



THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

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IVAW and VVAW Chicago Mobilize Against Sanctions and War on Iran

ROBERT CLACK

On February 1, a snowy Chicago day, over 60 peace activists hit the streets to protest further sanctions and the threat of war against Iran. The No War or Sanctions on Iran coalition was an ad hoc effort convened by IVAW and VVAW Chicago against the threat of further sanctions and war mongering by the American Israel Political Action Committee (AIPAC) and Senators pushing bipartisan Senate Bill S. 1881. The February 1 action was a follow-up to a state-wide call-in day to Illinois Senator Mark Kirk and a New Year's Eve action against the proposed sanctions.

As the rally began, activists heard from long-time anti-war activist Kathy Kelly of Voices for Creative Nonviolence and Andy Thayer of the Gay Liberation Network. There were also speakers from the Anti-War Committee Chicago and the Civilian Soldier Alliance. The public was extremely receptive and support-

ive to the crowd with passers-by giving their verbal support and cheers to protesters. After seeing anti-war veterans in the crowd a passerby bought coffee and donuts for the group. Another passerby gave IVAW members a bottle of wine and thanked the members for their service.

The march proceeded to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial where Iraq, Afghanistan, and Vietnam veterans gave statements against the dangerous sanctions and the need for our government to create a long-lasting peace with Iran. "We have had sanctions on other countries before," said Iraq veteran and IVAW member Zach LaPorte. "Sanctions are economic war and are often the first step towards fighting a war. War (and sanctions) affect civilians the most, especially women and children."

At the solemn memorial, Vietnam veteran and Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW)



Chicago IVAW members.

member Barry Romo, spoke on the human cost of war. "As you look at the Wall of the names of hundreds who died, think of the names that won't be there. People who died of Agent Orange, people who killed themselves with drugs, people who drank their lives away."

By early February, support

for the bill began to unravel. This was in part due to the efforts of dozens of groups, organizing call-in days, lobbying congress, and protesting. A good example was the National Iranian American Council's open letter signed by

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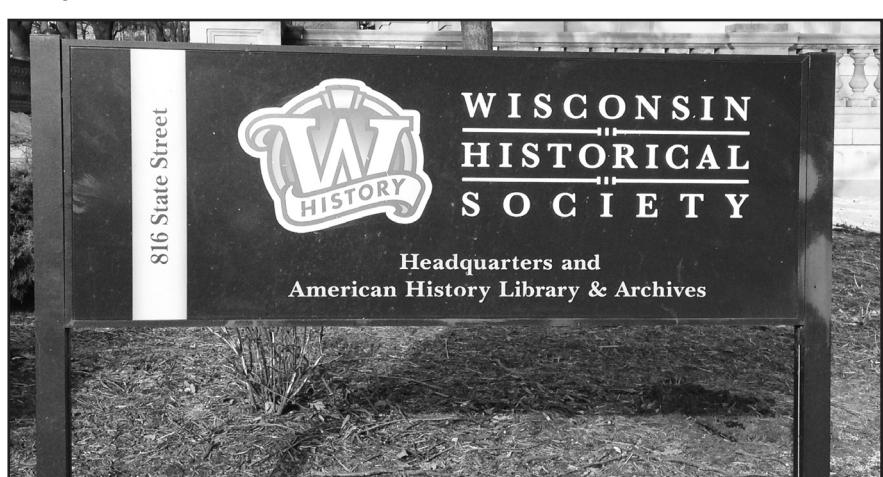
VVAW Visits Archives at the Wisconsin Historical Society

JEN TAYABJI

In mid-March, several VVAW Board and staff members took a road trip to Madison and visited the VVAW archives at the Wisconsin Historical Society. The archives at the Wisconsin Historical Society represent the largest and most comprehensive archives of VVAW and its members to date. There are smaller archives from VVAW members in other locations, including the Division of Rare and

Manuscript Collections at Cornell University and the Vietnam Center and Archives at Texas Tech University.

This year, VVAW began an Archive Project to document and preserve the work of VVAW and its members for future generations. Our goal is to archive photos, flyers, publications, and other materials documenting the history of VVAW and its members. Over



the past few years, VVAW staff have worked to digitize VVAW's newspaper, *The Veteran*, by creating PDF documents of each issue and also typing up the articles to create searchable text for the VVAW website.

VVAW made the trip to the Wisconsin Historical Society with several goals in mind. First, we wanted to see what was in the VVAW Archives. We were pleased to discover a well-organized collection of

demonstration posters, flyers, photographs from VVAW events, chapter information, meeting minutes, and even a printed membership list from the early 70s. We were very impressed with the staff and facilities. The Wisconsin Historical Society has a rigorous process established for sorting, organizing and housing their archive materials. They also

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From the National Office

BILL BRANSON

Welcome to the Spring 2014 issue of *The Veteran*!

As we approach the 50th anniversary of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) is reminded yet again of the US's tendency to unnecessarily and inappropriately intervene in other countries' affairs.

As tensions arise in Crimea between Russia and the US/NATO, we might remember other "regime changes," for the good of "democracy," both current and now enshrined in history and our nightmares. How about Vietnam, Cambodia, Chile, Panama, Iraq, Libya, Honduras, and Syria as just a few? The US and now international Rich have historically been less than respectful of other countries' democratic process when "they" don't like the results. The result of the CIA orchestrated regime change in Kiev is a very dangerous

situation, which seems to be resolving as a win for the Russians (Putin). When the majority of Crimeans voted to secede from the Ukraine and join Russia, that "democracy" was backed by Russian guns. The US (and NATO) has to acknowledge that vote and respect that decision. Are the people in Crimea better off? What is in store for the now broken and chaotic north of the Ukraine?

The coup in Ukraine was most likely orchestrated by the CIA and NATO. There seem to be two converging lines of force that led to the "crisis." First, Kerry, Obama, and countless current State Department mavens have been pushing for a "pivot" against Russia, one that strangely enough mirrors the Cold War. Remember the ongoing fiasco of NATO attempting to place anti-missile missiles in the "Stans?" There is a good argument for Afghanistan being yet another (failed) brick in

the wall around Russia, why not the Ukraine as well?

Secondly, there is obviously another huge economic wheel turning. Ukraine is located in a pathway for some very lucrative oil/gas pipelines to Europe. There are some interesting rumors about plans for huge fracking operations. Also, had the Crimea fallen to NATO, Russia would have been without a cold weather Naval Base. Perhaps someone can better explain the deal with the huge Ukrainian debt, but I'm sure that the Bankers played a role as well.

The people of the US and the EU only stand to lose by this NATO adventure. Whatever benefits the Rich resolve from the chaos they started will not trickle down. Whatever pain, suffering and debt that ensues will be born on working people's backs, not by the Banks, the rabid TeaBagger, or the State Department geniuses that thought this up.

At home, we continue to witness the tragic aftereffects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Most recently, we were shocked by the second shooting at Fort Hood in less than five years. Ivan Lopez shot and killed three people, wounding sixteen more. He took his own life in the gun battle. The Army higher-ups were quick to dismiss PTSD and combat-related causes for what happened. Yet, we know Lopez served overseas in Iraq. We also know he had been given psychiatric medication for sleeping issues and was been examined for PTSD. The higher-ups ruled out that Lopez had seen "combat" during his tour in Iraq. These vapid denials reek of a coverup. There were no front lines or clear-cut combat zones in Vietnam, much less so in Iraq. Somehow, the brass has forgotten about IEDs, rockets, etc. Even

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Thanks to Jeff Danziger, Billy Curmano for their cartoons. Thanks to Bill Branson, Brian Matarrese, Jen Tayabji, Ben Chitty, Ellen Davidson, Per Olaf, Jeff Machota, Susan Schnall, Annie Bailey, Dave Kettenhofen, Jim Willingham, Mike Hastie, Dan Lavery, Charles Philp, Robert Halgash and others for contributing photos.

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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 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

VVAW Visits Archives

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have a strict method for checking out items in the Archives to view in the Reading Room and do not allow for materials to be taken beyond that room for the security and protection of the Archive materials.

The most important goal of this visit was to explore collaborating with the Wisconsin Historical Society on our Archive Project. After our meeting with staff at the Wisconsin Historical Society, we are confident in continuing to have the Society serve as VVAW's official archive home. We will be working closely with VVAW members and the Wisconsin Historical Society to document and archive VVAW's organizational and membership history.

As we get ready to collect items for the archives, you have an important role to play. Take a moment to look at what you may have and organize it. Think about where you would like these items to go after you are gone. To safeguard that your items go

to where you want them to go, make sure to let your family know of your wishes and/or document them in your will. The Wisconsin Historical Society will be most interested in your anti-war work with VVAW after your service. But if you have items from when you served, or other personal items you want archived, you should contact your local or state historical archive to see what items they may be interested in preserving.

Later this year, VVAW will put out a call to collect items for the VVAW archives so stay tuned! You can visit the Wisconsin Historical Society online at www.wisconsinhistory.org. For more information about VVAW's Archive Project, please contact us at vvaw@vvaw.org.



JEN TAYABJI IS ON STAFF AT VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR (VVAW). SHE LIVES IN URBANA, IL.



Bill Branson and Barry Romo with the page of the 1972 membership list showing their names.

From the National Office

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if we accept their claims about Lopez's experience, we know that simply being in a war zone can provide a breaking load of stress. In addition, the US military is quite capable of making any GI's life hell. We can't allow the Brass to use PTSD, or its absence, as an excuse for an intolerable disregard of soldier's mental health needs.

While Lopez's actions were clearly horrendous, he was also a victim, like the victims he created. He had been used. And when he needed help, he was like many soldiers who are given a "quick-fix" of prescriptions without

the support system to help him through his PTSD. And after Lopez opened fire at Ft. Hood, eleven of the sixteen soldiers were back to work within a week of the rampage. Are they getting the support they need?

In preparation for officially withdrawing from Afghanistan (and unofficially losing the longest war in US history) the military is pursuing a rabid program of Punitive Downsizing. Finding itself with an embarrassing excess of Grunts, the Military Brass are seeking a cheap solution. Veterans who can claim benefits cost money.

Vets with bad discharges don't. After all, room has to be made for new, sexy, technically advanced surveillance and expanding the use of drones. If it means a systematic tossing of GI's to the curb, so be it! If they can't trip you up and kick you out, they use the endless chickenshit to drive you out. As part of its harassment campaign, the Army has introduced AR 670-1 regulations for women's hairstyles. Female soldiers, mainly African American soldiers, are being treated punitively for basically wearing their hair naturally, regardless that these now outlawed

styles are actually the easiest to maintain and interfere the least with helmets and other gear. The new slogan seems to be "Any Way but the Honorable Way," for discharging these inconvenient troops without benefits. It's up to us to renew our call for A Single Type Discharge for All Troops!

We hope you enjoy this issue of *The Veteran*!



BILL BRANSON IS A VVAW BOARD MEMBER AND LONGTIME MEMBER.

Fraggin'

BILL SHUNAS

In today's USA, what does it mean to be a veteran, and what role do veterans play? Being a veteran of a recent war is in many ways a lot different than back in the Vietnam days. Of course there are similarities with all wars. There are after effects such as limitations on care for vets, limited jobs for vets, and PTSD. However today everyone in the whole US of A knows when it comes to veterans that something special is happening here, and they usually show respect and give a vet some space if not the opportunity needed.

This reception is similar to World War II and before when veterans were shown respect and treated as heroes. However there are some differences between present day vets and World War II. For one, nowadays the GI Bill is much weaker. It is also different in a good way in that recognition of PTSD and traumatic brain injury is common among vets, is a problem and can be helped. WWII vets had to deal with any of these problems by themselves.

Unlike now or WWII, Vietnam vets didn't return to a welcome. The best we could hope for was to be ignored. Maybe this was because we were fighting against a concept (anti-communism) rather than against an enemy which was taking territory from other countries and sending civilians to death camps. Maybe it was because we lost our war. Or grew our hair long. Or dissed the establishment. Or smoked dope. Or disobeyed.

When I returned from Vietnam, I soon headed for my favorite bar. There I was greeted by old friends and acquaintances I hadn't seen for about a year. Some said they were glad to see me back. Some said they were glad that I served unlike those who went to Canada or pulled strings to get a draft deferment. After about 20 or 30 minutes the talk returned to the NBA playoffs and the beginning of the baseball season. I no longer felt like a returning veteran, nor did I want or expect to feel so. I only wanted to slip back into my life.

Many had different, less welcome experiences. Due to what was experienced in Vietnam many needed emotional as well as material support and didn't get it. Then again, many of you had similar experiences as I. Maybe you started school on the GI Bill

and never told anyone you were a vet. Many at school heard other students disparaging vets. You stayed quiet and wondered. Did we have any say in that debacle? (VVAW members on campus and other vets in the peace movement helped change some of the backward sentiment about soldiers/veterans.)

Much has been said about Vietnam vets not being welcomed home. Back in about 1975 the Chicago Chapter of VVAW had a rally to honor Vietnam vets. There wasn't much of a turnout. Vietnam vets just didn't connect to being a veteran in the way that Iraq and Afghanistan vets do today. A few years later Vietnam vets were discovered. Cities started to have welcome home parades, and maybe this kicked off the period of changing attitudes toward vets leading up to the situation today.

Today veterans are chic. Rick Morrissey, sports columnist for the *Chicago Sun-Times* began his last year's Veterans Day article by writing, "I can't recall the last time I attended a sporting event without seeing some sort of tribute to military members." Everybody supports us now. Or exploits us.

There used to often be movies or TV programs about a Vietnam vet doing drugs or going off and having a shoot-em-up. More accurate movies like *Coming Home* or *Born on the Fourth of July* were less common. Now on the TV series or in the movies the vet is outstanding. The only exception is when he works as a military contractor for Blackwater or some other mercenary outfit. If PTSD causes the hero to do something stupid or tragic - well - that is to be understood, and he'll (most often he) receive TLC from the leading lady.

Vets obviously play political roles. In the collective mind of the civilian population before Vietnam there used to be assumptions that equated being a veteran with being a patriot. This transferred into being a supporter of the military and a supporter of any war started by our government. In the aftermath of Vietnam that had changed or was not talked about as much. That was because half the Vietnam vets (or maybe the more visible) had long hair and questioned war.

When Vietnam vets started getting thanks for our service there was another change. We now fit

into the old formula. Vietnam vet equals good. All vets are good. Good vet equals patriot. Patriots support the military. Supporting the military means supporting the current (and next) war. Vets are thanked as having defended our freedom and risking the ultimate sacrifice in order that we civilians may enjoy our way of life because of the wars fought. Unstated is any doubt that the sacrifices have anything to do with the freedoms enjoyed in the homeland.

A large portion of civilians buy into the vet equals patriot idea to the point where speaking out against a war such as the Gulf War in the early nineties meant that you were denigrating heroes. I remember an anti-war demonstration back then. Off to the side were a handful of people waving flags and shouting support for our soldiers. This was apples versus oranges, but the perception was that not supporting the war meant you were somehow against the soldier.

Over time things got better and you could say what you wanted as long as you saluted our soldiers. But it still needs work. Sometimes people who consider themselves to be patriots oppose (a) war but stay quiet because they are afraid that speaking out is

unpatriotic. It is sometimes hard to speak out against the loud voices of the self-righteous.

So we have reached the glorious situation where the nation wants to do all it can to support and help recently returned vets. PTSD and TBI are considered to be things that need to be dealt with. Everyone knows that these folks made great sacrifices and are deserving. One problem. We are in a prolonged economic slump. There is less money to do the things that veterans need to be done. So, yes, the nation feels for vets, but the budget doesn't include what's needed. And if things don't get cut, neither do they expand to the extent needed.

One thing that can be done for the future veterans of war is to create fewer of us. The way that's done is to have fewer and shorter wars. In the meantime we are here as a social and political force with social needs. We are not always understood, but we are usually honored. We need to make as the accepted wisdom the slogan "Honor the Warrior, Not the War."



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



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Notes From the Boonies

PAUL WISOVATY

For the last fifteen years, I have spoken to history classes at Tuscola High School (Illinois) about the Vietnam War. As I have not exactly offered the students the traditional American Legion point of view upon the subject, I am a bit surprised that I continue to be invited back. Maybe it's because I've always had a good relationship with the high school principals. I retired recently after thirty years as the county's chief probation officer, and every time one of their malcontent students picked up a teacher and tossed her ten feet into a brick wall, they appreciated my assistance in getting the kid locked up. You use whatever leverage you got.

I am certainly not as knowledgeable upon the subject as Barry Romo, and I lack Joe Miller's two or three PhD's. Additional problems have been that I am not the most eloquent speaker on the planet, and - worst of all - I infrequently finish a sentence with the unspoken thought, "I can't believe I just said that." But the situation has improved over the years. After 75-100 presentations, it has inevitably gotten to the point where there is almost no question that a student can ask that I haven't heard a few dozen times before. In that sense, my answers are almost predetermined. I just have to wrinkle my brow every now and then, give the student a very serious look, and say, "Wow, that's a good question! I don't think anyone has ever asked me that before." As the Bard observed, "all the world's a stage."

Of course, every now and then I get a question that I haven't heard. That happened this past fall, and I either handled it really well or really poorly. The disinterested reader may judge.

A young lady asked, ever so politely, "I'm graduating this year, and my dad really wants me to join the service. Don't you think that's a great idea?" I kind of lost it. I said something to the effect that "If you were my daughter and you wanted to join the service, I would do everything in my power to talk you out of it. That could wind up being the worst decision you ever made in your life." She clearly didn't expect that answer, and my guess is that her dad wouldn't have stood up and applauded it either.

It's time to inject the obvious: I'm preaching to the choir here. I doubt that many readers are likely to respond with, "That's not fair!"

The Pentagon does everything it can to protect its young women in the service from sexual abuse!" Certainly, but there is a problem with preaching to the choir: you've heard it all before. Before you turn to the next page for that solid reason, please let me add a few thoughts.

This March, quoting from the *Associated Press*, "the US Senate agreed to leave the authority to prosecute rapes and other serious crimes with military commanders." Sen. Kirstin Gillibrand's bill "would have given the decision to take serious crimes to courts martial to seasoned military lawyers instead of the chain of command."

According to a related *AP* Story, "Female United States Senators have questioned whether the military's mostly male leadership understands differences between relatively minor sexual offenses and serious crimes that deserve swift and decisive justice." First of all, what is a "minor sexual offense?" With regard to Senator Gillibrand's reference to a "slap on the ass," I would note that, at least according to the Illinois Criminal Code, that slap is a felony if committed in a public place, which presumably includes things like federal military installations. But let's look at the mostly male leadership's understanding or lack thereof of such differences, which are quite obviously real.

I don't care how unenlightened a commanding officer may be, my guess is that he is able to differentiate between that slap and, let's say, enforced fellatio (with all due respect to General Jeffrey Sinclair, who may well be on the other end of such an arrangement in the event that he reads this column in a federal prison). As I tried to explain to the class, that's not what I see as the problem. I see the problem as part and parcel of the military hierarchy, and to a large extent the problem is not even a gender-based one.

How I proceeded to answer the young lady—after I'd calmed down a little—was like this. Let's say you're a Private First Class, and you are sexually assaulted by the First Sergeant, and you go to your CO, probably a captain, to report the act. The CO (sorry, ladies, but consistent with my argument the CO could even be a she) then asks himself, "OK, who is more important to me, my First Shirt or my PFC?" I am not suggesting that every company commander in the

United States military is going to do that. What I am suggesting is that, to one extent or another, a lot of them have. It is a mindset built into the system.

What else jumps out at us about this unfolding story? Again according to the *AP*, "The Pentagon has estimated that as many as 26,000 military members may have been sexually assaulted in 2012," which computes to 71 victims a day or one every twenty minutes. I'm somewhat surprised—actually amazed—at the Pentagon's candor here, and I applaud them for it. That said, try the next quote on for size.

"A raft of changes in military law is creating a culture where victims trust that their allegations will be taken seriously and perpetrators will be punished." That comes from Air Force Colonel Alan Metzler, Deputy Director of the Defense Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office. My guess is that reporters didn't exact that comforting assessment out of the colonel as he was stumbling out of the officer's club. It obviously represents the official position of the United States Department of Defense upon the subject. I'm confident that

those 26,000 victims from 2012, to say nothing of those from 2014, are much relieved at learning of it.

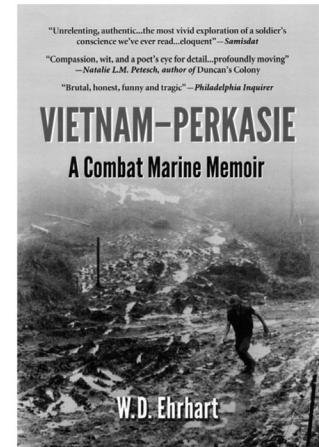
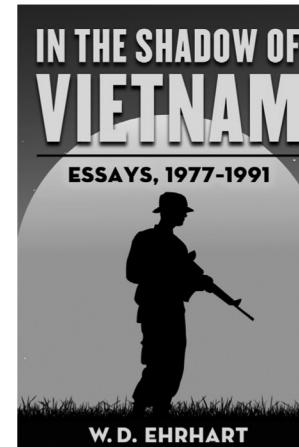
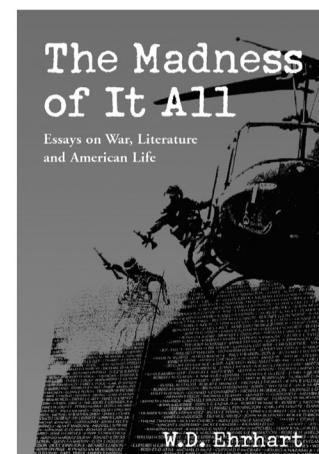
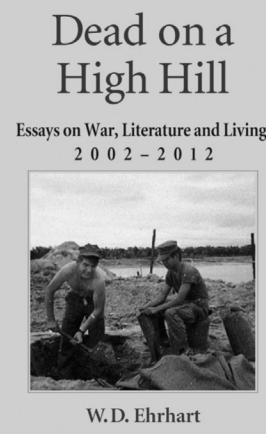
I'm writing this in March, so that by the time you read it some things may have changed. For her part, Senator Gillibrand remains optimistic. She is expected to pursue the issue in the Senate this spring, when the Armed Services Committee begins work on a sweeping defense policy bill for fiscal year 2015. She noted that "many people (in the Senate) said to me, 'Kirsten, I'm going to watch this, and if it doesn't get better in the next six months, I'm with you this time.'" Who knows? But look at it this way: when I was in the Army in the 1960's, you could not have told me that openly gay men and women would ever be allowed in the military. And you know what? That 20-year-old kid would've been just fine with their exclusion. Nations, like individuals, sometimes need to wake up.



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

McFarland

"[Ehrhart is]one of the great poets and writers of nonfiction produced by the Vietnam War"—*The Nation*



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IVAW and VVAW Chicago Mobilize

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72 organizations condemning the sanctions bill. "It speaks to the type of power veterans have," said LaPorte. "We got the Senators to back down. It's cool to see that type of direct action work and it makes me more confident for the future."

The defeat of AIPAC and the warmongers in the Senate was a significant victory for the peace movement. Additionally, AIPAC's defeat is a welcome sign of the lobby's waning power with Congress. The peace movement served as a major counterweight to AIPAC's power and this could bode well in successfully opposing future conflicts.

Despite IVAW and VVAW's successful organizing on this issue, it was a bitter pill to swallow when Republicans in the Senate attempted to amend Sen. Bernie Sanders' Ominbus Veterans Bill with Iran Sanctions. The Republican effort to amend the legislation failed, along with the latest effort to derail peace talks with Iran. Outrageously, Senate Republicans then directly voted down veterans benefits under the pretext of decreasing spending.

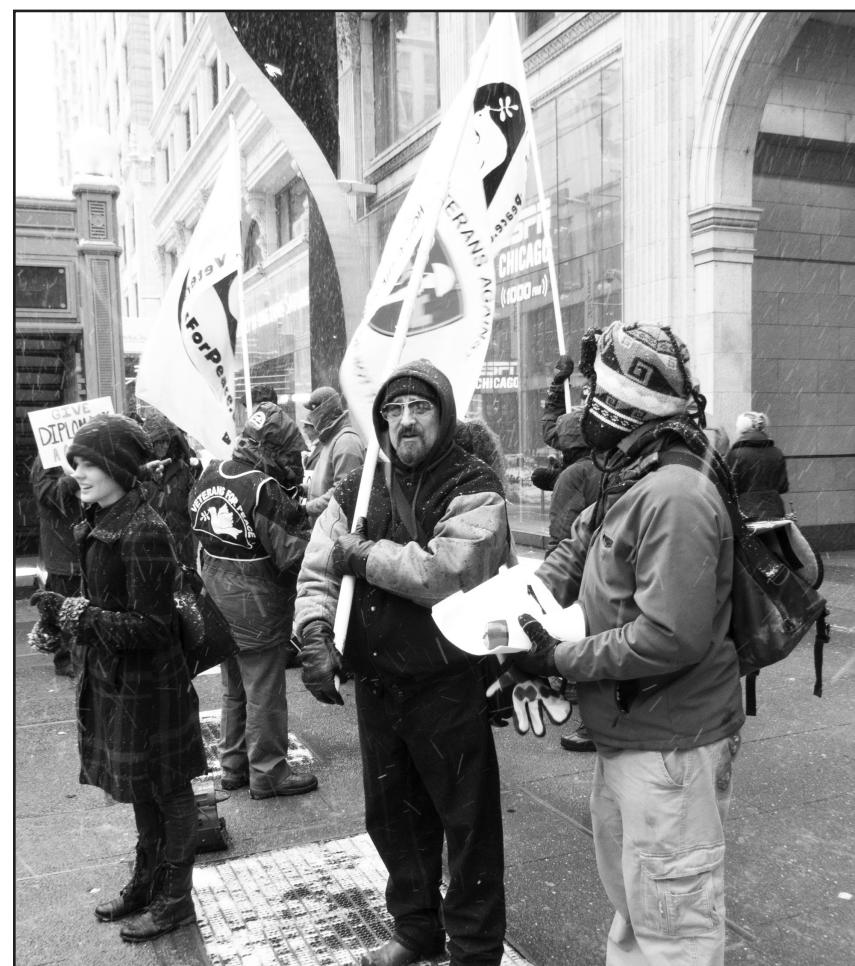
The dissonance of much of the country's political leadership must be made accountable. The blatant disregard for veterans and GI's welfare reveals how mean-spirited and cynical our political establishment has become. It's widely known that veterans, including recent Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, suffer disproportionately from suicide, homelessness, unemployment and other problems.

