process, they have to relive their combat trauma and in some cases have to contact those with whom they served. This drags up horrific memories that they have struggled to suppress, often through drugs, alcohol and promiscuity. This is the reason they acted out through drunkenness, disobedience or desertion of their posts stateside after return from combat. I know this because it has been the case in every veteran I have met who falls under the provisions of this Catch-22 implemented by a group of chicken hawks who were too busy setting the country up for economic destruction to consider the consequences of their actions on our veterans.

The men and women affected by PL 95-126 volunteered or were compelled by our own government to serve the interests of the corporations who our elected representatives feel they need to serve to maintain their positions of power. After all, they reason, someone has to pay for the propaganda campaigns that confuse the general public, justifying unnecessary wars and the real reasons for them, as well as lining the pockets of the rich by subverting democracy worldwide

in the name of America. Many of the members of Congress responsible for this outrage shamelessly lied to the young, patriotic men and women who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as their parents about the reasons they were sent to kill and die. Now that these servicemembers have done their duty, many of those most in need of help from the VA have been casually discarded, as were the Vietnam veterans before them.

The ordeal of seeking help causes flare-ups of PTSD symptoms and reminds these veterans of the fact that their government chose to dishonor them rather than treat the wounds of war and the economic devastation that these politicians themselves inflicted on these combat veterans. The same is true when any of the estimated 30% of female OEF vets are erroneously told that they are not entitled to VA services to treat the psychological damage from the devastating psychological trauma of being raped in the service. These women are often among the worst affected by symptoms of PTSD. A high proportion of them were sexually abused in childhood but were functioning well enough to serve until being re-traumatized during their terms of service by the very men who were supposed to guard their backs. Almost to a woman, they were then ostracized by their peers, often even if they chose not to report the crime. This has led to a gross underestimate of the actual incidence of this form of trauma, which is magnified by the abuse and neglect that followed from their command, in the name of "maintaining unit cohesion."

I suspect that most veterans falling under PL 95-126 choose

not to engage in this fight, knowing that even if they succeed in obtaining an upgrade of their discharge, they then have to argue that they suffer "mental illness" as a result of their service. PTSD is not a mental illness, leaving the VA to decide whether or not to resort to semantic gymnastics in order to provide the services that most of us in the VA dedicate our professional lives to providing. What they do not know if they choose to engage in this long battle is that they only stand a 50% chance of success at each step, according to unofficial sources with whom I have consulted.

What is worse, the law does not even have a provision to allow the VA to conduct evaluations of those who win the lottery in the first step. They are required to somehow obtain independent psychiatric evaluations in order to make their case. Fortunately or unfortunately, those who need the help most are generally impoverished by their circumstances. They could get these exams through programs set up for the poor, if they are lucky enough to realize that such services are often available in the community. Because these individuals most often have divorced themselves from society in their shame, anger and despair, I suspect that few even try to navigate the labyrinth of steps required to obtain services, if they are lucky enough to succeed.

This crime against the youth of our nation, many now having grown up and producing a new generation of alienated and disaffected youth, is unacceptable. The VA may play a role because of the communication problems endemic in such a large organization, but the real fault lies with our complacent Congress. All of us who want to truly honor our veterans must demand that the members of the Veterans Committee in the Senate act at once to atone for this sin against our nation. Please call Senator Webb, Senator Tester or other members of the Veteran Affairs Committee at 866-220-0044 and demand action. I do not believe that either of these diligent and hardworking senators is aware of the problem, despite my attempts at asking for help through their aides.

When I spoke to Phillip Brady, Veteran Affairs aide to

Senator Webb, he made inquiries, speaking to the DOD and VA about the problem. As the only office in either organization authorized to speak to Congress is presumably the office of public affairs, both predictably denied that it was a problem. If you are as outraged at this whitewash, please let Senator Webb in particular know. As a decorated Vietnam veteran and father of an Iraq war veteran, he may be willing to dig deeper and speak to someone more appropriate at the VA Central Office. I suggested to Phillip that he start with the VA director of Mental Health Services, Dr. Ira Katz. Dr. Katz is a dedicated public servant who has been unfairly maligned by the media in the past but who has privately expressed his concern about this law as well.

Please contact every veteran group and veteran advocacy group that you can locate. I suggest calling and emailing Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. Also contact Jim Scott at VetWatch.org and let him know that you share my anger at this continuing mistreatment of combat veterans and sexually abused female veterans who only wanted to serve their country while in fact being used as tools by a cynical, cowardly Congress to serve the interests of their corporate puppet masters. While you are at it, you might make an appeal for real universal health care in the form of a single payer system. At last count in 2004, there were 1.8 million uninsured veterans and 3.8 million family members of veterans without access to health care.

If you choose to act, please tell them that I sent you. I have been beating my head against these walls for months and I would appreciate a response from those in a position to repeal this law and give our veterans the care that they have earned. If I have to go to Washington to personally appeal for these deserving veterans, I will, but I would prefer to see Congress take responsibility on their own for rectifying this national disgrace.



RICK STAGGENBORG, MD  
FOUNDER, SOLDIERS FOR PEACE  
INTERNATIONAL PHYSICIANS FOR A  
NATIONAL HEALTH PLAN CAPTAIN,  
USA (RET) VA PSYCHIATRIST,  
NORTH BEND, OR.

## Moment of Silence

My life is a fluorescent light  
dim at first  
effervescing to stars on a cold desert night,  
the cathedral of my soul  
poised for all eternity  
in the moment of silence  
between boot and land mine.

—Paul Hellweg

# The Struggle of African American Vets

VINCE EMMANULE

The socioeconomic situation facing returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan is quite grim. Broadly speaking, returning veterans are enduring the multiple stresses of combat trauma, physical injury, unemployment, homelessness, imprisonment, drug/alcohol dependency and a multitude of other social, economic, and psychological ailments. In this context, it's important to remember that veterans from all ethnic backgrounds are disproportionately represented in any and all socioeconomic statistics within the United States. However, the situation is even more tragic for African American veterans.

According to Tom Tarantino of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, referencing a recent survey conducted by IAVA, over 16% of veterans surveyed reported being unemployed. That's almost three times the national average. In particular, the youngest subset of veterans, returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, are facing the most difficult situation with regard to employment. In fact, as Tarantino notes, "For new veterans aged 18-24, the unemployment rate averaged 20.4% in 2012, more than five percentage points higher than the average among non-veterans aged 18-24."

African American veterans, as Naeesa Aziz mentions, "make up only 11.9% of the entire veteran labor force" but "accounted for 17.5% of overall veterans unemployment in 2010." Additionally, Naeesa Aziz suggests, "the data also showed that unemployment among Black veterans has steadily increased from 2007 to 2010, rising seven points and landing at 12.7%." Above all, the "transition back home" for African American veterans is marred with economic strife and inequality.

Overall, the disproportionate economic realities impacting returning veterans from African American communities reflects nationwide trends. According to the most recent jobs report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, African Americans are facing an unemployment rate (12.6%) exactly twice that of their White counterparts (6.3%). Unfortunately, institutional racism is reflected throughout the African American veteran community in the form of long-term joblessness, short-term employment and

marginal economic opportunities.

Unsurprisingly, veterans are also disproportionately represented in America's prison industrial complex. Indeed, while veterans only comprise 7% of the total civilian population, they represent over 10% of America's prison population. Additionally, the National Coalition of Homeless Veterans reports that, "most State prison veterans (54%) reported service during a wartime era, while 20% saw combat duty. In federal prison 2/3 of veterans had served during wartime, and 1/4 had seen combat." Furthermore, the NCHV notes, "over half of veterans (57%) were serving time for violent offenses, compared to 47% of non-veterans."

Moreover, the NCHV observes that, "nearly one in four veterans in state prison were sex offenders, compared to 1/10 non-veterans." Similarly, "Veterans were more likely than violent offenders in state prison to have victimized females and minors," Unsurprisingly, African American veterans represent 34.7% of the veteran prison population, despite only accounting for 10.4% of the total veteran population. Quite obviously, the situation facing veterans in the prison system is calamitous. Particularly, we must draw attention to the growing inequalities among the African American veteran population enslaved within America's prison industrial complex.

Lastly, I would like to illuminate the utterly catastrophic situation facing tens of thousands of homeless veterans living in the United States. Citing the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the National Coalition of Homeless Veterans points out that, "62,619 veterans are homeless on any given night. Over the course of a year, approximately twice that many experience homelessness." Moreover, NCHV illustrates that, "51% of homeless veterans have disabilities... 50% have serious mental illness," and "70% have substance abuse problems." Again, while veterans only represent 7% of the total population, they constitute 13% of the total homeless population within the United States.

For African American veterans, particularly black women veterans, the situation is even more disastrous. As Shannon



Vince Emmanule at Memorial Day, Chicago 2013.

Jones reports, "About 13 percent of homeless Afghan and Iraq war veterans are women, and almost 50 percent of all homeless veterans are African American." With 1/3 of all women veterans reporting Military Sexual Trauma, it should be noted that female African American veterans who have been sexually assaulted are one of the fastest growing segments of the homeless population within the United States. These are the stark socioeconomic realities plaguing our veterans as a consequence of centuries of institutional racism, militarism, empire-building and neoliberal economic assaults at home.

In this context, Iraq Veterans Against the War - Chicago - has made it our absolute mission to address these issues by working with the African American community and incorporating African American veterans into our chapter's leadership roles. Yes, this is a difficult task. Why? Well, namely, because the anti-war movement within the United States is "old, white and grey." In other words, IVAW's demographics represent the anti-war movement as a whole. But this isn't a model for growth, power or success. In order to accomplish our stated goals, IVAW, along with the broader anti-war left, must cultivate spaces conducive to building a multiracial movement.

That being said, we've had some limited success in working with Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr. and the Rainbow Push Coalition. To my surprise, on several occasions, Rev. Jackson has invited me as a guest on his TV program, and has created a space for IVAW members to visit and speak with his largely African American congregation

and political community. On a personal note, Rev. Jackson has been extremely cordial and helpful. He has continually supported IVAW Chicago's work by showing up to our events and providing political support. For example, during the 2012 anti-NATO protests, Rev. Jackson marched with IVAW and Afghans for Peace preceding the service medal-returning ceremony. Afterwards, he came up to me and said, "Brother Emanuele, that was the most powerful anti-war event I've ever been a part of, and I've been to a lot."

Let us remember, Rev. Jackson understands violence, and its devastating after-effects. On April 4th, 1968, Rev. Jackson was standing but a few meters away from Dr. Martin Luther King when Dr. King was shot by an assassin at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. He knows what the fresh blood of a good friend looks like, and he understands the soul-crushing consequences. The ongoing and never-ending violent circle continues today—whether it's economic violence, or military occupation. The only way to move forward as a society and anti-war community is to openly recognize, analyze and radically change the institutional structures that dictate such inequalities will continue.



VINCE EMMANULE IS A FORMER US MARINE OF TWO TOURS TO IRAQ WHO REFUSED TO GO AGAIN BY LAYING DOWN HIS WEAPON. HE SERVES ON THE NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR. HE HOSTS THE VETERANS UNPLUGGED RADIO PROGRAM ON RADIO WIMS, MICHIGAN.

# US Out of Vietnam!

TED SCOTT

I worked all summer in 1966 gathering signatures for a petition against the Vietnam war. That led to my discovery that every college student I came in contact with had a deferment, and nearly every other young man in Cambridge had received a draft notice. Among the large working class Portuguese community they were being drafted right out of high school. Nearly every street was a Gold Star street. The unfairness was appalling but not surprising.

I told Boston University to cancel my deferment, and soon got a notice to report to the Army base in Nashville; included was a quarter for bus fare. I responded and got a new notice for the Boston Army Base. In the two weeks before reporting, I managed to find two other younger students who were reporting at the same time and place as me, so we decided to try to disrupt the event somehow. They were conscientious objectors, but they hadn't played that card. We wore t-shirts with slogans on the back. We planned to call out questions when we were assembled. My slogan said "US Out of Vietnam."

It was also printed on my bare back with a Sharpie pen.

At the assembly, standing with a group of about 90 would-be draftees, I called out, "Why is the US In Vietnam?" Immediately I felt myself grabbed from behind. As I was being pulled away I heard, "What are you doing to him?" Then another loud question and we found ourselves sitting in a small office with three guards, and being questioned by an officer, who finally sent us back to stand in lines with the others in our underwear. The guy at the first desk I came to made me take off my t-shirt, then, seeing the Sharpie message on my back, he reversed the t-shirt and made me put it back on. After the physical, we went to lunch. I must admit that after my question at the beginning of the day, I was sweating, trembling with fear and almost unable to talk.

During lunch four young men came over and thanked us. Halfway through lunch the same officer came into the lunch room, and called us back to the small office we had been in before. He said that they needed to find out why we were there and what our

plan was. He said we would be interviewed by Army Intelligence.

If we promised to return the next morning for the interview, we would be allowed to take the written test with our group and could go home; otherwise we would be kept overnight.

We agreed, took the test and went home. At my house we decided to get a BU photographer to come with us to take pictures. My wife and five other women from SDS would make a large banner from bed sheets to carry, and we would wear our t-shirts with our messages. The next day we rode the MTA to the base. The reporter snapped a lot of good pictures as we entered the base. Unexpectedly, a group of men dressed as longshoremen came around the corner from the building where we were headed. The first thing they did was to grab and break the camera man's \$700 camera. Then they made like they were going to attack the women, forcing them outside of the base. Then they pretended to attack us, but they didn't hurt us, they just ripped our shirts apart.

Inside the building some

Red Cross nurses were collecting blood. I had found a little courage so, as they stared at us, I said we were POWs. They gave us lollipops. An officer appeared and took us to a small waiting room and called us one by one in to an office for questioning. I was first, and noticing a large brown machine on the desk, I asked if it was a recording device. "Yes," was the reply. I asked if we would get copies or transcripts. "No."

I told the two officers that I didn't have anything to say except my name, rank, and serial number and I didn't know the last two. I was let go, as were my comrades. A few weeks later I received a letter from the Nashville draft board saying I had passed all the tests. I never heard from them again.



*TED SCOTT IS NOT A VETERAN, JUST AN ORDINARY RETIRED PHYSICS TEACHER. HE HAS READ AND THOUGHT ABOUT THE VIETNAMESE WAR EVER SINCE IT HAPPENED. HE CONSIDERS IT THE MOST IMPORTANT HISTORICAL EVENT SINCE WWII. HE LIVES IN WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS WITH HIS WIFE OF 48 YEARS.*



War on the VA, 1974.

# A Farewell to One of Our Own: Remembering Dr. Robert M. Bowman

PHIL RESTINO

On August 22, 2013 our friend and comrade Dr. Bob Bowman passed away at the age of 78 after a long courageous 8 year battle with cancer. Dr. Bob, as he was so lovingly known to so many, leaves behind his wife of 57 years Maggie Bowman, their 7 children and 21 grandchildren.

Bob was well known as the Pentagon insider who courageously blew the whistle in the early 1980's on the US government's plans to use as an offensive "first-strike" weapon the "Star Wars" missile defense system (aka SDI) which he directed in the 1970's when the program was top secret.

Prior to his work with SDI, Bob Bowman served as a USAF fighter pilot with service in Korea and Vietnam. It was Col. Bowman's war experience in Vietnam that led him to dedicating the rest of his life to working for peace as a member of Vietnam Veterans Against the War and later as a celebrated member of Veterans For Peace, serving as its keynote speaker at 4 separate VFP national conventions.

Colonel Bowman was the

National Commander of the non-partisan veterans' organization, The Patriots, whose motto is "Follow the Constitution. Honor the Truth. Serve the People." (See [www.ThePatriots.us](http://www.ThePatriots.us)) That same motto served as a campaign slogan for Bob as he tried to make a difference by running for US President in 2000 and for US Representative in 2006 and 2008.

In 2009 when the new national veterans organization Oathkeepers was founded, Bob Bowman quickly joined as its tenets basically mirrored those of VFP's own "Operation Support and Defend" national campaign launched 2 years earlier and as he recognized the opportunity to bring the politically conservative veteran members of the Oathkeepers and the politically liberal veteran members of Veterans For Peace together around the common goal of ending the illegal, unconstitutional wars. Dr. Bob saw the political division amongst the American people as a major obstacle to achieving peace.

Year after year Bob and his wife Maggie traveled in their



motor-home throughout the country on their annual "Patriot Tours" giving talks at events sponsored by groups from the political left as well as the political right. Thankfully his message was captured in videos such as the July 2009 YouTube "Dr. Robert M. Bowman: America is Artificially Divided" and the July 2010 article "Left and Right Together."

