In the spring of 1966, 50 long years ago, I finished my ten months of compulsory service in the Swedish Army. I was born 1943 in Sweden. My father was highly educated, and very successful in his field. I, however, was not so successful. My parents thought I was a trouble child. My father quickly got me a job as an assistant to Swedish geologists who prospected for iron ore in the wild and mountainous rain forests in Liberia.

My parents thought I was a trouble child. My father quickly got me a job as an assistant to Swedish geologists who prospected for iron ore in the wild and mountainous rain forests in Liberia.
Since Vietnam Veterans Against the War’s (VVAV) founding in 1967, we have fought against wars on all fronts. From the beginning, we have followed our organizing principles by joining in solidarity with the struggle against systemic racism, violence and oppression. In 1971 we went to Cairo, Illinois to support that struggle. In 1972 we protested at the Miami Republican National Convention and stood up against the American Nazi Party. VVAV has never supported a Nazi’s right to speak and spew hate speech and we must all speak out against it now.

In the last year, we have witnessed a resurgence of such ignorable hate. Bundy’s Citizens for Constitutional Freedom’s segusion militia took over a wildlife refuge in Oregon. Leader Live Bundy spewed racist speech about how African Americans would be better off as slaves. Donald Trump condemned the beating of Black Lives Matter protestors, and encourages violence at his events. His green light for thugs has created unsafe and hostile conditions for women and people of color. His calling for a ban on all Muslims coming into our country and an insult to our Constitution. Had Bundy’s militia been composed of people of color, would they have been allowed to stay on federal property? Would Trump’s and Bundys’ militia’s been composed of people of color, would they have been allowed to stay on federal property? If they illegally seized for so long? Or would it have looked a little more like Ferguson?

VVAV calls on you to take action against the resurgng racism and xenophobia, to speak out, to take action, and to stand up in solidarity. Get out and vote on November 8. We know it is difficult to turn out for what we know are rigged elections. Some of the candidates, on both sides, are enough to make one nauseous. Think of it this way; if you could save one person, with your vote, would it be worth walking down the street and spending a few minutes in a booth? The outcomes of these elections, from local offices all the way up to the presidential race, can either give power to this systemic oppression of hate, or stop it in its tracks. You decide.

VVAV also continues to stand with the Vietnamese, as we have done since we began organizing in 1967. Archivists at WYSO, a public radio in Yellow Springs, Ohio, recently uncovered a speech made by longtime Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAV) member Barry Romo at Antioch College in January 1973. WYSO aired a two-piece story in February on Barry’s journey from enlistment to anti-war protester. In late 1972, Barry represented VVAV on a peace delegation with Joan Baez, Telford Taylor and Rev. Michael Allen, delivering letters and packages to American POWs right outside of Hanoi. They were invited over by the Vietnamese government. No one knew at the time, that Nixon was about to start the Christmas bombings. The US military planes dropped over 20,000 tons of explosives on and around Hanoi over that ten-day period.

When Barry came back, he immediately hit the road to spread the word of what had happened, to talk about VVAV, and to build the movement to end the war in Vietnam. At Antioch College Barry said, “All my brothers and sisters in Vietnam, in the 1960s, and we are the ones who fought for peace in Vietnam...Vietnam veterans are still fighting to end this war from the inside. At the anti-war rallies, we are fighting for a peace time. A war of peace...VVAW...between the United States and Vietnam...It is not a war of our own making...We are fighting for peace.”

Since Vietnam Veterans Against the War’s (VVAV) founding in 1967, we have worked with The Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin (VAVA) to raise awareness of the continuing Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange. VVAV and VAVA have worked to raise awareness on the effects of Agent Orange/Dioxin (VAVA) to raise awareness of the continuing Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange. VVAV and VAVA have worked to raise awareness on the effects of Agent Orange/Dioxin (VAVA) to raise awareness of the continuing Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange.

Barry went as a VVAV delegate to Vietnam, was because VVAV saw the importance of working with the Vietnamese people. We saw that they were fighting for their country and that the US was the aggressor. Barry saw firsthand the damage Nixon's bombings did to the Vietnamese people. VVAV worked to stop the war and for years has worked for the normalization of relations with Vietnam and the Vietnamese people. VVAV has continued to work with the Vietnamese people, whose country and people are still devastated by the US war fought on their homeland. VVAV has fought to raise awareness on the effects of Agent Orange/Dioxin (VAVA) to raise awareness of the continuing Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange.