In regards to Iran sanctions, the same political leadership that supported legislation that put

the country at risk for war, used veterans and their benefits as a political ploy to increase sanctions. It's important to remember this series of events and to reject these Senators' claims of supporting veterans and their accompanying empty rhetoric. Anti-war veterans can be a tremendous force in drawing out these contradictions and calling out the leadership of a figure like Senator Mark Kirk. When the threat of conflict occurs, it's important that the peace movement make itself heard and demands that our government prioritizes caring for its citizens, and that our political leaders work towards creating greater peace and stability in the world.



ROBERT CLACK IS AN ANTI-WAR ACTIVIST AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZER IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.



Veterans F.O.R./VVAW Emergency Food Card Assistance Project

JIM MURPHY

Veterans' Fellowship Of Reconciliation and Vietnam Veterans Against the War has just launched a new project. Because the VA is overwhelmed with the needs of the veterans of the American wars of the past 12 years, we hope to share a model project that provides short-term food relief to young veterans living on the edge. We are donating \$50 food cards (gift cards) from Greenstar (our large local food co-op) and Wegmans to Iraq and Afghanistan vets and Vietnam vets. Local veterans and allies

are matching the donations of Greenstar and Wegmans.

The 1st Unitarian Society of Ithaca (FUSIT) is the hub for this project. Any veteran that is interested can contact us to arrange a meeting. At FUSIT we will verify their experience and provide a first card. At the initial meeting we will offer assistance and advice with regard to utilizing VA services. We will help with initial transportation and accompaniment, if desired.

Anyone interested in our blueprint, please contact us at ivetsfor@gmail.com or by phone



at (607) 319-0980. We feel this is another way to unite veterans and community. War is a moral injury as well as a psychological, neurological or physical injury. "Coming Home" is never simple and hundreds of thousands of

Vietnam Veterans died by 1980. We can't let this happen again.



JIM MURPHY IS A LONGTIME MEMBER OF VVAW.

Remember the Children

SUSAN SCHNALL

In every country, in every culture we believe that our children are our future. Our children are to be loved, treasured, cared for. As adults, we take that responsibility as the most important work we do in life. It is our nature to protect our children from harm. We watch over them when they're ill, we cry with them when they're in pain, we protect them from those who would harm them. But how do we prevent hurt from an unseen enemy? From something we carry in our bodies and transmit to them unknowingly?

It is estimated that between 1961 and 1975 about 20 million gallons of herbicides, including 13 million gallons of Agent Orange, containing more than 500 pounds of dioxin were sprayed multiple times over 5.5 million acres of land in southern Vietnam. The VA recognizes that certain cancer and other health problems as presumptive diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service. Covered diseases also include heart disease and progressive neurological illnesses.

And dioxin not only impacts the lives of those who served in Vietnam, causing deteriorating illnesses, but it can also be transmitted to their children, by causing changes in cells that may last for multiple generations. These cell mutations cause birth defects and other problems for

the children and grandchildren of those exposed.

The Institute of Medicine for the past several years has noted that, "it is considerably more plausible than previously believed that exposure to the herbicides sprayed in Vietnam might have caused paternally mediated transgenerational effects...attributable to the TCCD contaminant in Agent Orange."

It has been over 52 years since the US first used Agent Orange/dioxin in Vietnam. It is time that the United States government recognize and assume responsibility and accountability for the use of these chemicals that destroyed the land in south Vietnam, directly caused the death of thousands of Americans and Vietnamese, were responsible for creating debilitating illnesses in those sprayed, and continues to cause birth defects in our children. How do we protect our children from this unseen enemy? And how do we care for them?

Currently the only birth defect covered by the VA for the children of male American soldiers who served in Vietnam is spina bifida. The VA does recognize a wide range of about 18 birth defects as associated with women Veterans' service in Vietnam. These children are eligible for VA compensation, health care, and vocational training. We must demand that our government care



for all those who have been injured by this deadly poison.

Studies have shown that about 4.8 million Vietnamese and tens of thousands of Americans were exposed to Agent Orange during the spraying. Many other Vietnamese were, or continue to be, exposed to Agent Orange through contact with the environment and food that was contaminated. The children of those exposed now suffer from illnesses and disabilities.

Please contact your representative in the House of Representatives and ask them to co-sponsor H.R. 2519: To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide assistance for individuals affected by exposure to Agent Orange.

This legislation would provide health care and social

services for the affected children of American Vietnam veterans, provide health care and social services for affected Vietnamese and Vietnamese Americans, and remediate the land which remains contaminated even today.

Please join the Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign to demand justice for those who have suffered so much. Contact your congressional representative and ask her/him to become a co-sponsor of HR 2519 of 2013.



SUSAN SCHNALL IS A CO-COORDINATOR OF THE VIETNAM AGENT ORANGE RELIEF AND RESPONSIBILITY CAMPAIGN. SHE IS CURRENTLY A PROFESSOR IN HEALTH POLICY AND PLANNING AT NYU AND A MEMBER OF VFP AND APHA. SHE IS ON THE VVAW BOARD.

Notice for those who were officially part of "were in the class for," the Agent Orange Lawsuit MDL381. It is now possible for you to obtain your medical records used in the lawsuit. These records have been hidden for many years, but are now available. You will need the Social Security Number for the veteran(s) concerned. You should write to the following address and use the case number (MDL381).

Washington National Records Center National Archives and Records Administration, 4205 Suitland Road, Suitland, MD 20746-8001, Attn: Agent Orange Claimant Files.



Congress Rejects Veterans Omnibus Bill and Military Sexual Assault Legislation

ROBERT CLACK

On February 27, in a largely partisan vote, Senate Republicans voted down Senator Bernie Sanders' (I-VT) Veterans Omnibus Bill (S.1950). In the procedural vote the entire Democratic Caucus voted for the bill with only 2 Republican Senators (Heller, NV and Moran, KS) voting for it. The final 56-41 vote was just 4 votes shy of moving the bill through Congress.

The bill proposed expanding health care, education and job training for veterans. This included the opening of 27 VA Medical Centers and clinics, dental coverage, and better access for veterans regardless of disability ratings, among other benefits. The \$21 billion cost was to be taken from part of the savings of the "Overseas and Contingency Operations," the funding used for the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, that are now winding down.

However, the shenanigans started well before the actual vote, when Senate Republicans attempted to amend the veterans benefits legislation with Iran Sanctions. When this effort failed, Senate Republicans decided to vote down the bill altogether.

Even worse, on March 6 the Senate voted down New York Senator Kristine Gillibrand's (D) Military Justice Improvement

Act (S.1752). Another close vote, this bill was bipartisan in the final count, with President Obama also opposing the bill. This bill was designed to take prosecution of military sexual assaults out of the military's chain of command and set up independent military prosecution.

According to the Department of Defense, 1 in 5 women report sexual assault in the military. While this in itself is an astounding number, the epidemic of sexual assaults is likely far greater due to many soldiers not reporting assaults because of retaliation from the chain of command and perpetrators and because of the perceived lack of efficacy in prosecutions. Worse yet, many victims report those in their chain of command are often the perpetrators. Reports of a harassment prevention officer being charged at Fort Hood for rape and setting up a prostitution ring there, along with the high profile trial of Army Brig. Gen. Jeffrey A. Sinclair, points towards the tip of the iceberg of a serious and endemic problem within the military's ranks.

As the wars wind down and as the military begins to downsize and push GIs out of service, it is unconscionable to not use some of the appropriated money from

these wars for the care of those who fought in these conflicts, especially in light of some of the extensively-documented problems among veterans such as PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), MST (Military Sexual Trauma), substance abuse, unemployment, suicide, etc. These problems are often caused by disabilities and stress directly related to service.

Several things can be learned from both of these bills' defeats. Many in Washington are content with the status quo in their relationship with veterans and GIs. Our political establishment is content with letting the plague of homelessness, unemployment and suicides that affected Vietnam veterans happen to Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. Without the investment in resources and attention to reforming endemic problems such as military sexual assault, the struggle of Vietnam veterans may well repeat itself.

For now, much of the political message to veterans from Washington is, "we don't care." Fortunately, veterans are highly regarded in our society, and if veterans are organized and demand justice in a public and vocal way, the political establishment will have to yield. Demanding accountability and using community organizing

tactics could prove very effective in shaming those who have turned their backs on veterans and could be key to reversing these defeats.

Perhaps the most important lesson from the defeat of Senator Sanders' Omnibus legislation is that it does not bode well for others. Our country is in the midst of the worst economic situation since the Great Depression and in an age of ever-increasing austerity. If veterans cannot receive help for what the public broadly agrees they should receive and have earned, it begs the question of what will happen to others in our society, like the millions of citizens dependent on social services such as food stamps, public housing, mental health centers, all of which have been massively cut?

Communities should unite with veterans organizations in demanding justice on these issues, but we should not stop there and we should organize for the full restoration of services for all others in need. We must also challenge the utility of a society that funds militarism at the expense of community needs.



ROBERT CLACK IS AN ANTI-WAR ACTIVIST AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZER IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

Military Justice

General Sinclair Gets No Jail Time for Sexual Assault Charges



War Really Is A Racket

MICHAEL J. BURKE

One would naturally think that here in Atlanta, home of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and many other great voices of the Civil Rights Era, the anti-war movement would be one of the strongest in the nation. But it ain't so. Over the past decades, the city has concentrated its social justice power more on what happened during the past than on today. Today, MLK's children spend more time fighting over selling rights to their father's Bible and Nobel Prize. It's a sordid family affair.

Veterans of the Vietnam War era, like myself, agree that one of the greatest errors remains basically unaddressed—the stalking, abuse, and rape of our youth, which continues in our public school campuses (K-12). Kids are now being groomed for the killing fields younger than ever before in US history. Younger than in Nazi Germany! Long before

pre-teenagers are even exposed to the seductive ways and wares of military recruiters, in their junior/senior high school years, they are being sucked into "playing games" that encourage them to blow the damned "rag-heads" off the rooftops. I've seen it, you've seen it, and we both know it is just a precursor, of course, for the more sophisticated virtual reality games that the Army and Marine recruiters will bring later to test their war skills.

Come on now, we all know it's true. The war industry is the largest, most powerful, and surely, the most profitable industry on the planet. So what can we do, with our own meager means, if in our own small way we want to put an end to war or at least throw a monkey wrench into the works? One good starting point might be to get your hands on a copy of *War Is A Racket* by Major General Smedley D. Butler, USMC. He

was twice awarded the Medal of Honor for the longest time the most decorated Marine in USMC history. It is a sensational 80-page look at the history of the modern day US war industry, with two dozen startling photos. In one part Butler summarizes the "steps that must be taken to smash the war racket." He writes, "we must permit the youth of the land who would bear arms to decide whether or not there should be war."

Next step? Get involved in a local counter-recruiting movement (CR) or start your own CR effort. It's really not difficult at all. Try to concentrate on one high school or middle school and play follow-the-leader with one or more of the many CR organizations that exist online. Simply use your favorite search engine and go for it. A word of caution. Don't be too ambitious. Go after one school at a time and once you have found a school overridden by recruiters,

lock in and make it your primary target. Do not feel you must go it alone. Latch on to at least one other buddy and form a team and concentrate, concentrate, concentrate. Remember, the human brain is not fully developed until around 25 to 26 years of age. You can bet your ass the Pentagon remembers it and makes that fact a huge part of its marketing and recruiting strategy. ☮

MICHAEL BURKE IS A VIETNAM COMBAT VETERAN WHO SERVED OVER TEN YEARS IN THE ARMY, WITH TOURS IN GERMANY, KOREA, AND VIETNAM. HE IS A CO-FOUNDER OF SAFE PASSAGE NETWORK, WHICH CONCERNED ITSELF WITH CR WORK IN METRO ATLANTA COUNTIES. BURKE IS ALSO A PROUD GRANDFATHER OF SIX AND ENJOYS SPENDING TIME WITH HIS 4-YEAR-OLD GRANDSON WHO LIVES IN ATLANTA. YOU MIGHT WANT TO VISIT SAFEPASSAGENETWORK.ORG TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MG BUTLER.



1972 Republican Convention in Miami.

VVAW Fundraiser

BRIAN MATARRESE

The annual VVAW/Warrior Princess BBQ will be held on June 14th at my house in Levittown, NY, a community founded for returning WWII veterans. Last year over 75 people came and had a great time. On previous occasions we raised funds for Geoff Millard of IVAW to go to Haiti, and boxes of food and clothing for The Veterans Place, an organization that assist vets on Long Island. This year it will benefit the Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign. The campaign may be contacted at PO Box 303, Prince

Station, New York, NY 10012-0006. Email: info@vn-agentorange.org.

We have thought about having a raffle. With first prize being a date with Marty Webster but since the winner would have to feed him we are not sure if this is doable. As usual Joe Treglio will be in charge of sweets and desserts so we will try to have extra Lipitor and other statins available. All are invited and we hope to have a great time. Starting time is 2:00 pm and will last to whenever.



Joe Treglio, Marty Webster, and Mike Gold.

Veterans Organizing Conference, New York City

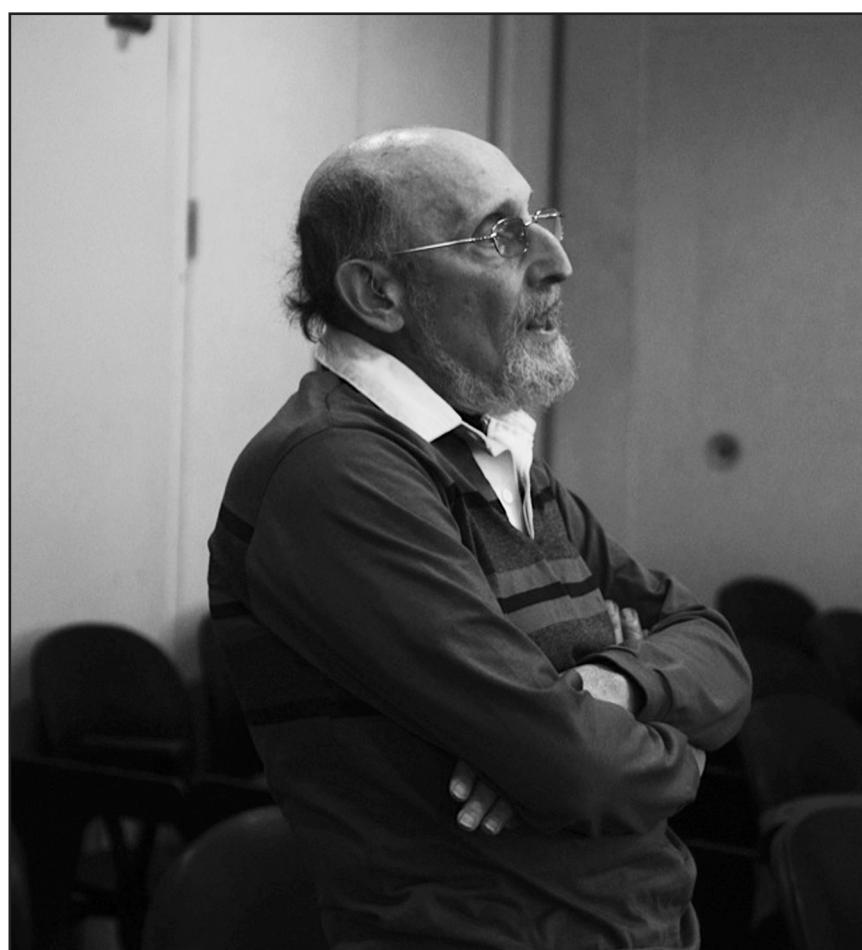
SUSAN SCHNALL

About 35 veterans and allies attended all or part of the day-long "Veterans Organizing Conference" sponsored by the Veterans Peace Council of Metro New York and its affiliated organizations, and staged at the Joseph S. Murphy Institute of the City University of New York on February 22, 2014. Susan Schnall (VVAW & VFP) and Ben Chitty (VVAW & VFP) moderated the event. Laurie Sandow provided staff support.

This conference followed up on the Council's "Conference on the Veterans Peace Movement," held last May at Rutgers Presbyterian Church in New York City. The May conference's morning sessions discussed veterans' witness to war, patriotic myths and rewriting history, and veterans and the politics of war. The conference's afternoon sessions

ans Peace Teams and VFP) talked about direct actions by veterans. Al Stolzer and Tom Barton (Military Resistance) examined dissent and resistance in the military. Bill Gilson (VFP/NYC) discussed participation in Armistice Day events, commemorating the Christmas Peace Truce of 1914, and the Agent Orange campaign. Ken Dalton (VVAW and VFP/NJ) talked about the chapter's international composition and work with grassroots organizations.

Participants discussed many other activities and concerns, including women veterans' issues, support for veterans in minority communities, challenges to restrictions on constitutional rights, lobbying campaigns, protesting drones, closing Guantánamo, work with US Labor Against War, counter recruitment, community



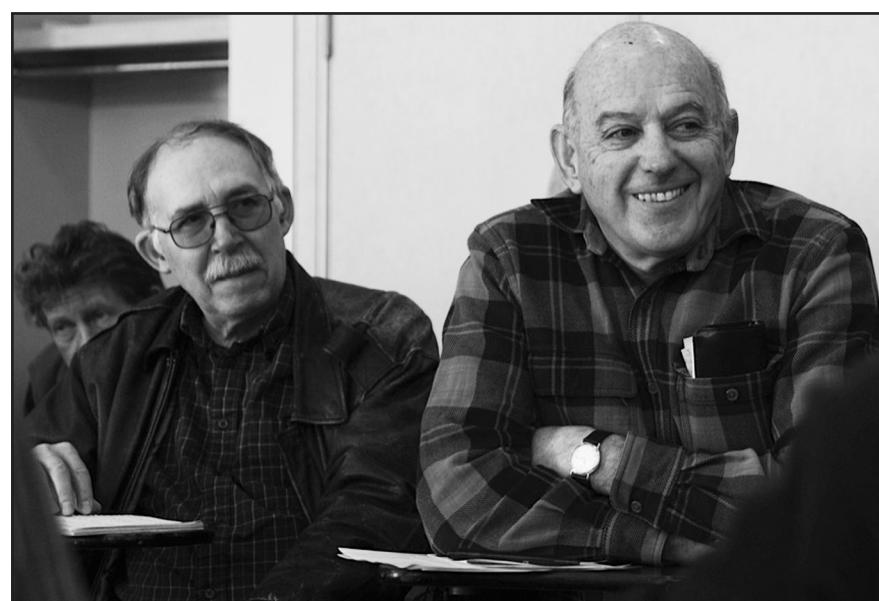
Mike Gold.

focused on what veterans bring to the movement for peace and social justice, what the movement can do for veterans, and how to organize veterans as veterans in the movement.

The morning session of February 22 began with presentations by representatives from organizations affiliated or closely associated with the Council. Brian Mataresse (VVAW) focused on solidarity with Vietnam and projects such as Agent Orange relief and recovering Vietnamese MIAs. Matt Howard (IVAW) described Right to Heal. Tarak Kauff (Veter-

organizing, intergenerational projects, and full disclosure of the real history of the American War in Vietnam. Ben Chitty opened the afternoon session with a summary of the morning's discussion. The various activities and campaigns fit into one or more of five categories: education, civic participation, outreach, direct action, and specific issues.

In the context of the Christmas Truce of 1914, three veterans' reconciliation projects were described. Jan Barry talked about Warrior Writers and Walt Nygard spoke about the therapeutic effects



Jan Barry and Frank Toner.

of the Combat Papers project, in which veterans turn their old uniforms into paper. Both projects work on the premise that art heals the soul. Susan Schnall presented the Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign, based on the principle that we have a responsibility to care for people harmed by our weapons and wars.

Ben Chitty presented a short summary of the importance of the Christmas Peace Truce when ordinary soldiers made temporary peace with their enemies, causing the Western Front to fall silent during WWI. The truce broke out spontaneously in many places, and more than a hundred thousand soldiers took part. This was an extraordinary event, a peace created by soldiers. Conference participants agreed that veterans should issue a call to commemorate the Christmas Truce of 1914, with suggestions including a hundred-day campaign beginning on International Peace Day, festivals featuring armistice-related movies

and performances, gatherings at Vietnam Memorials and issuing the call for peace.

The Veterans Peace Council will hold its next conference on Saturday, May 10, 2014 at the Joseph F. Murphy Institute. Discussion will focus on the significance for veterans of the Christmas Truce of 1914, and the campaign for its centennial commemoration.

This story is based on Ben Chitty's report on the conference. The full report is available on the Council's Facebook site www.facebook.com/veteranspeacecouncil.



SUSAN SCHNALL IS A CO-COORDINATOR OF THE VIETNAM AGENT ORANGE RELIEF AND RESPONSIBILITY CAMPAIGN. SHE IS CURRENTLY A PROFESSOR IN HEALTH POLICY AND PLANNING AT NYU AND A MEMBER OF VFP AND APHA. SHE IS ON THE VVAW BOARD.



Ben Chitty.

Vets for Equal Rights

DANNY INGRAM

I was talking to my friend Michael Burke during the recent holidays about an amazing experience I had at a veterans' conference last fall. Mike is a member of VVAW and thought my story was worth sharing. He asked me to share the story with you, so now that I am homebound amidst the Great Atlanta Ice Storm of 2014, I decided to write it up.

I am the former national president of a gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender veterans service organization. Last September we held our national convention in Denver. It is always a special experience to get together with other vets and share stories and experiences. As with most conventions, some of the most important work took place outside the conference room.

A bunch of us guys were sitting around in the hospitality suite, having some drinks and shootin' the shit as vets do so well. Most of the guys in the room that

night were local, and they knew each other. The exploits were getting bigger and the tales more outrageous. Out of nowhere one of the guys jumped in with a horrific story of what happened to him in Iraq. A massive explosion. Incredible injuries, and terrible suffering. Years of recovery. Permanent disability. The room was silent. Most of the guys in the room knew this former soldier, but they had never heard his story before. They were amazed.

That young vet experienced the incredible power of healing by finally telling his story. He had not shared it before, even with his friends, even fellow vets.

What happened in that hotel room in Denver was that we created a safe space, a space where he could share that story, a space where he felt safe finally sharing his fragmenting pain. It was a powerful experience for all of us. I left that room changed. I had been a part of someone else's healing.

I helped make that space for him.

We are healing to each other. We make the spaces necessary for that healing to take place, when we get together and share our stories. When we listen. That experience was the highlight of my convention. I experienced healing myself. I left that conference more whole than when I arrived. It is a simple thing to sit and listen to another veteran tell his or her story. But it can be the most powerful thing we ever do for another person.

In this age of technology where we can always be somewhere else, distracted by the ubiquitous electronic device in our hand, we should never lose the profound importance of being human with another human person. When we are present with another person, we are ourselves most profoundly human. And it is in that space that we become miracles of healing for each other. We both heal. We rediscover our

humanity, the vulnerabilities, and the strengths, of who we are.

Gay and lesbian veterans have problems finding this level of safety with other vets who may not accept us or allow us this incredible opportunity to find healing, not only from the injuries of combat, but from the pain of growing up LGBT in a society that teaches us to hate ourselves before we even understand who we are. I challenge VVAW to be this safe space where gay vets can find healing, and if the walls prove too high, send them to us. We will be their home, and their healing.

Thank you for allowing me to share this story. And thank you for all your great work.



DANNY INGRAM IS THE IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT FOR AMERICAN VETERANS FOR EQUAL RIGHTS (AVER). VISIT AVER ONLINE AT AVER.US.

A Call to Lay Down Arms and Recognize Our Common Humanity

SUSAN SCHNALL

December 2014 will mark 100 years since the World War I 1914 Christmas Truce. On this sacred centenary, let's build a peace to end war. December 2014 is an opportunity to pay homage to the peacemakers of 1914. Join the Veterans Peace Council in calling on warring factions, sects, and nations to lay down arms, recognize our common humanity and find the road to peace.

On Christmas Eve 1914, ordinary soldiers made temporary peace with their enemies, causing the Western Front to fall silent. The truce broke out spontaneously in many places, with soldiers emerging from their trenches, exchanging cigarettes and gifts, singing Christmas carols, burying their dead, and, in some places, participating in impromptu soccer games.

It was an extraordinary event—a peace created by soldiers. Then hostilities resumed. By the end of World War I there were over 16 million deaths and 20 million wounded; military and civilian casualties totaled over 37 million.

World War I "began" on June 28, 1914, when Serbian nationalists assassinated the

Archduke Franz Ferdinand of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, setting off a succession of events in the governments of Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy, Austria, Serbia, and Russia with demands and time lines that led to the mobilization of armies and begin World War I by the summer of 1914. A cartoon from that time illustrates the "Chain of Friendship," depicting the web of alliances: "if Austria attacks Serbia, Russia will fall upon Austria, Germany upon Russia, and France and England upon Germany."

Theories abound regarding the cause of the War: changes in the balance of world power, diplomatic clashes between the Great Powers, growth of nationalism across Europe, arms races, imperial and colonial rivalry for wealth, power and prestige, in addition to economic and military rivalry in industry and trade.

The Western Front was a static line of trench systems which stretched from the coast of the North Sea southwards to the Swiss border and consisted of hastily dug out trenches with barbed wire entanglements.

Armies employed huge artillery bombardments followed by attacks of tens of thousands of soldiers. The principal adversaries were Germany to the east against France and the United Kingdom to the west.

On December 24th, 1914, soldiers began to sing Christmas chorals and approach each other across the wide trenches of battle. It was a peace that lasted 24 hours.

Its power lies in the idea that we can bring about peace and justice in this world. So let us honor and commemorate the 100th anniversary of the soldiers' call to peace. For additional information contact: Veterans Peace Council/ info@veteranspeacecouncil.org/ or www.facebook.com/veteranspeacecouncil



RIP Bob Riggle

JOHN LINDQUIST

We will miss you Bob Riggle. He was a good man. I first met Bob at Washington High School, Milwaukee in 1965. He was a year behind me but we were both in band and orchestra; that's where the girls were. Bob and I played trombone, which in marching band lingo made us "boners." We had a passing friendship until my graduation in 1966. I figured we would never meet again.

We were reunited again by Vietnam. I was in the USMC 1967-69. Bob was in the Army 1969-71. He was in Da Nang in 1971 and saw a copy of the *Winter Soldier*, our first National Newspaper. I was listed as Regional Coordination for Wisconsin and Upper Michigan so he wrote a letter. "Did we play trombone in High School and can you send some acid?" "Yes I did," I replied, "and can you send us some Nam grass?"