Bob Bowman was quick to speak out against the US government's improbable, if not impossible, official theory explaining the conspiracy behind the attacks of 9/11/01. His advanced degrees in Nuclear and Aeronautical Engineering made it difficult to counter his argument that fires fueled by office furnishings and kerosene based jet-fuel could not make 3 steel-framed concrete skyscrapers blow up into dust and fall in nearly free-fall speed in perfectly symmetrical collapses. His experience as a USAF interceptor pilot made it equally as difficult to counter his argument that 4 known to be hijacked jumbo-jet airliners do not fly around in US airspace for more than 90 minutes without being intercepted unless there was a stand-down order on the interceptor planes. Dr. Bowman provides more in-depth interviews concerning both aspects of the 9/11 official theory as can be seen in the 2012 documentary from [AE911Truth.org](http://AE911Truth.org) entitled "9/11: Explosive Evidence – Experts

Speak Out".

Hopefully after more than 12 years now of the "War on Terror", enough of us will finally see the 9/11 truth as the necessary ingredient to actually stopping the 9/11 wars. In the meantime, those of us who remain in Bob Bowman's home chapter of Veterans For Peace in Central Florida will continue his work for peace by continuing to carry his message.



*PHIL RESTINO IS A PEACETIME VETERAN HAVING SERVED A 2-YEAR ENLISTMENT IN THE US ARMY INFANTRY. HE IS THE CO-CHAIR AND A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL FLORIDA CHAPTER OF VETERANS FOR PEACE, FOUNDED IN AUGUST 2005, AND A MEMBER OF MILITARY FAMILIES SPEAK OUT - FLORIDA. VETERANS FOR PEACE IS MADE UP OF MILITARY VETERANS WORKING TOGETHER FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE THROUGH NON-VIOLENCE SINCE 1985. THE CENTRAL FLORIDA CHAPTER COVERS FROM GREATER ORLANDO EAST TO GREATER MELBOURNE AND NORTH TO GREATER JACKSONVILLE. FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT THE CHAPTER WEBSITE [WWW.CFLVETERANSFORPEACE.ORG](http://WWW.CFLVETERANSFORPEACE.ORG) OR THE NATIONAL VFP WEBSITE AT [WWW.VETERANSFORPEACE.ORG](http://WWW.VETERANSFORPEACE.ORG).*

# Reclaim Armistice Day

BEN CHITTY

Several VVAW members joined more than a dozen veterans, military family members, and supporters in a vigil at the United Nations on September 21, the

International Day of Peace. The vigil was called by the Veterans Peace Council of Metro New York to respond to the annual call by the World Veterans Federation

for Veterans Peace Walks, and to launch a campaign to reclaim November 11 Armistice Day as a commemoration of peace in New York City.

*BEN CHITTY IS A SHELLBACK NAVY VETERAN OF TWO DEPLOYMENTS TO VIETNAM, AND A LONG-TIME MEMBER OF VVAW."*

## Veterans Peace Council of Metro New York Reclaim Armistice Day!

Armistice Day originally marked the end of the first World War at "the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month" in 1918. Congress changed the name to Veterans Day in 1954, seeking to recognize veterans of later wars both living and dead, and also to promote patriotic sentiments just as the latest battle in the Cold War had ended in a stalemate on the Korean peninsula. Since then, Veterans Day observances have become tributes to militarism: cadets and soldiers step smartly to martial music to show their readiness for war, and politicians rush to bask in the reflected glory of military service. There is little left of the memory of sacrifice, less attention to veterans issues, and nothing at all of the 99-year-old dream of ending war altogether.

It's almost 100 years since the start of World War I - the "Great War," the "War to End War and Make the World Safe For Democracy."

New war stirs in the Middle East (Damascus stands in for Sarajevo), and promises a new conflagration with even more devastation

and desolation. Among the ingredients of that vicious and corrupt conflict are the arbitrary boundaries drawn by the victors of the Great War out of the shards of the Ottoman Empire.

The Veterans Peace Council aims to return 11-11 to its original purpose. Our campaign has two components.

- First, we will call on all houses of worship in New York City to mark the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month by ringing their bells or chimes for eleven

minutes. We hope this becomes customary in our city.

- Second, we will form a Veterans Peace Contingent for the city's parade up Fifth Avenue on November 11. We will march as Veterans For Peace and Vietnam Veterans Against the War.



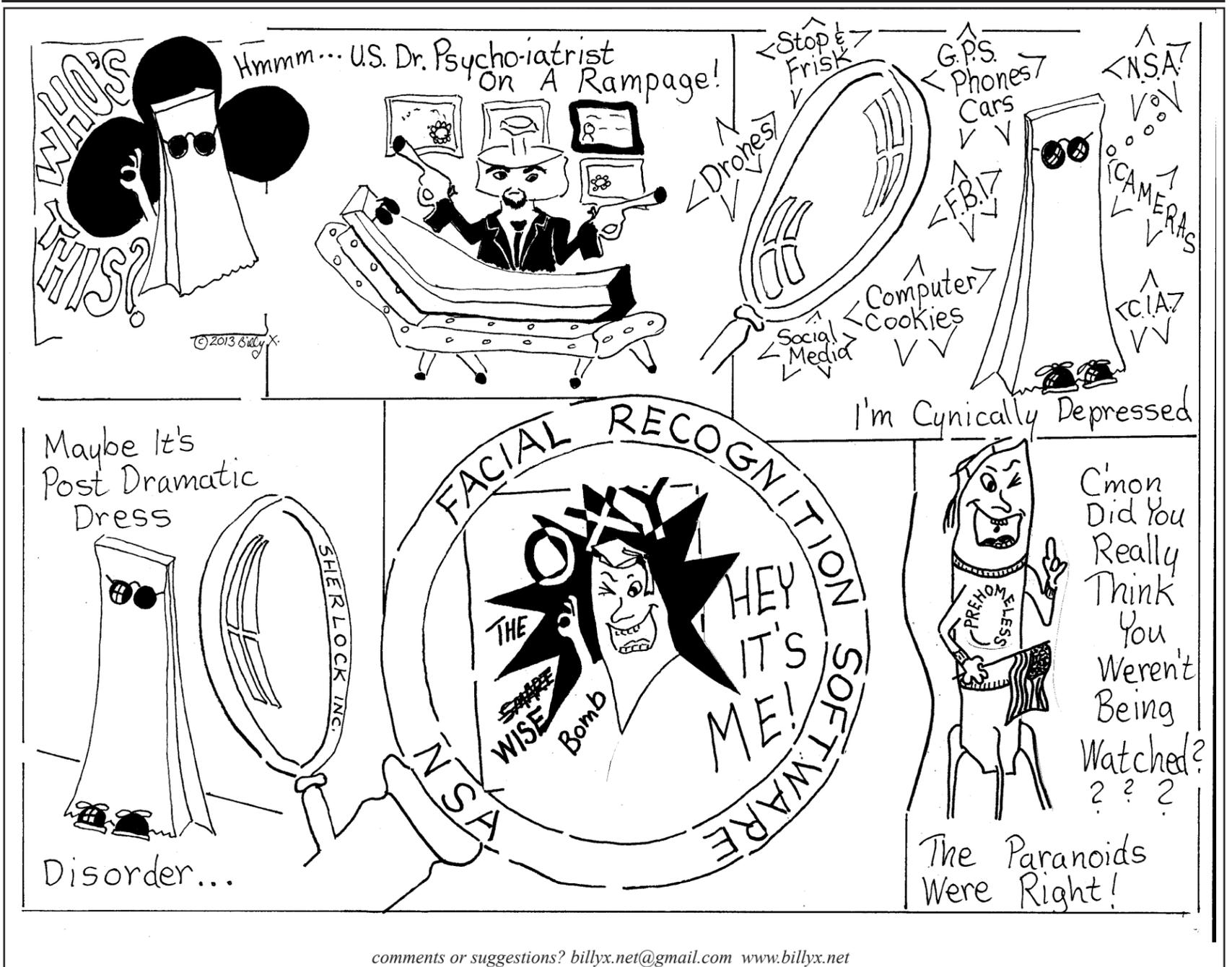
Veterans, military family members, supporters

## Join Us!

VETERANS PEACE COUNCIL | INFO@VETERANSPEACECOUNCIL.ORG | WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/VETERANSPEACECOUNCIL



Setting up banners for the vigil at the Isaiah Wall across from the United Nations.



comments or suggestions? [billyx.net@gmail.com](mailto:billyx.net@gmail.com) [www.billyx.net](http://www.billyx.net)

## Federal Veterans' Benefits In Washington D.C. – Winter 1971

No not the paltry college money, \$129 total, for the G.I. Bill at the U. of Maryland  
 No not the free 4 hour waits at the Irving Street VA hospital for a look-see  
 But the "bennie" to sleep on the snow-free heating grates by the Federal buildings

Our government saved many Nam vets' lives with this convenience  
 They were the shadows embracing the metal grids... best spots hidden by shrubs  
 They had ragged jungle fatigues for pajamas  
 Their winter quilts were soiled field jackets... poncho liners  
 AND...those heating grates worked all winter

They wouldn't fund vets dying from Agent Orange or "Vietnam Syndrome"  
 They wouldn't provide housing, jobs, not even the VA hired us  
 The VFW and American Legion banned us... we were losers.... Not in a real war...

But nobody stopped vets from the Federal heating grates they called their evening home

I was living... not to be pulled down by the cruel injustice of war

They were dying... they would not be buried at Arlington...

—Jim Murphy

# The Cowardice of Power

FRED SAMIA

*Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence. Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation.*  
- Martin Luther King Jr. Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Stockholm, Sweden, 1964

As President Obama celebrates the 50th anniversary of the great peace march on Washington with tributes to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, he simultaneously contemplates an attack on the people of Syria which according to international law would be illegal. As a combat veteran of the Vietnam war, a registered independent who voted for Barack Obama, and an American journalist of Syrian ancestry who has lived and worked in the Middle East, I urge our government not to attack or join in any attack on the people of Syria. It will be the people of Syria, already paying a terrible toll in that

fratricide, that will suffer under the missiles and bombs. Having witnessed first hand collateral damage in Vietnam and Lebanon, I can attest that such weapons will never be "smart." Rather, they miss their targets with predictable and horrible consequences. I also saw in person and reported on the repression and fear that Hafez Al-Assad, the father of Syria's current president, instilled in that country's citizens.

The waywardness of the technology aside, President Obama also risks trampling whatever moral rectitude the United States has left in its foreign policy bag. He, and especially Secretary of State John Kerry, himself a Vietnam combat veteran, should know that violence can never stop violence. In the words of singer Holly Near, how does "killing people show that killing people is wrong?" And despite Kerry's impassioned statement on the use of chemical weapons the administration has yet to provide any hard evidence as to who is responsible. Kerry astounds when he rejects out of hand the

possibility of an act of provocation, no matter how reprehensible the idea. Has he already forgotten Iraq's non-existent weapons of mass destruction? The American ad agency-scripted "stolen incubators" performance by the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador in front of the UN? The Gulf of Tonkin incident? Or the gassing of Kurds in Halabja, Iraq by Saddam Hussein that the US initially blamed on Iran? Also to be considered is al-Qaeda's infiltration of, and influence on, Syrian rebel groups such as the al-Nusra Front, and what they would gain by an American-led attack on Syria.

Killing more innocents, as is sure to happen with any kind of bombardment, is not the way to bring peace and justice to the Syrian people. Neither is letting the fighting continue unabated. The best solution would be an immediate negotiated ceasefire and multilateral peace talks co-brokered by nations of the West and the Middle East. More than anyone, President Obama and Secretary Kerry should

know that we do not have the moral superiority to dictate to another country, and that, like Vietnam, like Iraq and Lebanon, Afghanistan, Libya and Tunisia, the only legacy of a military intervention in Syria will be chaos, heartbreak and more hatred of the United States. Acting from a place of power against the weak or defenseless is not courage but cowardice.



*FRED SAMIA IS A MARINE VETERAN OF THE VIETNAM WAR WITH SEVEN DECORATIONS INCLUDING THE PURPLE HEART. AS A FREE-LANCE JOURNALIST HE HAS WORKED IN THE MIDDLE EAST, SCANDINAVIA AND EUROPE, FOR, AMONG OTHERS, UNWRA (THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AGENCY FOR REFUGEES); LAWRENCE (MA) SUNDAY SUN NEWSPAPER; PACIFIC NEWS SERVICE; MONDAY MORNING MAGAZINE (BEIRUT); COUNTER SPY MAGAZINE. HE WAS CO-PRODUCER ON THE PBS-AIRED DOCUMENTARY, "VOICES IN EXILE: IMMIGRANTS AND THE FIRST AMENDMENT." HIS FATHER'S PARENTS IMMIGRATED FROM SYRIA IN THE EARLY 1900'S.*



Boys in Damascus.

# September 11? Chile 1973, Chicago 2013: 40 Years of Neo-liberal Attacks on Our Societies

KIM SCIPES

What do you think of when you hear the term "9-11?" A date. Does it remind you of the attacks on New York's World Trade Center, or the attack on the Pentagon, or the attack that was frustrated by passengers in Pennsylvania?

It reminds me of all of these things but, more importantly, it reminds me of the FIRST 9-11, September 11, 1973, when the US helped overthrow the democratically-elected government of Salvador Allende in Chile. This wasn't the first time in the post-World War II period that the US government had helped overthrow a democratically-elected government. The US had done that in Iran in 1953, Guatemala in 1954, and Brazil in 1964, plus had supported dictators in a number of countries in the Caribbean and Asia by that time. It was the first one that many of us who came to political consciousness in the 1960's experienced directly.

Salvador Allende was an experienced Chilean politician who worked to gain the presidency. He won in 1970 with a plurality, and according to the Chilean Constitution was put into power legally. Not a radical politically, he could be described as a social democrat, someone who sought some form of socialism but wanted to achieve it through electoral politics.

Allende realized that Chile was being raped of its natural resources, most importantly, copper by US multinational corporations such as Anaconda. These multinationals had invested something like \$800,000 in Chile, yet had taken over \$5 billion out. Allende realized that he could not successfully address the poverty related problems in Chile without nationalizing the US facilities, and using the profits from the copper operations for the good of the Chilean people. When he nationalized the US investments, he put himself on a collision course with the US Empire.

President Richard Nixon and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger were personally involved in developing a strategy and providing resources to members of the Chilean military high command to help overthrow President Allende. Also involved, unfortunately,

was the leadership of the AFL-CIO, who were operating behind the backs of American workers and without their knowledge through an organization they had created for such purposes, AIFLD (American Institute for Free Labor Development). Nixon and Kissinger did all they could to cut off development aid to Chile, both by the US government, but also by multilateral development institutes like the Interamerican Development Bank and the World Bank, while increasing aid and training to the Chilean military.

When the military attacked on September 11, 1973, it was very carefully planned and resolutely carried out. La Moneda, the Presidential Palace in Santiago, was shelled by artillery and then

provided services to the mentally disabled, or supported working class families were ended at first opportunity.

Pinochet also smashed anyone or any organization that challenged the coup or his rule. His rule was all-but-absolute, and was not overturned until the early 1990s.

Although we've yet to have the violence of the Pinochet dictatorship in the United States, our leaders, beginning particularly with Ronald Reagan and continuing today under Barack Obama, have been carrying out neo-liberal economic policies since the early 1980s and, just like in Chile, they have been a disaster for most of the people. The United States is the most economically unequal

education that might come from this graduate of one of the most expensive private colleges in the country, Sarah Lawrence, whose kids are in the private, and very expensive, University of Chicago Lab School, Emanuel wants to turn public education into a for profit venture. Key to doing this is to break the Chicago Teachers Union.

Now, Emanuel will complain about the high cost of a unionized work force and how they do get paid more than non-union teachers. The real issue is power. Emanuel wants no one to challenge his plans, and certainly wants no one to have the power to stop him and tell the public that the Emperor is naked, which the CTU did during the 2012 teachers' strike. He cares not for the students, the parents, the teachers, or Chicago, it's his way or the highway. Ultimately, he has this dream of becoming the President of the United States, and he'll throw anyone necessary under the bus to get his shot.

I'm sure, in his private moments, he wishes he could use the Pinochet option.

Think I'm exaggerating? Guess who closed down much of the South Loop in May 2012, and mobilized over 3,000 police—including state troopers—to defend a meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the greatest war-killing machine in the history? (Wait until you see the new movie, "Four Days in Chicago," which can be found at <http://www.fourdaysinchicago.com>.) "I didn't get the Mayor's last name, but it sure sounded like Pinochet.

*This article originally appeared in "Substance," an educational policy journal in Chicago.*



*KIM SCIPES, PH.D., IS A FORMER SERGEANT IN THE US MARINE CORPS, WHO NOW IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT PURDUE UNIVERSITY NORTH CENTRAL IN WESTVILLE, IN. HE LIVES IN LOGAN SQUARE, CHICAGO. HE FOCUSES ON THE COUP IN CHILE AS A CASE STUDY IN HIS RECENT BOOK, AFL-CIO'S SECRET WAR AGAINST DEVELOPING COUNTRY WORKERS: SOLIDARITY OR SABOTAGE?*

**Pinochet also smashed anyone or any organization that challenged the coup or his rule.**

invaded by troops. President Allende was found dead, with a weapon by his side.