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Thanks to Jeff Danziger and Billy Curmano for their cartoons. Thanks to Bill Branson, Brian Mattarrese, Susan Schnall, Per Machota.

Veteran Staff
Jeff Machota
Ellie Shunas
Bill Branson
Jen Tayabji

VVAV Merchandise

**HONOR THE WARRIOR, NOT THE WAR**
Veterans Against the War Fighting for Veterans' Rights All issues since 1967

**VVAV Merchandise**
c/o Dave Kettenhofen
3550 East Lunham Avenue
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**VVAV**

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  $6.00 for first item, $2.00 for each item after
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- **VVAV Enamel Pin** - $3.00
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  $2.00 for first item
- **VVAV Grey Crewneck Sweatshirt**
  (M, L) - $20.00
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  $9.00 for first item, $4.00 for each item after

Total Enclosed
Like other readers, I naturally enjoyed Daniel Lavery's review of Hamilton Gregory's *McNamara's War*. Daniel points out that "the pipeline to Vietnam needed to be filled with warm bodies regardless of the law." Thousands of otherwise draft-eligible, white, upper-middle class males avoided the draft by joining the reserves (e.g., George Bush), while others like Mitt Romney and Dick Cheney ran up a lengthy list of derelictions for a variety of reasons. Actually, there is some good news here: would you want to know someone who had a foxhole with Dick Cheney? I don't think so!

Daniel notes draftees who were "too fat, too short, with medical problems, psychiatric disorders, low IQ's, Downs Syndrome, schizophrenia, and even convicted criminals," many of whose very serious disorders led to unnecessary deaths on the battlefield. Obviously, there was such a serious shortage of bodies, OK? The Army was forced to draft, let alone sent to Vietnam. But he failed to mention one group, possibly because Mr. Gregory was unaware of them.

I not too long ago retired after 35 years as a probation officer, and remember, a couple of decades ago, crawling around in the Courthouse basement looking through probation files. I often felt that I had a lot of time on my hands, OK? What stuck in my mind was a non-infringement recommendation presented to the District Court. I especially liked the last three words of that recommendation. The other options were the county jail or state prison. Understanding to begin with that a community-based criminal-justice system requires the ability to do with the branch of any armed services, I had to ask myself, "Why in the hell would any criminal court request a "recommendation"? I had ever made such a recommendation when I was working, I am confident that the court door session in chambers would have followed. But I know that it used to happen, and have trouble believing that without any planning, they would go to a small county in east central Illinois. Unfortunately, the attorneys and judges were not sophisticated. They thought the cases were either dead or lying around in nursing homes somewhere, so that I cannot question them or (at least the attending nurses aides would prefer that I not try. As much as I would like to throw that back into Bobby McNamara's lap, I will have to give him a pass on that one. Let's start with the proverbial good news and bad news. I remember from the time I was in the Army that confirmed that, yeah, that is exactly how they wound up there. It was "take your choice - join up or get locked up." I have no idea what were the specifics of their circumstances (anything from shoplifting to child molestation) nor of what happened to them later in their military careers. Ideally, they would have served out their sentences. But instead anyone else killed, walked away with an honorable discharge, used their GI Bill benefits to complete postgraduate education, and as we speak are busy writing columns for The Veteran. Like I said, that would be the ideal end of the story. But in Vietnam, they would have gotten a felony conviction, gotten their acts together, and taken advantage of some veterans' benefits. And please keep one thing in mind: sometimes young people just didn't have a choice. That does not automatically make them bad people. McNamara's self serving intentions notwithstanding, there were people that were otherwise indefensible of handling those cases might have worked out for the better.

Of course, as Gregory suggests, there is no reason to assume that, and a lot of good reasons to consider that McNamara's "strategy" had a lot of local success. It was a whole lot of the probation clients with whom I dealt. They were usually not as strong as the system (the service), they might as what they did, and I, as seen in Vietnam With the us army 9th diVision in 1968. To fight.