His tour went well and upon arriving home he joined the Milwaukee Chapter of VVAW. Whether it was demos, takeovers, work parties, security or just partying, Bob was there. All through the war on the VA, Bob was there. He was around until the late 70s, and then he left for Arizona for landscaping.

Bob was back and forth through the years but he always stepped back into VVAW no matter what was up. Finally, Wisconsin winters became too much for Bob and it was back to the southwest and the landscaping jobs he loved.

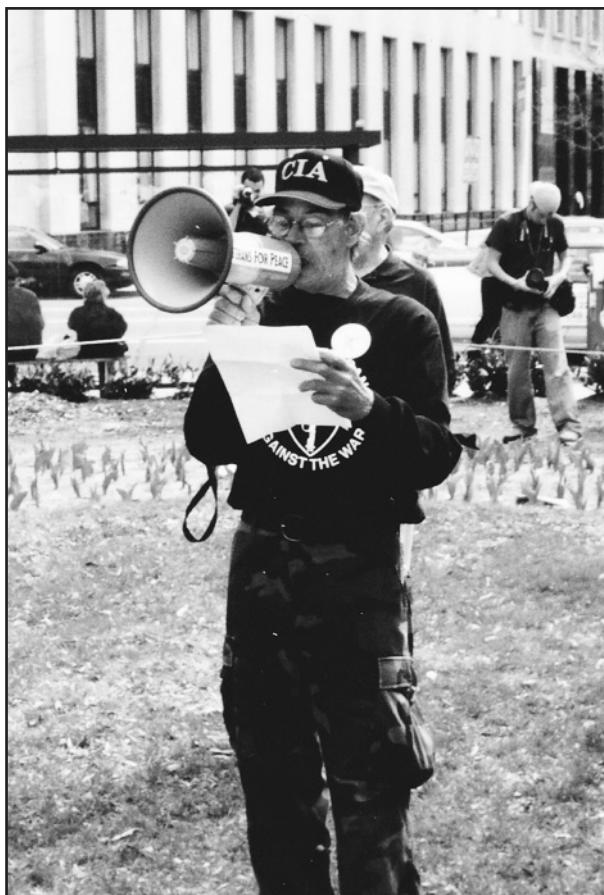
Semper Fi Bob. We will miss you.



JOHN LINDQUIST IS A LONGTIME MEMBER OF VVAW.



Bob at the Milwaukee Beer Fest, 2004.



Bob in DC, 2003.



John Lindquist, Bob Riggle, Mike Goetsch in Milwaukee.



Mike Goetsch, Dave Kettenhofen and Bob Riggle at the Wall in 2003.

The Future Is Now

R. G. CANTALUPO

Born in the shadow of the mushroom clouds of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we are the first generation to grow up with the reality of earthly extinction merely a pushed-button away.

And that marks us as if by an indelible stain.

October 1962: The Cuban Missile Crisis.

When I re-imagine the living fear of those weeks, I'm viscerally flooded with dread, nausea and cortisol. The nightmarish (and absurd) fight or flight images of bomb shelters, hiding under school desks, and storing canned food and water bottles to protect against radiation effects lasting centuries splotches my brain like a smeared blood trail.

I was thirteen.

A lifetime ago, but as I sit down to write about "future wars" tonight while the hot winds of a potentially devastating present war with Russia blow through the Oval office, through the halls of Congress and the Senate, through the distorted and hawkish minds of the corporate media, and out the mouths of thousands of men and women over the air-waves, the same visceral dread floods my veins.

I have been against war ever since I fought a war.

And I have never met another combat veteran — someone who killed and witnessed others being killed, who woke up post-trauma, reliving battles they wished to forget — advocate war as a solution to a political or economic problem, or out of some self-righteous fervor called patriotism.

Those of us who remember wish to forget.

Those of us who have

forgotten wish not to be reminded.

Those of us who could not and can not forget and whose wishes remain as unanswered prayers, have found ways to help others, self-medicate, or become proactive in order to survive.

The guilt of having survived when some of the best among us did not, becomes our most devastating enemy; suicide and addiction our weapons of mass destruction; our hope that no one will die in vain again, our life's long battle cry.

If I look beyond today however, beyond this cross of history we are currently forced to bear, if I'm able to see ten or twenty years into the future, I do not see war, or at least war as we know it.

Not wars like Vietnam, or Iraq, or Afghanistan, or Syria, or the Ukraine.

In the future, we will need to redefine what we mean by war.

Will drone warfare waged on domestic and foreign enemies of the New World Order on a computer screen in an office in New Mexico or Utah be war?

Will H.A.R.P. warfare waged with ELF waves shot from Alaska into millions of brainwashed brains or up into clouds to create devastating climatic events be war?

Will economic terrorism or monetary fascism be called war?

But perhaps even to define war in America is an impossible task.

Because for us, war is a way of life, a cultural milieu. We declare war on everything: Drugs. Crime. Terrorists. Obesity. Wolves. Cancer.

We decimate small farmers

growing wheat or corn with non-Monsanto seeds.

We search and destroy purple-mountain majesties by cutting off their peaks, fracking them, and destroying everything that surrounds them, humans, animals, plants, water, air, soil.

We blast oceans with sonic waves to test our warring capabilities accidentally killing thousands of dolphins, whales and numerous other species, collateral damage.

We wage war on sharks for shark-fin soup that magically gives hard-ons to ultra-rich connoisseurs.

We wipe out rivers, lakes, forests, and whole eco-systems and argue it's a betterment or necessity of life.

We extinguish species, cultures, civilizations.

We've become the best killing machine money can buy and we do it under the false banners of freedom or God or self-righteousness, while the real banner being flown is to make more profits or carve out more power for the richest 1/10th of 1% among us.

Perhaps instead of future war(s), we should simply think of perpetual war.

Perpetual war on Human Rights and Dignity.

Perpetual war on Freedom of Expression.

Perpetual war on the US Constitution.

Perpetual war on Privacy.

Perpetual war on Freedom of Assembly.

Perpetual war on truth, books, ideas, independent thinking and hope.

Perpetual war on the

homeless, the disenfranchised, the mentally ill, the aged, on anti-war protesters, on veterans, on civil disobedience, on peace.

Perpetual war on the poorest and least powerful among us.

And what will these perpetual wars look like?

They will not be televised.

They will not be broadcast on corpora-tocracy TV.

They will be battled anonymously in the middle of the night inside the castles and fortresses of our homes against the pit-bulls of governmental police, often ending in staged suicides or accidental sudden deaths.

They will be brought to us in the living color of flames like "The Hunger Games" or Waco, Texas.

They will be defended as they are now, by our peaceful resistance and the honor of our presence; by the belief in a quality of life beyond mind and debt slavery doled out by the New World Order.

They will be waged against whomever wishes to monitor our thoughts and actions; to pass laws in our name that imprison us with cameras and recording devices and neighborhood drones; against lies, revisions, spectacles, and perpetual propaganda.

They may well be our last battles, for if we lose there will be nothing left to fight for, nor any reason to resist.

We will have become who they wish us to be: conscienceless soldiers following orders from above; Manchurian Candidates, the Mindless Masses.

And we will have forgotten who we are: Our origin and our cause for loyalty.

We are warriors against war!

Vietnam. Iraq. Afghanistan. Syria. Iran. Ukraine. Russia.

And we are witnesses: Were, and are, and will be again.

And So We Stand.

Pledge our allegiance.

Begin, again.



1972 Republican Convention in Miami.

R. G. CANTALUPO'S (ROSS CANTON) WORK HAS BEEN PUBLISHED 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.

They Were Soldiers: How the Wounded Return from America's Wars – The Untold Story

JOHN KETWIG (REVIEWER)

They Were Soldiers: How the Wounded Return from America's Wars – The Untold Story

Ann Jones

(Haymarket Books, 2013)

They Were Soldiers came to my attention via Truth-out.org, the online news and commentary site I trust as my primary source for awareness of what's happening in the world. This is one of those books "every American should read." Ann Jones is an accomplished journalist, photographer, and author who was, for a time, embedded with American forces in Afghanistan. She has reported on the impact of wars in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa, and writes regularly for *The Nation* and TomDispatch.com.

They Were Soldiers is a piledriver book, riveting and relentless. The author follows America's wounded from the battlefields of Afghanistan through the long journey home, interviewing medical personnel, victims, and family members at every stop along the way. She has uncovered statistics, and instances where statistics are very carefully not kept by the military, presumably because the data would be embarrassing. The observations in this book are heart-wrenching and infuriating. When we were in Vietnam, we said our wounded and dead brothers were "wasted," and we soon realized that our military considered us expendable. If anything, things are far worse today. Jones is fully appreciative of the many advances in medical care for the wounded,

but she carefully documents that America's war effort does not include nearly enough medical resources to treat the terrible injuries happening daily in Afghanistan. Her descriptions of the wounds from IED devices made me understand as never before the effectiveness of those weapons, and the terrible damage they do to a human body. Clearly, technical progress has made weapons more devastating even as medicine has learned more about patching up the damages. I suppose human progress is marching on, but what a shame that we do these things to our fellows.

"It's not a huge number of people," the urological surgeon says, speaking of men who have suffered devastating wounds to their genitals when an IED detonated at their feet, "but the severity of the injuries, and the possibility of complications down the road—that weighs heavily. The kind of injuries—you don't have any idea of the devastation until you see it up close. This has been eye opening. It's given me a new understanding of the costs of armed conflict. Even being in the military, I didn't know." An ER nurse, an Army major on her second deployment to Bagram, says she has lost count of the number of quadruple amputees she has treated. Asked to describe the typical case she sees in the ER, she replies, "Amputees up to the waist. No arms. No legs. No genitals. Age 21 or 22. We cry."

Jones accompanies a quadruple amputee on a flight from Afghanistan to Landstuhl, Germany. She follows other

wounded from Germany to Walter Reed hospital and interviews their families and their wives who must deal with young children and the daunting task of helping their husbands as they struggle to use prosthetic devices and wheel chairs, to deal with intense pain, and also the mental and emotional damage that occurs when the physical body is exploded. "Doctors and nurses in military uniforms told me again and again that the men are brave," Jones writes, and her simple words kick you in the gut. She follows the maimed to their homes, sees them struggle to carry on with life, and talks with their families about the challenges they all must face together. She discusses the suicides, and the addictions to pain pills and prescription drugs. She discusses the violence that has occurred once the veterans get home, and the MST (Military Sexual Trauma) that so many of our soldiers are forced to undergo. Most of all, throughout the book, Ann Jones decries the military's efforts to cover up these truths, to rationalize the devastation and maintain their blind adherence to "the mission" by denying their very humanity. Jones rails against the "God squad" of Evangelical Christian chaplains who have infiltrated today's military and created the impression among Americans that US military power is always "good," and "even a necessary adjunct to the accomplishment of Christ's saving mission." Military bookstores, she tells us, now stock racks of evangelical literature and far-right, conservative propaganda. She

THEY WERE SOLDIERS

How the Wounded Return from America's Wars—The Untold Story



ANN JONES

A Dispatch Books project

"No sentimental bullshit here... Read this book."
—Jonathan Shay, author of *Odyssey in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming*

talks about PTSD, the emotional damage that is done, and the military's efforts to avoid the realities of what modern war does to the spirits of the people who witness its cruelty and carnage.

They Were Soldiers is not an enjoyable book. It asks hard questions about America's militarism, and the costs of our military adventuring around the world. Yes, Jones recognizes the human spirit that drives so many of the terribly wounded to get on with their lives despite the tremendous obstacles, but she also questions the overwhelming costs in human terms. America's wars since Vietnam have been created from lies and misrepresentations, and the military-industrial-intelligence complex has profited enormously. Our wounded veterans struggle on quietly, painfully, accompanied by their damaged families. We do not have adequate facilities to deal with the devastation, and there are scant signs that the situation will get any better soon. The powers that be would like us all to remain oblivious. Ann Jones' tremendous book shines a bright light into this dark corner of America's history. I strongly recommend that you read *They Were Soldiers*. As a veteran, a tax payer, and a citizen, I consider it one of the most important books I have ever read. Please read it. Think of it as a patriotic duty.



JOHN KETWIG IS A LIFETIME MEMBER OF VVAW, AND THE AUTHOR OF ...AND A HARD RAIN FELL: A G.I.'S TRUE STORY OF THE WAR IN VIETNAM. FIRST PUBLISHED BY MACMILLAN IN 1985, IT IS STILL AVAILABLE AT MOST BOOKSTORES.



Brian Matarrese, Ben Chitty, and Mike Gold at NYC Veterans Day, November 11, 2013.

Full Disclosure: Toward an Honest Commemoration of the American War in Viet Nam

HOWARD MACHTINGER

The Full Disclosure campaign is a Veterans For Peace effort to speak truth to power and keep alive the anti-war perspective on the American War in Vietnam. It is a clear alternative to the Department of Defense's (DoD) efforts to sanitize and mythologize the US conflict in Vietnam, legitimizing the continuation of further unnecessary and destructive wars.

President Obama has announced his plan, starting in 2012, for a 13-year-long commemoration funded at \$65 million: "As we observe the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War ... we pay tribute to the more than 3 million servicemen and women who ... pushed through jungles and rice paddies, heat and monsoon, fighting heroically to protect the ideals we hold dear as Americans." (See the official web site at www.vietnamwar50th.com).

Rather than conducting an honest evaluation to glean important lessons from US intervention in Vietnam, the DoD is promoting an ex post facto justification of the war without acknowledging the terrible destruction and damage done to the Vietnamese people and land. Neither is the DoD honestly confronting the lasting impact of this conflict on American soldiers and their families, from loss of life and physical disabilities and

illnesses, to the transmission of birth defects to their progeny. The DoD does not mention the millions of Vietnamese, including women and children who were captured, tortured, displaced, and killed. There is no representation of the heroic American soldiers who resisted the American War in Vietnam, nor any real acknowledgment of domestic protest. And the DoD project does not pay tribute to the voices and postwar reconciliation activities of many antiwar veterans.

Our goal is to mount a national campaign to present an accurate and honest history of the American War in Vietnam. This campaign will include:

- 1. Coordinated actions** on the 50th anniversary of the Gulf of Tonkin "incident" and Resolution (in August/September 2014) as well as other important anniversaries.
- 2. Protests at DoD events.**
- 3. Teach-ins during the spring of 2015**, the 50th anniversary of the original teach-ins focusing on the realities of the war, the nature of modern warfare, the dangers to civilians, etc.
- 4. Development of mobile exhibits of art and photography** on Vietnam and modern warfare.
- 5. Speaking tours and forums** on issues including chemical warfare, attacks on civilians, the fantasies of automated, ro-

botic war, the legacies of war (particularly Agent Orange).

6. Developing materials to celebrate a pantheon of heroes such as Hugh Thompson, Ron Ridenour, Muhammad Ali, Donald Duncan, Daniel Ellsberg, Susan Schnall, and many others.

If you are interested in supporting this campaign, please go to our web site at www.vietnamfulldisclosure.org or email us at vncom50@gmail.com. We cannot allow the propagandists of official history to indoctrinate future generations about this terrible war. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa warns: "The past, far from disappearing or lying down and being quiet, has an embarrassing and persistent way of returning and haunting us, unless it has in fact been dealt with adequately."

Upcoming Anniversaries:

- 8/04-8/1964: The largely fabricated Gulf of Tonkin incident
- 8/07/1964: US Congress passes Gulf of Tonkin resolution giving the President a free hand without declaring war
- 3-6/1965: Anti-war teach-ins on US campuses
- 3/02/1965: US begins bombing of North Vietnam in Operation Rolling Thunder
- 3/08/1965: US marines land in Da Nang marking a major escalation

of US military involvement

- 3/17/1965: 25,000 march against the war in Washington DC
- 10-11/1965: Large antiwar demonstrations throughout US, including the first public burning of a draft card by David Miller
- 12/1965: The total of US troops in Vietnam exceeds 184,000
- 8/23/1966: Muhammad Ali applies for conscientious objector status, declaring that "I ain't got no quarrel with the Viet Cong"
- 6/1966: Fort Hood Three refuse deployment to Vietnam
- 12/28/1966: Capt. Howard Levy charged with promoting "disloyalty and disaffection" among soldiers at Ft. Jackson and of refusing to teach dermatology to Special Forces airmen.



HOWARD MACHTINGER WAS A SDS REPRESENTATIVE AT THE SECOND SESSION OF THE BERTRAND RUSSELL INTERNATIONAL WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL (COPENHAGEN, 1967). AFTER THE WAR, HE HELPED FOUND THE VIETNAM SUPPORT COMMITTEE IN SEATTLE. HE MADE THE FIRST OF MANY VISITS TO VIETNAM IN 2002. HE IS AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER, VETERANS FOR PEACE, CHAPTER 157.



Vietnam Protests, Kent State, and Nixon's Cambodian Invasion 1970

DANIEL C. LAVERY

Dan Embree, a West Point graduate, joined me and other Academy graduates to form a peace organization opposed to the genocide in Vietnam called Concerned Academy Graduates. He resembled Abe Lincoln, at six feet three, penetrating eyes, and chiseled chin. Twenty members founded the group that included Ed Fox, an Annapolis classmate, and Hastings' law student. We held a press conferences voicing our opposition to the Vietnam debacle. Embree, studying for a PhD in English, gladly wrote position papers. We decided upon the wording on our petition to Congress to remove our troops from Vietnam.

At one of our meetings on the University of California Berkeley campus, a group of loud disrupters suddenly entered and shouted, "We're the gay liberation army and demand to be heard!" They made so much noise we could not hold our own meeting. We had already decided on our purpose before the interference, so we disbanded. Long afterwards we learned that this incident appeared as one of many Republican Party dirty tricks in a Freedom of Information request filed by the ACLU.

As I drove home, I saw a man with a sign in the back window of his truck where he had a rifle mounted with a peace sign that called it "Footprint of the American Chicken." I zoomed up in front of him with my convertible containing "Vets for Peace,"

a peace sign, and "Vietnam Vets Against the War" bumper stickers. He jumped out and confronted me. Face to face with an angry old man with gray hair, a white tee shirt with an American Flag, and faded jeans. He screamed, "I lost my son in Vietnam! You peacenik punks deserve to die."

Thinking he might do something crazy I quickly said in a measured tone, "I am a Vietnam vet. I'm sorry you lost your son."

Tears streamed from his face, "I want the protestors to know my son's life was worth something."

"Everyone's life is precious, mister."

He turned around and slowly walked back to his truck shaking his head. I knew he had a rifle and was distraught. Stunned by such emotion, I raced to my car, jumped in, and sped off leaving one of the endless confrontations Americans had about Vietnam. How ugly that could have been had he led with his weapon without hearing my words.

Vietnam Veterans Against the War and Veterans for Peace both held rallies, press conferences against the War, and marched at every peace demonstration. It surprised me to find my name mentioned by KCET after the camera caught me saying at a press conference, "The United States has unleashed its military monster on the Vietnamese people killing over two million Vietnamese men, women, children, and babies while we have lost nearly

50,000 Americans in a civil war. Please support our effort to bring the troops home and stop this destruction." The announcer added, "Dan Lavery will be speaking at the demonstration and hopes a large number of the public will join the Concerned Academy Graduates, Vets For Peace, and Vietnam Vets Against the War this Saturday at noon." How quickly my name became associated with peace marches marveled me having just arrived in Berkeley in August 1969. Media power amazed me that I had a public identity in such a short time.

Berkeley Campus had many demonstrations that caught the attention of progressive crowds. "People's Park" was a small plot of land used for speeches, planting vegetables, and protesting. It became a line in the sand for demonstrators and the establishment. Police in riot gear had blinded a student there, injured many others, and brutalized the crowd with their nightsticks and tear gas. Mario Savio, an eloquent spokesman dating back to the Free Speech Movement a few years before, urged the crowd to stop the madness of the "odious machinery of the state," in Vietnam or on campus. Peace advocates in the hundreds shouted, "One, Two, Three, Four. We don't want your fucking war."

On April 30, 1970, President Richard Nixon demonstrated his dishonesty in telling America he was the peace candidate for the

1968 presidential election when he ordered the invasion of neutral Cambodia. Students, peace groups, and the growing outraged public joined in massive demonstrations to protest this blatant abuse of military power, rejection of the mood of the public, and world opinion. Protests dominated the news. Hastings College of Law, many colleges, and high schools marched and shouted disapproval of the escalating American war machine Nixon led.

On May 4, 1970, the shooting of unarmed college students by members of the Ohio National Guard left four students dead. Seventy-seven National Guard troops from A Company and Troop G, with bayonets fixed on their rifles fired 67 rounds killing four students aged 19 and 20, wounded nine others—one suffered permanent paralysis. Four million students waged a student strike. Hastings faculty responded by making exams optional and allowed us to make speeches, join peace rallies, and do draft counseling. We led detailed presentations to the students, answered questions, and gave them information how to claim conscientious objection. Some were patriotic and equated that emotion with a requirement to support the President no matter what he ordered. We knew this from first-hand experience, challenged blind patriotism, and showed them how military officers opposed the Vietnam War.

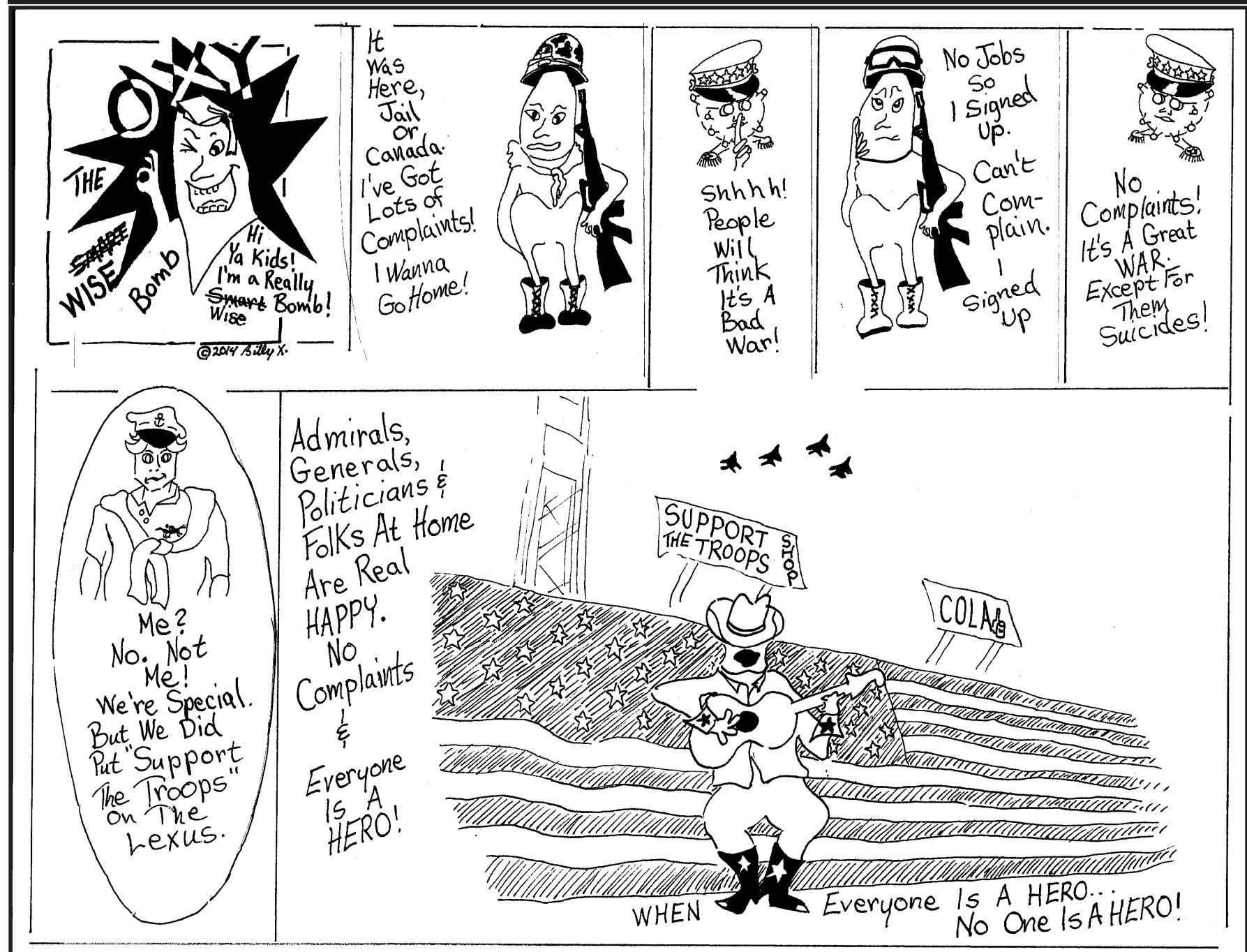
At a televised peace rally for VVAW in San Francisco behind hundreds of protesting vets, I marched to honor former member of the House of Representatives, George Brown, opponent of the Vietnam War, read my anti-war statement, and threw my Vietnam medals into a coffin. We believed our protests were the most patriotic actions we could take against the Nixon Administration's abuse of international law.