Initial reports were that over 30,000 people had been killed in the first few days, although current estimates are that between 3-5,000 died. Many bodies were hidden, buried in mass graves, or flown out over the Pacific where they were dumped out of aircraft and fed to the sharks. Thousands were arrested then disappeared.

The military, under the leadership of General Augusto Pinochet, seized power. Pinochet invited a group of economists trained at the University of Chicago to advise on reviving the economy. They implemented a program that would later go by the name of neo-liberal economics to remove any government regulation of the economy that had been implemented by the Allende administration. The only value they projected positively was profit-making. Trade unions and any pro-workers organizations were disbanded, and their leaders tortured and killed. Social programs that fed the poor,

of all of the so-called developed countries. In fact, we are more unequal than some of the poorest countries in the world, such as Bangladesh, Uganda and Vietnam. When profitability is the only acceptable value, it empowers the wealthy and those who operate for them, while devastating the social reality we call society.

At the same time, the US government has put massive amounts of money into building its war machine, over \$10 trillion between 1981 and 2010. We spend more money each year than our 14 closest military competitors combined! This is money that cannot be put into education, health care, rebuilding our infrastructure, addressing global climate change, or taking care of our people. We can try to dominate the world, or we can try to take care of our people, but we cannot do both.

This brings us to Chicago and Mayor Rahm Emanuel. Emanuel is on a mission to destroy the Chicago Public Schools, and replace them with charter schools. Besides any ideological animosity to public

# Return to Vietnam

MIKE KERBER

Why return to Vietnam after spending time in the war there? Have you ever been curious as to what it is like after 40 some years? The curiosity got to me enough that when I saw a trip put together by the Veterans for Peace chapter 160 of Vietnam, I had to go. There was no way I was going back with veterans that still believe we should have "won" the war. Our group of 12 was made up of veterans, relatives of veterans killed there, peace advocates, a journalist, a military nurse and an airline stewardess that flew soldiers to and from Vietnam.

We met vets that live in Vietnam and work there. These vets work with agencies that help the Vietnamese recover from the damage the US caused. One agency clears unexploded ordinance in the Quang Tri province. From 1975 until 2002 42,135 people have died and 62,143 have been wounded from some of the 600,000 tons of bombs left behind. Another agency works with farmers that have been injured from unexploded ordinance and families of veterans to help them improve their farms and small businesses. When we visited the agencies, orphanages and hospitals that care for 3rd and 4th generation kids that are physically handicapped from the effects of Agent Orange, it was

heart wrenching.

I was very apprehensive as to how the Vietnamese people would accept us. After arriving at our hotel I took a walk and was amazed as to how people, especially ones my age would say hello and smile.

We traveled from Hanoi to Da Nang, Hue, Dong Ha, A Loui (Ashau Valley), Hoi An, Nha Trang and Saigon.

Although there is not much left that would suggest there was a war, we did get to see the Vinh Moc tunnels north of the DMZ, Khe Sanh, Trough Son National Cemetery (it reminds one of Arlington) and a couple of war museums.

As you walk around the Saigon war museum with a VFP shirt on, it was amazing how many people wanted to have their picture taken with you. You can interpret that anyway you want, but the people were very friendly.

Meeting the Vietnamese veterans of the war was full of emotions until one them puts his arm around you when someone takes our picture together. The veterans love to exchange lapel pins. Knowing this, I presented many of them with Vietnam Veterans Against the War pins. When we met with veteran's organizations, they would say that the war is past history and that they would rather focus on peace



and healing.

After meeting many Vietnamese, you come away with a sense that these are peace-loving people that fought for hundreds of years for their independence and they now have it. They have peace and they enjoy what is important to them, which is love of family. They do not talk much about politics and religion because these things do not affect their everyday lives much.

After reading many books on Vietnam from the perspective of those that struggled through the war, you get a sense of what people did to survive whether it was US soldiers, NVA and Viet Cong soldiers or Vietnamese civilians. It is rewarding to see

that the country is at peace. It also reinforces the work that all of us must do to continue the job of preventing unnecessary wars and the healing of veterans now and in the future.



*MIKE KERBER WAS DRAFTED IN 1968. HE WENT THROUGH ARTILLERY TRAINING AT FORT SILL AND SPENT 8 MONTHS WITH THE 101ST DIV. 2/319 ARTY IN THE A SHAU VALLEY IN '69 AND '70. HE WAS AT CAMP EVANS, EAGLES NEST, FB RENDEZVOUS, FB RAKASSAN AND FB BARBARA. HE SPEND HIS WORKING LIFE IN THE GRAIN BUSINESS IN THE MIDWEST AND IS NOW RETIRED AND LIVING IN BLOOMINGTON, IL.*



*Swords to Plowshares - empty bomb casings used for planting at Mine Action Center, Quang Tri.*

# War Overseas, Social Devastation at Home... An Evening with Iraq Veterans Against the War

KIM SCIPES

As part of their national convention in Chicago, Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) presented a public forum titled "21st Century American Militarism: Occupation Abroad and Resistance at Home" at the Chicago Temple on August 2, 2013. Featuring talks by Christian Parenti, Michael Rakowitz, Suraia Suhan, and Nick Turse, and followed by an interesting Q&A session, the approximately 250 people in attendance were treated to a stimulating discussion of war and militarism in the present day US Empire.

The powerful introduction to the event by Iraq veteran and evening master of ceremonies, Vince Emmanuele, tied militarism overseas to social devastation at home, was followed by a talk and video slide presentation by Nick Turse.

Turse, author of the recently-released book, "Kill Anything That Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam," began talking about his book and his experiences over a 12-year period of researching, traveling to Vietnam to interview Vietnamese survivors, and writing. Initially planning to do a Ph.D. dissertation on PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) among US veterans, Turse stumbled upon US Army documents detailing the war's destruction and devastation, and began reading. He read a wide range of the literature — now totaling over 30,000 books! — to provide context and understanding of the war. He traveled across the US, talking to US veterans about their experiences, what they did and/or what they saw. He traveled to Vietnam, locating and talking with survivors of the violence of the war. What he argued, showing some gruesome war-related photos so there would be little doubt, is that the war was really a

war against Vietnamese civilians whom we were supposedly there to help.

He went further. He specifically discussed how the US Army, and, by implication the other services, did all they could to keep accounts from reaching the American public. Reports disappeared, those who reported were intimidated and threatened, and those who refused to cower suffered retaliation. At the same time, the US media ignored the increasing number of reports of atrocities. He specifically talked about a case where Newsweek disemboweled a closely documented story that reported between 5,000-7,000 Vietnamese were killed (over 10 times the number of people killed at My Lai) by the 9th Division in the Mekong Delta.

Later, Turse said that the single most important thing he learned from his research was how all-consuming the war was to the Vietnamese. The Vietnamese had to continually negotiate their lives with the American soldiers and the war in general. He gave an example. When Americans attacked a village, they fired artillery first, sending the Vietnamese into their bomb shelters for protection. But after the artillery stopped, they had to decide how long they could stay safe in their shelters. If they waited too long, and the Americans arrived, they risked their lives because American troops would throw grenades into the bomb shelters to make sure no one was hiding from them. The pressures of this "negotiation" over so many years simply cannot be comprehended.

Michael Rakowitz, a Jewish Iraqi-American and professor of archeology at Northwestern University, followed Turse.

Shifting focus to the destruction of Iraq from the US invasion, and specifically the cultural devastation, Rakowitz told stories of trying to recover and reconstruct artifacts from Iraq's cultural heritage, some which went back to Babylonian times.

He specifically talked about Dr. Donny George, an Iraqi scholar who has played a key role in these efforts. It turns out to support his work, George plays drums in a rock band. So in an exhibition created by Rakowitz that George attended, there was a picture of George playing his drums, which befuddled the latter, as he said there were no pictures of his band, the "99 Percents." Rakowitz explained the benefits of photo shop. He told of a picture that he had found of George in a meeting, looking bored, and he attached this image to the image of Ringo Starr of the Beatles!

Next up was Suraia Sahar, an Afghani woman who has immigrated to Toronto, and who is a member of Afghans United for Justice. While she couldn't talk about militarism in the US, she talked about her experiences in Canada as an anti-war activist, and how she's been mistreated whenever she has publicly spoken. She spoke about how the Canadian government and the media have used "Remembrance Day" (originally to remember Canadian WWI veterans) to build support for Canadian troops in Afghanistan today.

Dissatisfied at previous programs, she decided to protest the Afghanistan War at the November 2012 celebration of Remembrance Day activities. Although she is not religious, she chose to wear a headscarf to celebrate her culture, but went there to discuss the war, damage

to her people, culture and country as they've been at war for over 30 years (including the Soviet and US invasions). She reported that people didn't respond to her or her concerns. Without even talking with her, people starting yelling at her, labeling her a Taliban supporter, Islamist, or even jihadi. I guess all the fools are not located south of the Canadian border.

Finally, we got to the presentation by Christian Parenti. The author of four books, his latest titled "Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence," Parenti's presentation was a tour de force. He discussed how US militarism and foreign policy has changed in the post-WWII period. Starting out as what President Eisenhower famously called the "military-industrial complex," Parenti noted that the civilian component was initially composed of weapons-building corporations, like Boeing, Raytheon, and MacDonald-Douglas. Today, in addition to the traditional arms merchants, we must include those companies who provide things like intelligence and surveillance systems, food and catering services, as well as engineering and construction efforts to the US military, like KBR, Halliburton, Blackwater (now Xe), Triple Canopy, etc. (Nick Turse has written an excellent book on this called "The Complex", which I recommend.) In other words, there are more and more corporations benefitting from US militarism, and advocating for greater US military involvement across the planet. Of course, they aren't encouraging the US Government to take their sons and daughters to carry out these policies.

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*IVAW during their recent conference in Chicago.*

## Fellow Traveler's Notebook

ELAINE ELINSON

As we made our way in the darkness of the Vinh Moc tunnels, I ran my hands over the well-worn rock of the narrow passageway. Every few yards, light from someone's small flashlight would illuminate tiny caves. These, our guide Truc explained, were dwellings for entire families.

Half-way through the length of the tunnel, we came upon a cave with life-size figures in it. A woman lying on a cot, another woman bending over her, a baby in her arms. This was the maternity room. Seventeen babies were born underground: as US artillery bombarded Quang Tri, seventeen new lives emerged. St. Augustine said that hope has two beautiful daughters: anger and courage. These seventeen babies were born of hope.

I remembered in college seeing a grainy, black- and-white French film about the tunnels, unsteady camera shots of an operating theater, school and living quarters deep underground. We all marveled at the determination and tenacity of the Vietnamese.

Forty years later, as I inhaled the damp air, and gingerly stepped on the slippery stones, I had the same feeling I had as I touched the wallpaper in the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. This was the same stone that had sheltered Vietnamese villagers and the Viet Cong as they fought for liberation. We were touching history, we were touching hope.

If I was so overcome, I wondered how the veterans on our delegation were feeling. Gayle Hodges had flown troops out of Travis Air Force Base to Viet Nam in 1966-67, landing in Saigon on Christmas Eve. Chris Jamison was a crew member on a M42 Duster at various fire bases along

the DMZ in 1970. Mike Kerber was drafted and spent 8 months in the artillery of the 101st Division in the mountainous area of the A Shau Valley.

From April 18 to May 2, we were part of a group of 13 members of Veterans for Peace who traveled to Vietnam as part of an ongoing effort to understand and heal the legacies of the war. We were guests of the Veterans for Peace Chapter 160, comprised of US veterans who now live and work in Vietnam, and the Vietnamese Veterans Association.

We focused on two specific scourges of the aftermath of the war, the impact of Agent Orange on several generations of Vietnamese children and the toll taken by unexploded ordnance, which, even today, injure and maim farmers in rice paddies and children in rural villages.

Though the hot war ended almost four decades ago, the American war of aggression continues to take its deadly toll. Most Americans, including myself and others on our delegation, were not aware of the way the Vietnamese people continue to live with this lethal legacy.

As we journeyed from Hanoi, to Quang Tri province, Hue, Da Nang, Na Trang and Ho Chi Minh City, we learned how Vietnam has struggled to rebuild in the face of great devastation – and how welcoming the Vietnamese people are to Americans who come in friendship. At one of our first meetings in Hanoi, Ambassador Nguyen Tam Chien of the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations, explained, "The virtue of peace has been enforced through our history of war"

On our first day in Vietnam, Gayle and I walked through the

Women's Museum in Ha Noi.

We were moved by the stories of women guerrillas, many of whom had been imprisoned – some in tiger cages built by the French, tortured and executed. We read letters, hastily written in pencil on pages torn from a spiral notebook, about how much they missed their children. We saw items in the display cases, a teapot, a pistol, an embroidered scarf used for smuggling covert messages that were the few, vital possession of courageous women fighters.

I remembered a t-shirt I wore to anti-war demonstrations in San Francisco: it was white with a red silkscreen of a woman guerrilla fighter in an ao-dai and a conical hat. In one hand she cradled her baby, in the other an AK-47. Here were their real stories, their scarves, and their embroidered sewing boxes containing ammunition.

At Friendship Village, a serene countryside oasis outside of Hanoi's bustle that houses a school and home for children disabled by their families' exposure to Agent Orange as well as a rest center for veterans, we met several women veterans. Though we could not understand each others language, we embraced in solidarity. A Vietnamese veteran with a chest full of medals insisted on taking one off his uniform and pinning it on the shirt of Chuck Searcy, vice-president of Veterans for Peace 160 who has lived in Vietnam for 20 years.

"Did you see," Gayle asked me in her warm Texan drawl, "that when he pinned the medal, a drop of his blood fell on Chuck's shirt? That was one of the most memorable moments of this trip for me," she said.

Mike Kerber, a peace activist from Chicago, had a similar feeling. "When we met Vietnamese vets, some of whom fought in the same area where I was, they put their arms around us and we were filled with warmth. It was a fabulous feeling to experience this kind of forgiveness that you don't see much of in the United States.

"This trip has brought a peace of mind about the war that I could never get before," Kerber added.

As a former artilleryman in the hills of the A Shau Valley, Kerber was especially moved by our visit to Khe Sanh, where more than 100,000 tons of bombs (equivalent to five Hiroshima-size atomic bombs) were dropped in 1968 during the massive aerial bombardment assault, and 158,000 large-caliber shells rained down from the surrounding hills. This was almost 5 tons for every one of the 20,000 NVA soldiers there. At the Truong Son National Cemetery, where 20,000 graves mark the remains of Vietnamese soldiers and civilians who died in defense of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, Kerber and other members of the delegation lit incense and paid their respects to the war dead.

The bombs and artillery continue to take their toll. As we stood in a desolate field near Nan Bieu village in Quang Tri province, under a blue tarp to protect us from the blazing sun, Colonel Bui Trong Hong, a 30-year veteran of the Peoples' Army of Viet Nam, explained how teams detect and remove unexploded ordnance, inch by inch. At the nearby provincial Mine Action Center, we learned how just after the war injuries from unexploded ordnance were widespread, as

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## An Evening with IVAW

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Parenti's talk covered US foreign policy since the fall of the Soviet Union and the attacks on 9.11.2001. He covered the expansion of US militarism around the world as the US seeks to maintain its position as the world's superpower. He argues that the military adventures abroad are connected to issues as diverse as global climate change, the emergence of failed states such as Somalia and Afghanistan, and the revelations about the spying

and surveillance uncovered by Snowden, Manning and others.

Now, Parenti thinks that more and more Americans are recognizing the importance of these issues and are seeking ways to get involved and to challenge this direction. I don't think most Americans are thinking globally like this and, of course, our mainstream media isn't helping with this. I think efforts to defend public education, for example, can be better understood when put in a

larger framework such as Parenti suggests.

In short, a very interesting program, and certainly intellectually stimulating. It was taped by Larry Duncan of Labor Beat, a local cable TV program, and so should soon be available to the public.

I think this was an important program: tying militarism overseas to problems people face every day at home and suggesting that these issues are combined and must be

approached holistically. I think the vets are trying to project a broader degree of discussion into our understanding and they deserve our thanks for that, too.



*KIM SCIPES, PH.D., IS A FORMER SERGEANT IN THE US MARINE CORPS, WHO NOW IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT PURDUE UNIVERSITY NORTH CENTRAL IN WESTVILLE, IN. HE LIVES IN LOGAN SQUARE, CHICAGO.*

## Fellow Traveler's Notebook

*continued from previous page*

thousands of people, impoverished by the war and the debilitating embargo, sought out weapons to sell for scrap metal.

Today, school children come to the Mine Action Center to learn how to stay safe. Planters made from artillery casings are filled with aloe and bougainvillea. "Swords to plowshares," remarked Searcy, whose organization Project RENEW, helps clear weaponry, provide livelihoods in cattle raising and mushroom farming to impacted families, and fund the educational center.