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I was assigned to the 67th Medical Group, and I handled the paperwork for all the doctors and nurses north of Cam Rahn Bay. I visited hospitals where I saw the results of war—many young men with wounds, even entire parts of bodies; also Vietnamese women and children who suffered the same type of damage. The South Vietnamese (our "ally") treated their own people badly. It is a sad testament to the Vietnamese people poorly. Our mission was to fight the communists, which is difficult, especially with 20,000 feet up in a B-52. But closer to the ground to how tell the communists from the non-communists? I saw healthy American young men and women trying to help a poor country, and they soon became angry and hateful and began to call all Vietnamese names. That turned me against the war. I'd taken four months in country. I would still do my job, but when I got home I protected the war. When I arrived home I found other veterans (thanks, comrades, in Vietnam With the us army 9th diVision in 1968. To fight.

In 1966 I had just joined the local John Birch Society, as its youngest member - 16 years old, and fresh behind the ears, but eager to fight against the communists. I was the youngest member of the organization. I remember the night of our first meeting, feeling that I had a mission to fight against the forces of evil. When I got out of basic training, I joined the John Birch Society, as its youngest member - 16 years old, and fresh behind the ears, but eager to fight against the communists.

Hate the war that back into Bobby McNamara's lap, I will have to give him a pass on that one.

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Again we are in the silly season aka presidential politics. Donald Trump is touting "Make America Great Again." This is not unlike politicians who came before him. It goes along with waving the flag, hugging babies and hanging out in coffee shops in primary states. Depending how it's used it could be just another campaign slogan to grab your attention and vote. Then again it could be all part of an effort to get people to forget reality and follow this megalomaniac. To the extreme it could be all part of an effort to get your attention and vote. Then again it could be as great as we were during and after World War II. I have an idea of how we can be great again. The again would be the year of 1908! That was the year the Chicago Cubs won the World Series. They put together a pretty good team this year, giving us a chance to be great again. Alas, I suppose this is a local thing. St. Louis Cardinal fans wouldn't think this is so great. Another thing are the grumpy people who don't even like baseball. We've certainly seen better days in the job market. I suppose that then wasn't great for a lot of people, but probably more than nowadays. Real wages just ain't what they used to be again. The again part. We want wages back the way they used to be, and after World War II. We've got F-16s and smart bombs and huge nuclear aircraft and the ability to see at night. We just can't beat that damn tribe of Pashtuns. If we did we could be as great as we were during and after World War II. One thing that has been great and still is great is our National Park system as well as our system of National Wildlife Refuges. We've just got to keep them out of the hands of the Bundy family and their ilk. We've got the smartest bombs. It's too bad the people who decide when and where to use them ain't as smart as the bombs. We think our sports fans are the greatest. In other countries they kill each other. We just have bar fights. Elections. Our elections, if not the best, are certainly the longest. President for two years can now. Do hear three? Nobody in the rest of the world can top that. Shame that the democracy in their face. We've got the smartest bombs. It's too bad the people who decide when and where to use them ain't as smart as the bombs. We think our sports fans are the greatest. In other countries they kill each other. We just have bar fights. Elections. Our elections, if not the best, are certainly the longest. President for two years can now. Do hear three? Nobody in the rest of the world can top that. Shame that the democracy in their face. We've got the smartest bombs. It's too bad the people who decide when and where to use them ain't as smart as the bombs. We think our sports fans are the greatest. In other countries they kill each other. We just have bar fights. Elections. Our elections, if not the best, are certainly the longest. President for two years can now. Do hear three? 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Bill Shunas is a Vietnam veteran, author and VVAW member in the Chicago chapter.
Vietnamese Visit New York and DC

continued from page 1

for disabled children in Vietnam. Tim noted that in his 25 years of working in the Senate, this was the first time that a group of Americans and Vietnamese had come together to talk with him about the needs of both groups.

VAVA returned to New York on Friday, December 18 for a dinner meeting with members of VVAW. It was an extraordinary event as folks told their stories of that conflict and their memories from that time. Frank Toner served as a medic in-country and refused to carry a gun. Per Oldman was a Swedish national who volunteered for the Marines and fought at Khe Sanh, at the same time Mr. Rinh was fighting as a soldier in the North Vietnamese Army. Joe Hirsch is a long standing member of VVAW who was in military intelligence during the conflict and speaks fluent Vietnamese. Ed D'Amato was with the US Army in Vietnam in 1966. Ken Dalton was in the Navy, based on a ship off the coast of Vietnam. Brian Matarrese, who was in the US Army during the Vietnam conflict as well as a member of VVAW and social activist for many years, helped bring the group together.