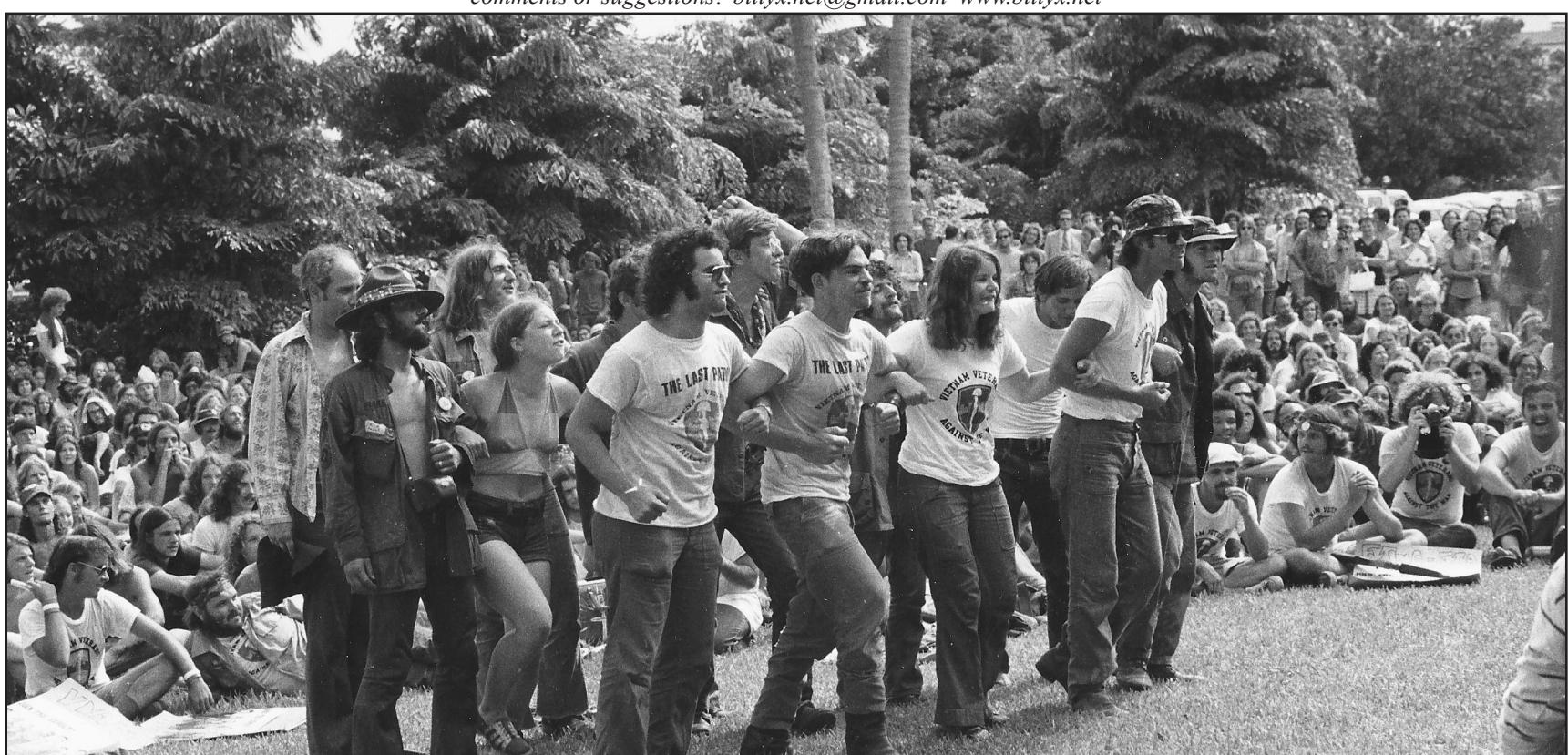
VVAW MEMBER DANIEL C. LAVERY GRADUATED ANNAPOLIS, NAVIGATED A NAVY JET AND SHIP, TURNED PEACE ACTIVIST, AND CIVIL RIGHTS LAWYER FOR CESAR CHAVEZ'S UFW. HIS MEMOIR, "ALL THE DIFFERENCE," DESCRIBES HIS EXPERIENCES. WWW.DANIELCLAVERY.COM



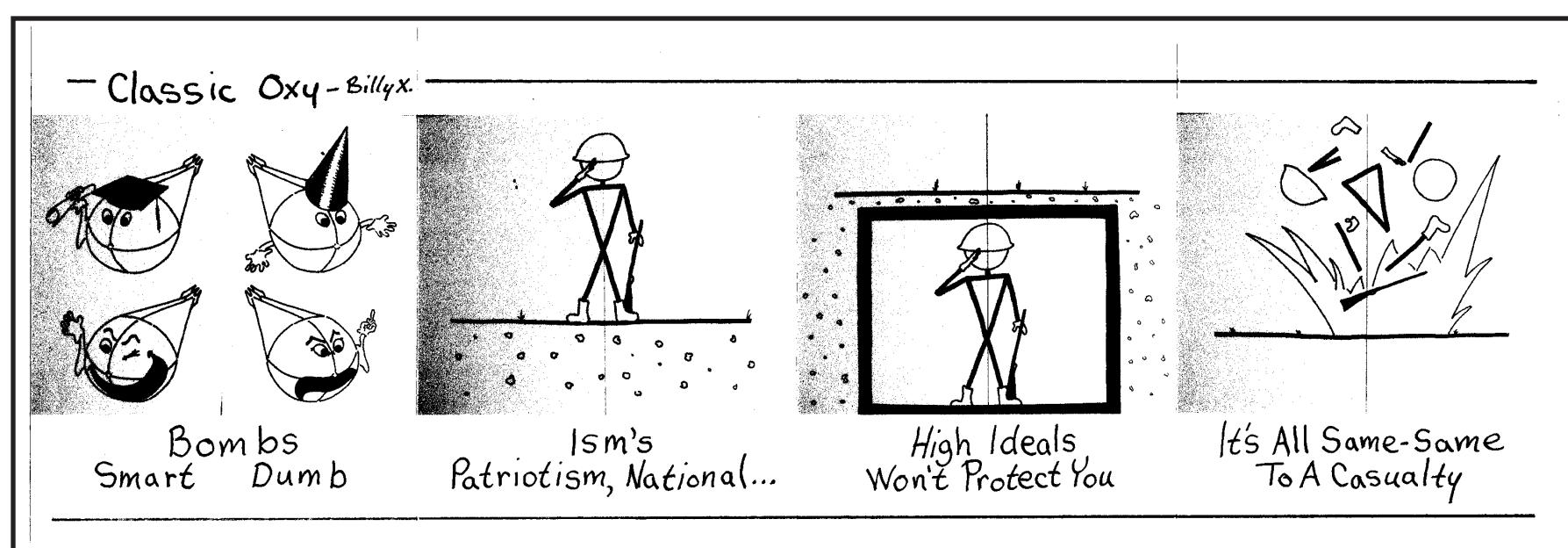
Dan Lavery at a peace rally in San Francisco.



comments or suggestions? billyx.net@gmail.com www.billyx.net



Flamingo Park, 1972 Republican Convention in Miami.



They Marched Into Sunlight: War and Peace in America and Vietnam

BONNIE CARACCIOLLO (REVIEWER)

**They Marched Into Sunlight:
War and Peace in America and
Vietnam**
David Maraniss
(*Simon & Schuster, 2003*)

David Maraniss begins his book with a short biography of each young man turning up at Ft. Lewis, Washington on their way to the USNS Pope, embarking from San Diego for the long voyage to South Vietnam. These young enlistees were heading to the port of Vung Tau on the South China Sea, a world away. The author introduces us to each man and we immediately feel a kinship. Meanwhile, the reader is introduced to a South Vietnamese soldier who has joined with the North to drive the foreigners from their land. We feel a kinship, somehow, with this man as well.

1967 was a benchmark year

in world history. The year was especially significant in the United States where young people were fighting wars on two fronts. David Maraniss stops time during several days in the month of October. His book focuses on the twin stories of those fighting and those protesting a war that divided a generation.

Intertwined with the personal remembrances of the soldiers of the Black Lions, are the thoughts and memories of their Viet Cong adversaries. A personal, inside narration of their deepest feelings about their loved ones, their homes, their friends, and their expectations.

On the morning of October 17, 1967, 155 US soldiers headed into the jungle, loaded down with ammunition hoping for an ordinary day in a not-so-ordinary war. Alpha Company would lead the way with Delta just behind

them. Yet, there would be a feeling of foreboding.

Students awoke in Madison on that same Fall morning, with the plan for a demonstration and protest against the presence of Dow Chemical on campus. Dow produced napalm, a weapon used in the Vietnam War.

Neither group would encounter what they expected, far from it. The telling of the stories is as poignant and powerful as the stories are themselves. This is a book of non-fiction that has the incredible feel of an important novel. If you have never read a book about the era, this is the one you must read for its gut-wrenching reality and narrative power. It is the story of a generation. It is a story for the ages. If you do not read Maraniss' book, you will have denied yourself the very center of the world that was

the era of student revolt and a war that America still debates.

The many facts and details are offered up in a panoramic view of dissent in America—of the truth of leadership in the military, the government, and on college campuses. Life as we knew it changed forever. And the lives of those remembered in this book changed for good.

Maraniss took his title from Vietnam veteran Bruce Weigl's poem, "Elegy."



BONNIE CARACCIOLLO WAS BORN IN BOSTON IN 1951. SHE IS THE PUBLISHER OF THE BLOG "VIETNAM: MY WAR TOO" AT [HTTP://MYWARTOO.BLOGSPOT.COM](http://MYWARTOO.BLOGSPOT.COM). SHE CURRENTLY LIVES IN ATLANTA BUT IS RELOCATING TO BOSTON SOON. SHE SAYS, "IF BEING ANTI-WAR IS A CRIME, CONSIDER ME A CAREER CRIMINAL."

Elegy

Into sunlight they marched,
Into dog day, into no saints day,
And were cut down.
They marched without knowing
How the air would be sucked from their lungs,
How their lungs would collapse,
How the world would twist itself, would
Bend into the cruel angle.

Into the black understanding they marched
Until the angels came
Calling their names,
Until they rose, one by one from the blood.
The light blasted down on them.
The bullets sliced through the razor grass
So there was not even time to speak.
The words would not let themselves be spoken.
Some of them died.
Some of them were not allowed to.

— Bruce Weigl

We Did What We Could

We fired on the trees
because their shadows
looked like men.

We torched the hootches
because we saw rifles
entering or leaving

doorways in the dark.
We strung wire around
a rice paddy and called it

ours for a day. We did
what we could, what we
were ordered to do. We

didn't like it. We didn't
think it was right or good.
But we did it—what else

was there to do? Some
stayed in the valley, some
on the mountain with no

name, some in the Ho Bo
Woods, some along Ho Chi
Mein's trail. Some died

later of internal wounds. And
some are still out there on a
street some where. Each of

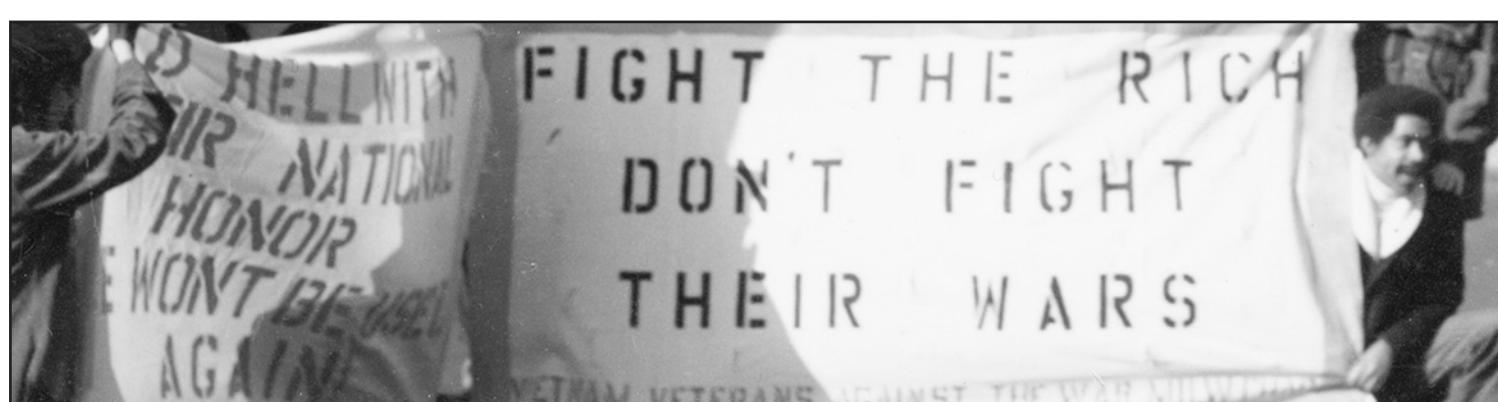
us left something we loved
behind—a girl, a friend, a
promise, a luckless Saint

Christopher, a purpled heart.
We did what we could, what
was asked of us. It wasn't

enough. Not for us. Not for our
time. Not enough to keep the
dead from rising with their

fists full of weeds, nor enough
to stop the living from cradling
them in their nights of terror.

— r. g. cantalupo



Protesting the Slaughter of Innocent Civilians

LOUIS DEBENEDETTE

Elliott Adams, of Sharon Springs, New York, along with the Hancock Drone War Crimes Resisters, was found guilty of disorderly conduct. Adams is a 67-year-old former VFP President and member of VVAW.

On Friday, February 7, Town of DeWitt Court Judge David Gideon found 12 of the 17 Hancock Drone War Crimes Resisters guilty of disorderly conduct. They had gone to Hancock Air National Guard Base near Syracuse, NY, on October 25, 2012, to bring a "Citizens War Crimes Indictment" to the base and symbolically block the gates. Their nonviolent action had called for an end to drone warfare and the slaughter of innocent civilians.

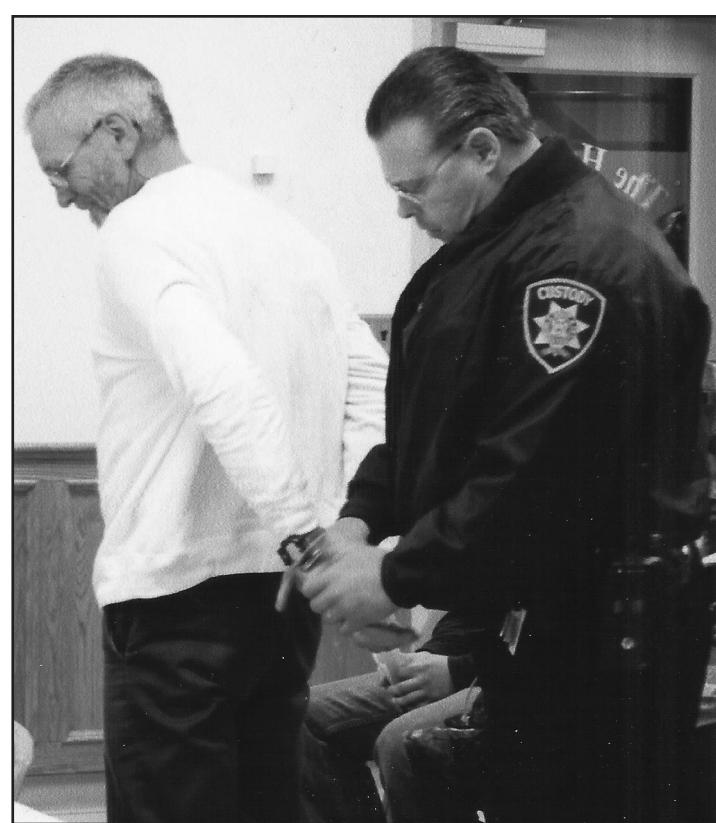
The Judge decided to send a message, saying, "At some point this has to stop." The judge gave the defendants the maximum sentence - 15 days in jail (starting immediately) and a \$250 fine with a \$125 court surcharge. He also imposed a two-year Order of Protection, prohibiting the defendants from going to the home, school, business or place of employment of Col. Earl A. Evans, Commander of Hancock's mission support group. Considering that the defendants had never met or knew of him before their arrest, it is clear that the intent is to keep people away from the base. Defendant Rae Kramer stated, "No person on the base was intimidated by us, that is clear. But the end result is to deprive me of my first amendment rights."

In sentencing statements, the defendants spoke from their hearts. Some reaffirmed their legal duties as citizens to stop war crimes. Clare Grady said, "We

went there to stop the war crimes." James Ricks hoped the judge would "sentence us to community service to investigate the war crimes they are committing at the base."

The defendants are part of the Upstate NY Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars. These activists seek to educate the public and Hancock Air Base personnel about the war crimes being perpetrated in Afghanistan with the MQ-9 Reaper Drone piloted from Hancock Air National Guard Base. We came to the base as members of the Catholic Worker and veterans' communities, along with other activists from upstate New York, who join together for regular nonviolent resistance to war and injustice at the base. We are raising a call against the use of remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) commonly known as drones. We recognize that the slaughter of war always requires war-makers to dehumanize the victims. Reliance on drones exacerbates the dehumanization because the technology allows war makers to kill a target without identifying clearly who the person is or what the person has done or is doing. Therefore we bring to this base the faces of several who have been killed, as well as the desire of a young Afghan friend, according to reports from Elliott Adams.

Further actions in the movement's efforts came on Saturday, April 5, when best-selling, award-winning journalist Jeremy Scahill spoke in Des Moines, Iowa. Scahill is a National Security Correspondent for *The Nation*. He has reported from Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, the former Yugoslavia,



Elliott Adams being arrested.

and elsewhere across the globe. He delivered a speech on drone warfare and the changing face of US foreign military occupation at the Iowa Air National Guard base in Des Moines. Elliott Adams, along with six other activists, was arrested for trespassing and disorderly conduct. Adams stated, "we want to live without war." Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said, "In a free society, few are guilty but all are responsible. If weaponized drones are flown from these bases, we, along with RPA crews, share responsibility for consequences including death of targeted victims and whatever trauma is sustained by those who operate the drones." The Iowa Air National Guard's 132nd Fighter Wing is in the process of transitioning from maintaining and flying a fleet of F-16s to missions involving remotely piloted aircraft.

Judge Amul R. Thapar also

sentenced Greg Boertje-Obed, a Vietnam-era veteran, Megan Rice, an 83-year-old Roman Catholic nun, and Vietnam veteran Michael Walli on Tuesday, February 18, 2014 in federal court in Knoxville, Tennessee. The three were convicted in May 2013 for their nonviolent action called "Transform Now Plowshares" at the Y12 Nuclear Weapons Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, on charges of depredation of property and sabotage. The sentencing included five years for Boertje-Obed and Walli, and three years for Sister Megan. All are currently serving out their sentences in federal prison.



LOUIS DEBENEDETTE IS A LONGTIME ACTIVIST AND MEMBER OF VVAW. HE IS ALSO OUR ITHACA, NY VVAW CONTACT.



Annie Bailey at Agent Orange settlement hearings in 1984.

What If? Could Tonkin Amendment Have Prevented Vietnam Ground War?

BILL CHRISTOFFERSON

What really happened in the Gulf of Tonkin in August 1964 remains murky 50 years later, despite a number of books and inquiries into a naval skirmish off the coast of North Vietnam. But it became Lyndon Johnson's justification for widening the war, and Congress quickly gave him the authority he wanted.

An amendment to the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, drafted by Wisconsin Sen. Gaylord Nelson but never introduced, might have changed history.

President Johnson went on television to say he had ordered retaliation after "renewed hostile actions" against US ships. The American response would be "limited and fitting," he declared. "We still seek no wider war."

The resolution he sent to Congress was simple. "That the Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander in Chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression." A second section said the peace and security of Southeast Asia were vital to the US national interest.

Sen. Gaylord Nelson wanted to know what that meant. Was Congress being asked to write the President a blank check on Southeast Asia? He asked J. William Fulbright, Foreign Relations Committee chairman and floor manager for the resolution, on the Senate floor, "Am I to understand that it is the sense of Congress that we are saying to the executive branch; 'If it becomes necessary to prevent further aggression, we agree now, in advance, that you may land as many divisions as deemed

necessary, and engage in a direct military assault on North Vietnam, if it becomes the judgment of the Executive, the Commander in Chief, that this is the only way to prevent further aggression?"

That would be "a grave decision on the part of our country," Fulbright said. "I personally feel it would be very unwise under any circumstances to put a large land army on the Asian continent. It has been a sort of article of faith since I have been in the Senate that we should not be bogged down." But, he admitted, "I do not know what the limits are" on what action the President could take. "I do not know how to answer the Senator's question and give him an absolute assurance that large numbers of troops would not be put ashore. I would deplore it. And I hope the conditions do not justify it now."

Nelson said he intended to vote for the resolution. "I do not think, however, that Congress should leave the impression that it consents to a radical change in our mission or objective in South Vietnam," Nelson said. The mission, he said, was to help establish "a viable, independent regime, which can manage its own affairs, so that ultimately we can withdraw from South Vietnam." Fulbright agreed, and said the resolution was "quite consistent with our existing mission and what has been our understanding of what we have been doing in South Vietnam for the last ten years."

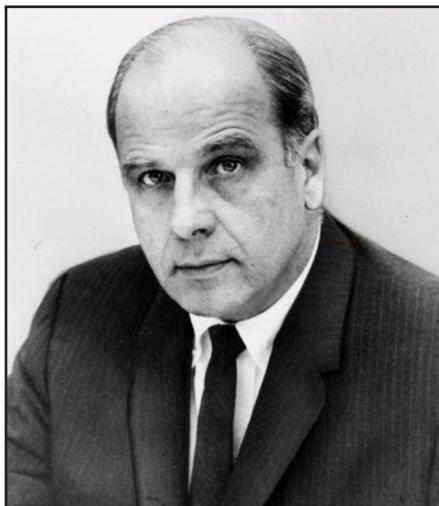
Nelson was still uneasy enough that when he walked to the Senate with George McGovern the next morning, for the final debate on the resolution, he had an amendment in his hand. It said:

"The Congress also approves and supports the efforts of the

President to bring the problem of peace in Southeast Asia to the Security Council of the United Nations, and the President's declaration that the United States, seeking no extension of the present military conflict, will respond to provocation in a way that is 'limited and fitting.' Our continuing policy is to limit our role to the provision of aid, training assistance, and military advice, and it is the sense of Congress that, except when provoked to a greater response, we should continue to avoid a direct military involvement in the Southeast Asian conflict."

McGovern and Nelson walked up to Fulbright in the front row of the Senate, and Nelson told Fulbright he wanted to introduce the amendment. "Don't do it," Fulbright said. "We want this mainly to show bipartisan support and to undercut Barry Goldwater. We'd like to see it pass unanimously. The campaign is coming up and Goldwater is going to hit him for not using our full power." Johnson had privately told Fulbright he wanted no amendments, "not even the Ten Commandments." The administration wanted strong bipartisan action now, Fulbright said. The President did not want to expand the war, Fulbright said, and he would say so again on the Senate floor.

Nelson rose to say he was disturbed that every Senator who spoke seemed to have his own interpretation of what the resolution meant. To clarify the matter, he offered his amendment and asked Fulbright to accept it. "I do not object to it as a statement of policy," Fulbright said. "I believe it is an accurate reflection of what I believe is the President's policy, judging from his own statements." But accepting the amendment would confuse matters, require a conference committee and delay action, he said. Nelson, a freshman Senator who considered himself "no foreign policy expert," had "a great deal of respect" for Fulbright, who was certainly "not a war monger," he said. So he deferred to Fulbright and did not press the amendment or ask for a roll call. Nelson and McGovern voted with the majority when it passed 82-2. Only Wayne Morse of Oregon and Ernest Greuning of Alaska voted no. The House vote was



Sen. Gaylord Nelson.

unanimous.

For the record, Nelson took the floor the next day to say he had voted for the resolution based on Fulbright's assurance that it meant "no change in our basic mission in Vietnam. That mission is one of providing material support and advice. It is not to substitute our armed forces for those of the South Vietnamese government, nor to join them in a land war, nor to fight their war for them."

President Johnson echoed Nelson's remarks, pledging in October that he was "not about to send American boys nine or ten thousand miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves."

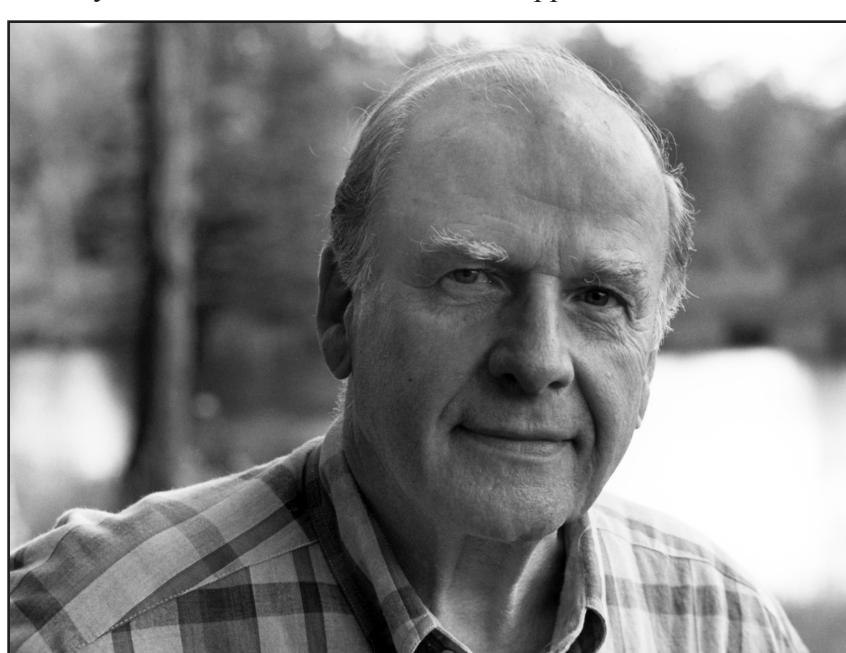
On 8 March 1965 the first combat troops, 3,500 Marines, landed at Da Nang to defend the air base, beginning a steady increase in US ground troops.

Johnson believed he had all the authorization he needed for escalation, in the form of the Tonkin Gulf resolution. "He carried that thing around in his pocket," Nelson said. "I was at a meeting with him at the White House when he pulled it out and said, 'You guys authorized this.'" LBJ called it the "504 to 2" resolution.

Sen. Mike Mansfield, later recalling Nelson's questions on the resolution, said: "History may have taken a different turn if the Senate had done what was right rather than what was expedient, and had followed the advice of (Nelson)."



BILL CHRISTOFFERSON, A VVAW MEMBER IN MILWAUKEE, IS THE AUTHOR OF GAYLORD NELSON'S BIOGRAPHY, "THE MAN FROM CLEAR LAKE," PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN PRESS.



Sen. Gaylord Nelson.

Tonkin Gulf: A Realistic Fantasy

JOE MILLER (REVIEWER)

The Abel Mutiny
Allen Meece
(Xlibris, 2000)

It is 1964.

What if the crew of a destroyer like the USS Maddox, realizing that their ship was part of a conspiracy to make war against Vietnam, decided to mutiny in order to take the ship out of the war?

This is the fundamental basis of the story that Allen Meece has constructed in *The Abel Mutiny*.

I asked to review this novel because there are not many, if any, books - fiction or nonfiction - published about the Blue Water Navy during the Vietnam War. We have glory and gore stories about Seal teams. There have been books about the Brown Water Navy in the river patrols. Any writing about Blue Water Navy tends to focus on Navy pilots and carrier duty (nothing about the crew, for sure).

This little book, written by a former Sonarman who actually served on a destroyer during two Westpac cruises during 1964 to 1966. Though a work of fiction, does provide a realistic account of shipboard life for the average sailor during that period.