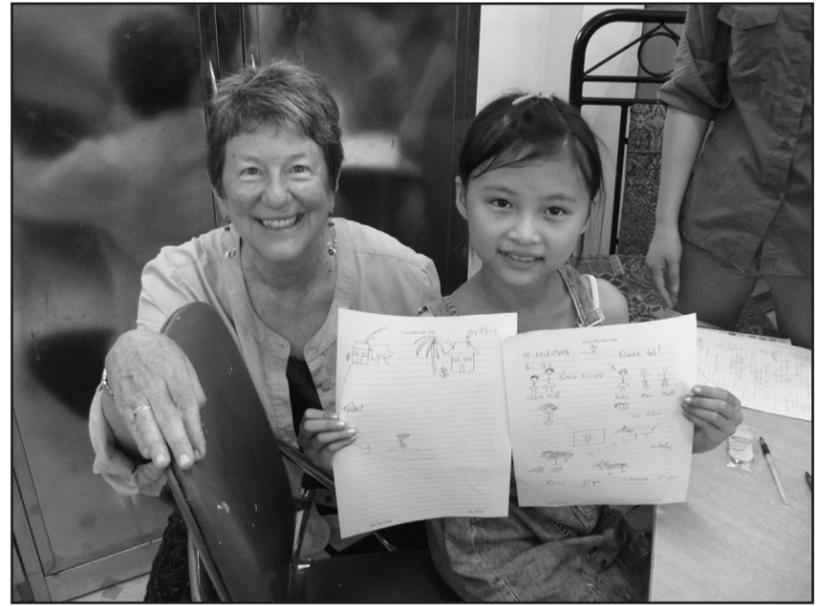
Chris Jamison, a labor union organizer from Syracuse, New York, could hardly contain his anger as we listened to the US contractors explain the multi-million dollar remediation project at the former Da Nang Air Force Base. Jamison, who was stationed near the DMZ, had been warmly welcomed into the simple homes of families whose children, debilitated from genetic mutations caused by Agent Orange, cannot speak, see or even sit up. As he climbed the ladder to look at the expensive clean-up site, Jamison murmured in a troubled voice, "Too little, too late."

For a decade, the United States sprayed 80 million liters of poison on Vietnam -- 61% of which was Agent Orange containing dioxin, one of the deadliest chemicals known to man.

It claimed more than 3 million victims, including children of the third and fourth generation. Hundreds of thousands have died, and 200,000 victims currently receive a small monthly subsidy from the Vietnamese government. Because most victims cannot work, and often need full-time care, these families are the poorest of the poor.

Jamison was more impressed by the work of VAVA, the Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange, that has 3,500 chapters around the country to mobilize support and assistance to victims of Agent Orange and their families. He was moved by the dedicated teachers in the schools for disabled children and the doctors at Hoa Binh Village at the Tu Du Hospital who care for children whose families cannot cope. Those are the more fortunate ones. In a small room at the hospital, there are rows and rows of shelves with jars containing fetuses that could not survive because they were born without brains or other vital organs.

"I still can't understand why most Vietnamese (but I'm sure not all) seem to forgive us-- notably me as an American soldier-- for the death and the destruction we inflicted upon their families, their communities, and their nation during the war," said Jamison. "I know of no other people as



*Elaine Elinson with new friend Huong, 11, at Friendship Villahe, HaNoi.*

courageous and persevering as the people of Vietnam, especially the war veterans, unexploded ordnance teams, Agent Orange victims and their caretakers who we were honored to meet."

In Hoi An, Gayle and I bought candles in paper cut-out boats that were being sold along the banks of the Thu Bon River under the colored lanterns of the ancient Japanese Bridge. A young girl told us to make a wish and showed us how to lower them into the water on a long pole. We made a wish for the children we had met in Friendship Village, who danced for us at the DAVA Center, who slapped palms with us at Tu Du Hospital, and who lay silently on straw mats in villages in Quang Tri and Hue. We said a prayer for

peace, and our tiny flames joined a stream of other candles, bringing a glow to the dark waters.



*ELAINE ELINSON IS A SAN FRANCISCO-BASED JOURNALIST WHO TRAVELED WITH THE ANTI-WAR FTA SHOW IN SOUTHEAST ASIA IN 1971.*

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# Reflections on the Passing of Comrade General Vo Nguyen Giap – Great Hero of Humanity

MERLE RATNER

I am very saddened at the passing of General Vo Nguyen Giap on Friday, October 4, 2013! Bac Giap, as he is called as a term of great affection, dedicated his entire life to achieving the national liberation and independence of Vietnam. He led the victory of the Vietnamese people against French colonialism and US imperialism, making Vietnam the first country to achieve decisive victories over colonial and imperialist powers. Bac Giap and President Ho Chi Minh together led the movement for national liberation and socialism which made these victories possible. Developing Marxism Leninism creatively and applying it to the particular conditions of Vietnam, they were able to meld the demands for national independence and ending feudalism and oppression into a powerful and all-sided people's struggle.

Bac Giap developed a theory and practice of people's war — an integrated strategy of military, political and diplomatic mobilization of the entire Vietnamese people. This unique comprehensive approach maximized the agency of the Vietnamese masses in achieving their own liberation, mobilizing their grass roots initiative. Some bourgeois press obituaries of General Giap have claimed that he was "ruthless," willing to lose millions of people to win Vietnam's independence. Those who write this clearly do not understand Bac Giap or the Vietnamese people! The French colonialists and US imperialists' scorched earth war against the Vietnamese made the fight for liberation burn in the heart of the people, who were willing to make incredible sacrifices to achieve their liberation. Bac Giap successfully led this movement with great love and respect for those he commanded and his love has been reciprocated. The massive outpouring of people, including many youth, this weekend in the streets of Vietnam to honor Bac Giap underscores how beloved he is in Vietnam, as he is around the world.

After liberation, Bac Giap continued to fight for the development of people's power and socialism, particularly

focusing on the empowerment and advancement of the majority of the population — the peasant community. He has been a consistent voice criticizing corruption and opportunism and advocating for environmentalism. Around the world, Bac Giap embodied proletarian internationalism as an inspiration to people struggling for independence, equality and justice

In an interview he gave in 1999 with PBS, Bac Giap summed up some of the lessons which the world has drawn from his life of service to humanity, "There is a limit to power. I think the Americans and great superpowers would do well to remember that while their power may be great, it is inevitably limited.... Since the beginning of time, whether in a socialist or a capitalist country, the things you do in the interests of the people stand you in good stead, while those which go



for long term friendship and solidarity.

Bac Giap told me that about his research and investigation into the living conditions of the peasants, land use issues and his desire to ensure that they were

struck me as a marriage of love, equality and respect, with common beliefs as well as lively discussions and even some disagreements!

In my final meeting, General Giap spoke mainly of his activities in the revolution against the French and his work together with President Ho Chi Minh. At that time, he was resting in Do Son at a very modest Army house. His body was becoming frail, but he still managed to climb a flight of stairs to meet with a large group of soldiers who had come to visit bearing flowers and great enthusiasm. With the young soldiers Bac Giap radiated energy and warmth, making everyone feel comfortable. I will always remember Bac Giap, Bac Ha at his side, among that group of young men and women with their eyes shining!



**Bac Giap successfully led this movement with great love and respect for those he commanded and his love has been reciprocated.**

against the interest of the people will eventually turn against you. History bears out what I say."

I met Bac Giap and his wife and comrade, Dang Bich Ha, several times over a number of years from the 90's to 2005. The first time, I was immediately struck by his kindness and his humility. As I shook his hand, somewhat awestruck, he waved his hand and stopped me when I started to say how honored I was to meet him. He said that he had come to hear my thoughts, and the thoughts of our movement, about the situation in Vietnam and the US. He asked me to tell him about the communist and left and anti-war movements in the United States, about how people here viewed Vietnam and about what we thought of the current situation of the Vietnamese revolution. He was particularly interested in how young people in the US understood the situation in Vietnam and the about basis

able to improve their lives and prosper as Vietnam developed. He expressed concern for Vietnam's workers, saying that in a socialist country, particularly in this stage of development, policies must focus on the well-being of the majority—the workers and peasants.

In a later meeting, we spoke about socialism and about the challenges of political education of youth. Bac Giap was always hopeful, even when acknowledging the contradictions that development brings.

I was also privileged to spend some additional time with his wife, Dang Bich Ha. Bac Ha is a strong revolutionary woman who took part in all the discussions and raised many questions about the communist movement in the US. Bac Giap and Bac Ha's relationship impressed me as an expression of the Vietnamese revolution's emphasis on the equality of women from the earliest days. It

MERLE RATNER WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN ORGANIZING THE TWO COMMITTEES OF CORRESPONDENCE FOR DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM (CCDS) STUDY TOURS TO VIETNAM AND CONTRIBUTED TO THE CCDS PAMPHLET "VIETNAM: FROM NATIONAL LIBERATION TO 21ST CENTURY SOCIALISM." SHE IS A CO-COORDINATOR OF THE US-BASED VIETNAM AGENT ORANGE RELIEF AND RESPONSIBILITY CAMPAIGN AND COORDINATED AN INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON MARXIST THEORY AND PRACTICE IN THE WORLD TODAY AT THE HO CHI MINH ACADEMY IN VIETNAM.

# We, The People

RG CANTALUPO

The day you wake up to find your phone's been tapped and nondescript men in unmarked cars are outside your front door, you won't be ready.

No one ever is.

My day came on a Sunday, May 14, 1972, two days after we, the Monterey Chapter of VVAW, organized a protest in response to the mining of Haiphong Harbor in North Vietnam.

I picked up the phone to call a friend, and heard a suspicious clicking sound. I hung up and tried again. Same click, as if someone was listening in on a "party line."

I put the phone back on the hook and opened the front door. Across the street, sat an unmarked police car. The two men in the front seat looked over and stared.

Later, when I drove to a friend's house, the car followed, or another appeared.

Before the week was over, I saw unmarked cars and men in crew cuts everywhere. I couldn't go to the grocery store or walk on the beach without seeing them. They seemed to monitor and know my every movement.

My home no longer was my domain; my life no longer my own, but the subject of others, to do with as they please.

So how did I become a target of the FBI besides being an active and outspoken leader in the Monterey Chapter—by accident, and by a single photograph.

Two days earlier, we'd blocked the gates of the Monterey

Naval Postgraduate School. For a while, we were successful. We closed the streets and the gates surrounding the school by locking arms.

Then the police arrived and chaos erupted. They tried to push us off the streets and away from the gates. We pushed back, or collapsed around them.

One cop kept riding his motorcycle into the crowd kicking

hand. He sprawled backwards, and I stood over him, club in hand.

At that moment, the photograph was taken.

The photo appeared on the front page of the Monterey Herald the next day. It showed me standing over him, arm raised, poised to deliver a crushing blow, while he lay on his back flailing like a cockroach. His mirrored sunglasses were broken, the

**Shadows and night terrors invade your brain and take over your life. You feel like you're living in a house of mirrors; like a sniper's going to pick you off at any moment.**

and swinging his billy club. He did this one time too many, the crowd parted, then closed around him, and began hitting and jabbing him with signs. He lost his balance and fell. When he grabbed my friend Anthony's leg to arrest him, a bunch of us started pulling from both sides. It became a tug-of-war with Anthony in the middle. I grabbed the cop's billy club to stop him from beating on my friend, and with the constant pulling, it slipped loose and ended up in my

eyepieces catawampus—one, half on one eye, one, reflecting off his forehead.

You can't really make out my face.

My long hair and beard obscure my features. Besides, the shot is from the side, at an angle, my back slightly turned toward the camera. I'm sure there were other photos though, photos where I was clearly visible and recognizable. But I never delivered the blow that the photo implies. Once Anthony's leg was pulled out of the cop's grasp, (sans half his jean pant leg and one shoe), we ran, dispersed in all directions to escape arrest.

The rest is history; or was.

No one can live like that—not for long.

Shadows and night terrors invade your brain and take over your life. You feel like you're living in a house of mirrors; like a sniper's going to pick you off at any moment or someone's going to break down your door and arrest you in the middle of the night.

Every unknown sound's an intruder prying open a window, or jimmying a door.

You become paranoid, fearful, on hyper-alert.

If you owned an M-16, you'd lock and load and flick the safety off, ready.

So when the semester ended a month later at Monterey Peninsula

College, I went underground, I disappeared.

We all did—my closest friends, the three or four others in the VVAW who also believed their phones were tapped. I drove across country in a VW bus with my friend Wayne, another Vietnam vet.

In September, I resurfaced as a transfer student at UC Santa Cruz.

I never participated in another protest, attended another VVAW meeting, or reconnected with anyone from the Monterey chapter.

Over the next forty years, I wrote, published, gave lectures on Vietnam, did crisis intervention on veterans suffering from PTSD, but this is the first time I've written about what it feels like to be "targeted," or that infamous photograph that portrayed a crime I didn't commit and could've framed me with assault with a deadly weapon against a police officer.

There is nothing "free" or democratic about a government that spies on millions of law-abiding citizens or changes laws to suspend or erase the constitution and the Bill of Rights: Lies used to deny people inalienable rights are still lies, no matter what the ruse.

I wasn't a terrorist in 1972, and I'm not one now.

I was a combat veteran with three purple hearts and a Bronze Star for Valor Under Fire.

And I was a Vietnam Veteran Against The War—that war, and the many after it, and this one soon to come—a right I still own, no matter what this government believes.

We, the people, are not dangerous!

A government, not of and for the people, is!



*R.G. CANTALUPO'S (ROSS CANTON) WORK HAS BEEN PUBLISHED IN OVER A HUNDRED LITERARY JOURNALS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES, CANADA, AND ENGLAND. HIS AWARD-WINNING VIETNAM WAR MEMOIR "THE LIGHT WHERE SHADOWS END" WAS SERIALIZED IN THE LITERARY JOURNAL "WAR, LITERATURE AND THE ARTS." HE WAS AWARDED THREE PURPLE HEARTS AND A BRONZE STAR WITH A COMBAT V DURING HIS TOUR IN 1968-69 WITH THE 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION.*

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# Operation Egg-Lob: Scrambling with VVAW

FREEMAN HOBBS ALLAN

January, 1973

It was the Prague Spring of 1968 and citizens of Czechoslovakia were in the streets demonstrating for freedom. Demanding that Soviet troops and political bosses go home. I arrived in Wuerzburg Germany that summer, just as the east block tanks rolled into Prague. The Cold War was already very hot in Vietnam, where thousands of US troops were debarking and digging in for the bloody seven years still to come. Now a hot war in Europe seemed imminent too.

US strategy, Europe, back then: Do not be an aggressor. USAREUR consisted of four line divisions backed by 7th Air Force in Ramstein. Mine was the Third Infantry Division. We were tripwire units tasked to hold ground until backup could arrive. Now, as a 2nd lieutenant, I was division counterintelligence officer. Our mission was tactical nuke and classified document security, while our sister unit, the spooks, was frantically tasking agent sources across the border. We needed order of battle on the Soviets, badly, so we could re-deploy our line units and get ready. We especially needed to know how east block tac-nukes were being redeployed.

For that winter, 3rd Inf Div was quietly preparing for the possibility of tactical nuclear war along the border. Our atomic mines were in place to blow mountains and deny road access to hostile armor and infantry invading Western Europe. Hundreds of divisions, primarily Soviet and East German, were just across the border. It's a forgotten crisis now, but our little NATO umbrella was braced for potential heavy rain.

By March 1969, Brezhnev's

iron glove had crushed the Czech revolt. Slowly things returned to cold war normal. Garrison duty. FTX's. Armor and Arty range-firing at Grafenwoehr and Wildflecken, the big, remote training areas. I was assigned to two-man control, the last link in firing division tac-nuke missiles if the balloon went up. But day to day, my agents and I did security clearance interviews. We were also tasked with tracking US soldiers who had begun deserting the Army and going to France or Sweden rather than accept orders to Vietnam.

It was while studying these men's lives and motives that my personal politics started changing. I had trained for Vietnam myself at Bragg and Benning, a newly-minted ROTC butterbar. Now the jungle war was on the far side of the globe from me. Tracking soldiers who were refusing to go there got me reading, thinking, and soul-searching.

My dad had commanded D Co., 28th Marines, one of the five line units that captured Mt. Surabachi on Iwo Jima. I was a Deep South kid raised up to serve our country with pride and dedication. Now, was I becoming one of the very "subversives" whom my intel mission said must be interdicted?

I pushed that thought away and did my job. I had no TV, and little access to the ferment building in the anti-war movement back home. But as I studied SLA Marshall and the actual history of Vietnam, the French colony handed off to the US, I understood a fierce civil war was taking place. We Americans took pride in supporting the ARVN defending South Vietnam's freedom. Right? Here's the slippery slope I was

coming up against: in a way, the North Vietnamese demand for freedom and self-determination, it was the same thing – on the other side of the cold war, yeah, but really the same thing – that the Prague Spring had just been about. Get the Masters of War off our home territory, so we can decide our own politics.