VVAW donated $5,000 to VAVA for the building of homes in Quang Binh Province, an area that was subjected to repeated bombings throughout the American War. The whole town of Dong Ho was completely destroyed by the bombing, and the people continue to suffer from the repeated spraying of Agent Orange. At the dinner, individual VVAW members also donated money to the victims of Agent Orange. It has been over forty years since the last US troops left Vietnam and yet, the damage we caused remains - in the contaminated land and in the people who pass on cells changed by dioxin contamination from generation to generation. Bomb craters remain from Operation Rolling Thunder and unexploded ordnances makes the land dangerous to farm and puts innocent children at risk when they play in the fields. It is up to us to clean up those terrible remnants of the American War in Vietnam, to continue to assist the Vietnamese people to heal, and in doing so, heal ourselves.

Mr. Nguyen Minh Y speaks emotionally when he thanks the veterans who have been to war and are now fighting for peace and social justice for the Vietnamese. He states his (and VAVA's) support for the Americans and their children who suffer from the impact of the American War in southeast Asia.

Susan Schnall is on the VVAW Board, co-coordinator of VAORRC, and a Vietnam era Veteran who was court martialed by the US Navy for anti-war actions in 1969.

Ed D'Amato (long time VVAW member who served in the US Army in Vietnam) and Nguyen Minh Y at VVAW dinner with VAVA.

VVAW members at VAVA dinner where VVAW donated $5,000 for the building of two homes in Quang Binh Province.

Tran Thi Hoan dancing with members of the band Filthy Rotten System at the Holiday Party.

U.S. Veterans and Vietnamese People are Still Dying from Agent Orange

Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & responsibility campaign

www.vn-agentorange.org
something hard, like the muzzle of my M16. Ten pieces (you can count them on a cat-scan) of this bullet hit my left temple with the force of a heaved sledge hammer. The force of the hit tore a hole in my skull bone the size of a silver dollar. The pieces of bone were lodged in the outer part of my brain. The ten pieces of the bullet lodged one to two inches deep in my brain, and one in the center of my brain. I was conscious long enough to instinctively know that I was dying.

Who saved my life? Our corpsman? A Marine? I met my platoon commander 25 years later, for the first time since the incident: “Are you fucking alive?!” The medevac helicopters were on their way to pick up the wounded, but when he saw me laying next to the KIAs with an ashen face and covered in blood he knew I was dead. Due to attrition he became our company commander the following day, and lost track of his men. What really saved me was somebody’s decision to haul me on board that chopper.

Initially my right side was completely paralyzed, but to make a long story short, two and a half months later I was back in Sweden running cross-country—slowly. The Marines rated me 90% disabled and retired me in May 1969. The VA rated me 100% disabled. I decided to study architecture in Washington, DC, but after a couple of years I moved to New York to study photography. On the surface my life in Washington had seemed normal—I made friends and had girlfriends, but my move to New York in 1971 immediately exposed me to a totally new world—a radical anti-war world that I embraced. It made me wake up from my emotional and political torpor. I joined Vietnam Veterans Against the War, partook in their rap groups, and at VVAW’s demonstrations I vented my hatred of the war. I was a “reborn” Marxist.

During the nineties I revisited Vietnam four times—to see the country and the people. On each trip I went to Hanoi to meet my former enemies. We drank a lot of beer, ate a lot of weird food and with the help of an interpreter told each other war stories. In April 1994, partly for adventure and partly for reconciliation, I did a four-day-long climb of Fan Si Pan, at 10,312 feet Vietnam’s tallest mountain, together with Nguyen Thien Hung, my guide. After the two first hours of steadily climbing on day one, Hung and I took a break. By using pencil and paper, gestures and facial expressions, and uttering sounds I found out that Hung had been fighting the Americans since 1967. He had been fighting us all through the war. As a 2nd Lieutenant, and a tank commander Hung had taken part in the final route of the ARVN and on April 30, 1975 had victoriously driven his tank into Saigon. In 1983 Hung had left the People’s Army and moved back home to the mountainous north western corner of Vietnam. My climb turned out to be more of a reconciliation than I had thought. Two of the nights we lay huddled against each other for body heat, belly against rump. Our damp wool blanket barely cut the freeze.