The descriptions of what it's like to ride rough seas on a destroyer or "tin can" resonated with me, though I never served on one. Meece and I were apparently serving in the same area around the same time, and I recall times when our carrier, the USS Ticonderoga, had occasion to refuel or replenish the destroyers in our task force. His description of that process is very real, and I saw destroyers and their crew getting bounced up and down by the seas while we on the carrier were riding smooth as can be.

Shipboard life, whether it is about gripe sessions among the crew, the workings of General Quarters, or scenes in the Combat Information Center (CIC), is well-reflected in Meece's prose. That is all part of the realistic aspects found in this absorbing novel.

The fantastic, though also riveting aspect of the novel, is found in some of the inner dialog among members of the crew, as well as in the topic and tenor of their gripe sessions—at least for the period: late summer and early fall 1964.

The classism and lifer mentality of the Navy (and other services) is elaborated quite vividly throughout the novel in the thoughts of some main characters. For example:

"Officers are up on the bridge above gun mount 31, the twin three-inch antiaircraft guns. They see you're enjoying yourself and they don't like people having fun. It's better military bearing to be depressed and repressed like they are." (p. 2)

And...when the crew was being told about Vietnam as a "military conflict" as opposed to a real war:

"The officers have been to college, they'd tell you if there were any killing going on in this conflict. They're smarter, older, better-paid and more respected. They wouldn't lie....unless that's how they earn that extra income." (p. 9)

This all comes to a head when the USS Abel is placed on the firing line with other destroyers and they spend six days firing into the jungles of Vietnam. A conversation between Sonarman John "Jack" Mason and Torpedoman's Mate Gerald "Obie" Oberhoffen goes like this:

"Does this feel wrong?" Jack asked. "Isn't this, let me see here, what's the right word? What's it called when you shoot somebody who doesn't shoot back?" "Yeah," Obie answered. "The word is murder." (p. 26)

It should be pointed out that the official establishment of gunnery attacks on Vietnam from the sea does not take place until late 1966, so the author may be taking poetic license here.

Chapter 3 of the novel is titled "Tonkin," and this is where it all hits the fan. You get a small dose of the action from the section quoted by Allen Meece in this issue. This chapter is a high-powered description of the preparation and completion of a DeSoto patrol, an intelligence mission that, in this novel, takes place soon after the Tonkin Gulf Incidents of August 1964.

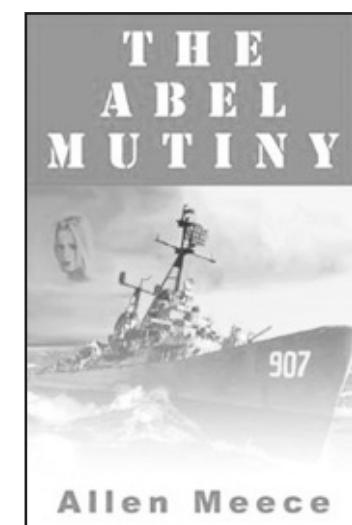
Historically, as Meece points out in this issue, there actually was a third Tonkin Gulf Incident in September 1964. There were two destroyers involved, the USS Morton (DD 948) and the USS Edwards (DD 619). An NSA intercept team was on board the Morton. Meece was a Sonarman Third Class on board the Edwards. The events that took place during that patrol from 17 to 20 September provide the details and the emotion behind Meece's novelistic account of the action.

[For an official account of these events, one may wish to consult a September 28, 1964, National Security Agency document titled: "Chronology of Events of 18-20 September 1964 in the Gulf of Tonkin." This was declassified and released by the NSA on February 13, 2006.]

In the novel, a character sums it up: "We went where we shouldn't, killed who we didn't need to, and didn't rescue any survivors." (p. 72)

The Abel then goes on R&R in Hong Kong for four days. As the ship prepares to get underway to return to Vietnam, Torpedoman's Mate Obie goes on strike, locks himself inside the torpedo shack, and demands that the ship not return to Vietnam.

Of course, the Captain refuses. As Meece writes, "Obie had committed two cardinal military sins: Believing in truth



and acting against lies. He was useless." (p. 104).

Obie is removed from the ship and, through a secret deal among the top officers and lifers, he is sent to Long Binh Jail (LBJ). As he was Navy, he was not supposed to be sent there. [Note: Long Binh Jail was not established until 1966]

The fate of Obie causes Jack Mason and others among the crew to mutiny, take over the ship, remove the officers, lifers, and members of the crew who would not go along, and take the ship out of the war altogether.

The remainder of the novel details the mutiny, the discussions about where to go and how to get there, and their ultimate fate. This is an exciting ride, and the reader by this time is rooting for them to make it happen and be successful in challenging the war.

It is a fantasy, but you can easily get sucked into it by the great writing and the intense dialogue between men who feel betrayed by their own government and feel compelled to do something about it.

Those of us who participated in the war and felt that betrayal should read this exciting book. Do not be put off by the historical or other inaccuracies; take it as it is—a book written by one of us that successfully, I think, expresses feelings and emotions about "our war" and what we learned about ourselves and our government through that war—or was it just a "conflict?"



JOE MILLER, US NAVY, 1961-1968, NAVAL SECURITY GROUP, 1961-1964, USS TICONDEROGA, 1964-1966.



Tonkin Gulf Intrusion

ALLEN MEECE

Tonkin Gulf Intrusion is an excerpt from "The Abel Mutiny" by Allen Meece.

"NOW GENERAL QUARTERS! GENERAL QUARTERS! ALL HANDS MAN YOUR BATTLE STATIONS FOR SURFACE ACTION! THIS IS NOT A DRILL, I REPEAT, THIS IS NOT A DRILL!"

There is a bright wash of land only seven miles away on radar and you ask a nearby officer, "What is that?"

He looks at the blip and ignores your question. You deduce that it is an officer-level secret and that you're where you shouldn't be, on a menacing warship seven miles from the shore of northern Vietnam.

Combat Information Center is manned with an air of competency. The radarman with an Elvis Presley hairstyle is drawing a surrogate battle scene that will be these men's only experience of the attack, unless, that is, one of the enemy dots gets within torpedo range and explodes the ship and this whole room descends below the surface of the Gulf of Tonkin. That could happen but don't think about it or you won't stay calm. If you don't stay calm you can't concentrate. If you don't do your job well, you'll die. It's simple. This is combat.

The tactical board shows a squadron of five contacts nine

miles away and closing at an impressive speed of fifty knots. The room sways and lurches in the destroyer's wild flight at flank speed, a mere thirty knots.

The officer on the other side of your floor-mounted radar console receives instructions and points to the nearest contact and says, "Designate target one to fire control."

Your radar screen displays an electronic target hook that you can manipulate with a control stick to encircle that radar contact which appears most threatening to the ship.

You snare the contact and say into the phones, "Fifty one, Combat, now designating target one."

"Fifty one, target one, aye."

Director fifty one's electronic hook moves to the blip and clings to it with automatic tracking. The gun director has acquired target and is locked-on.

"Fifty one, ready to shoot."

"Good work, fire control. That you, Kaiser?"

"Kaiser, aye."

"What's happening is this. We've got five quick-boats on radar. There's another tin can out here with us that's taking the two western-most contacts and we're taking the three closer ones."

"Fifty one aye," is the terse reply from Kaiser who has work to do.

"Commence firing," says the XO, passing the order from the



captain on the open bridge.

No one's heard the term before. They're not sure what to do and nothing happens.

"Are we supposed to shoot 'em?" asks Kaiser incredulously over the phones.

"Wait one." You ask the ensign, "Are we supposed to shoot these contacts?" Now the ensign's doubtful. He turns around and looks at the executive officer. The XO understands the question: Should a ship in peacetime be killing the crew and sinking the boats of another nation?

The XO nods yes. The ensign regains his military composure and says, "You heard that order, commence firing."

"Kaiser?"

"Yes?"

"Shoot the target." That sounds better. "Shooting the target" is something Kaiser knows how to do from gunnery exercises. That phrase ignores the death it's going to bring.

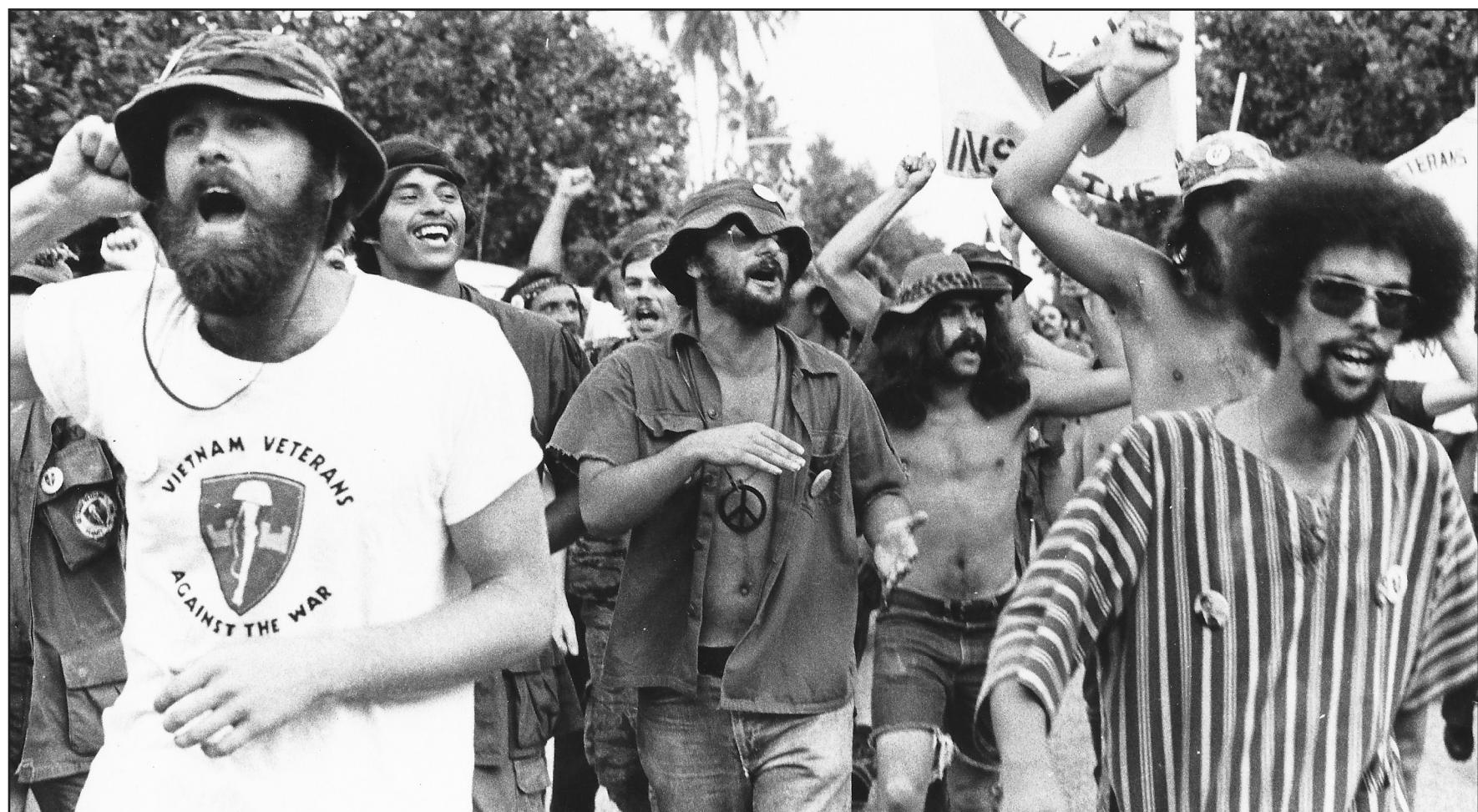
BANG! A shell is fired with intent to kill.

Now you're in a life or death struggle. Your country transported you to a place where you shouldn't have been and forced you to defend your life in order to get out of there.

And like any war excuse, the Tonkin Gulf Incidents were lies. We were not frivolously attacked on the high seas as the corporate media parroted the establishment lie. Our DeSoto Patrols had intruded NVN's sovereign coastal waters many times. Finally, war was started. It didn't end until commercial fortunes were made while 58,178 American military men and women died.



ALLEN MEECE JOINED THE NAVY IN 1962 TO SEE THE WORLD AND "PROTECT DEMOCRACY." HE WAS MADE A FOOL. HIS DESTROYER WAS IN THE THIRD TONKIN GULF INCIDENT OF SEPTEMBER 18TH OF 1964. HE AUTHORED THE TONKIN GULF NAVAL WAR NOVELLA CALLED "THE ABEL MUTINY" WHICH IS AVAILABLE FROM AMAZON.COM.



1972 Republican Convention in Miami.

News of a Lost Friend Edited

DAN NEW

The sun blazed into my eyes as a column of soldiers approached. I looked into the face of each man as he passed. It was the dry season and the red clay dust covered our features, leaving only a vague outline of whom they might be. After one of them passed, he turned and called back to me. "Is that you, Danny?" As I turned to his voice, McQuade's smile revealed his identity. We moved towards an embrace. Our weapons and flak jackets made our attempt all the more awkward. "How the heck are you?" We both asked. We clasped our hands together and looked into each other's eyes. Our loyalty to the soldiers we were with soon pulled us apart. We were duty bound to move on and so we did. "Did'ja hear about Nutly?" He asked as he backpedaled away. Struck silent with the fear of knowing Nutly's fate, I dared not reply for I knew the answer in my heart. McQuade and his unanswered question faded into

the green terrain. Memories of Nutly invaded my mind as I continued on. Each morning for eight weeks during basic training, Danny slung his feet over the edge of the upper bunk. My view was of his feet and legs to his upper calf where dark Irish hair in neat patches and patterns interrupted his powder white skin. After a great yawn, he vaulted down to the wooden polished floor of the barracks. The shift of his weight from the bed to the deck sent awakening energy down to me in the lower rack. Then his morning joke, "Why did the Army put the short guy in the top bunk?"

Together by chance, we became friends, bunkmates. Our lives had been thrown together by the escalating military draft. Now we slept, ate, and soldiered together. He was from upstate, shy with only a few words to offer. I bore the city guise, caustic and smart in the streets. Danny was vulnerable and open. He had

a stocky build with a thick neck and sharp features. His eyebrows almost met just above his nose. I was a gangly wisenheimer with an answer for everything. He was short to my tall, squat to my length, round to my lean. We were nineteen. The Army whipped us into shape to fight the war. We were not sure where or why it was, but it hung as an elusive threat far off in the future. Our chances of going there seemed faint. We shot expert on the firing range and maxed our physical training exams. We bonded as we grew into trained soldiers. The Army let us go home for a week at Christmas. Nutly and I rode from Fort Jackson, SC on a bus. It snowed all the way. It took 24 hours. Between catnaps, Danny and I talked. He asked, "Do you have a girlfriend?" "Yup," "What's she like?" "She's alright," "You gonna marry her?" "Maybe, someday."

During the long trip, he dozed. His head struggled against

surrender and came to rest on my shoulder. I squirmed at first. Then found comfort in his trust. When he awoke, I let him know that he had drooled. We parted at New York's Port Authority bus station on Christmas Eve and reunited five days later for the return trip. Our time together passed so quickly. Basic ended in January, we received orders for advanced training. He went to Georgia. I went to Virginia. I imagined meeting him when it was all over. We arrived in Vietnam about the same time, the end of April. By the time I met McQuade, Danny had been interred back home and, on that day, I began burying his memory in the midst of the war.



DAN NEW IS A VIETNAM VETERAN, WRITER AND ARTIST. HE IS THE CO-FOUNDER OF THE ALBANY VETERANS WRITING GROUP. HE SERVED IN-COUNTRY 1967-68 IN THE US ARMY.



Madison, WI, 1980.

Disbelief in Government Statements Markedly Increased During the Vietnam Era

GERSON LESSER

The old adage that truth is the first casualty of war was well demonstrated during our Vietnam intervention. I am a veteran of World War II and now almost 93 years of age. Yet hearing about the Tonkin Gulf events remains very clear in my mind. I was at a lovely outdoor summer party in Connecticut, and the big news of the Gulf events provoked a good deal of active discussion. I remember arguing that the story somehow did not hold up. Ho Chi Minh was a very clever man, so why would the North Vietnamese order small torpedo boats to attack large and well armed US warships

(and supporting aircraft)? The consequences could only be suicidal for the specific event, and certainly provocative of the US. The Tonkin Gulf events may or may not have been planned by our military, but in any case they were used by Lyndon Johnson to bomb North Vietnam and to get full permission from Congress to "legally" pursue a full war in Vietnam, to send hundreds of thousands of men and equipment and full air support over the next few years. It was only much later that news began to leak out that the initial story was flawed. There may have been a conflict on August 2,

when US ships, in or near North Vietnam waters, fired initially, and that the August 4 "incident" was a phantom, as US ships did much firing but there were apparently no North Vietnamese ships in the area. It is my impression that Tonkin Gulf and so many releases about the Vietnam War, such as body counts, put elements of doubt in the minds of some segments of the population. More people began to analyze and show some doubt about the day to day statements from the administration and the armed services. Critical attitudes and disbelief were further stimulated

during the Nixon administration, particularly with all the deceptions and lies as part of awarded events.



GERSON LESSER, M.D. SERVED DURING AND AFTER WORLD WAR II. HE WAS VERY ACTIVELY OPPOSED TO THE WAR IN VIETNAM, SOMETIMES HELPING TO ARRANGE ANTI-WAR PROTESTS IN NEW YORK AND IN WASHINGTON. HE ALSO HELPED MANY YOUNG MEN WITH DISABILITIES IN HOW TO PRESENT SUCH TO DRAFT BOARDS. HE WAS ALSO ON MANY COMMITTEES OPPOSING THE DRAFT.

Catching up with Tico: Prelude to the Tonkin Gulf Incidents

JOE MILLER

On 11 June 1964, just a day and a half after Linda (Hui-fang) and I were married, I was put on a plane at Sung Shan Airport, Taipei, for my formal transfer from duty with the Naval Security Group to "regular" sea duty on board the USS Ticonderoga (CVA-14). It was to be a wild journey, and then some.

Linda and I fought through all the obstacles (official and unofficial) in order to be married before I would have to leave the island. Before I boarded the plane, we stood facing each other, separated by a wall of glass after I passed through the security gate. She was in tears and I was not far from it; we put our hands on the glass as a final goodbye. She was going to have to work through all the paperwork to get her passport and a visa to travel to the United States. To a great extent, except for a couple of buddies who were still stationed there, she would be doing this alone. I could not say when I might see her again.

I was headed for another unknown—sea duty on board an aircraft carrier as punishment for becoming a security risk due to my relationship with Linda. The plane was taking me to Japan, where the Ticonderoga was supposed to be docked at Yokosuka. The plane landed at Tachikawa air base, and I had to take a train to Yokosuka. When I got there, I was informed that the "Tico" was not there. No one could say where it was. I was ordered to stay on base until they figured out where to send me next. So, I spent about three days cleaning floors and doing general duty while the Navy was trying to locate the "lost" ship. This was not the norm for a Petty Officer Third Class (E-4).

Then, word came that the ship was going to be in Manila. Well, the distance between Yokosuka and Manila is about 1900 miles. That's a pretty broad stretch of ocean, and I wondered how it was that the Navy would not have known this and sent me to the Philippines in the first place. I almost felt they were doing this on purpose, but that would be giving them too much credit. It seems they just did not know.

So, back on a plane to fly from Japan to Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines. The plan was to put me on an Air Force bus

to Manila, where I would meet up with the Ticonderoga. [Some may wonder, why not the Navy base at Subic Bay? I wondered the same thing.] Then, after a couple of days hanging around at Clark—at least not doing any duties of any kind—word came that the ship would NOT be pulling in to Manila, after all. What now?

I finally received official notification that, since the ship would not be pulling into port anytime soon, I would be flown out to the carrier on the next COD (Carrier Onboard Delivery) flight, that is, with the mail. So, I packed up my sea bag and was taken to the airfield, where I saw a C-1A

together again? Would I be able to see her before she left Taiwan to stay with my folks in Niles? How and when might I be able to do that?

It seemed like perhaps an hour (or more?) before the Ticonderoga came into view. From where I was sitting, it looked even tinier than the toy boats I used to play with as a kid. We were circling overhead, since we had to wait for the ship's fighters to land before we could make an approach. As we circled, we also came down in altitude. The ship began to look a little bigger with each pass. Circling, circling, lower and lower. Then, the ship

was... an escalator! That was totally unexpected. We took the escalator down below decks, and the Chief led me through a confusing set of hatches and corridors until we reached the personnel office, where I was to report in. Of course, over the next two years, I would learn well how to navigate those hatches and corridors.

The ship's Personnel Officer, LTJG St. John, checked me in, and we began to discuss where I might be placed in the ship's company. X Division was the basic clerical unit on board, and it seemed the likely spot, since I was to be shifted from Communications Technician to Yeoman. There was some concern that I had no security clearance, given the fact that I had been totally removed from work with any sensitive materials.

That afternoon I was paired up with another Yeoman, Ron Matusek, who showed me around the ship a little more. I recall that the first week or so on board I was assigned to a bottom bunk in an open gangway where people were rushing back and forth at all hours and kicking up dirt and dust. The bunk was only a couple of inches off the floor, so my bedding was always covered with dirt. Nothing at all like the previous bases where I had been stationed. A serious wake-up call as to what was in store.

Soon, the head of the Weapons Department, Commander Parkinson, heard that there was a new Yeoman on board, and he negotiated for me to be transferred to work in his office as Senior Yeoman, since I was an E-4. So, I now had a "home" on board with a bunk inside the Guided Missile Division quarters, well up off the floor and in an air conditioned space.

That's how I began my nearly two-year stint on board the USS Ticonderoga.

Within a month and a half, I would be an indirect witness to the first salvos in what soon became America's Vietnam War.



JOE MILLER, US NAVY, 1961-1968, NAVAL SECURITY GROUP, 1961-1964, USS TICONDEROGA, 1964-1966.

I was headed for another unknown -- sea duty on board an aircraft carrier as punishment for becoming a security risk.

sitting there waiting for me. The plane could hold nine passengers, and I seem to recall I was the only one being "delivered" to the Ticonderoga that day, except for the ever-important mail.

I was strapped in with a harness, facing the rear of the plane. The reason for this would be made clear very soon. The engines revved up and we began to taxi. I'll admit I was very apprehensive about this trip. I was being flown out over the ocean to land on a moving target; a huge target, to be sure, but it would not be like landing at O'Hare Airport. Soon we were well up over the Philippine countryside, heading toward the South China Sea, where the Ticonderoga was currently in the midst of air operations.

It was 17 June 1964, and I had been trying to get to this new duty station for five days now. As we flew over the sea, I began to think about what it might be like to be stationed on board ship for a couple of years. After three years in the Navy, this was to be a real change. Of course, by this time, I had forgotten any bit of information we were taught in boot camp about life aboard ship. Now it would be learned again, on the job, whatever that might be. And, when would Linda and I be

disappeared from my view. That could only mean that we were now on final approach... I hoped.

As I looked out the window, it seemed like we were only a few feet above the water. That had to be an illusion, right? This pilot surely knew what he was doing. I had no way of knowing how close we were to landing... or to slamming into the stern of the ship. Suddenly, came the bounce and the jolt of hitting the deck and being stopped by the arresting cable. I was slammed into the back of my seat—oh, that's why I was facing to the rear.

The door flew open, and everything was noise and heat and the smell of aviation fuel. There was a Chief Petty Officer there at the door shouting directions to me. I pulled my sea bag to my shoulder and stepped out of the plane. The Chief pointed out the yellow footprints on the deck and told me to follow them and him very closely. This was to make sure no one stepped into a propeller or got sucked into a jet intake. As the Chief guided me toward a hatch to enter the superstructure, I tried to keep from looking around, so as not to make any wrong moves.

We stepped through the hatch, and the noise subsided significantly. The next surprise

Serving Your Health After Serving Your Country: How To Stay Healthy As A Military Veteran

RENÉE KEATS

You've served your country, now it's time to think of serving your health. With the introduction of the new health care laws there has also been an increase in health care and services targeted to ensuring efficient and accessible medical services for veterans.

Approximately 500,000 veterans, previously denied VA coverage, will now have access to health care in 2014. Now is the time for veterans to recognize that, now more than ever, there are great resources especially devoted to serving our most cherished population: our veterans.

Top Physical Concerns

Certain injuries and conditions sustained during service are common to our service members and veterans. Many of these conditions were first treated during service. However, there are other physical issues that evolve after a person has left military service. The most common conditions and ailments include:

- Stress
- Difficulty Sleeping
- mTBI (Mild Traumatic Injury)
- Depression
- Chronic Pain
- Misuse of pharmaceuticals

Eight Core Wellness Recommendations

The United States Department of Veteran Affairs has identified 8

core wellness recommendations for service men and women to use when managing their health:

1)Physical Activity: It's not surprising that the VA lists "getting exercise" as its top initiative for veterans. Getting sufficient physical fitness may be the first step in addressing many health issues. It's not uncommon for veterans to get out of the habit of exercising, especially once they are out of the service and coping with other aspects of life (work, school, relationships, family, etc.). Studies have shown that regular physical activity can help lower the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers. It can also help prevent weight gain, reduce depression, and improve sleep. Physical exercise helps to improve all aspects of a person's life including: improved sleep, decreased stress and decreased depression. Whether you like to run, lift weights or take a bike ride, there are ample opportunities to stay fit.

If you are looking for an affordable and accessible gym to use, the YMCA offers memberships and respite care services to eligible military families.

2)Eat Wisely and Strive for a Healthy Weight: You've heard it before, choose your foods wisely and exercise. But if you are carrying excess weight, losing it can be the first step towards

servicing your health. People who are considered "obese" often develop problems like heart disease, diabetes, some cancers, sleep apnea and gallstones. The VHA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention has developed an interactive program called MOVE!® to help veterans manage their weight and increase their physical fitness.

3)Get Screening Tests and Timely Immunizations: Veterans have served their country but, after leaving the service, often don't take care of themselves. That is why, regardless of their age, gender, family history and current or past health status, every veteran is encouraged to seek preventive services. As a bonus, under the recent changes in legislation, all of these services are covered benefits. Veterans should be screened for alcohol abuse, depression, high blood pressure, HIV, military sexual trauma, obesity, PTSD and tobacco use. It is also important for veterans to remember to get a flu shot every year and a tetanus shot every 10 years.