Was this traitor thinking? I generally avoided the officer's club. I had no one but my wife to ponder with. As my DEROS approached, we decided to take discharge in Europe. Sort of our own private ex-pat war protest. We moved out on the economy. I found work as a journalist.

The major story I broke was that black GI's were getting ITT'd direct from Nam to Europe. Back home, this was the post-MLK assassination, militant civil rights era. COINTELPRO was in full swing. Black Panthers were targets of the FBI. The US Army did not want men with automatic weapons training returning to ghetto streets. When shortimers from Nam hit Long Beach CA, the white guys were dispersed out to US bases until their date of discharge. But now, black soldiers, many with big afros and militant attitudes, they were flown next day to Ft. Dix. Less than a week after leaving Cam Ranh Bay, they were up at Graf, qualifying tanks for war against the Sovs.

It was called an Inter-Theater Transfer. It was the Army's de facto policy, 1969-72, for damping down black unrest on US streets. Now that unrest, coupled with hash-smoking dissident white soldiers, began contributing to a massive breakdown of order and discipline in Europe. Black GI's were enraged at unofficial Army racism. There was huge disparity between white and black soldiers in making rank. The Cracker lifers refuse to give me my rightful promotion, this was a universal black soldier complaint. There were fraggings at Grafenwoehr.

My stories in the Herald Tribune, the Overseas Weekly, alerted Time and Newsweek. The facts of USAREUR's collapse of battle-readiness and imploded morale became a Pentagon crisis. Vietnam was proving to the Masters of War that unpopular conflicts could no longer rely on citizen soldiers. The US required

a professional and all-volunteer Army. Fast forward four decades, and we can see the harsh multi-tour impact of this policy on our soldier-brothers' lives today.

Back then, I finally came home to Washington DC, continuing as a journalist covering military matters. The Nixon era increased my personal polarization. I began hanging out with a small group of VVAW guys in Adams-Morgan, the counter-culture area of DC near Dupont Circle. We all had buddies scarred from Vietnam service. There were street demos, days of rage against the war. I admired Dan Ellsberg, and read how Nixon had used Kissinger to stymie the Paris peace talks that could have ended things back in late 1968.

I had served honorably. Now I crossed over. Operation Linebacker II, December 18-29, 1972, would become the culmination of Nixon's promise that "the bastards have never been bombed like they're going to be bombed this time."

Just a few months back, I found myself down in my basement, thinkin' bout the govament. Because that was when some old photos I ran across brought the whole story just above flooding back into my memory. Our President's campaign slogan back then had suddenly taken on an urgent meaning for us VVAW's: Nixon's the One.

While everyone remembers Linebacker II, its horror-show of destruction during the annual celebration of the Christ-child's birth, almost no one knows about "Operation Inaugural Egg-Lob," which occurred eggzactly 22 days after the bombing ceased. It was a tiny, sort of black ops direct response to the Christmas Bombings. Okay, okay. Maybe it was an egg-yolk-yellow ops response.

Five of us DC-Vietnam Vets Against the War (only 2 officially members, at the time) decided to channel our rage regarding Linebacker. Using mortar skills honed in Basic Training (as well as in the Nam, for 3 of us), we each stowed a dozen eggs into our fatigue jackets, assembled in the Protester Zone on Jan. 20, 1973, and awaited our targets,

*continued on next page*



1. Anti-war contingent fenced in by DC buses.

## Operation Egg-Lob

*continued from previous page*

code named Tricky and Spiteful. The DC Tactical Squad had herded everyone with protest signs into one block, just where the parade route turned north off Pennsylvania Avenue.

Bands came by. Lots of patriotic pizzazz. And then, big black limos, targets in sight. The attached photos tell the rest of the story. The gist: 60 rounds downrange, a lot of splatter on two limos as well as a disgruntled gang of Secret Service guys, and approximately 14 direct hits inside those convertibles. We five made a point of standing one line back from the curb, using this screen to mask our lobbying action. In the anti-war protest melee of sound, most folks had no idea what was going down. Except, hmmm... why were those SS guys suddenly jumping up on the limos, frantically raising hands like catcher's mitts?

As the two limousines turned the corner, Bob, Jerry, Erl, Tom and I looked behind us. The Tac Squad, beating clubs on plastic shields, was moving in to disperse Americans practicing their free rights of assembly. Some of us had been clobbered by these fellows over at a Pentagon protest. We exfiltrated swiftly. The next month I sent the IRS a letter: Put me in jail, but no more napalm-taxes from me. We are legally empowered to escrow them from your bank account, came the reply. See if you can find me, I wrote back. I quit my job, obtained an alias and new ID (courtesy of one of those egg-throwing friend's skill sets), and began a seven-year standoff with Tricky Dick.

Several times he sent IRS minions from Charlottesville out into the mountains looking for me. I did blue collar work:

carpentry, farm tractoring, eight months in the Louisiana oil patch, ex-pat years in India and Central America. Then one day, bumping down a dirt road in my pickup, I heard news on the radio: The US government had dropped charges of fraud against Nixon, who had over-quoted the value of his presidential papers by several million dollars. But now the seven year statute of limitations had run out on his tax crime, without those charges being prosecuted.

Light bulb went off. If it worked for Tricky, maybe my own tiny tax-crime also could be nol prossed. In 1980 I called the IRS. Sir, we want you back on the tax rolls, they said. Look, tens of thousands did like you did back then. President Carter's amnesty says all you have to do is just file next April. No consequences. No jail time.

I've been legal now for over three decades. Still protesting. A Vet for Peace. But, in theory at least, using rights I do possess under the Constitution. The story remembered here happened a long time ago. These days out in our quiet Blue Ridge cabin I don't think about it much. Except for once in a while, when making breakfast, I find myself scrambling eggs.



*FREEMAN HOBBS ALLAN HAS WORKED AS A PREP SCHOOL TEACHER, PROFESSIONAL FISHERMAN IN ALASKA AND ECUADOR, RIGGER IN THE LOUISIANA OILPATCH AND AS CO-FOUNDER OF AN ARTISAN COOPERATIVE IN BENGAL INDIA. HIS MEMOIR AT WWW.SACREDSOURCEBOOK.COM SHARES ONE MAN'S UNUSUAL QUEST FOR ACHIEVING PERSONAL AS WELL AS WORLD PEACE.*



2. VVAW Op team makes ready.



3. Mad bomber down range.



4. Stop the war!



5. Men in trenchcoats spot incoming rounds - Pat looks nervous.



6. Spiro's guy scrambles to block an egg.



7. Spiro's limo guns away around the corner.

## "A Happy Moving Party"

JIM WILLINGHAM

I talked with a Vietnamese man from the beach village 1/2 km. southeast of Phan Thiet artillery base. He was standing at the southeast end of the corrugated black metal runway, watching us. As the soldiers watched, I yelled toward the forest south of the east-west runway, "Little Corsica!" Uproarious laughter erupted from the woods. Then I yelled, "Little Corsica, Saigon!" More uproarious laughter came from the southern woods, heavier. Then I had all the soldiers on the base yell together, "LITTLE CORSICA, SAIGON!" A mass of uncontrollable uproarious laughter came from the deep woods, only about 100 yards south, with talking in Vietnamese.

The man from the beach village spoke English. One of the soldiers on the base spoke Italian and had a pleasant short talk with a man in the southern forest, who also spoke Italian, a descendent of (French) Corsicans and Vietnamese. They organized a "happy moving party" through the woods and moved the people from the tiny village 3 km. west of the base south, then east to the beach village.

There had been an ambush by North Vietnamese Viet Cong the day before, 1 & 1/2 km west of the base on the narrow, straight trail to the west village. Women usually walked that trail in the morning, did 1/2 the laundry, walked back, then returned the next morning to finish the last half of the laundry.

The village was isolated in a small square cut out of the woods around them, with another path north 1 km. to the main east-west highway, just south of where the Pacific Coast mountains turn westward, and they were harassed by the militant northern VC, who came down into the southeastern forests from the highlands on an incline several km. west. They were giving pure heroin to the

women to sell to the soldiers. The women had no choice, because the combatants were like gangsters.

The women did laundry for two days, waited 3 days off and repeated it. There was an arrogant Lt. who no one talked to. The warrant officers, two Huey choppers, 4 pilots, and the other soldiers had been trying to wean off the 3 addicted soldiers, but they dared not tell the Lt. "It was going well."

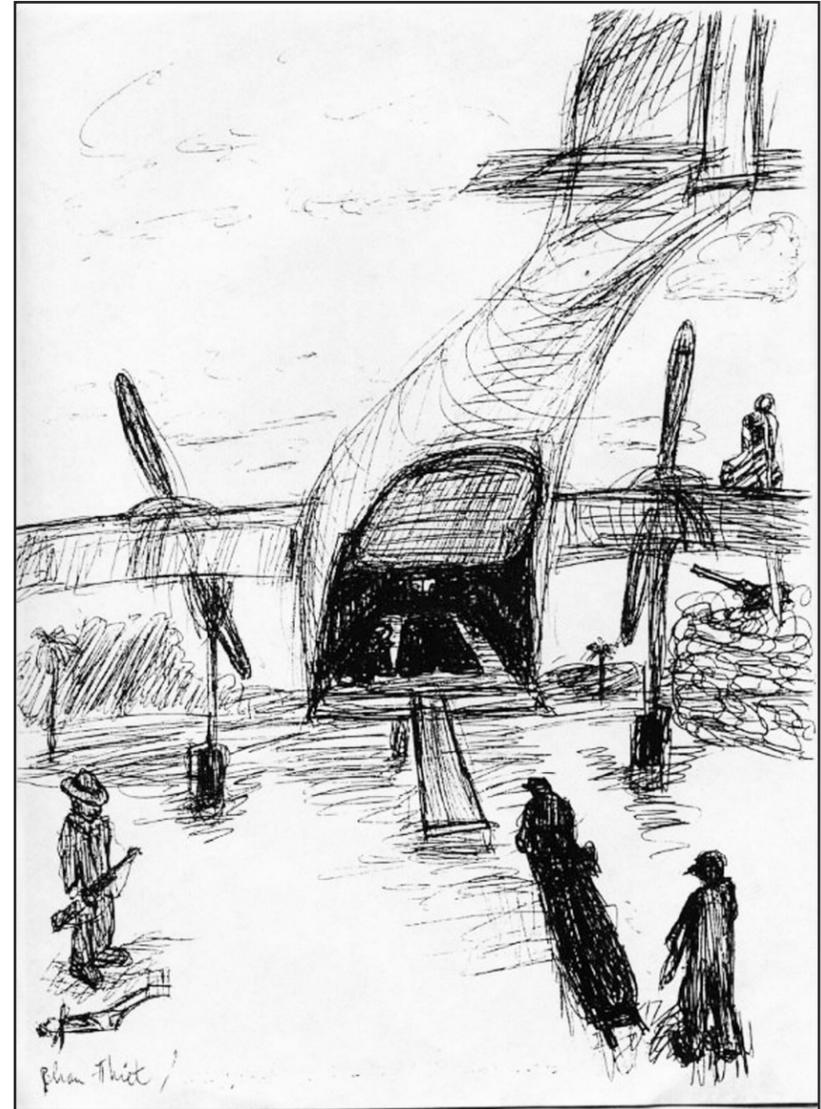
On September 7, 1970, the women walked east to the base down the long straight trail, 5 feet of grass on either side, with 50 feet-plus tall trees and deep forest. One of the women sold one of the 3 addicted soldiers a large amount of pure heroin, down in his sleeping bunker. At the end of their workday, one of the other women told the Lt, "VC were in the village last night," then they walked home. No one said anything.

The next morning, the women didn't come back to finish the laundry. The arrogant Lt. remarked, "The women didn't come back this morning. That's strange." Before he could stop himself, the ranking sergeant said, "Something's up" and regretted it, because the irrational Lt. ordered a patrol to the village.

"That could be dangerous," remarked the sergeant." The Lt. pointed his .45 at the sergeant and said, "Are you refusing an order from an officer?" "No sir." The sergeant formed up a patrol of six men and requested chopper cover. "That might alarm the villagers."

Halfway down the trail they were ambushed on both sides, falling sideways in alternating directions. The chopper crews ran out over the Lt. "I did not order choppers." "We're going anyway!" They evacuated the men, 2 dead, 1 dying, 1 wounded who survived. Medivacs took them, no replacements.

The men at the base were



furious, with the sergeant, a survivor, telling them they'd put the Lt. up for an Article 89. One of the heroin addicted soldiers tossed a grenade into the command post, fragging the Lt.

The sergeant arrested the soldier, took his weapon and sent him to his sleeping bunker. The three heroin addicted soldiers got wasted together, the arrested soldier over-dosing. The base was down eight men and they were tired and grim. At 3 AM, a sapper came in through the wires northeast of the base, went down into the sleeping bunker, slit the three drugged soldiers' throats and left, unseen.

It was my first mission as a C-7 copilot in country, early morning. I helped carry one of the lost soldiers on board, spoke to the escort then the soldiers. They were grim. I talked to them about the UCMJ, how to cover for each other in a situation to avoid irrational orders. They understood.

I talked across the runway to the man from the village. They would move the western village to the beach, then I would airdrop \$5,000 on the runway at 4:30 in the afternoon.

I and a soldier carried out a white phosphorus bomb from the plane, showed it to the Vietnamese man and placed it inside the base. We flew out to the west over the

little village. I prayed.

At 12 noon, the two Hueys flew out and landed on the south side of the village and soldiers walked through, making sure it was empty, then faced east, down the trail. Four unarmed men in black pajamas stepped out onto the trail from the southeast. The sapper was with them crying. One spoke English. He told the soldiers they could shoot him. They forgave him, if he would stay with the southern people in peace and turn the northerners to peace. They returned to the woods. The choppers climbed to 1,000 feet and the white phosphorus bomb was tossed onto the village, turning it to white ash.

I went to the parachute shop at Bien Hoa AFB. They rigged up the pack of money. The man was waiting that afternoon, for the airdrop. After that, the women were safe and no heroin came into the base. "It bought a respite from the attacks for awhile."

Seven days later, I met a radiant Buddhist monk in Cam Ranh on a goodwill mission to a children's school. I spoke to him in private, after the others had gone outside. He served us pink lemonade.



JIM WILLINGHAM IS A VVAW  
MEMBER WHO LIVES IN FLORIDA.



Dewey Canyon III, 1971.

# Dear Greg: Letters From My Father

EDITED BY GREGORY ROSS

5 February, 1978 @ 2101-10th St., Berkeley "Dear Greg...First of all I really don't recall a disagreement with you in regards to Viet Nam. As a matter of fact, we really haven't discussed it too much; have we? Feel free to say what you want not only about the war but about a lot of other things; what I mean is simply that you are not a child any more and you should have no hesitation in relating your feelings...the only thing that's important is what you do with your own life, UNDERSTAND?... so think where you want to be when you are, say, my age[56]... think of how many roads I was on to get to the right one...some of the wrong ones was my doing and some weren't...Write soon. Love Dad"

16 July, 1978 @ 2101-10th St., Berkeley "Dear Greg...the four years you spent in the Navy; remember the brawls, broods and drunks forget why you did any of them but, never let the 'War Time' become important. We all did things that would not have been done under normal times...you've had over seven years since any

problems because of Viet Nam or leaving home the 'The Good Little Boy'...we all had doubts and problems...the difference between me and the guy in the loony bin is I just remember the good times... so work on what's to come and get more out of life than you are, be more to life than you are and love more of life than you do...it's there Greg...I refuse to believe you have as many hangups and problems as you think...so lets find that ladder we all are expected to climb and climb it. Love, Dad"

28 July, 1979 @ 1543 Addison St., Berkeley "Dear Greg...Viet Nam is over. It was an evil and wasteful time of life; including wastes of lives. When it started I believed so much that tried to get involved some how and failed physical on teeth. I don't know if I just enjoyed running off to camp or was addicted to wars... and always had an invisible sob and wail for any fatality or hurt that went with the area...Then the wrongness of being in some rice paddy...with Death...I no longer owed my life to my country... after that I stopped having my nightmares of Pearl Harbor and

Korea...I am not being morbid, I am trying to say, some times it takes a long time to find what way peace of mind is directed and all of a sudden compassions change and storms that have existed inside all your life suddenly are quelled and sort of peaceful... I'm only trying to say if you want it, contentment and pacification of what you want will come and when it does it is so much simpler than you could imagine. Love Dad"

2 April, 1980: Progress Notes Standard Form 509 [Rev. 11-77]: Initial Treatment Plan; Identifying Data: Name: Gregory Ross... Age 32... Birthdate 7-19-1947... Marital Status, Single... Occupation, Laborer... Last Employment, February, 1979... Probation Officer, None... Significant Other: Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Ross, 173 Laverack Ave, Depew, NY. Complaints Resulting in Admission: depressed and suicidal. Legal Status: voluntary. Admitting Date, 4/2/80. Valuables, None. Cash on Hand, \$4.97[\$10 from Patients Funds]. Hospital Course: transferred to the Young Veteran's Program on 4/4/80 where he began an intensive

program of group and individual psychotherapy and milieu therapy. Approved by, Fred Gusman, MSW, Program Director

17 July, 1980 @ 3801 Miranda Ave Ward 324C1, V.A. Hospital, Palo Alto "Greg, enclosed find something I made myself [money]...hope things are looking up for you. Know this, I have faith that this time you'll work it out...I'm behind you and I really ain't a pusher or shover where you are concerned. Hope to hear from you soon. Love Dad."