4)Be Involved In Your Health Care: Personally invest in your medical care. To get the best care, you must provide your treatment team with accurate and complete information about your health. It is important to think about your visit prior to seeing the health provider so your questions have been thought out and you don't waste time. Just as important, you must be willing to share all of the stressful aspects of your life that are affecting your health and ability to manage daily activities.

5)Tobacco Cessation: When you quit smoking, your immediate and long-term health immediately improves. Yes, all forms of tobacco are harmful including cigars, pipes, snuff, chewing tobacco and electronic cigarettes. Two great sites for learning how to be smoke free are:

•Quit VET is a national, toll-free smoking cessation quitline. Call 1-855-QUIT VET (1-855-784-8838)

•SmokefreeVET—A mobile text message smoking cessation service. Text the word VET to 47848 from your mobile phone or visit: www.Smokefree.gov/VET

6)Limit Alcohol Intake: Avoiding binge drinking and limiting the amount of alcohol

you consume seems like common sense. But did you know that too much alcohol use or binge drinking can lead to higher risk of health problems, such as liver damage or other injuries?

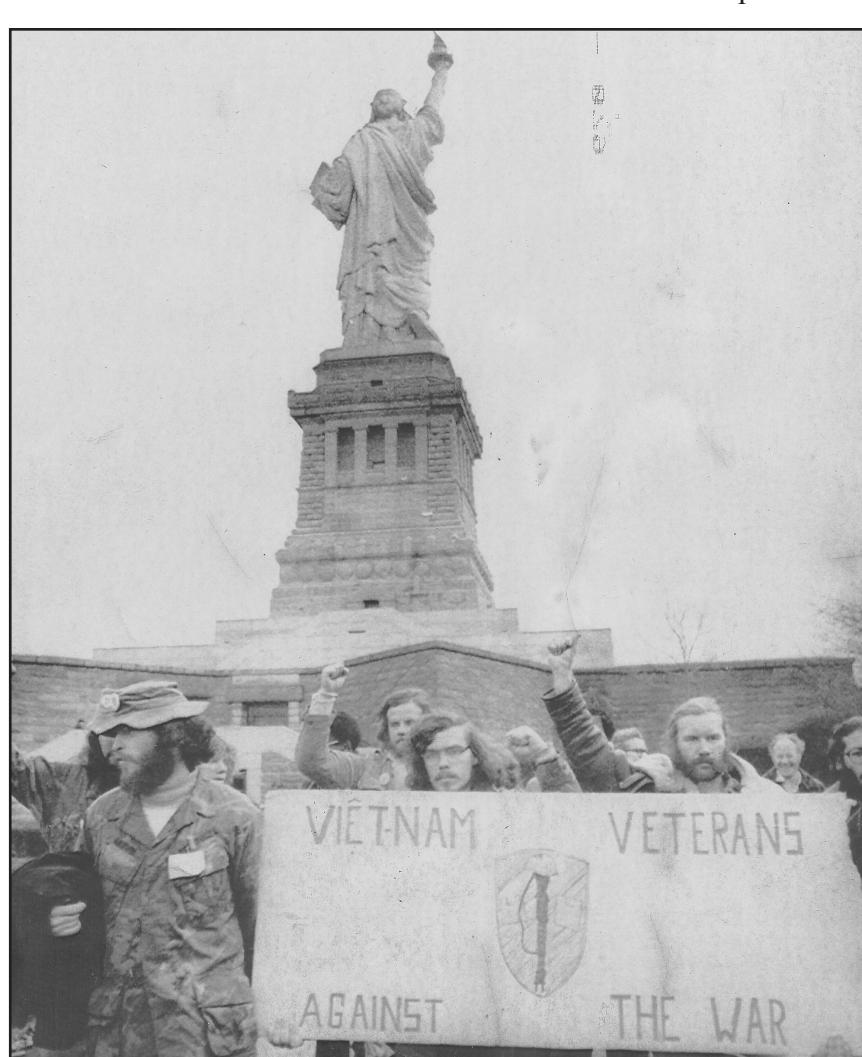
7)Mesothelioma: Due to exposure to asbestos, some veterans have developed mesothelioma, a form of lung cancer. Some experts believe current veterans are still exposed to asbestos and can be at risk for mesothelioma. For more information, check out Cooney and Conway's Veterans Guide To Asbestos Exposure, Mesothelioma and Lung Cancer. Another great resource for veterans is their social media guide for veterans with mesothelioma.

8)Stress: Everyone experiences stress in their life. But too much stress can create problems both mentally and physically. People who are "stressed" often comment that they have difficulty focusing, feel anxious and worried. Some will describe their bodies as "wound up:" tense muscles, sweaty palms, pounding heart. Obviously, too much stress over an extended period of time can put your overall health at risk. There is a veteran's hotline available for anyone experiencing an emotional crisis: 1-800-273-TALK and press 1 for Veterans.

There is no argument that increasing the availability and accessibility of medical care for United States veterans is a long time coming and much deserved. But that is only part of the story. Even if medical and health care is readily accessible, veterans must want to seek services, know about them and finally, know how to access them.



RENÉE KEATS IS A CERTIFIED HEALTH NAVIGATOR WITH A MASTER'S DEGREE IN PUBLIC HEALTH FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO. WITH OVER 20+ YEARS OF HEALTHCARE RELATED EXPERIENCE, MS. KEATS HAS WORKED IN HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATION, GOVERNMENT, MANAGED CARE, MEDICAL IT DEVELOPMENT AS WELL AS IN OTHER HEALTH RELATED SETTINGS. PRIOR TO FOUNDRY WINDY CITY MOMMA, SHE WORKED FOR WELLPOINT AS A PROJECT MANAGER AND LATER A CLIENT SERVICES MANAGER.



VVAW Statue of Liberty takeover, Dec. 1971.

Walking Through Fire

STAUGHTON LYND (REVIEWER)

Walking Through Fire: Iraqis' Struggle for Justice and Reconciliation

Peggy Faw Gish

(Cascade Books, 2013)

The subject matter of this book is ostensibly different from Nick Turse's authoritative survey of the Vietnam war. Peggy Gish first went to Iraq in October 2002 and was in Baghdad when the United States invasion began in 2003. Her account of many subsequent years of dangerous "accompaniment" of Iraqi civilians (Summer 2004-Spring 2006, Summer 2006-Fall 2012) at first glance concerns an occupation, not a war.

But as one reads, the similarities multiply and the distinction between "war" and "occupation" breaks down. The underlying subject of both books is the same: How the United States military conducts itself in countries inhabited by brown-skinned persons who have done nothing to threaten or harm Americans but whose government, in the unilateral judgment of American decisionmakers, threatens United States interests.

Consider what Peggy Gish tells about the United States assault on Fallujah. She offers a chilling account of the refusal of occupation authorities to attempt negotiation before devastating this city of 400,000 in 2004. Reportedly using 2,000 pound bombs and white phosphorus rounds, United States forces caused deaths in the many thousands and, according to the Iraqi Red Crescent, 6,000 detentions. Gish writes:

One of the first things US troops did was to occupy the Fallujah General Hospital. They claimed that the casualty figures it gave out were inflated, and so considered the hospital a "center of propaganda" against the coalition forces.

A member of the hospital staff later told us, "US soldiers forced sick or injured patients to lie on the floor handcuffed. . . . Air strikes on another medical clinic killed twenty doctors and dozens of civilians." This countered Geneva Convention agreements that stipulated that civilian hospitals should not be the object of attack and that medical personnel caring

for or transporting wounded and sick civilians should be respected and protected.

To be sure, American activity in Vietnam descended to lower levels of hell. Everything else aside, measurement of success by body count ensured that when faced with the need to distinguish friend from foe, United States soldiers were likely to kill everyone.

Nevertheless, I believe these two books show how the arrogance, racism, and casual use of violence to solve all problems that characterized the American military in Vietnam were still at work, essentially unchanged, more than a quarter century later in Iraq.

Gish tells how Paul Bremer,

were most impressive. But the witness who blew me away was a veteran of the occupation force, Geoffrey Millard.

Millard sought to rebut the common perception that officers were more enlightened than ordinary soldiers. He described the problem facing servicemen at check points as they were approached by a variety of vehicles. The soldiers did not understand the language or hand signals of Iraqi drivers. One 18-year-old private chose to press the "butterfly trigger" of his machine gun. Moments later a husband and wife together with their two children, aged three and four, were dead.

The unit held a meeting that evening to talk about what

to avoid the repetition of anything like the Vietnam war. Again a personal experience comes to mind. As the invasion of Iraq was about to begin in 2003, a group calling itself Labor Against the War held a founding meeting in Chicago. Two Youngstown friends and I made the trip. To my astonishment a local union of the Teamsters had offered its hall for the occasion. I found a couple of stewards and asked them how in the world a union not known for anti-war sentiments had offered this hospitality. "It was the Vietnam vets," I was told. "They hit the mic at a local union meeting and said that they had seen this movie before."

What, then, is to be done to maintain and strengthen the Vietnam Syndrome? Here are two suggestions.

First, we must not lose hope in the possibility of solidarity with our so-called enemies. Peggy Gish tells a remarkable story. At times when Ms. Gish traveled to Iraq her husband Art often went to Hebron, in the occupied West Bank, to offer support to Palestinians at the mercy of aggressive Israeli soldiers and settlers. On one occasion, as Israeli tanks were destroying a Palestinian market in which cartloads of country vegetables were offered for sale, Art placed himself in front of a tank and spread his arms wide, like the Chinese protestor at Tiananmen Square. Someone took a photo, and Peggy had a copy in her wallet.

It happened that Peggy, together with an Iraqi driver, an Iraqi interpreter, and a co-worker, were kidnapped in northern Iraq. In an effort to establish communication with a young man guarding them, they showed him the photo of Art and the tank. The guard left the room and in about fifteen minutes returned, smiling. Release of the entire group followed within a short period of time.

My second proposal is that anti-war groups and individuals attempt to revise the current law and military regulations governing Conscientious Objection. These understandings were negotiated at the onset of World War II by representatives of pacifist groups such as the Amish, Mennonites, Church of the Brethren, and

Nevertheless, I believe these two books show how the arrogance, racism, and casual use of violence to solve all problems that characterized the American military in Vietnam were still at work . . .

President Bush's disastrous choice to head the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq, attempted to enact an "interim constitution" that would permit Iraqi authorities to privatize public assets and allow foreign investors to acquire such assets and take the proceeds out of the country. "Advisors" to each of Iraq's twenty-six new ministries would have veto power over the decisions of indigenous ministers. Before leaving Iraq, Bremer signed an order giving immunity to Western defense contractors that were alleged to have violated Iraqi law. According to Gish, American officials imposed a justice system that "lacked due process of law."

As to racism, I have a memory of my own from an improvised citizens' "parallel court martial" proceeding in Tacoma, Washington. Lt. Ehren Watada was being court-martialed for his refusal to deploy to Iraq and the citizens' hearing permitted witnesses who were not allowed to testify at the official trial to offer evidence. The civilian witnesses, beginning with Daniel Ellsberg,

happened. The highest-ranking officer in the room ended the meeting by saying, "If these fucking hajis learn[ed] to drive, this shit wouldn't happen."

In Iraq, as in Vietnam, there has been an increase in cancer, leukemia, and birth defects resulting from the use of toxic chemicals and depleted uranium. Gish and her colleagues spent a great deal of time seeking to assist the families of persons who had been detained by the American military. As at Guantanamo, the American approach seemed to be that if there was a possibility that a man had aided the enemy, he could be imprisoned indefinitely without charges. There were endless complaints of soldiers needlessly kicking in doors, destroying home furnishings, taking money and other valuables, and incarcerating any male in sight without evidence.

But if the American MO of death and occupation continues, so too does the so-called Vietnam syndrome, a diffuse popular determination in the United States

continued on next page

Back From Nam

Vets cradled by rehab nurses in pool with shot off limbs.
Some in wheelchairs tell themselves what they did was right.
They repeat an embedded phrase: "We did it for our freedoms."
"We killed people to allow the Vietnamese people to be free
And not allow the enemy to force their will on them."

"But that's what the draft did, man, said one with a beard.
"They forced me against my will to fight and kill people.
That's the worst thing in the world. What about my freedom."
"If you had a chance would you go back again?" asked one.
"No, I'd go to Sweden," a Black with no legs said in a chair.

Another said with head up, chin out, and anger, "Yes, I'd
Go back out of an obligation to do what's right for America.
No one has the right to tell anyone to do anything against their will.
That's what I went to Nam to fight for" said the patriotic man.
"But then you are saying the draft isn't the same as being forced."

"I'm saying no country can force others against their will."
"Some have to justify the war and can't say it was useless."
"Many can't live with what we did there killing people and stuff."
"They would be lying to say this was OK since I got a medal."
"Killing can't justify paralyzed people. We can't face we did wrong"

How many admit we did wrong and face the rest of life crippled?
You don't know what's going on, you been away too long.

You're out of touch my poor discarded man.
Yes, your left out, out of there without a doubt.
Your obsolete my poor old disabled friend.

Remember the Tet offensive and people blown away in Saigon?
I felt like an athlete in an Olympic event in combat city.
We have wasted a lot of time waiting for this opportunity.
What a time it was. Innocence, confidence, long ago.
Man fights battles on the land and sea.

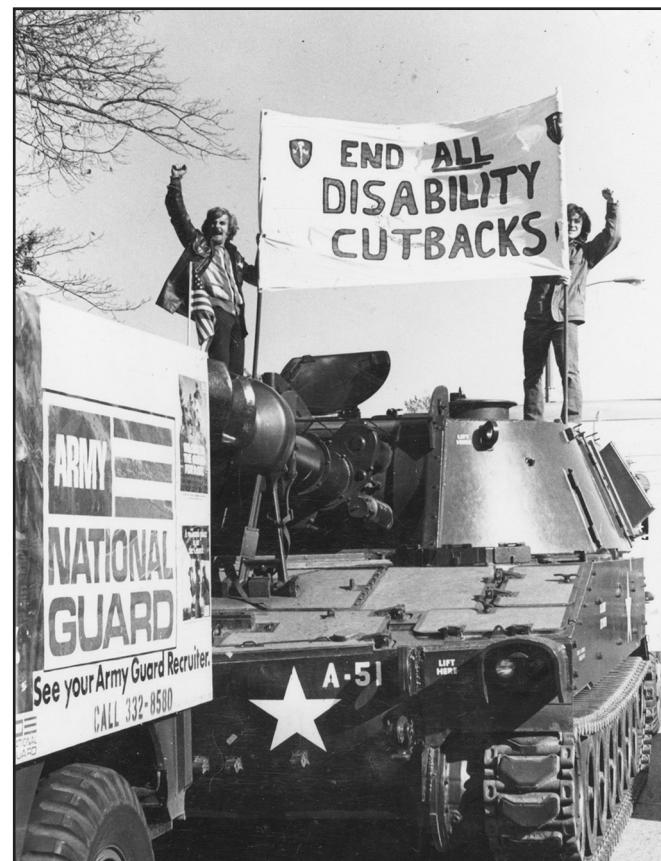
My friend had brains but now is paralyzed in the psycho ward.
Earns more than those working on him from disability he can't use.
Man strapped on a cart uses crutches to move around.
They feed all the Vietnam psychos Thorazine to make them zombies.
Take me to the station. Put me on a train.

I don't think I'll ever pass thru here again.
I want to volunteer, says a youth
Without a clue after brainwashing by recruiters in uniform.
Once I was a strong man. Now I am so weak. Never in my
Sorry life have I ever felt like this, before.

—Daniel C. Lavery



Dan Lavery reading from his memoir
at "Words on Fire" book signing December 2013.



Walking Through Fire

continued from previous page

Society of Friends or Quakers (to which my wife and I belong). These groups are so small that the government could accommodate them without risking a shortage of military manpower. Conscientious Objection as thus defined requires an objection to participation in "war in any form," which is to say, to all wars, on the basis of "religious training and belief."

Very few combatants in an all-volunteer army will be able to meet these requirements. As Camilo Mejia indicates, they volunteer for a variety of

reasons, some of them economic, and some having to do with representing their country. Then their experience in the particular war in which they find themselves causes them to become unwilling to continue to commit what they have come to perceive as war crimes. But they don't know what they would do in a war other than the one in which they are fighting. And whatever they conclude is likely to be based not so much on religious training and belief as on traumatic experience.

At the end of World War II, in

Nuremberg and Tokyo, the United States and its allies sentenced Axis commanders to death for their conduct in a particular war. Similarly, a soldier must be able to refuse further combat in the only war that soldier has experienced. As the little girl in Carl Sandburg's *The People, Yes* says when watching her first military parade, "Sometime they'll give a war and nobody will come."



STAUGHTON LYND IS AN HISTORIAN AND A LAWYER. DURING THE PERIOD OF THE KOREAN WAR HE RECEIVED AN UNDESIRABLE DISCHARGE ALONG WITH SEVERAL OTHERS, BASED ON ALLEGATIONS ABOUT HIS POLITICAL BELIEFS AND ASSOCIATIONS MADE BY UNNAMED INFORMANTS. THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT UPGRADED ALL THESE DISCHARGES TO HONORABLE. HE WAS AN EARLY PROTESTER AGAINST THE VIETNAM WAR. SINCE EARLY 2003 HE HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF HISTORIANS AGAINST WAR (HAW).

How I Nearly Won the War

MARC LEVY

Christmas 1970: a hot meal in a muddy fox hole, a Red Cross gift of WD 40. Excellent for cleaning my M16. Thank you, Jesus.

Twelve months later, three on a remote fire base burning human shit, it was time to head home.

At Bien Hoi Airport I met other GIs leaving Vietnam, some with combat ribbons, the "thousand yard" stare. Unlike the young men who flirted with stewardesses, fell asleep, then suddenly woke in Vietnam, our return flight was eerily quiet. But the moment we landed at Oakland Air Force Base everyone cheered. At the airport I bought a plane ticket to Jersey, boarded, and sat near a good looking stewardess. She winked and giggled but I did not reply. The cab ride home cost six dollars.

"This is my son," my old man would say to friends and strangers. "He was in Vietnam. He was a medic."

But my father, my brother, my friends, never asked what I did in war, what war did to me. They never asked.

A month later, in the dead of winter, I reported to Fort Devens.

"Sorry," I said to First Sergeant Balmer, an intensely vigorous man. "I don't pull guard duty."

"You what?" he asked, stupefied.

"Nothing personal, Sarge. I just can't do it."

A year at war can change a man. And stateside Army discipline may enrage him.

"You got thirty minutes," the First Sergeant scowled as he stormed out the barrack. "You best have your shit together!" He really said that. "Best have your shit together."

I packed an AWOL bag, put on jeans, sneakers, a sweatshirt, my army field jacket, and lay back in my bunk.

"What the...where the hell do you think you're going?" the First Sergeant asked as I got up.

"AWOL, Sarge. I don't pull guard duty. Remember?"

"Are you out of your mind? You can't do that!"

"I'm going to Boston, Sarge. See you in three days."

I walked out the barrack, caught a bus, two hours later had a ten dollar hotel room, went to a porn theater, jerked off, ate good, slept good, explored the town. The trip back to Devens so uneventful.

"Greetings," I said to the company clerk, who glanced up from his typewriter.

"Greetings yourself," he said. "Balmer gave you an Article 15."

But non judicial punishment meant nothing to this GI. For the next six months I refused guard duty, KP, haircuts, did not salute officers. Deliberately failed a driving test.

"Stop sign! Stop sign! Step on the brakes!" a lieutenant wailed.

I stepped on the gas.

"Green means go! GO, you moron!"

I stepped on the brakes.

Over time I racked up five Article 15s and a Summary Court Martial. Captain John Carlen assigned me to Sgt. Green, an ornery muscular man who'd done three tours in Vietnam, won three Silver Stars. His orders were to make me miserable.

"Get back to work or I'll give you a knuckle sandwich," he barked one fine summer day.

Calmly, I strode past the big man, left the sweltering warehouse, walked to the middle of a small field, sat down cross-legged and began singing "The Answer is Blowing In The Wind."

Sgt. Green called First Sergeant Balmer, who called Captain Carlen, who called Major Odell.

"Now what?" asked the Captain, who swept both hands through his thinning hair.

"Sir, I don't eat knuckle sandwiches," I said, and calmly stretched my legs.

Captain Carlen sank his face into his palms.

Major Odell, a stocky middle-aged Texan, leaned over me. "Son," he said, "Let's you and me get down to business. You talk, you talk, I swear to God I'll listen to every goddamn word you say."

"Sir, Private Levy reporting, Sir." I nearly stood and saluted. "Major, I can't follow orders. I just can't. I want out of the Army."

The Major was not pleased.

"Now you listen to me, Private. I'm in charge here. Not you. And our Father in Heaven made soldiers like you to obey my orders! If you can't do that...if you can't..." The Major shook his head

and raised one hand skyward. "I will have no choice...no choice but to court martial your fucking ass!"

He really said that. "Your fucking ass!"

Thank you, Jesus, for the

Common Sense Book Store, a GI coffee house located in a small town where an English professor taught off duty soldiers the art of writing anti-war poetry. In time, we formed the anti-war Radio Free Devens (broadcast by WAAF in Worcester, MA), spoke to reporters, one night shook hands with Dan Ellsberg on Eye Witness News.

"Was that your ugly face I saw on TV?" asked Staff Sergeant Judson, a barrel-chested black man who'd fought his way up the Army's lily white ranks. Framed certificates and awards blanketed the wall behind his desk.

I nodded sheepishly. "Yes, Staff Sergeant."

He looked at me with the kindness of one who has survived much cruelty and will never bestow it.

"You're a crazy one, Levy. Someone's gonna write a book about you. Make you famous. I mean that. Now get out of my office!"

Restricted to base by Captain Carlen, I filed for Conscientious Objector status. Denied, I wrote to my congressman: "Help! I need to get out of the Army!" When he did not reply, I began the long trek up the Fort Devens chain-of-command. Two months later I reached the top.

"Sir, Private Levy reporting to see General Irwin," I said to a trim lieutenant seated behind an immaculate gray desk.

By now my hair was shoulder length and my garrison cap kept slipping off my head.

Lieutenant Shaw reluctantly called the General. After a brief exchange he slammed down the phone. "The General can't see you today," he snarled.

"But sir, I have an appointment. I'm Private Levy. I'm here to get out of the Army."

Lieutenant Shaw stood and pounded the desk with his fist. "I don't think you get it, bud. The General will not see you. Now get the fuck out!"

He really said that. "Now get the fuck out!"

Three weeks later an officer approached me as I stood in the morning chow line.

"Sign here," he said, pointing to a large X beneath a dozen paragraphs. "We'll give you a Bad Conduct Discharge. You'll be out in a week! Isn't that what you want?"

A Bad Conduct Discharge, a BCD in Army parlance, is a very bad thing to possess. It identifies the bearer as a person without pride, without honor, a pariah incapable of serving his country. It disqualifies the recipient from most state and federal benefits. It is a bright red flag to potential employers. It condemns one to a life of civilian hell.

"No thank you, sir. I'll take my chances at the Special court-martial."

The officer was stunned. I was hungry. Drifting from the chow hall, the scent of burnt toast and runny eggs beckoned me onward.

A month later a tall one-eyed colonel threw me out of JAG.

"Sir, you can't do that. Major Odell has me up for a Special court-martial. I'm here to see my Army lawyer."

A much decorated WWII vet, Colonel Raymond Ritter wore a jaunty black patch over his right eye. "You're a fucking disgrace to the Army!" he said, and grabbed my shoulders and hustled me out. "A fucking disgrace."

Undeterred, I walked a mile to the IG's office. A swarthy heavy set man, he leaned back in his large oak chair and propped both legs on his desk.

"What can I do for you, soldier?" asked Inspector General Schmidt.

"Sir, Colonel Ritter just threw me out of JAG."

I told him my story while standing at attention in my dress uniform. Atop my head, an Army baseball cap to which I'd painted an officer's rank and gold trim.

The IG looked me over, lit a cigar, and took a long thoughtful drag. "I'll look into it," he said, exhaling a noxious plume.

I believed him. "Thank you, Sir. Thank you!"

At company Head Quarters, Captain Carlen screamed, "The IG just chewed my ass out! Did you complain about Colonel Ritter? Did you do that?"

"Sir, you don't understand. I'm Private Levy. I have a right to legal counsel."

The captain did not curtail his anger.

"Get the fuck out of my sight!" he yelled at the top of his lungs. "You hear me! Get the fuck out!"

continued on next page

Jimmy Mack

RICHARD WELLS

*"Jimmy, Jimmy, oh Jimmy Mack,
when are you comin' back?
Oh, Jimmy..." —Martha & the
Vandellas*

Jimmy Mack, our infantry squad leader, was a short, heavy-set, black guy with a baby-face, and absolutely no charm. Jimmy Mack was a corporal and a lifer bucking for his third stripe before he rotated to Nam. We were a hash-smoking, beer-drinking, slacker outfit enjoying easy German duty, and resented the ambition that got worked out on our time. No one

had been fragged in Germany, but Jimmy Mack was a prime candidate.

We were in Hohenfels doing our winter field maneuvers, and were out on a live-fire exercise. Our squad was working its way through a wooded area, on the look-out for silhouettes to blow to smithereens. Jimmy didn't have us in control, and we were moving around willy-nilly, squeezing off rounds as the spirit took us. I was in the middle of the squad, on my knees, rifle to shoulder, trying to sight through the other guys, when,

lo-and-behold, there was Jimmy Mack not ten feet in front of me, right in my line of fire, and I had a bead on the back of his little, lifer head.

Oh, those relativity blues as time stretched out, and I ran through all reasons why Jimmy Mack should or shouldn't get a one-way ticket home. I eased my finger off the trigger. I committed no act of murder. Jimmy Mack lived another day.

A couple of months later, after Corporal Jimmy Mack got his much wished for transfer to Nam,

word got back to us that Sergeant Jimmy Mack was no longer of this world. I guess he had a ticket, — I drew it, and passed, but it got cashed in anyway.



RICHARD WELLS IS A COMMUNITY ORGANIZER AND POET WHO LIVES IN SEATTLE, WA, WITH HIS WIFE REGGIE, HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW RUTH, AND THEIR GOOD DOG SAM. HE SERVED FROM 1966-1969, AND THANKS HIS LUCKY STARS HE NEVER SAW COMBAT.

Justices Kennedy, Roberts, Alito, Scalia and Thomas Vote to Allow Unlimited Money in Campaigns

... SO GENTLEMEN, IN THANKS FOR YOUR SERVICES TO THE ROLE OF MONEY, LET ME PROPOSE A TOAST TO...



How I Nearly Won the War

continued from previous page

My Book Store friends had contacted Ed Randall, a noted civilian lawyer. Ed agreed to take my case. Hearing the good news, I went AWOL to Jersey. One night the phone rang. My old man picked it up. "It's for you," he said politely.

"Hello..."

"Doc, it's Ed. Why'd you leave?"

"It's my birthday, Ed. I'm twenty-one."

"Look, Army brass want to give you a Dishonorable Discharge and three months hard labor. I pulled some strings. Plead guilty, you'll get a General Discharge, do five days in jail."

I looked at my dog. My dog looked at me.

"I don't know, Ed. What do

you think?"

"If I were you, Doc, I'd take it."

"OK, Ed. See you soon."

We met in an empty JAG office, where I noticed two stacks of paper on a long metal desk. One pile had copies of my case. The other concerned a General court martial, the highest court under the Uniform Military Code of Justice. I read the top page. The charge was statutory rape. The accused was Sergeant Green.

After two hours in a small courtroom five officers pronounced the sentence Ed had predicted. Before two imposing MPs lead me away, the court secretary, a pretty brunette, slipped me a tab of speed.

In the stockade barbershop, one of the MPs said, "Boy, you gonna co-operate or we gonna hold you down?"

The two of them weighed half a ton. "I'll co-operate," I said.

My baseball cap was suddenly knocked off my head. The prison barber cut my hair to the bone. A photographer snapped my picture with a Polaroid camera. When he wasn't looking I pocketed the photo. I gave the speed to a combat vet who'd slugged an officer, knocking him out.

Five days later I was freed from jail. In the rush to justice Ed forgot to mention I'd lose all rank and a months pay. Nearly broke, I packed my Army duffel bag, said good-bye to Devens, and started

hitching to Boston. About noon a red Chevy convertible pulled up. A familiar face leaned out the driver side window.

"Need a lift?" asked the court secretary.

The next morning, after one last fondle and a fond farewell, I began the long trip home.



MARC LEVY WAS A MEDIC WITH DELTA 1-7 CAV IN 1970. HIS WAR POETRY AND PROSE HAVE BEEN WIDELY PUBLISHED ONLINE AND IN PRINT. HIS WEBSITE IS MEDIC IN THE GREEN TIME.

Old Soldiers

JAMES HELLVIG

As a vet, I often reflect on my time served and on the generation that now serves this country. We, as a nation have been at war for over a decade now... and yet most of us are unaffected in our daily lives.

In each generation those who have gone before - "The Old Breed" - reflect on their experiences and compare them to "the modern model." I'm not different in that regard. I think that this generation of warriors is both better trained and better equipped than my compatriots of long ago. Technology and physiology has come a long way in the past thirty

years, but some things cannot change no matter the history... young people from all walks of life still volunteer to put themselves in harms way for a variety of reasons. They join and serve with courage and honor... and sacrifice greatly and sometimes ultimately for what they all believe in - country and each other.

They learn and pass on the lessons of those that have bled before them. No one prays for peace more than a soldier... their job is to train and prepare for war. Some folks don't understand this... if you haven't been there

it's nearly impossible to do so. On this long weekend that most will enjoy with their family and friends, I ask you to remember that in a far away lands all over the globe, are sons and daughters, not asking for understanding or even recognition. Separated from loved ones this brotherhood stands proud and continues the traditions that keep us free. The routine won't change... the mission doesn't make exceptions for holidays... and you're not done until you're retired or a civilian again.

Remember... that for every old soldier, there stands a young

one... back straight and unflinching in the face of adversity.

I salute you young people... and I remember my own fallen but never forgotten comrades. Be safe and come home to pass the torch... we'll be waiting.



JAMES HELLVIG IS A FORMER US ARMY SOLDIER. HE WROTE THIS IN REMEMBRANCE LAST YEAR AND THOUGHT IT MIGHT INTEREST OUR READERSHIP.



Letter to VVAW

JOSEPH GUASTELLA

April 4, 2014

44 years ago today, April 4, 1970, I was on an airplane headed to Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri to report for basic training. I had lost my college deferment for the draft after leaving school, having decided that 2 1/2 years of alcohol and drugs was not a good foundation for the future. I had hoped that the new draft lottery, which began in December 1969, would allow me to circumnavigate the issue of the Vietnam War. I won the lottery, birthday #1 - September 14.

My plane trip that day was the beginning of my active duty stint for the National Guard. It was my side step around the war. In those days, the Guard did not go overseas. We stayed at home. It was not like really being a soldier, I thought. I was going to be a clerk-typist. Then, while I was in basic training, 4 students were killed at Kent State University in Ohio by National Guardsmen. I had 2 friends from school who were in the process of applying for, and ultimately received, status

as conscientious objectors. They were serious about it. Both went to work in the Peace Corps. They asked about the feeling among those of us who were active duty Guardsmen, what was the consensus about the killings at Kent State. Inwardly, I thought it was a tragedy, but I was relieved that I was going to be a clerk-typist.

While I feigned opposition to the war, I did not take any action or even participate in anti-war demonstrations. When my draft number came up, I was terrified. I believed that fear would get me killed. I had seen enough war on TV and in the movies to know that is what happened to cowards. That is the truth.

I finally got out of the Guard a few years later, before my 6-year-enlistment was finished. I simply stopped going. I received a phone call one day from a career sergeant at the Armory in East Orange, NJ. That is where my unit was. As a sidebar, today that building is a Mosque. The sergeant told me that he did not feel like going through all the paperwork that was required for me - AWOL and eventual court

martial. He offered me a deal. Turn in my equipment, and he would get me processed out with a general discharge. I thought I outsmarted the Army. I was wrong.

I will continue to carry a good deal of shame because of my failure to stand up for either side during the Vietnam War. I will always admire the real courage of the young men and women who served in Vietnam, whether it was by choice or not. War is the worst of all wrongs. But soldiers do what they are told. They do not get to choose. Some that I know who went believed in serving. Some were killed in combat. Some came home and do not talk about it.

Those of you who served in Vietnam went there so that I did not have to. You stood in front of me and shielded me with your limbs and your lives and your sanity and your youth and your innocence. I can never know the suffering you endured on my behalf.

My letter is prompted by an article I read in *The Veteran* on the VVAW site. It is from Fall 2012; Volume 42, Number 2. It is entitled, "Thank You for Your

Service." It was written by Bill Ehrhart, an honorably-discharged former Marine sergeant with a Purple Heart Medal, a Navy Combat Action Ribbon, and two Presidential Unit Citations. At the end of his letter he says, "Instead of thanking our servicemen and women for their service, perhaps we ought to be asking less service from them and more service from ourselves." I believe he is correct.

It has taken me 44 years to acknowledge my complicity in the Vietnam War and the debt I owe to those who served in my place. I do not expect that a letter or a thank you will change anything, but it is a beginning.



JOSEPH GUASTELLA IS NOT A VETERAN. HE JOINED THE NATIONAL GUARD IN APRIL 1970 AND RECEIVED A GENERAL DISCHARGE ABOUT 5 YEARS LATER. HE HAS LIVED IN BERGEN COUNTY IN NEW JERSEY ALL HIS LIFE.

Peace

HAROLD R. PETTUS

I joined my parents in the ongoing struggle for peace and human rights as a young boy during the effort to rid our government of Joseph McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee in the early 1950s. One of the things I have learned over those years is that peace is not something that is won. It is a never ending struggle to keep the forces of "war for profit" from their never ending efforts to push us again and again into sacrificing our sons and daughters and millions of innocents to the cause of their enrichment. We have victories, yes. But we must accept that what eternal vigilance really is, is the price for peace.

Another thing I have learned, very related to that one, is that those who are willing to sacrifice our lives in their lust for greater and greater wealth are very good at what they do. No sooner had we dubbed the war a war for oil than they launched an extensive campaign to ridicule that notion over and over and over until it was widely regarded among those who didn't know and those who were politically motivated to accept it, as a ridiculous rant.

Then the media, ever fearful of the credibility risk of endorsing anything regardable as ridiculous adopted a lasting habit of avoiding any reiteration of that perception. Now this is an even bigger industry and we are hard put to keep the realization that this an awful mass murder for profit alive.

I cringe when I am thanked for my service because I know this little ritual is a careful creation for equating war with heroism, patriotism, and freedom. I will not join in with so many of my neighbors in flying the flag on my front porch because this gesture has been deliberately and successfully kidnapped by the "war is patriotic" crowd and I just cannot make this silent endorsement. I will not accept the title of hero because, hero or not, the real meaning of heroism directly implies having done something that is good and this too is a contrivance for the glorification of war.

Under the banner of every government they sway with their money, the war industrialists have always considered the lives of us lesser mortals a reasonable expenditure for the expansion of their empires. As long as they are

allowed to make these fortunes at the expense of us, they will. Their only weakness is that they must move under cloak of darkness. In their weakness lives our strength.

Our task is to present the case for "war for profit" as the true impetus for every war in new ways that eclipse the old ridicule that has blunted that message for so long. When they mock us for how we say it, we say it another way, and again, and again, and again until it is said so many ways that it is an elephant in their living room.

Nature created Homo sapiens a quarter of a million years ago as a guardian for the world with a great new brain to use in the stead of weapons of death. It's about time we got around to using it. From teeth, claws and venom, we have progress thru clubs, spears, arrows, guns, and bombs to the ability to vaporize the very planet itself. Every day our lust to take from each other more than our share of the world's riches by the threat or use of these apocalyptic weapons grows into a bigger and bigger cancer in the belly of our international body politic. It has grown into a madness, blinding us to its catastrophic consequences.

Only the peace movement, in all its manifestations, stands between our world and those too greedy, and too stupid to allow us to survive. It is our fate to be the ones who tell the world so many times that they must listen that this is not a rant. It is the repeated history of the way of the world and this is the final chapter.

I am a patriot I love my country. It is my home. I want to give it to my children so that their grandchildren can someday look me up and learn how the world survived through peace and stopped selling humans for profit.

You are my brothers and sisters. Thank you for being here and letting me hear your voices so I am not lonely in my dream for a better America – a better world.



HAROLD PETTUS IS A VETERAN OF THE MILITARY ADVISOR ERA OF VIETNAM (SAME AS THE WAR ONLY LESS VETERAN'S BENEFITS.) HE SERVED AS A NAVY HOSPITAL CORPSEMAN THIRD CLASS PATCHING UP THESE ADVISORS. HE CURRENTLY LIVES IN EVERETT, WASHINGTON AND SPENDS HIS RETIREMENT LIFE WITH ONE HOBBY – PEACE.

Senator Feinstein Very Angry at CIA

OK, NOW IF SENATOR FEINSTEIN ASKS YOU
YOU ARE VERY HAPPY, HAVING A GREAT TIME
AND HAVE NO COMPLAINTS...

SENATOR FEINSTEIN.
WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE!

SURPRISE - YES.
PLEASANT - NO.



Betrayal: Toxic Exposure of US Marines, Murder and Government Cover-up

AARON DAVIS (REVIEWER)

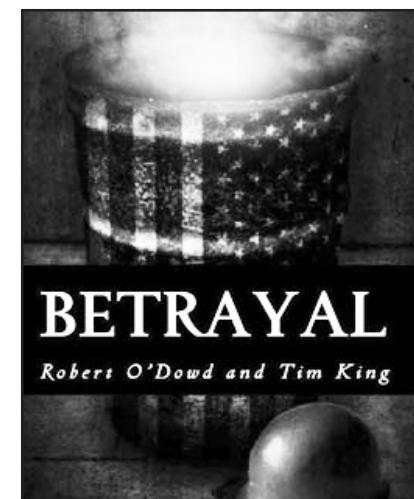
Betrayal: Toxic exposure of US Marines, Murder and Government Cover-up

Robert O'Dowd and Tim King
(O'Dowd and King, 2014)

Betrayal is a true story of US Marines who were exposed to carcinogens, injured, and continue to fight for health care and compensation. The Marine Corps leadership at Marine Corp Air Station El Toro, CA, denied ownership of a major trichloroethylene (TCE) plume spreading off base into Orange County for 16 years, may have ordered the shredding of records, and the burial of 55 gallon drums containing TCE on base to hide them from the Marine Corps Inspector General after their use was not authorized. Thousands of veterans and their families were once stationed at El Toro, the premier Marine Corps jet fighter base closed in July 1999. On the East Coast, legislation to provide health care for Camp Lejeune, NC, an active military installation, was passed in the 112th Congress in August 2012 through the Janey Ensminger Act. However, no veteran compensation was included in the Act. None of the veterans that served aboard these two installations were notified of their exposure to deadly contaminants when it was discovered, resulting in both bases earning Superfund Cleanup Site status. There are 130 military installations on the EPA Superfund database—a list of the most environmentally-hazardous sites in the US. Except for Camp Lejeune, no veterans of these installations were notified of their possible exposure to toxic chemicals and other contaminants (e.g. radiation) and the health effects of exposure. Thousands of veterans have died without 'connecting the dots' between their cause of death and military service. Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) like the American Legion can easily inform their memberships of the toxins and their health effects of the contaminants found by EPA on military installations by establishing an internet link to the EPA Superfund database on their websites. This information can literally save lives but doesn't appear to be a priority for any VSOs.

Betrayal reports on the murder of Marine Colonel James E. Sabow and other Marines whose deaths are tied to use of El Toro's assets during the 1980s and 1990s to import South American cocaine into the US and to export guns to the Contra Rebel faction of Nicaragua. Demanding a court martial to clear his name of false charges of misuse of government aircrafts, which threatened to blow the whistle on the use of El Toro's assets to support narcotrafficking, Colonel Sabow was found dead on his quarters' patio by his wife on January 22, 1991. The circumstances surrounding his death and the forensic evidence from the

in his pharynx that resulted from a basilar skull fracture. In fact, the tracheae, bronchi, bronchioles and alveoli were filled with blood, doubling the weight of the right lung. His shotgun was found under his body. No fingerprints on the shotgun. No suicide note. There was no mention in any government report of the three men who flashed government credentials, forcing Naval Investigative Service (NIS) agents to leave the crime scene. The motive for the murder was to prevent the disclosure of a covert operation to ferry weapons to Central and South America and government-sanctioned narcotrafficking on flights into El Toro. Data processing records



early purchase of a small quantity of softened municipal water;

Unexplained cut-off of pumping records when the base wells were clearly shown as not abandoned on engineering drawings and the purchase of softened municipal water from the Metropolitan District was not enough to allow El Toro to abandon its base wells;

And a radiation-contaminated hangar shuttered and sealed in 2012, ten years after the Navy reported the hangar free of radiation. The 200,000 square foot hangar, the former site of a Radium 226 paint room, was shuttered and sealed in 2012 while the State of California required the Navy to redo a radiation survey; the waste water pipes under the former Ra 226 paint room were cut and the sewer lines may be contaminated with radiation, and if confirmed, would require the Navy to dig up the contaminated sewer lines and disposed of them at a hazardous waste site off-base at a cost that could easily amount to several hundred million dollars.

Betrayal provides the legal argument for presumptive disability compensation for Lejeune Marines who currently have access to the VA for 15 medical conditions associated with organic solvent and benzene exposure to contaminated well water on the base over a 30 year period (1953-1987), and presents the argument for a Science Advisory Board (SAB) with backgrounds in environmental exposure, environmental assessment, health monitoring, and other relevant fields to objectively evaluate the risk of toxic exposure of the 130 military installations on the EPA Superfund list.

Taking care of veterans should

continued on next page

Thousands of veterans have died without 'connecting the dots' between their cause of death and military service.

crime scene support murder by a government assassination team. Crime scene tampering and government cover-up at the highest levels including a "doctored autopsy photograph" submitted in a Defense Department report on the death of Colonel Sabow to Congress in 2004. An affidavit in 2010 to the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) by an internationally-renowned pathologist reported homicide and crime scene tampering. The pathologist orally withdrew the affidavit. The 2010 NCIS cold-case investigation dismissed homicide as the manner of death, reaffirmed the false charges of misuse of a government aircraft, and depression and suicide as the manner of death. Colonel Sabow, a decorated Vietnam fighter with 221 combat missions, met his death at the hands of others. The autopsy report by Orange County (no Navy doctors) made no mention of the unexpected violent blow to the right side of the head, which caused unconsciousness. Occipital skull fragments penetrated into the back of his brain. He was near death due to the massive brainstem trauma in which agonal hyperventilation characteristic of this type of injury occurs. Sabow was aspirating blood from a wound

were purged on the maintenance of unmarked C-130s; a Marine with knowledge to purge the records was unexpectedly promoted, transferred, and murdered several years later. Other Marines who knew of the illegal drugs would meet violent deaths.

"Betrayal" reports the denial of responsibility and the cover-up to hide the truth of environmental contamination from veterans, their dependents, and the public at El Toro. These include:

No usage records on TCE and other organic solvents used on the base for decades, the Marine Corps' denial of ownership of the TCE plume spreading for miles into Orange County until a lawsuit forced the government to accept responsibility;

The loss of the official government contract procurement file for the municipal water purchase with the Irvine Ranch Water District;

The loss of all of the original well construction drawings;

Over 40 years of water distribution engineering drawings missing;

No records on the dates the base wells were abandoned but several engineering drawings showing the base wells part of the water distribution system after the

In the Dark

FRANK J. PAVLAK

The 50th anniversary of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution is August 10, 2014, a good time for me to reflect back on how this event has affected my life, what I have experienced, and learned.

Everyone has a story.

When people ask me what I did during my tour in Vietnam, I tell them that they kept me "in the dark." That response usually generates more interest and so I then explain that I was an Aerial Reconnaissance Photo Processing Specialist. I was stationed at Tan Son Nhut Air Base outside of Saigon. That Air Force specialty designation meant that during my tour of duty in Nam, I spent my time developing photographs taken by F4-Cs which had flown over the Ho Chi Minh trail, Cambodia, or North Vietnam. Pilots in those planes took photos of bomb craters, partially camouflaged MIG 21s, SAM missile sites, etc. and I processed them in the dark room. I also produced waterproof maps for Marines as well as satellite weather maps. So, I saw the war "in the dark." I wasn't raised to shoot and kill. I volunteered for the Air Force so I would not get drafted and forced to learn how to shoot and kill. That is not how we are meant to be as humans. No

wonder we have so many veterans with PTSD.

Not everything was doom and gloom however. I was working late one night by myself and with some free time I printed a bunch of 20" x 24" photos of Snoopy for my friends. As the prints were coming off of the large drying machine my Captain (who rarely came downstairs from his office except to tell us to get a haircut!) arrived in my area wanting to know what I was doing. I tried my best to distract him and prevent him from seeing the Snoopy prints. He insisted on seeing what I was working on. I thought I was going to be in deep trouble when he held up one large print of Snoopy and looked at it. He responded by saying "Hey! This is neat. Can I have one?" I told him he could have a couple or more if he wanted!

When I returned from Vietnam, I was honorably discharged at the same time after serving 4 years in the Air Force. As I tell my kids, there were no parades when we returned from the war. I was disenchanted with the war and joined Vietnam Veterans Against the War for a short time before I finished my college degree. I rejoined again recently.

As the years went by, I real-

ized I was getting older when I found that university US History courses were teaching the Vietnam War as history. I asked myself when does an event become history? How many years does it take? I visit the Vietnam Memorial whenever I travel to Washington DC to pay my respects to fallen comrades.

I reflect back on my time in Vietnam when I hear helicopters fly overhead. My barracks were under the flight path of Huey and Chinook helicopters coming into Tan Son Nhut Air Base with wounded soldiers or damaged Light Observation Helicopters (LOH). This occurred 24 hours a day for my entire one-year tour.

I also frequently reflect over the Kent State Massacre, May 4, 1970, when Ohio National Guard troops shot and killed four unarmed students and wounded nine others. To this day I struggle trying to understand how such an event could happen. Some of the students were protesting the military's incursion into Cambodia. I intend to visit Kent State during the massacre's fiftieth anniversary in 2020.

I have grown more pacifist over the years and less supportive of our country's military's actions,

such as drone strikes in the Middle East. I was quite upset when our country went to war in Iraq based on the false pretense of weapons of mass destruction. At the time, I felt that it was the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution all over again. As the philosopher George Santayana said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." One of the two US Senators who opposed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, Senator Ernest Gruening, stated "...sending our American boys into combat in a war in which we have no business, which is not our war, into which we have been misguidedly drawn, which is steadily being escalated." He was a voice "in the dark."

This is my story.



FRANK J. PAVLAK LIVES IN ARVADA, COLORADO. HE IS RETIRED. HE IS A MEMBER OF VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR. HE HAS 30+ YEARS EXPERIENCE IN THE FINANCIAL SERVICES INDUSTRY, A B.S DEGREE IN ACCOUNTING FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO. HE IS HONORABLY DISCHARGED – US AIR FORCE 1968-1972. 460 TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE WING TAN SON NHUT AIR BASE SAIGON, VIETNAM.



Betrayal

continued from previous page

be one of this country's highest priorities. There's a critical need for medical monitoring of veterans exposed to toxic chemicals and the evaluation of disability claims from Superfund sites by scientists with environmental exposure backgrounds. The VA's current system provides no routine medical care monitoring for those at risk for toxic exposures while veterans are left to their own resources and skills to file disability claims frequently denied by administrative staff without input

from scientists with backgrounds in environmental exposures. The disability compensation claim denial rate for Camp Lejeune veterans is about 84%.

Betrayal was written by two former El Toro Marines. Robert O'Dowd is an investigative reporter and columnist, and Tim King is a photojournalist, war correspondent, and the Executive News Editor of Salem-News.com. O'Dowd, a retired Defense Department manager, honed his investigative skills as an auditor

for EPA Inspector General. King, a Los Angeles native, spent the winter of 2006-2007 covering the war in Afghanistan, while he was in Iraq over the summer of 2008, reporting from the war while embedded with both the US Army and Marines. King holds numerous awards for reporting, photography, writing and editing, including the Oregon AP Award for Spot News Photographer of the Year (2004), first place Electronic Media Award in Spot News, Las Vegas, (1998), Oregon AP

Cooperation Award (1991). King has several years of experience in network affiliate news TV stations, having worked as a reporter and photographer at NBC, ABC and FOX stations in Arizona, Nevada and Oregon.



AARON DAVIS IS THE VVAW CONTACT IN UTAH. HE WAS A MARINE WHO SERVED AT CAMP LEJEUNE, ONE OF THE SITES OF CONTAMINATION.

How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Torture

JOHN McNAMER

. . . plus the illegal invasions, the summary executions, and the surveillance state.

Why has it ever even bothered me that many thousands of people have been kidnapped and illegally rendered to CIA dark sites to be sometimes tortured to death or held for many years without any legitimate legal process?

That the use of "intelligence" information obtained from torture, well known to be mostly unreliable and useless, is now the norm for the supposedly civilized western nations of the world?

That the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Obama sits in weekly high-level meetings to examine a kill list of candidates to determine who will be the next "bug splat" on a video game screen, and then joke about how drones make him "really good at killing people?"

That the evolved and ongoing Bush/Cheney coalition of the killing has successfully established the right to unilaterally invade and occupy any weaker sovereign nation in the world—a scenario that Hitler could only have hoped for in his wildest dreams—slaughtering hundreds of thousands of civilians in the process without any legal repercussions whatsoever?

That the omniscient, faceless spooks—ever ready to pounce—are monitoring my emails, my phone conversations, my financial details, my personal life?

That these very words may be implicating me even as I type, in some yet-to-be-defined threat to the national security agencies

of Bigger Brother?

It's not that they are bad people—after all, they are the good guys. They are Christian capitalists, men fully entitled to reach out and share some of the many-splendored benefits of western democracy with the unenlightened dark-skinned masses of the world. In my name, using my money.

So what if they have dredged up and put into play almost every reprehensible desecration of civilized human behavior known to the world, with crucifixion being a possible exception. The crucifixion may be still coming, by the way, as it may be they have yet to encounter a white bearded good Christian in obvious need of an attitude adjustment. Or, as the master plan continues to unfold, it could be revealed that the cross is set to be the next step up from the waterboard. Possibly, it's already in use and safely beyond the reach of our limited intelligence and security classifications.

I realize now that it doesn't matter, these things just have to be done. No particular reason, they just have to be done. So, in the spirit of true patriotism and self-preservation, I hereby announce my complete surrender to the new realities.

It's actually for my own good. I need to be quiet now and placidly carry on with daily routines. I'm a simple-minded country boy who doesn't understand the complexities. It's just the way it is.

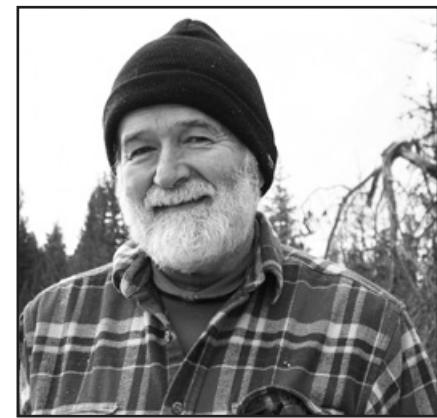
Remembering that God and

the NSA do work in mysterious ways, I accept that it's all for the best, for the greater good.

And it's become quite clear that my resistance has been mainly a personal problem. I readily admit I was once so confused, before the reprogramming. For example, I used to think that when a strong elected leader like der Führer claimed the right to use massive military might to invade and occupy other countries at will, to assassinate and summarily execute in the name of national security, it was a bad thing which must be stopped by all the good people—even if it took a world war to do this.

That when the Nazis randomly kidnapped certain kinds of people and rendered them to black-site concentration camps to be tortured and killed or held indefinitely without legal process, it was atrocious, illegal, immoral, crimes against humanity.

That when the Chinese Communists in Korea and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia used water torture as their primary warped way of dehumanizing, brainwashing and destroying suspected opponents, this was the horrifying and depraved result of Godless authoritarian communist ideology. An ideology which absolutely must be stopped at all costs, even if it were to take a nuclear holocaust. Yes, it was bad enough that we found it necessary to step up and prepare to destroy the world in order to save it from this.



That the Stalin-era Guantánamo-type gulags and ridiculous show trials with fixed outcomes for perceived enemies of the state were despicable icons of the worst form of governance possible.

That the massive unrestrained surveillance states forced on their citizenry by the Soviet KGB and the East German Stasi were an intolerable assault on the dignity of "free" people everywhere. "Ich bin ein Berliner!"