15 January, 1981: Mr. Ross was hospitalized on Ward 324C1 of the Menlo Park Division of the Palo Alto Veterans Administration Hospital from 4/2/80 until 1/15/81. The Young Vets Program is an inpatient treatment program for young veterans, particularly Viet Nam combat veterans. Mr. Ross's diagnosis is: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Delayed Type... It was medically inadvisable for Mr. Ross to be employed or attend school...due to depression, apprehensiveness, intermittent suicidal ideas, insomnia and anxiety...this period he attended an intensive group therapy program... began a Vocational Rehabilitation Program. This letter is being written for the purpose of calculating an extension of his GI Bill Educational Benefits...Sincerely, Joseph R. Magliozzi, M.D. Staff Psychiatrist, Ward 324C1, Menlo Park Veterans Hospital.

5 January, 1982 @ 597 El Dorado Ave. #3, Oakland "Dear Greg... hope you can understand we won't be able to come to your wedding... don't have the money... Love Dad"

19 September, 1983 @ 597 El Dorado Ave. #3, Oakland "Dear Greg...coming to see you, your wife and my grandson... Love Dad"



GREGORY ROSS: NAVY, THE GUN LINE OFF COAST OF VIET NAM WITH THE 7TH FLEET [1968-69]. GRADUATE OF A VA DRUG, ALCOHOL AND PTSD PROGRAM [1980]; ACUPUNCTURIST, DETOX SPECIALTY [SINCE 1989], LAID OFF [2011] PUBLISHED IN "VETERANS OF WAR, VETERANS OF PEACE."

## The Weight on My Heart

I put my head in my hands and want to weep.  
I inhale and know it will never lift, the weight on my heart.

I think, again, of ending myself—the neurons out of helpful efficiency have kindly sliced a shortcut to that heavenly thought—but I tell myself, again, I have too much to do: I will stop war with words alone.  
My wounding will never heal; it weeps openly: hourly—daily—monthly—yearly.  
My stigmata, that no one can see. My tears, blood red but no one cares.  
Not for me: I am nothing, but for those yet to die on American blades, military shivs of ignorance, drones of dominance, splintering bullets of empire.  
I do not even allow myself to hate, for that just fuels the killing and maiming.  
Words, words, words—they are my only weapon.  
I will wring from them the entirety of their power and fight for anti-war.

I inhale and know the weight on my heart will never lift.  
I put my head in my hands and want to weep.

—Tim Bagwell

# An Amazing Journey with Vietnam Vets

J. GRALEY TAYLOR

It was the Spring of 1989 and I was about to set off on the life-changing journey of my life. I was a World War II vet who had mixed feelings about our war in Southeast Asia. I had been producing film documentaries about a variety of social issues with local television stations in Seattle. During a lunch conference with the station manager of the local ABC affiliate, KOMO-TV, I discovered that he was a Vietnam vet. When I mentioned to him my interest in producing a documentary based on the book, "Out of the Night: the Spiritual Journey of Vietnam Vets" by Bill Mahedy, he became immediately interested. He green-lighted the project and KOMO-TV gave full support to the production, inviting me to shoot the film in 16mm color.

That began a filming schedule that lasted almost two years and took me all over the country. It provided me the opportunity

to meet and interview over 25 Vietnam vets. For me it was an awesome experience as these vets trusted this WWII vet with some heartfelt feelings about their experience in Vietnam and what was happening to them after returning home.

One of the first discoveries was that Vietnam vets needed to talk about their experience in Nam mostly with one another, and I found small groups doing just that.

In San Diego, I had an incredible interview with Bill Mahedy, the author of the book and a chaplain who served in Vietnam. He gave me permission to produce the TV documentary on the book and introduced me to several vets whose stories he had written about. Bill was also one of the organizers of Vietnam Vet Centers through out the country with the San Diego center being one of the first.

My journey took me to the

campus of University of California Santa Barbara where Professor Walter Capps led a large class on the Vietnam war. He had invited vets to tell their stories to his students, some of whose fathers had fought and even some who had died in Vietnam.

I traveled to Angel Fire, New Mexico, where Victor Westphall had built the first Vietnam Memorial after losing his son in the war. Two vets joined me in that tour and shared on camera some of their powerful memories.

I met Barry Romo one day in Chicago when he was taking a walk along Lake Michigan with his daughter. An intense interview with Barry revealed that there were many Vietnam vets who were opposed to the war.

Finally, my travels led to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. It was an experience I'll never forget as I recalled the stories that so many vets shared with me about

what that memorial meant to them.

For the numerous vets who visited with me, Vietnam had been a dark physical, emotional and spiritual journey. And thankfully many had moved out of that darkness regaining both health and faith.



*J. GRALEY TAYLOR IS A WWII VET WHO HAS BEEN A VVAW MEMBER FOR MANY YEARS. HE'S A PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER WHO IS ALSO A FILMMAKER. FOR 40 YEARS HE WORKED LOCALLY (SEATTLE AREA) WITH TV STATIONS IN PRODUCING PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMING. THE LAST TV DOCUMENTARY HE PRODUCED WITH KOMO TV WAS "OUT OF THE NIGHT" BASED ON A BOOK BY CHAPLAIN BILL MAHEDY. HE HAS MADE DVDS OF THAT FILM AVAILABLE FOR VIETNAM VETS, VET CENTERS AND ALSO VA HOSPITALS. HE CONTINUES IN RETIREMENT PRODUCING "MISSION FILMS."*

## The Wall

We were wrong, terribly wrong.

Robert McNamara

Visitors stand in silence—sharing grief and pain. War casualties etched in polished granite.

1959	2
1960	5
1961	16

Each year the numbers grow, row after row. Young lives cut short.

1966	6,144
1967	11,614
1968	16,589

A girl stops, gently touches the name of the father she never met. Tears flow freely.

Leaders in Washington are not moved by sentimentality. Vietnam casualties are acceptable losses.

It was a long war  
A tragic war  
An unwinnable war

—Barry L. Reece

## 45 Days

Toss me a grenade, he shouts  
So I do that, he pulls the pin  
Ping, he counts three throws the thing  
BOOM they must be dead  
But now the dread snap  
Their Chicom makes  
When they pull the string to activate  
The chemical fuse in the wood handle  
That flies from the woodline  
Falls short, twists the machine gun  
Wilson, Dorio, Roy, Beck raise up  
Wilson yells "Look to the left  
They'll try to outflank us."  
So I do that, the grunts shoot back  
Then snap BANG dirt and dust  
Everyone hit...  
After the medevacs lift them away  
After we recon for blood trails  
And meat we leave this place  
Patrols ambush jungle monsoon  
Not how we wanted  
Not how we dreamed  
No popped smoke in the open field  
For birds inbound to lift us out  
No cooling air till the birds touch down  
None of that.  
All day we trudge the dark wet trails  
Slip and climb the muddy hills  
Wade the dark and narrow streams  
Steps so weary, with one last heave  
We drop our rucks into the killing heat  
And curse you love you  
Vietnam...Vietnam.

— Marc Levy

# The Retreat

DAN NEW

The ordained Buddhist monk is a former crew chief of a helicopter gunship in Vietnam. He enters to the singing of the bell. Barefoot and robe-clad with shaved head and an austere embodiment, he walks the center aisle that leads to a raised platform. Lining his entrance path are the chairs and cushions of the one hundred and thirty who are gathered in this sacred setting. Respectfully, the monk climbs the stage and turning to us.

He begins in a soft measured voice.

"A veteran commits suicide every sixty two minutes in our country. Seventy percent of them are over the age of fifty. We sit here and meditate to honor them and to save ourselves, for this is the cost of war and violence in this country. You sitting before me are the light at the tip of the candle. For the next five days, we will practice meditation in all that we do to combat the moral and spiritual wounds of war. Please

respect the silence and dedicate yourself to this practice."

We introduce ourselves by name, branch of the service, where and when we served. The room resonates with the pronouncements of those gathered from the last six wars stretching from Korea to Afghanistan; old and young, black and white, men and women, a few have brought their families and loved ones, most are alone. Some bear the visible wounds of war, limbs missing, scarred flesh while others bear their wounds with vacant stares. This is Lourdes for the combatant and it holds the possibility of a new "Memorial Day" paradigm without the parades and celebration.

And so we begin, prompted by the singing of the bells and the instruction of our mentor in the ways of sitting. The first sitting seems interminable, breathing in and breathing out. It is followed by a walking meditation leading us closer to awakening. Breathing in on one step and out on the next,

this walking is unnervingly slow.

The pace of the retreat slows my racing metabolism. The speed of my thoughts diminishes through the meditation. I strive to accept each moment as the only moment; ratcheting down from the normal pace of life; committing to being present to the real moments of my day. Continually prompted by the singing of the bell, I slide downward and inward with all the others into a steady rhythm of breath and awareness as silence becomes sacred.

We write in meditation with stark purpose; sharing our words with others. The fears of each of us are shared in these chances of vulnerability and in the safety of blessed space that we have created. With the practice, there is an opening; an accessibility to words and images that have been hidden below the movements of our daily lives allowing that which rises up from our beings to live. The thunder of a piercing explosion and the cry of a sexual

assault increase in volume and pitch as they return with the flow of our pens.

Each day takes one deeper into the silence that allows feeling. Our writing reveals its depth. Five days pass without some measure of normal time as in a liminal space. We gather by the lake on Sunday morning for the closing and the monk leads us in a Norse ritual when we light afire the raged paper scrolls containing the work of our practice and time together. Smoke billows to the clear sky as the bier floats to the lake's center and slowly sinks to rejoin the elements of nature.



DAN NEW IS ONE OF 2.6 MILLION MILITARY VETERANS WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM. HE IS THE SON OF A WWII VETERAN. HE IS A MEMBER OF THE ALBANY VETERANS WRITING GROUP THAT BEGAN IN SEPTEMBER OF 2013.

## The Fallen

The drums have stopped; the pipes are still!  
 A final volley of Rifles fire  
 and Taps are sounded  
 the Toll of WAR  
 Now He lies in final rest with fellows  
 lost before  
 in neat rows  
 of white marker  
 gravestones  
 and crosses  
 marshaling  
 in neat lines where  
 comrades rest  
 in timeless  
 repose  
 waiting for  
 Bugle calls  
 signalling  
 Final Assembly  
 when War  
 will end  
 Swords  
 will be  
 melted and  
 Bodies reformed

—Don "Doc" Mercer

## The New (old) Patriotism

It's been this way since the Revolutionary War:  
 "Get someone else to do the dirty chore!"  
 Those who incite hardly ever fight.  
 They approve creeds that  
 don't require deeds (by them).  
 Waving a made in China US flag, wearing the right hat,  
 T-shirt or pin gets you in the "Paper Patriot" club.  
 Forget or ignore politicians' flubs.  
 Just follow old empires' traditions. Why,  
 the chore of fighting war provides scenarios  
 and tactics for video games. Increase your score.  
 Play some more. Go shopping.  
 Others serve so you don't have to.  
 God loves us best.  
 Let the troops do the rest.

—Horace Coleman



# When Men Win Glory

HORACE COLEMAN - REVIEWER

## Where Men Win Glory: The Odyssey of Pat Tillman

Jon Krakauer

(Anchor; Rev Rep edition July 27, 2010)

This book covers new developments and material obtained through the Freedom of Information Act. Doubleday published a first edition in 2009.

Krakauer cites sources, includes maps and spares no one—no matter their rank, position or their self-serving conduct. He clears up murky issues. He explains the SNAFUs that caused the destruction of Jessica Lynch's convoy. He explains what corroded the mission that led to Pat Tillman's death and the deliberate trashing and suppression of evidence about it.

Tillman's wife Marie is well depicted. You learn things Tillman's mother didn't reveal in her book "Boots on the Ground by Dusk." Pat Tillman's brother Kevin is fully developed. Krakauer describes barracks life, Ranger training and Tillman's personality and philosophy of life.

He details how the sleep deprived Captain leading the convoy Lynch was in missed crucial turns twice and only checked his GPS an hour after doing so. While backtracking the convoy ran into Fedayeen—and a hostile city.

Ironically, Ranger Tillman and his brother Kevin were flown in as part of a quick reaction team to back up Lynch's rescuers.

Positioned outside Nasiriyah where Lynch was first hospitalized, they were never used. The hype about Lynch's conduct and rescue foreshadowed the smothering of factual data about Tillman's death."

Sources other than Krakauer's said an Iraqi ambulance tried to return Lynch to US forces before she was "rescued." The ambulance, supposedly fired on when it neared a US checkpoint, turned back.

Krakauer says (page 337) "Standard operating procedure dictates that when a soldier is killed in action, their uniform is left on the body for shipment back to the United States to be removed during the autopsy and analyzed as forensic data." He continues: "For reasons that have never been explained, Tillman's blood-soaked uniform and body armor were removed...and placed into a trash bag before the body was flown to Bagram."

Then things got deeper: [page 337] "Sergeant James Valdez testified, a captain named Wade Bovard, came to me with an orange plastic bag containing Tillman's clothes. He then related that he wanted me to burn what was in the bag for security violation, leaks and rumors."

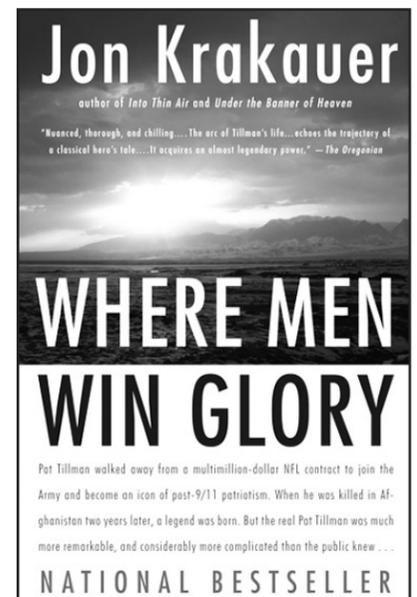
And even deeper: [page 337] "Before destroying the items in the bag, Valdez went through the pockets of Tillman's uniform. In the cargo pocket of the pants he found Pat's notebook, after which he started a fire in an empty oil drum and destroyed the notebook, uniform and body armor." Many have speculated what might have been in the notebook Tillman was carrying (for security reasons) instead of a journal. Normally personal property is returned to the next of kin.

Things to know about Pat Tillman.

After 9/11, still an NFL player, he enlisted in the Army in May 2002. He refused to give interviews to the media or make

public appearances for the Army. The Army offered him—and he rejected—an early discharge. By doing this he lost out on NFL teams' offers of more money than his last NFL contract paid. His last mission was on April 22, 2004, near the tribal area between north eastern Afghanistan and western Pakistan where the Taliban and insurgents had free reign. His platoon was ordered to enter and clear a village near the "zero line" between the two countries. A Humvee in Tillman's convoy broke down on a rugged mountain road. Then its suspension failed. No helicopters were available. The platoon was ordered to not abandon it and to reach the village and clear it before darkness fell. An Afghan trucker was hired to transport the Humvee. The platoon was ordered to split into two sections. Private Jade Lane, a friend of Tillman, was wounded by friendly fire. A Staff Sergeant and three machine gunners (including the one who killed Tillman) were later RFS'd (Released for Standards, expelled from the Rangers and sent to the regular Army). Lieutenant David Uthlaut, the Platoon Leader who became a fall guy, was ordered to clear the village at 4 P.M.—shortly before daylight ended—was wounded by friendly fire and RSF'd!

A Company First Sergeant was asked at an investigation into Tillman's death why the mission had to be done so quickly. He answered "I think a lot of times at higher [headquarters]—maybe even, you know, higher than battalion [headquarters]—they may make a timeline, and then we just feel like we have to stick to that timeline. There's no—you know, 'intel' driving it. There's no—you know, there's no events driving it. It's just a timeline . . ." Tillman filled out an Army document before his first deployment (to Iraq) in which he'd stated he didn't want a chaplain or minister officiating at any memorial service held for him. In the space reserved for "special instructions" he wrote "I do not want the military to have any direct involvement with my funeral." (page 369) Major General Stanley McCrystal (who trashed President Obama in a Rolling Stone magazine interview) approved a Silver Star for Tillman one day and the next sent a back-channel message to high level civilians. It said they should be careful about using



information about Tillman's Silver Star because they might be embarrassed. (pages 372-373) Thomas F. Gimble, acting attorney general in the Department of Defense's inspector general's office, wrote "Corporal Tillman's chain of command made critical errors in reporting Corporal Tillman's death and . . . bears ultimate responsibility for the inaccuracies, misunderstandings and perceptions of concealment that led to our review." The military and its civilian overlords had tried a variation of the same hype they'd used about Jessica Lynch. Two of the world's leading pathologists (Dr. Robert Bux and Dr. Vincent DiMaio, also gunshot wound authorities) believed "The pattern of the bullet impacts suggests that the rounds [that killed Tillman] were all part of a single burst from the Squad Automatic Weapon." (page 372)

Feces flow downhill but truth bubbles up—sometimes. Losing Tillman's brain, which was put into an ammo box after being scooped off the ground, burning his clothes and spinning reality into fantasy ultimately didn't work.