But that's all in the past for me. I'm a changed man and I have seen the light. I get it now. The resistance is gone. What's happening is what's happening and it's important to be part of the team play as we go forward: Torture and rendition, illegal invasion and occupation, summary executions from on high, mass surveillance of everything about everyone.

They are all good. Period. At some very deep mystical level, it is apparently all about loving thy neighbor as thyself, or it certainly wouldn't be happening this way, would it?

As proof that I'm serious, I even have a new mantra printed on a t-shirt carefully saved in the closet for those special events demanding the utmost in political correctness: "Kill for Peace, War Forever."



Tommy

The rhythmic cadence of knitting needles slows, then stops. Maude thinks about Tommy. Is he safe?

Toby sleeps near Maude's feet. Dark dreams trigger occasional whimpers. Why hasn't Tommy come home?

Letters from Iraq are piled neatly on the kitchen table, bound by a yellow ribbon. Was his last letter his last letter?

The Bible on the lamp table lies open to Matthew, Chapter 5: Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called God's sons. Why are warriors our heroes?

Toby rises quickly and runs to the door. Head cocked, he listens attentively. What does he hear?

Silence is broken by a loud knock. Maude steps to the window and pulls back the curtain. Two soldiers stand erectly.

—Barry L. Reece

JOHN McNAMER WAS AWARDED A BRONZE STAR MEDAL FOR SERVICE WITH THE US ARMY'S 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION IN VIETNAM. HE RECENTLY FILED A REQUEST TO THE CHIEF PROSECUTOR AT THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT ASKING FOR AN INVESTIGATION OF CANADA'S COMPLICITY IN THE TORTURE OF AFGHAN DETAINEES; IN EXTRAORDINARY RENDITIONS, AND IN OTHER POSSIBLE WAR CRIMES AS DEFINED BY THE ROME STATUTE.

Flowers for An Loc

JIM WILLINGHAM

It was the 3rd time the south Vietnamese and American bases at An Loc had been attacked, every two years on that date and time, 9/9/66 and 68, then this morning, 9/9/70. It was consistent with a series of attacks that had been happening on 3 bases in III Corps (N of Saigon), 1 in II Corps (E of Saigon) and 1 in IV Corps (S of Saigon), every 2 years on specific dates, in addition to the annual Tet. This kept the rhythms of the north Vietnamese attacks on these bases pulsing with an ongoing intensity that was increasing on every repeat occasion. Rocket propelled grenades were the weapon of choice against Hueys and Cobras, A-28's and A-37's.

There were no RPG's at An Loc on 9/9/70, because they had all been destroyed in Cambodia across the border 70 km. north, 4 months earlier during the ARVN/American incursion the first 2 weeks of May. The infantry had been drawn back in III Corps, then concentrated NW to Tay Ninh along with some ARVN troops, then another army of infantry went NNE to Song Be and was staged there, 100% ARVN. They were supported by the air cavalry and fighters, with 300 ARVN and American casualties. After this, the infantry was kept drawn back in III Corps. Casualties of Americans and South Vietnamese dropped dramatically.

The North Vietnamese combatants with weapons had been centrally located north of III Corps and were fanning out to the SW and S to the SE, going everywhere. The other weapons caches had been NE of Song Be and North Vietnamese combatants had been crossing the border going east into the southern highlands. They were going everywhere from there, east then north to the Pacific highlands, southeast then dropping down to the coast and traveling

south on sampans to the mangrove forests in II and IV Corps. Others were attacking Dalat City, or trying unsuccessfully. Still others were making their way across and down into the southeastern forests, where they were repelled by the Americans and South Vietnamese.

There had been the potential of larger attacks, first at An Loc on 9/9/70, with a fusillade of RPG's. One man could carry 10 in his belt and 1 in his launcher. 100 men could have carried 1100 RPG's, downed the entire fleet of air cavalry coming in from Bien Hoa, followed by the A-28's and A-37's, with a mass of 8,000 more than able to overrun both bases, killing them all and heading south. There were no RPGs on 9/9/70, only many AK-47's; I shot one man who had a hand grenade and there were 2 light machine guns with clips. They all died, est. 8,000, based on the dimensions and volume of them. I shot 90 times with a .38, 90 hits. I shot one man twice and another man 3 times, because he was still moving and close. I was with 40 ARVN Rangers with M-16's, their Lt. Col. standing by with the rest of my C-7 crew plus the M-60 gunners at the American and ARVN bases, 40 choppers, 15 A-28's, 2 A-37's, artillery and defoliated woods. We lost no one, no one wounded.

Unfortunately, I was in that final series of all 5 defensive battles at those bases, by destiny, from An Loc in III Corps on 9/9/70 to Vinh Long in IV Corps on 6/13/71 and three major airborne command post situations from the cockpit of a C-7, calling artillery and air power, with a lot of North Vietnamese dead. I have always grieved a lot about them, along with the two Army men we lost at Katum Artillery Base on 4/3/71 and the 28 Marines we lost at the Vinh Long Navy Swiftboat Base, where it came together with the

Army base. I remember them visually, the Army men brave, smiling and proud, the last two Marines rising up together, firing across the river. I fired 5 shots above them across into the woods to let them know we were coming, as we ran down from the Army base. They went down again, together. I fired a 6th shot across, to let the Navy ground troops know we were coming.

We had 20 M-16's, including 2 sister soldiers, 1 grenade launcher and 2 .38's. There were about 10 Navy ground troops, including a forward M-60 gunner and a sister manning an M-40 above the Navy base wall. She called for choppers on the land line and kept firing. No one more of us died, no one wounded after that. The North Vietnamese, from the mangrove forests downriver, all died. They were driven, always suicidal with their attacks. There were two surviving elderly Vietnamese from the river village of 25 sampans, 48/50 died. The Marines had been sent out onto the sampans, ordered by their Marine Colonel. He died with them, his body floating face up, head first downriver while the battle raged.

After the choppers came, the Navy Corpsmen brought out the two elderly survivors, a woman unhurt physically, but in shock and a man shot in his left shoulder, already packed and bravely walking out with the Navy men. Some of the younger relatives from the village behind the bases came forward greeting them. The man went to the Navy hospital. I had to apologize to them. "Sin loi, Buddhist?" and bow.

I prayed over the fallen Marines. I gripped the back left-lower leg of a Marine. He was still warm. I pounded my fist into his calf. He was gone, along with all 27 of them, down on the sampans. The Marines covered the bodies of the small, elderly sampan people as they fell from the sudden massive ambush, coming from a block of tall green trees across the river. That's the one that broke me, an accumulation of violent experiences, beyond the pale.

I debriefed the Navy ground troops. I reminded them of the UCMJ, that they had the right to say, "Sir! No, sir!" to avoid irrational orders with reckless endangerment and how to cover for each other in the event an officer points his gun at one of them, which he did.

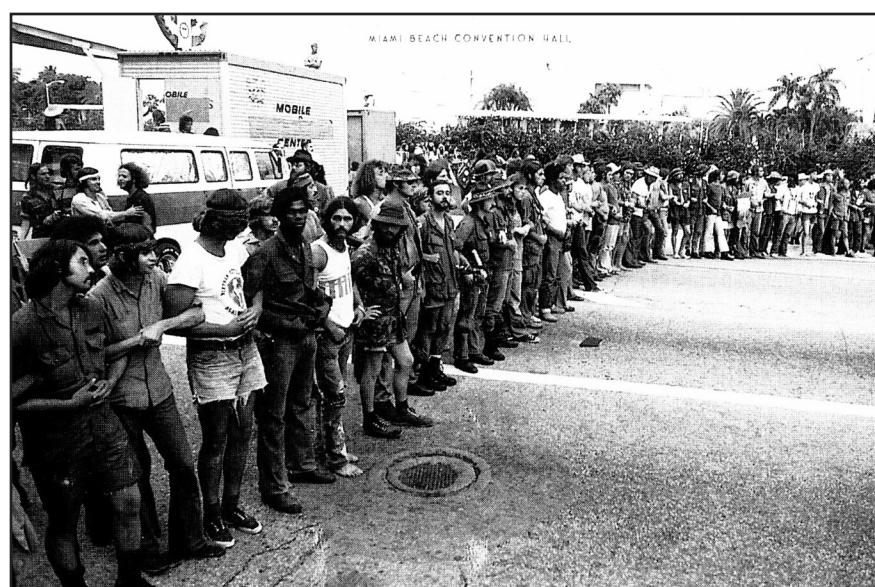
I remember my 3 mercy killings, a wounded man weeping, sobbing in despair in dark woods north of Lai Khe Army base on 10/17/70. I yelled, "Mercy!" shot for the sound, he was quiet. A small Vietnamese woman was mortally wounded, calling for help. She had a red stain on her black shirt, below her left breast. A man was writhing in pain at Katum on 4/3/71. The bullets were flying. I called to the woman, loudly, "You're precious! I love you!" and to the man, "Mercy!" before I shot them. We had to keep firing.

There were other experiences, good ones. I sipped pink lemonade with a Buddhist monk in Cam Ranh on 9/16/70. We talked at length about the peace that would follow. In May '71, I went to an outdoor cafe near the University of Saigon, sipped pink lemonade and talked to some young people there, very distinguished. I said, "Let the peace come to you."

On 8/7/71, I met a beautiful matriarch of the NLF, in a long purple-orchid dress. She was seated in the cabin of the C-7, Cam Ranh Bay AFB. I knelt before her and placed her left hand on mine on the seat beside her, to soften me. I told her I revered and honored Madame Binh, the NLF representative in Paris. "We have to save lives from now on." "How many more men and women will not go home to find their loves?" I told her I was angry with General Giap, the central commander of all the North Vietnamese combatants, for sacrificing all those people and for what I had to do to oppose him, that my heart was broken. I told her he had to be turned to peace and asked her, "Will they give flowers?" She said, "Yes, they will give flowers."

Fortunately, there was a strong and deep networking for peace in the south. It permeated through the Buddhists into the Catholics into the diplomatic wing of the National Liberation Front into the locally elected representatives, into the University of Saigon and into the Republic of Vietnam Army and Air Force. They knew they were praying and fighting for peace and respect. They knew what was going to happen after the Americans left and we did not come back.

The Battle of An Loc 9/9/70 was a deep, personal experience



The Last Patrol, RNC Miami Beach, 8/72. The guys stuck Jim in the middle.

continued on page 36

Enough

HAROLD PETTUS

One thing members of VVAW know is that it isn't easy being in the vanguard. Thousands of years of war have firmly established a tradition of accepting military assignment as proof in itself that the battle is righteous and warranted. We don't kid ourselves that convincing our citizenry that we have entered an era where this assumption is no longer appropriate can be easy.

I won't reiterate the familiar list of conflicts that have tainted our recent history. The wars against people who posed us no threat, fought in ways that defied victory, mostly destroyed the lives of innocents, and accomplished nothing. You know them.

By their measure we can know that we must not do this again. Nothing on the table in Iran,

Syria, etc. is new or different. Nor can new wars here accomplish anything new or different. Just another heinous body count. But here is the thing that makes it so not easy.

Our brothers in arms, active and retired, have been accepting their lives of cannon fodder as an act of heroism for so very long that it is beyond possible for many of them to accept that it was all wrong and all for nothing. That they were maimed, their minds pushed beyond endurance, and their comrades ripped apart in horrible deaths to serve only a prideful donation to the military/industrial complex is a blasphemy some simply cannot bear or even acknowledge. We understand this.

The burden of the VVAW is to mourn this mortal wound

and proceed with the business of healing the future. The massive killing of peasants for the glory of the royal court has gone on long enough. It is the twenty-first century and high time we grew beyond medieval concept of honor and glory as measured by suffering, carnage, and death.

It's all settled. The armies of the world have absolutely proved that we can slay millions of people and fix nothing. Hell, we can depopulate the planet and fix even less. Enough. Now that our technology has brought us to a place where so very much of what we do is of such great consequence, we can no longer ignore the reality that we are, in so very many vital ways, one world. In this time of extinction scenarios, it is time to find another way to

solve our differences.

We were not heroes nor were we villains. We own neither pride nor shame. We were duped and our honor is best redeemed by never allowing that to happen again. It is the twenty-first century and time to end international relations through slaughter. The human brain has housed a mind capable of accomplishing all of our needs without killing each other for at least a quarter of a million years by the most conservative estimates. It's about time we stopped imitating the savage beasts that preceded us and got around to using it.



HAROLD PETTUS SERVED IN THE NAVY HOSPITAL CORPS FROM 1960 TO 1964 AND COMPLETED HIS SERVICE AS AN E-4.



VA Westside Hospital Demo, Chicago, August 19, 1974.

Flowers for An Loc

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for me. After the battle as we were talking privately, the ARVN Lt. Col. said to his first Sgt., in English, "We will fight for a little while longer, then we will join the other side." I asked him, "Will you make them respect you?" He said, "Yes, we will make them respect us."

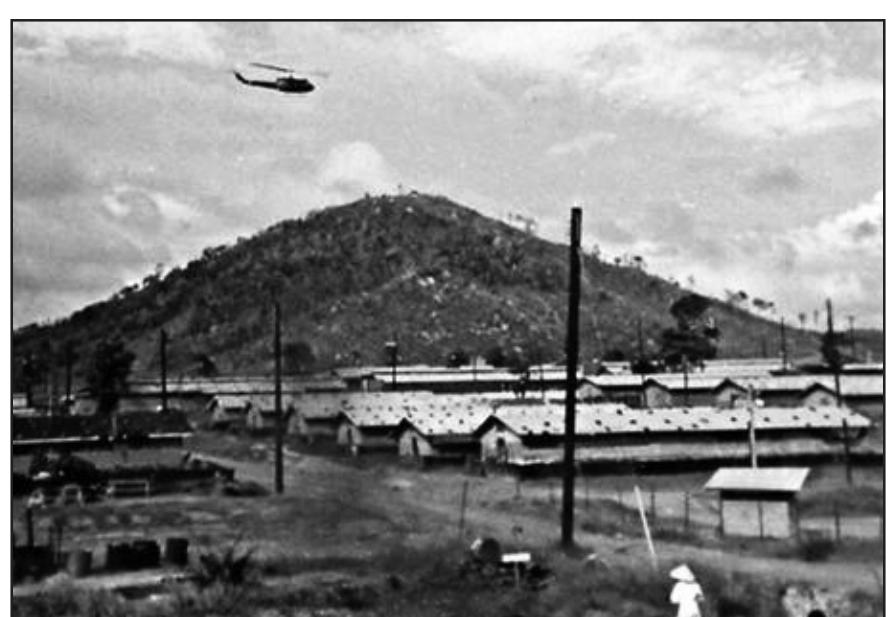
We bowed, Vietnamese Buddhist style, including the 40 ARVN Rangers. I had my VVAW button in my pocket. The next year, I declared conscientious objector, then resigned my commission and protested. After, I became broken,

with grief and guilt, a walking ghost. One thing kept me going and healed me. We are always forgiven. There is always hope.

Madame Binh was grieving in Paris. She would have her deep and lasting peace, Madame Peace. They gave flowers.



JIM WILLINGHAM IS A VVAW MEMBER WHO LIVES IN FLORIDA.



An Khe, Vietnam.

Letter to Editor

The Buffalo News April-26-2012 printed in the Everybody's Column section.

Pentagon's Control of Veteran's Affairs

The attempt to intimidate the veteran community's opinion regarding the government's military spending won't work. Veterans are not only veterans, who receive health care, disability and educational assistance through the Veterans Administration

(which is funded by the Defense Department), they are also citizens, taxpayers and workers. They know that the dead-end and disastrous foreign policy followed by the US government since the end of World War II has served as a justification for the massive military budgets that every year have boosted corporate profits and helped create the \$14 trillion federal deficit.

To end this attempted intimidation, Veterans Affairs should be removed from the

political and economic control of the Pentagon. To end the existence of this "permanent war economy" with all of the sorrow and waste that accompany it, the profit must be taken out of production for the military. This can be done by nationalizing the corporations that receive those government contracts. Only by taking the profit out of war can we begin to solve our domestic problems, develop a constructive foreign policy and enter into a new historical period.

This letter to the editor was

written in response to the never ending propaganda campaign that says "any cuts to the D.O.D. budget will hurt veterans." The reason this line works is that most people believe that when it comes to choosing whether to buy another submarine, airplane or tank, or add more beds and staff at a VA hospital or clinic, the corporations will get the money.



—Al Donohue

Teenage Nazis

Roy did not know who his father was, raised up in Jersey City, New Jersey
He grows tired of living on the dirty part of town,
Joins the Marines at the age of seventeen
they teach him how to kill in many different ways.
Roy loves the power that has been given to him
They then send him to Vietnam
to join the other Nazis.
When he goes to his first village
a mamason runs up to him,
No VC Here No VC Here, she nervously says.
Roy takes his Ka-Bar & stabs her in the gut,
when a little boy sees his grandma go down
he runs to her & says something in Vietnamese,
Roy takes his 45 & shoots the boy in the head.
Another Nazi grabs a papason by the neck,
throws him down the well & takes his silver 38
with pearl handles that his Nazi Dad sent to him,
& unloads it on papason down in the well.
Other kids run to their grandmas & grandpas
as the Marine Nazis kick them with their jack boot
jungle boots & then leave.
In the next close village there are no Vietnamese
in the open anywhere.
They are all hiding in their mound bomb shelter
covered with grass, but the Vietnam Nazis
throw hand grenades into the tunnels inside it,
when they hear the screams they throw
in more & then leave.
They know it will make the VC insane mad in the area
about their mothers, fathers, wives & children.
The American Nazis have become good
at finding booby traps & land mines.
But when 3 of their own hit different ones in one day,
they kill & burn down 6 villages in a row.
When they hear of My Lai, they have to admit that,
the Army Nazis who did this

should all get Silver Stars.
But then in a quiet village they get bored,
so they take a papason & tie him to a tree,
& take turns bayoneting him just for fun,
while in another hut, the American nazis
gang rape a little girl.
When Roy kills his first VC, he cuts the head off,
puts it on a long thick stick.
Later he carries it down Highway 1
to the American Nazi base camp, & digs
a hole & puts the stick head in the ground
with rocks to hold it for all to see.
When Roy flies home after his Tour
of the American Nazi War he has ribbons,
& a Bronze Star & Silver Star, for killing
the most Vietnamese enemies VC NVA or not.
His photo makes the front page of the
Local Newspaper as a hero, killing the
most Vietnamese of his whole Company.
After a couple of days Roy wears his jeans,
an old T-shirt & walks along the boardwalk
on the Jersey shore.
A police man who saw his photo, tips his hat
to Roy when he walks by, then with the lights on
& the ocean breeze, another man recognizes
him too. Shakes Roy's hard hand & asks him
what are you going to do? Roy says probably
work at the docks, the Mob man shakes
his head, says you deserve better than that,
He has a high paying job offer with
little work, the Mob man sets up a 9 o'clock
breakfast for both of them the next day.

— Dennis Serdel
Vietnam 1967-68, Light Infantry, Americal Division,
11th Brigade, Purple Heart



Bacsi-Doc

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repressed, but will still creep up in a sweaty nightmare some 40 years later. There is the recalling (if I wish to go there) of other mundane recollections as well. Basically I was just trying to do my job as a medical corpsman, of which I had gone through much training to become.

Before leaving my last duty station at Bethesda Naval Hospital near Washington, DC, I had worked in the ER learning skills that might only be approved to be performed by medical doctors in the civilian world. I knew other competent corpsmen that could set a broken limb or apply a cast among many other skills. I also remember going to The Moratorium To End The War in October of 1969, which as military personnel we were strictly prohibited from. But being politically naive, curious, and very interested in girls, I attended along with a half million others. Pete Seeger performed that day.

After receiving orders for Vietnam the next month, I was officially designated as a Navy 8404 FMF (Fleet Marine Force) Combat Corpsman since we were

now Navy personnel officially attached to Marine Corps units, which I learned had one of the highest mortality rate of any MOS (military occupational specialty).

After completion of Vietnamese Language School, which was a 2-week course when arriving in-country to help us understand Vietnamese customs, we were then assigned to 1 of the 4 Combined Action Groups operating in I Corps. The Lt. Col at the completion of the course seemed to take some kind of sadistic pleasure in telling us 40 corpsmen lined up that day that only 50% of us would be making it home. He said if we wished to have him write a letter to our folks at home, he would tell them about what job laid ahead of us in the civic action program we were about to embark on.

After being there a few months in the CAPs, I was doing the best I could under the circumstances. This one afternoon, I was told that a local farmer had sliced his hand open while in the rice paddies. He was in a nearby hamlet to where we moved that evening since being a

mobile CAP was now our modus operandi so that the enemy would not know where we might be set up on any given night.

We'd learned that the older stationary units could bring on an attack more likely from the Viet Cong. We also knew that we never knew who to really trust living among the people, and knew that we actually lived with Viet Cong and Viet Cong sympathizers, in what I perceived as a very screwed up war indeed.

What I learned most interestingly early on was that these poor peasant farmers and their families just wished to be left alone by both us and the Viet Cong.

As the Marines I was with set up our nightly perimeter and sent out their ambush team, I entered the farmer's humble straw-made home to set up my medical bag on a rough wooden table with a kerosene lamp. I tended to his wound, cleaning it with anti-septic while laying out my suture kit. I injected lidocaine to help numb the area. Using forceps and a needle, I then carefully applied individual stitches along the length of the meaty part of his thumb he had sliced open.

I realized that this farmer

had never been treated by anyone in his life for anything medically related and I also thought he could very well be either a Viet Cong or sympathizer.

Years later I learned that the Viet Cong actually highly respected us for the humanitarian works we performed while in these CAP units, and sometimes didn't harass us because we were actually helping them in some odd perverse way in this equally strange war.

As I squinted in the poor light to mend this Vietnamese man's hand, I heard a Marine who was sitting quietly nearby say: "Geez, Doc, where did you learn to do shit like that?"



WALT CRONIN WAS A NAVY CORPSMAN (MEDIC) WITH THE COMBINED ACTION PLATOONS IN VIETNAM IN 1970. HE IS ON 100% SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY DUE TO PTSD. HE IS A FOLK AND COUNTRY SINGER/SONGWRITER, WRITING ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCES OF LIFE IN AMERICA AS A DISENFRANCHISED VETERAN. VISIT HIS WEBSITE AT [HTTP://WWW.THEGOUSTERS.COM](http://WWW.THEGOUSTERS.COM).

Blurting Out The Lies

If the US Government is not constantly confronted with their lies, Americans will constantly believe that America is exceptional, as Obama recently stated on national television.

We are living in a make believe culture. Since the end of World War II, the United States has bombed 28 countries, and has threatened so many more countries with its exceptional behavior.

US sanctions against Iraq began in August 1991, and stayed largely in force until May 2003. Watching the "60 Minutes" telecast of May 12, 1996, when Lesley Stahl interviewed then Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, is still a shocking piece of truth. Lesley Stahl asked this question to Madeleine Albright: "We have heard half a million children have died. I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima.

And, you know, is the price worth it?" Albright replied: "We think the price is worth it." 500,000 Iraqi children died as a result of the US embargo and sanctions, and weapons of terror against that country.

In 2008, the population of Wyoming was 532,668. I have met several Vietnam veteran activists who went to Iraq during the mid 1990s, and visited the hospitals in which these children were dying.

When you include deaths from Depleted Uranium, the facts and pictures that my friends took of the

dying and the dead, were absolutely unimaginable. That is half the people who were murdered in Auschwitz during the Nazi Holocaust.

What I am writing here has been written about by many writers and journalists around the world for years.

The Iraqi Children Story can easily be researched on the Internet and many book publications. But, in America, this madness of truth has nearly been exterminated. And, that is why people have to keep writing about this history, so it doesn't vanish.

In America we deny that 500,000 Iraqi children died as a result of American tax dollars, because it is information straight out of hell.

It is extremely important for activists to keep writing about how dangerous the US Empire is, otherwise American tax dollars will continue to be used to stuff the orifices of the dead.

—Mike Hastie
Army Medic Vietnam
September 24, 2013

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 over 40 years old. The insignia, VVAW® and Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc.® are registered trademarks belonging to VVAW and no other organization or group may use it for any reason without written permission from the VVAW Board of Directors.

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

Bacsi-Doc

WALT CRONIN

The Combined Action Platoon (CAP) to which I was assigned consisted of 12 Marines and one Navy Corpsman. We later described ourselves as Peace Corps workers with rifles operating as units in the countryside of I Corps outside of Da Nang, Vietnam in 1970.

Winning the hearts and minds was the official mantra we were told when being given an area of operation to conduct patrols, ambushes and operations to attempt to ensure that the Viet Cong and NVA not control the locals by kidnapping village chiefs and murdering them or using their terrorist tactics to convince some villages that wished to have allegiance to South Vietnam be left unmolested from their influence.

As a nineteen-year-old Navy Corpsman, I have to admit that my knowledge of politics was minimal and our involvement in Vietnam by the late sixties was obviously a "let's get the hell out of here" mentality. We flashed peace signs to each other everywhere we went, while hitching rides on military vehicles on Highway

One, the main asphalt artery running north to south. Mainly, our platoon of Marines worked with a larger group of local militia types who were called Popular Forces. These were locals who were their National Guard (young, old and in-between) that we tried to train while living in their hometown villages in our area of operation. I was more idealistic in the beginning, trying to work the civic action principles of this very different type of infantry unit.

I would hold medcaps, which were basically mobile clinics where I would set up a wooden table and chair in front of a Vietnamese home on a dusty main street while the villagers all lined up to be examined and diagnosed by me, a nineteen-year-old Navy medic. I was called Bacsi, which is Vietnamese for doctor. A heady title for a teenage corpsman. They usually just called me Bacsi-doc.

The tedious drudgery and sometimes freakish minutes of terror in the CAPs seemed to blend into the day to day existence of never knowing when you might



A Vietnamese fishing village near Chu Lai in Walt's area of operation in 1970.

die or be horribly wounded as we witnessed this around us. Our Vietnamese counterparts seemed to appear to bear the brunt of this since command had dictated a year previously that the Vietnamese had to take the lead on patrols and operations. There was always the fear of a sniper round or stepping on a booby trap while on patrol or the knowledge that the same CAP a year prior had been wiped out in

an ambush while on patrol.

I told a Vietnam vet friend of mine recently that my recollection of Vietnam was comprised of two words: chaos and bullshit. Chaos being the insanity of war and bullshit being the reasons we were there in the first place.

There are so many memories, many of which are blocked and

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George Bush Painting Boarding - New Form of Torture Replaces Waterboarding