Standard Operating Procedure, according to Krakauer, is shipping a KIA troop's body home in the uniform worn when killed. The uniform is removed during autopsy and analyzed for forensic evidence. Tillman's body was shipped naked.

Ultimately, there are no secrets. Just limited distribution of information. Contrary to what those covering up mistakes and spreading propaganda intend, big lies don't always last.



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



## Miami Beach 1972

We came from everywhere in America,

From the east coast, we came in heavy numbers.  
From the west coast, we made a strong contribution.

From our northern United States borders,  
From the Great Lakes regions,  
From our southern United States borders.  
We grabbed the Gulf Coast Vets along the way, on US Rt. 10

We came

From America's cities,  
From America's farms.  
From America's Islands,  
From America's lakes and pond regions,  
From America's suburbs and  
From America's dwindling farmland

We came.

By car  
By bus  
By motorcycles and bicycles  
By thumb

We Came

By trains  
By planes,  
and by foot,

We came.

Thousands Strong.

We Came

Mostly combat hardened Marines and Army Paratroopers.

Our America had lied to us,

Our America had used and abused us.

And now we were coming to Miami Beach to give voice and body  
to our anger and our rage.

Nixon wanted to be president again.

We couldn't let that happen.

Too many innocent Vietnamese screamed in our daytime nightmares.  
Too many of our dead brothers,  
Endlessly screamed in our every waking thought,  
Demanding of us to find the unfindable valid reason for their deaths.

Up Collins Blvd,  
The center of Miami Beach,  
We came.

Wheel chaired brothers to the front.

American men with broken bodies and minds,  
But reinforced spirits,  
Chanting with their marching brothers,

"HO, HO HO CHI MINH.  
THE NLF IS GONNA WIN"

We shouted it loud.  
We shouted it Proud,  
We shouted in with conviction.

This was not a secret, that we had to be made known.

The fact that the NLF would win was decided with the first shot  
fired against colonial France in 1945.

Ho Chi Minh rhymes with win,

Tricky Dick rhymes with sick.

There we were, many thousands of New York Yankee fans, season  
ticket holders to the man, cheering for the Boston Red Sox to win.

Some of us thought it was the Bastille in Paris in 1798, Others  
thought it was the Winter Palace in Petrograd in 1917.

What it was, was The Fountainbleu Hotel in Miami Beach in 1972.

The prisoners and arms are still locked up The King still rules.

Years have gone by

Now we have de-humidifiers in our basements and eat Big Macs

By the billions

—Pat Finnegan



# I Love This Man / My Soldier

TERI SAYA

He was with me at the County Fair sharing a "brick-o-fries." He was with me to experience the best Chinese Buffet and the best 3D movies ever! He was with me when we cried together over the loss of family, friends, and pets. He was with me when I went through hell with my husband. He was with me when I lost my home. He was with me when the divorce was final and we celebrated at the Reggae Festival. He is my best friend and now my fiance. We have yet to consummate this union...My man is a Vietnam Veteran.

He signed up with the Army in 1968 when he was 18 while searching for meaning in his life. He wanted to make a difference. For 18 months he was in the line of fire in Saigon (a.k.a. Ho Chi Minh City) and Phu Bai. After witnessing the atrocities of an unnecessary war, he completed his tour of duty and returned home.

While working on his BA at the local Community College, he met with members of Vietnam Veterans Against the War and joined them in the 1971 anti-

war protests in Washington D.C. Throwing his dog tags over the fence of the White House in protest, he didn't think about what those men in black were going to do with the tags once they gathered them off the lawn.

He suffered with skin rashes, foot fungus, and deep emotional problems, all of which had started in Vietnam. He struggled through college and finally earned his master's degree in Art Therapy. He was diagnosed with classic PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) and found that no matter what he tried to do to get some kind of compensation from the Veteran's Administration for his illness, there seemed to be a blockade of red tape designed to discourage.

He worked as an art therapist, a bartender, a security guard, an electrician, a campgrounds keeper, an internet installer, an office manager, a school counselor, and a hot line counselor. His PTSD would not allow him to settle down or have any close relationships. He became angry, depressed, and lonely.

After years of counseling and tons of creams, ointments, and potions, he still suffered from the effects of his time in the military. Trying to find solace and relief from his emotional afflictions, he decided to go back to Vietnam in December of 1999 when he joined the Veterans Vietnam Restoration Project, a non-profit organization that sends teams of veterans to Vietnam to reconcile with the Vietnamese. He was there for 6 weeks, helping build houses and schools. He came home satisfied he had done a good thing. However, still struggling with PTSD, he once again filed for compensation from the Veteran's Administration with the same result as before.

My man has recently retired and we are doing what we can to keep the bills paid. It can be complicated living with an emotionally damaged man. His moods can be a cyclic process, irritability, depression, anger, confusion, regret, acceptance. And then it starts all over again. Imagine trying to sleep or even sit still while your skin itches, your

feet are on fire, you're sweating, and your mind is racing. Trying to keep him happy and comfortable is a labor of love. I have learned to accept and wait.

48 years after joining the Army, becoming emotionally and physically damaged in Vietnam, applying over and over again to the Veteran's Administration, my man has yet to see any compensation. So, going back to 1971, what did those men in black DO with those dog tags that were thrown over the fence?

My opinion.....  
Black List.



*MY NAME IS TERI SAYA. I AM 56 YEARS OLD. I HAVE RAISED 4 BOYS AND ENDURED 3 MARRIAGES. I AM NOW ENGAGED TO A VERY INTERESTING AND COMPLEX VIETNAM VETERAN WHO I'VE KNOWN FOR MANY YEARS. MY LINE OF WORK IS DESKTOP PUBLISHING. I ENJOY READING, WRITING, MOVIES, EXPLORING.*



Dewey Canyon III, 1971.

## Fresh On Yesterday's Tracks

"America Betrays Herself in Vietnam"  
wrote historian Barbara Tuchman.  
Present-day folly, one word away.  
Are W's lies less deceptive than LBJ's?  
Will Rumsfeld trump McNamara's bane?

Repugnance, like breath  
from a mouthful of rotten teeth.  
No fix from meds or mints —  
the only cure, removal.

From the distance, star-shirt fiends  
lust for others' blood.  
A haughty pledge, stay the course  
Wishful thoughts, winning hearts and minds  
Victorious blather, peace with honor  
The march of fools . . .  
while bold ones speak to silence.

Corruption gnaws at flimsy strings.  
With callused hands  
the puppet wields the puppeteer.  
The greater audience sees pigeons.

Ash billows from the pyre,  
the phoenix rises.  
A brood of CIA spooks and mercenary goons  
spew venom too familiar:  
brick and concrete desert rubble  
ablaze, thatched Quang Tri hamlets.

Haunted cells at Abu Ghraib —  
naked terror snarls.  
Gore to blot the looking glass,  
as "Hanoi Hilton" stares,  
and cries from Con Son Island's "tiger cages"  
can't be muffled.

Spent munitions loiter,  
their masters in denial.  
Paid in full with wasted lives —  
receiving end collateral.  
And "friendly fire" is friendless.

Patient phantoms check no clock,  
wait in silence  
mindless of descendants.  
post traumatic stress  
unexploded ordnance  
Agent Orange toxin  
depleted uranium dust  
build heinous monuments  
to anguish.

Beliefs veer hard, collide with vengeance  
Allah's mercy  
God's will  
mocked by zealots' twisted doctrine.  
Yet, even Buddha  
failed to halt the madness.

In sand, a vintage car idles  
radio plays George Harrison,  
"With every mistake we must surely be learning."  
Wheels spin,  
the rig sinks deeper,  
bottoms out . . .  
stuck!  
Mud, caked red,  
still clings to weakened frame,  
reveals a bygone wallow  
in the mire.

—Paul Nichols



*Dewey Canyon III, 1971.*

# Book Review of "100 Monkeyz"

BRUCE GATTEN - REVIEWER

**100 Monkeyz**  
**T.A. Drescher**  
(Taos Press, 2013)

"100 Monkeyz" is a collection of short stories which map the globe, from the rust belt of Buffalo, N.Y., to the rice paddies of Vietnam, from the desert Southwest to the rolling hills of West Virginia.

These stories deal with the universal themes of war, love, death and the place of soldiers returning from a distant country torn by civil war and destructive chaos.

Here we find heroes and villains, brave soldiers and cowardly ruffians. We encounter a chivalrous protagonist who battles enemies both internal and external. We discover the underlying causes of a man's search for meaning in a world gone mad with senseless violence and the meaningless pursuit of empty pleasure. In short, we see a man come to grips with his relationship to modern society and the inner springs of love of God.

It is in pursuit of eternal truth that the author of these powerful

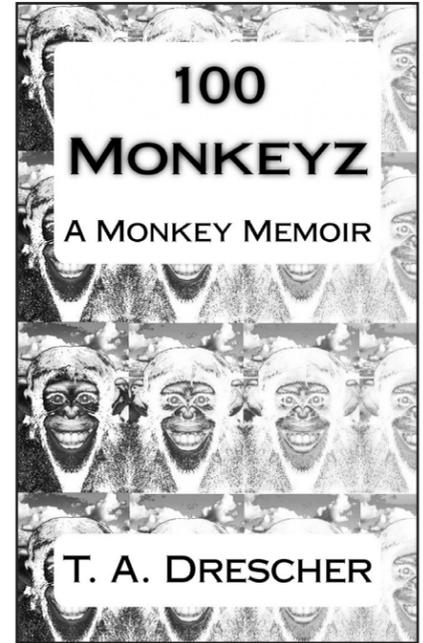
stories redeems himself. The reader is brought through gripping tales of battlefield horror, as these stories of troubled youth entering manhood in war-torn Vietnam, grip the consciousness and probe the heart until the reader can say of the author, "This man has led a worthwhile life."

We are brought into a behind-the-scenes look at the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, commonly known as the Hare Krishna movement. The devotee author encounters the machinations of a crooked rural sheriff, a wayward swami and a temple community of farmer-devotees engrossed in pioneering attempts to establish an oasis of sanity in the desert of the modern world which has forgotten its Lord and God. For it is in approaching God, Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, that the author manifests the qualities of the perennial hero who lays his life on the line not only for his personal survival but also his sacred honor in defending the innocent and punishing those who would prey

upon the helpless.

The author of "100 Monkeyz" is a Vietnam Veteran who received numerous combat commendations including the purple heart, bronze star and combat infantryman's badge.

In reading these stories, "100 Monkeyz," one is inescapably drawn into the pulse of a modern world where, if one does not question the violence and chaos which assaults the senses via modern media, one becomes prey to it. There are no simple answers to today's complex problems but if one goes along the journey of the author, he will be rewarded by a satisfying exposition of the thirst of the soul for its God and the quest for peace in a society that would just as soon forget the men and women it sends into battle in far distant countries for sometimes dubious causes. To buy "100 Monkeyz" or read selections from this book, visit [www.100monkeyz.com](http://www.100monkeyz.com) and go to "Click here to buy 100 Monkeyz."



BRUCE GATTEN ATTENDED CATHEDRAL HIGH SCHOOL IN SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS AND STUDIED AT SAINT ANSELM AND AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGES IN THE 1960'S. HE WAS THE PRODUCER OF "100 MONKEYZ" AND IS A FREE LANCE PHOTOGRAPHER IN NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT WHERE HIS ART WORK HAS BEEN EXHIBITED AT VARIOUS GALLERIES.

# All the Difference

AL WELLMAN - REVIEWER

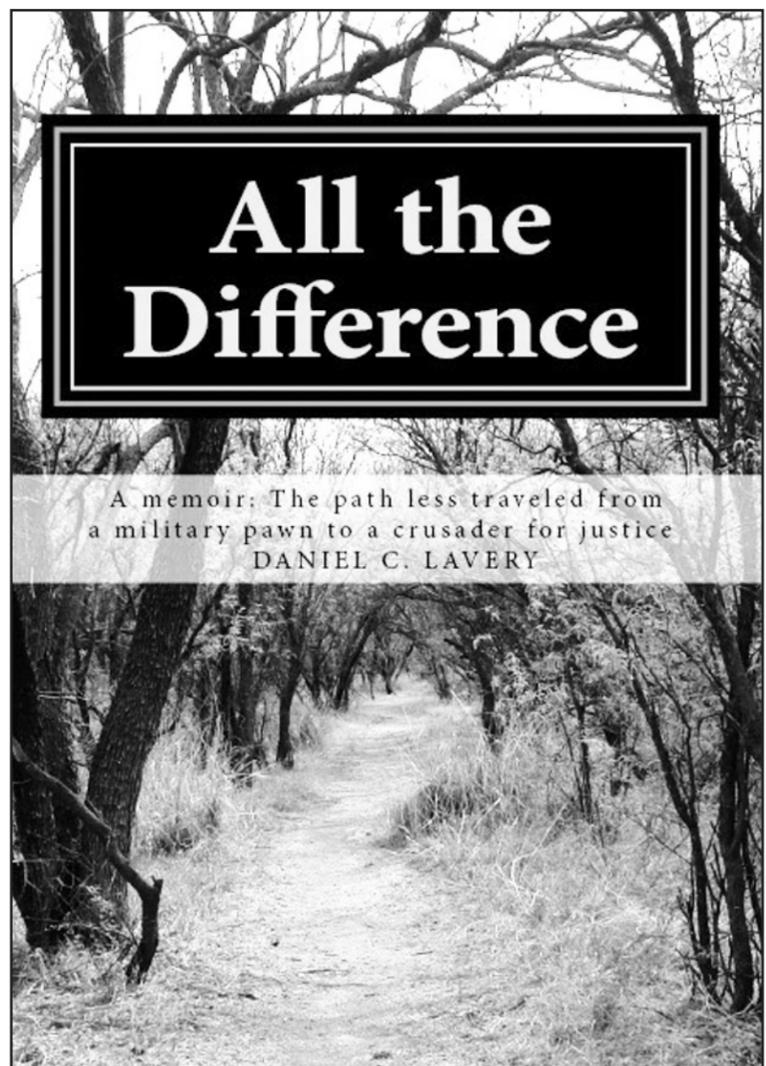
**All the Difference**  
**Daniel C. Lavery**  
(CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013)

The best history books are written by those who lived through the events described. "All the Difference" by Daniel C. Lavery is a well-written description of the United States' turbulent 1960s. The stage is set by a child's perceptions of life in the United States during the cold war. As the son of a career naval officer, Lavery lived in widely separated locations offering various perspectives from Florida to California. His description of cultural interactions during the post-war military occupation of Japan provides insight into an era changing both nations.

Lavery describes an adolescence defined by scholastic team sports. His athletic prowess sustained a successful self-image through uncertainty about career objectives. The comfortable diversion of team sports disappeared with graduation from the United States Naval Academy just in time for the Gulf of Tonkin Incident.

Chapters 24 through 33 recount a typical junior officer service obligation beginning with acquisition of the traditional new Corvette. Flight training with the RA5C Vigilante contrasts the reality of high-tech weapons systems against their advertised capabilities. Self-destructive drinking and driving reflect doubts about a military aviation career. After successful completion of flight training, Lavery requests reassignment to surface ships. Subsequent service aboard USS Oak Hill (LSD-7) brought combat zone experience in Camranh Bay and Danang followed by time in western Pacific ports including Taipei, Hong Kong, Yokosuka, Subic Bay and the unforgettable city of Olongapo.

Upon release from active duty, Lavery found in law school the means to effectively apply the energy and enthusiasm which had brought him athletic success before Vietnam. His description of California's energizing activism of the 1960s will bring back memories to every Vietnam veteran and offer a window for younger readers to understand the origins of VVAW.



AFTER SHIPBOARD TRAINING WITH NAVAL ACADEMY MIDSHIPMEN DURING THE SUMMERS OF 1965 AND 1967, AL WELLMAN ACCEPTED A NAVAL ROTC COMMISSION IN 1969

AND PATROLLED THE PIRAZ STATION OFF NORTH VIETNAM ABOARD USS CHICAGO FROM 1970 TO 1972.



## Letters to Editor

I have no personal connection with the Vietnam war, other than as a constant protestor against it. But it has been my wish and hope that the government would push heavily for children to once again learn to speak other languages so that we can have people in the diplomatic corps who understand the people they work with in other countries. We MUST be able to understand people from all over the

world, particularly if sent to their countries. Our embassies are full of people who do NOT speak the language of the country to which they are sent. Our country is sadly lacking good, trained diplomats, as we sell our embassies to old wealthy men and women who want to live overseas in the luxury those embassies give them.

I would further hope that a Peace Academy be formed, to

train our best college students in diplomacy, and teach them of other ways and languages. We have to be one of the first to try for peace over war, but we do not seem able to come up with people trained in Peace, but merely those from the Dept. of Defense, which is merely a Dept. of War, full of OLD MEN, who are willing and happy to send our young to die.

—Peggy Cartwright



I AM AN 89 YEAR OLD WRITER WHO LIVED THROUGH WWII AND ALL THE OTHER DREADFUL LITTLE WARS AND "ACTIONS" SINCE, MARCHING AND MARCHING FOR THE PEACE THAT I HOPE SOMEDAY WILL COME, AS I NOW HAVE GRANDCHILDREN I WISH CAN LIVE LONG LIVES AS I HAVE, AND NOT ON BATTLEFIELDS.

Dear VVAW brothers and sisters,

The Spring 2013 edition of the VETERAN arrived as I was finishing reading Henry Kissinger's 600 page tome: "Ending the Vietnam War." The contrast, of course, could not be more vivid. It reaffirmed my great respect that VVAW earned during the Vietnam War, but also the great dedication you have had in keeping the organization, the message and the history alive for so many years. It also got me off my butt to send in some dues.

I'm now in Minneapolis, working with the very active Vets for Peace chapter here, tutoring math to immigrants and enjoying my latter years as health permits. The wife and kid are fine.

Best to you all,

—Andy Berman  
(formerly "Scott")



Here is my two cents toward ending the political stalemate and economic stagnation that our country seems to be in. On the surface it looks like a full employment policy and the funding of expanding health care, education, infrastructure and pension programs are in a tug-of-war with fiscal common sense as embodied in the argument to reduce the nation's debt. It is as if the rope in this tug-of-war is stretched across a bottomless chasm. It seems to me that no matter which side wins, the nation as a whole will lose.

What we have here is a failure to communicate, communicate a shared understanding of recent history, or of the priorities we have in common. It is this failure that necessitates a new labor based-populist type political party.

For many the struggle for better priorities began with the effort to stop the war in Vietnam and to solve the problems here

VVAW members,

Please accept this meager \$2 gift to keep the coffee or tea in your office available. No need for an acknowledgement.

When I am done reading the newspaper you send I donate it to the Chaska Library.

During the Vietnam war I did 2 yrs. of civilian work in lieu of induction as a conscientious objector.

Although our backgrounds are different, I appreciate that we're on the same page.

Sincerely,

—Phil Simard



Dear Brothers,

The Spring edition (Volume 43, Number 1) of the Veteran shed some light on something I have questioned for years. The POW/MIA claims were nebulous decades ago, and much less credible as time went on. I saw no logical reason for North Vietnam to hold prisoners for leverage or bargaining advantage. For what? It made no sense.

What baffled me was how the fantasy came about, much less how it was promoted to a gullible, possibly guilt-ridden public. As the years passed and the deception continued, I noticed something. Most of those who beat the old drum had profoundly different views on matters of war and peace than I. I didn't realize my anti-war sentiments until I had been in one (RVN 1968-'69). A good number of the zealous were indeed "Chicken Hawks" who had weaseled their way out in the day. Just look at them now!

Quite often, their rant centered around the politician or President they wished to demonize at the moment. Nixon was indeed a sly dog and understood the deceptive benefit in conflating the categories. In the run-up to the Iraq disaster, many in the arm-chair soldiers were quick to accuse me of not supporting the troops as I questioned the lies. As always, one must consider the source. That's the kind of stuff you get from cowards and fools. In truth, I spoke on behalf of the GI who would experience the reality of situations the would-be heroes could only fantasize about when they told fake war stories at the Legion. Thanks (I think) for verifying my suspicions on the ruse.

Peace on ya!

—Gary L Davis

Honor the Warrior, Not the War...



at home. What's happened since then? In 1975 the military budget was \$112 billion. This year it is about \$680 billion. Total debt in the US, that owed by households, businesses, all governments, and financial institutions in 1975 was between 3 and 4 trillion dollars. As of 2006 the total debt had risen to over 42 trillion dollars and this year the federal government owes 19 trillion of the total. What with the poor economic and social situation today, as well as the Iraq-Afghan war, it seems like the call for new priorities was buried under a pile of borrowed money.

There is a circular self-reinforcing relationship between an imperial US foreign policy, the wars that follow (Korean, Vietnam, and Iraq), and military spending. The more the corporations depend upon those government war contracts the more they support the bad foreign policy that results in those contracts.

For the People, it means

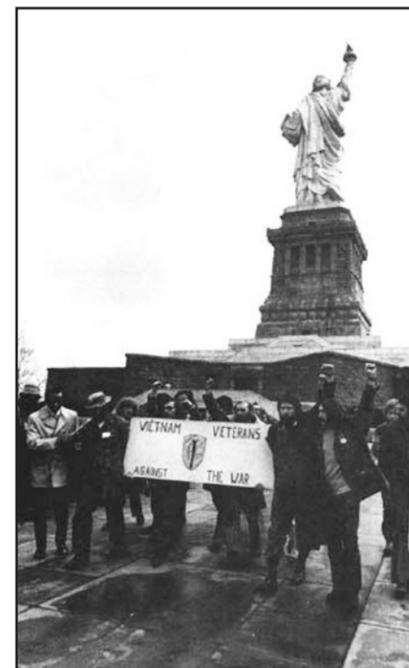
death and destruction abroad and high taxes, reduced resources and more debt at home.

What is needed is a more positive approach to the rest of the world. This can be achieved by taking the profit out of war through nationalizing the corporations that do military and national security work. Granted, this is a fairly radical economic proposal, which is why I believe a new political party is needed.

—Al Donohue



AL DONOHUE WAS IN VIETNAM 1966 WITH THE 101ST, ACTIVE WITH U. OF BUFFALO VETS CLUB, PARTICIPATED IN DEWEY CANYON III '71, NATIONAL STEERING COMM. MEETINGS IN TAOS N.M. AND MILWAUKEE WIS., THE LAST PATROL '74 AND REPRESENTED VVAW IN ROME ITALY AT AN ANTI-IMPERIALIST RALLY SPONSORED BY L'UNITA.



# Release of Two Books on the Same Day Recall the Aerial Massacre in Laos Fifty Years Ago

NICK LOMBARDI

The publication date of two different books, to be released on May 31, 2013, is a coincidence that could turn out to be a fortuitous one for each, in that both deal with the same topic, the secret war in Laos that took place during the 1960's, and whose geographical focus is the same area of northern Laos. One is a novel, "The Plain of Jars," while the other is a reprint of a 1972 anthology of bombing survivor stories, "Voices from the Plain of Jars."

It has been just about fifty years since undeclared war was waged in Laos, the tiny country sandwiched between Vietnam and Thailand. Although the roots of this war were entangled in the complex and reckless politics of US foreign policy at that time, the results are clearer: after nine years of war, seven billion dollars, three and a half million tons of bombs, a half-million dead, and 750,000 homeless, the US had failed to achieve any of the objectives it had aimed for.

There are several grave aspects of this war which still have relevance today. The most tragic was the bombing of unarmed civilians, the worst case of this having taken place in the plateau known as the Plain of Jars, its name derived from two thousand year old stone urns made by a forgotten civilization. Here, a scorched earth policy was carried out by the US Air Force, with the objective of population removal. Firsthand accounts of the horrors of the bombing campaigns are given in "Voices from the Plain of Jars," where those who had made it to refugee camps told their stories to a young American volunteer, now a freelance columnist, Fred Branfman, who subsequently compiled the narratives and children's drawings into this classic book.

As a consequence of the air war, there are still millions of live cluster munitions lying in the ground, which have caused more than 50,000 casualties, including

30,000 dead, and still continue to kill and maim 100 people each year. More than half of the victims are children who pick up the brightly colored, yet deadly little balls.

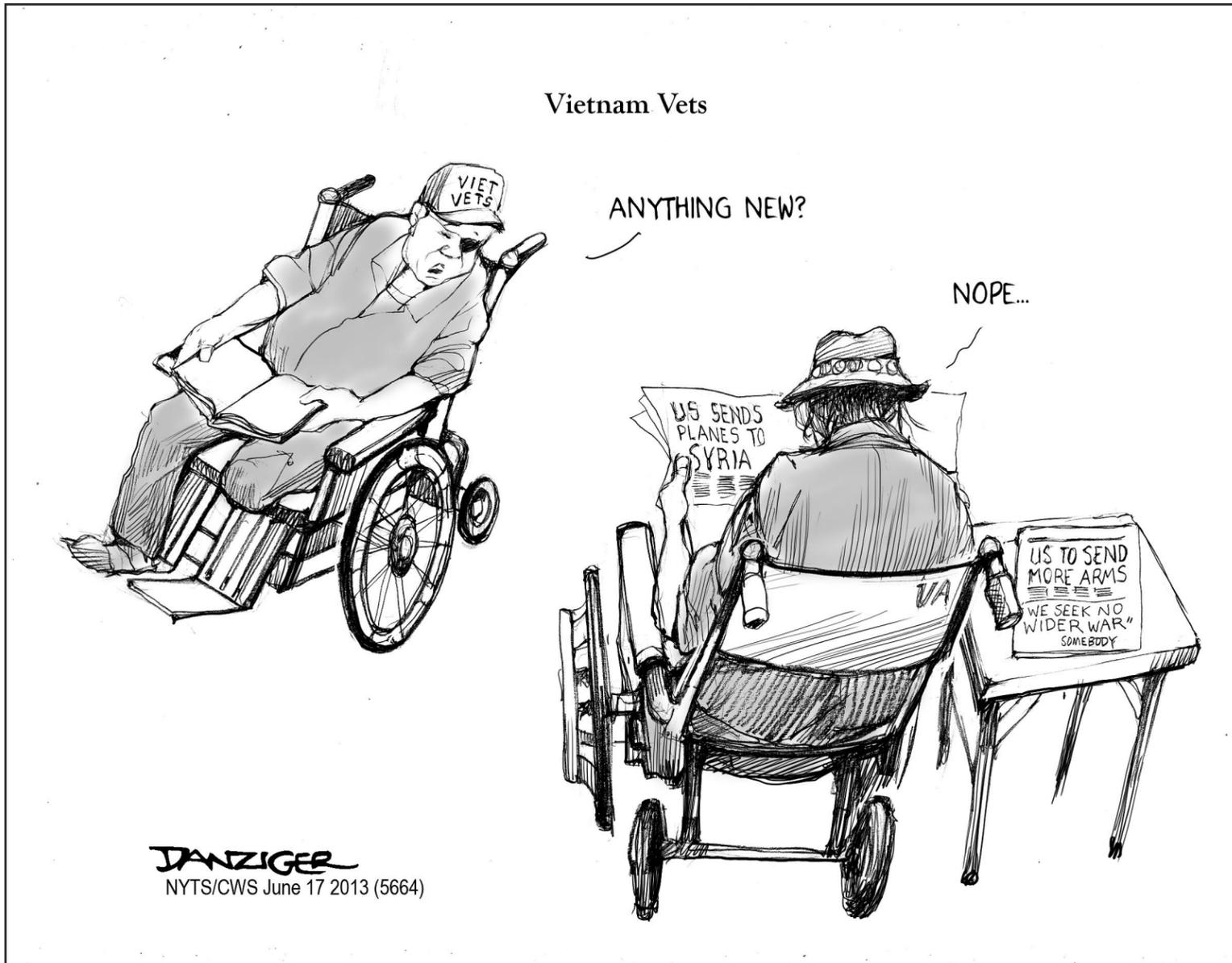
"The Plain of Jars," a novel by N. Lombardi Jr., is an adventure story about a sixty-four year old widow trying to unravel the mystery of her son's fate, a pilot who was shot down over Laos twenty two years earlier, and in the second part of the book, about a mysterious man who becomes a local legend as he clears the cluster bombs with the aid of an elephant and a self-designed flail, a device that whips the ground and detonates the little ball-like grenades. The novel uses entertainment value to educate people about a military conflict that only few today know had ever occurred. Using action, suspense, even humor, and other fictional devices, the author has created a vehicle to convey a strong anti-war message without beating the

reader over the head with it.

Does recalling the events of that time and place have any contemporary significance? Both authors feel that indeed it does, for the secret war in Laos had set the precedent for tactics used in making war today, such as aerial bombardment of civilian targets, CIA involvement in military operations, the use of proxy armies, and the testing of new aerial weapons in combat situations.

Both books are available at all major outlets, both online and many brick and mortar shops. "Voices from the Plain of Jars, Life under an Air War," Edited by Fred Branfman, University of Wisconsin Press "The Plain of Jars," by N. Lombardi Jr., Roundfire books

For more information on the history and culture of the Laotian people, and an introduction to the secret war, visit <http://plainofjars.net>.



# 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 40 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 355**

**Champaign, IL 61824-0355**

**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 and support the work of VVAW and its historic legacy. 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).

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

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

# RECOLLECTIONS

## Just Another Day

JEFF MOTYKA AS TOLD TO MARC LEVY

In Compton it was just another day. Hot and sunny and no wind. I had KP and was serving chow to grunts and firebase crews. We'd been on patrol two weeks--this was our reward.

The lieutenant was gone. In the bush a resupply bird took him out. And brought in a new man. My pal Gary didn't want to be platoon sergeant so James Aalund, a drafted Shake-and-Bake with no combat experience got the job his first day in the field.

It was Saturday. After lunch, I was standing with Gary, Cookie and Tom looking at the mountains as the sun went down. Cookie said, "This would be truly beautiful if there wasn't a war going on." A second later we heard mortar tubes popping: Thuuup...Thuuup. We froze. Gary said, "Oh shit, there goes your beautiful day." Everyone yelled "INCOMING" then we ran for the bunkers.

The first two rounds fell outside the berm. The next two hit close. The VC walked the next seventy rounds counterclockwise inside the perimeter. Walking them our way. Tom helped build the

bunker we were in. I said, "Can it take a direct hit?" Tom said, "Yeah, we could take a direct hit but from a mortar." He said a rocket would kill us. He said when the rounds stop be ready for a ground attack. We were scared. I was hyper alert to the silence, the explosions, the ground shaking.

When the mortars stopped we left the bunker. It was dark outside. There was no ground attack. A bunker near us was on fire. Grunts were yelling another bunker was hit. They were yelling about casualties and KIA's. Gary said, "Go over and get me a sit rep."

When I got there a body was being carried out. They said it was the new platoon sergeant and he was probably dead. They said a round exploded in front of the bunker as he looked out. The blast tore his head apart. Five guys got hit by shrap.

An officer asked if I knew where the platoon sergeant was. I told him he was probably dead. "Who's in charge?" he asked. I pointed to Gary who was helping put out the fire.

Later that night Gary said go

inside that bunker with a flashlight. "Make sure it's empty," he said. I turned on the flashlight and saw a scene from hell. The walls were red and wet with blood. Like they'd been spray painted. Blood dripped from the ceiling, it ran down the walls. The sandbags were studded with small white pieces of bone. Then I looked down. I saw a human brain. It was lying in the dirt, shiny and glistening and coated with blood. Lorenzo Coleman was with me. I left the bunker, walked to a trash barrel, and found a Maxwell House coffee can.

Lorenzo held the flashlight while I scooped the brain into the can. Actually, it was half a brain; split down the middle. I put the can with the brain in the trash barrel. There was nothing else I could do. Lorenzo and I never told anyone. What for? And I didn't want anyone poking in the barrel to look at it.

We spent the night atop the bunker. I stayed awake all night. I'm not sure if Lorenzo slept, but I doubt it. The next morning I began cleaning the bunker. I think Lorenzo helped too. We pulled the

bone fragments from the sandbags and put them in the trash barrel. We dried the walls and ceiling with sand. We covered the floor with sand to soak up and cover the blood.

The bunker had a beer and soda cooler made from a wooden ammo box lined with foil. I cleaned the outside of the cooler then opened it. Blood had gotten into the cooler. A lot of blood. The melted ice looked like strawberry Cool-Aid. I saw cans of beer and soda but I closed the lid and carried the cooler to the trash barrel.

A week or so later a memorial service was held for Sgt. James Aalund. This was the first time I heard his name. Most of the grunts in second platoon didn't know it.

When a new lieutenant arrived I became his RTO.



JEFF MOTYKA WAS AN RTO WITH DELTA 1/7 FIRST CAV '69-'70. HE LIVES IN TENNESSEE IN A BIG HOUSE WITH A LOT OF LAND SO THAT IT'S VERY QUIET AT NIGHT.

### Lieutenant Kerry Asks Secretary Kerry

HOW DO YOU ASK A MAN TO BE THE FIRST ONE TO DIE IN SYRIA?



DANZIGER NYTS/CWS Aug 27 2013 (5722)