Last December, I had the great pleasure of meeting one more of my former enemies, here in New York City. Captain Nguyen Van Rinh, the battery commander who survived Khe Sanh, made his career in the People’s Army. He retired as a Colonel General, the second highest rank in the People’s Army, and continued his service for Vietnam as Deputy Minister of Defense. He is nowadays President of VAVA (see Susan Schnall’s article on page 1). We heartily shared a meal in a Chinese restaurant in Midtown. With the help of his interpreter we warmly shared some of our experiences of trying to kill each other.

Per-olof odman has Worked as a photographer, but most of his life he has, With his own hands, renovated old houses. At present, one in France.
I think everyone knows of someone touched by Agent Orange, the chemical defoliant used in Vietnam. To emphasize the cost in lives of our brothers and sisters I began a Booneytunes Art Project in 2011 with one 20-gallon drum painted like an AO barrel with a side that reads, “Do you know someone touched by AO? Please put their names on this AO barrel so they might be remembered. Perhaps others will remember as well.” I started displaying the AO barrel locally and it's found a home at The Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison, Wisconsin, The High Road Veterans Memorial Park in Niaukesha, Wisconsin, art shows, and even the farmers market. The names began to multiply quickly with testimonials folks had written that show the significant and poignant cost AO has bequeathed to Vietnam veterans and our families. Now, in 2016, the number of AO barrels has risen to four and I can see a fifth and sixth down the road. As an artist my goal was to show the cost these defoliants caused with stark realism. Like the names on The Wall in Washington, DC, you can’t help but feel the same loss after experiencing the AO Barrels. They have become memorials all on their own. Reaction to the effort has been enthusiastic with only a couple bumps in the road. Two local conservative veterans organizations labeled the AO barrels “too political” and they don’t want it at their events. In one case, I was kicked off a talent show to honor vets by the Honor Roll Memorial Committee. They told me if I said one word other than the song I was to perform, they would close the curtain and shut off my mic. When I said I would say a word about the AO barrel I was out. I was the only vet on the bill. The same group voted unanimously not to let my family lay a wreath at our local memorial honoring AO veterans and their families. In the other case, Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Chapter 7 sponsored an AO Symposium at the Legion and it was presented by Vietnam Veterans of America. I called and asked if they were interested in having the AO barrel at their event and the call back blew me away. I was told I was a trouble maker, they’d already called the cops and if I brought the AO barrel I would be arrested. To be honest it’s my VVAW affiliation that eats at their craw. Some people can see the connection between art and the struggle while others only see fear. As an artist I felt I’d arrived. If you have someone in your life who is touched by AO and want their name on the AO barrel you can email that information to Booneytunes@yahoo.com and I’ll add the name. Anyone interested in my music and art can assess it all free at ReverbMusic.com.

Take Action To Get Co-Sponsors for HR 2114: Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2015

Representative Barbara Lee introduced the Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2015 on April 29th last year to help heal the wounds of war. 1) Call either the local office or Washington office of your congressperson and ask for the name and email address of the legislative aide working on veteran issues; 2) Email the legislative aide the following letter:

Dear __________, I am contacting you with a request regarding asking Representative____ to become a co-sponsor of HR 2114 that would heal the terrible wounds from the war in Vietnam. I am a veteran of the Vietnam War and member of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. You were represented to me as the person in the office who handles veterans' health. We are writing to ask Representative____ to become a co-sponsor of HR 2114. This bill would help heal the legacy of the American War in Vietnam by: providing medical assistance and disability benefits to the affected children of American Vietnam veterans, providing health care and social services for the affected Vietnamese and Vietnamese off-spring, and clean up the lands and restore ecosystems contaminated by Agent Orange/dioxin in Vietnam.

This legislation was introduced by Congresswoman Barbara Lee on April 29, 2015. Would you consult with Representative____ about adding her/his name and voice to this critical and long overdue bill? Supporting factors: Representative____ recently received a Dear Colleague letter from Congresswoman Lee requesting support from members of the Progressive Caucus and Congressman Raul Grijalva has again signed on as first Co-Sponsor. Also, a Vietnamese delegation visited the United States this past December. They represent VAVA (Vietnamese Association of the Victims of Agent Orange), the organization responsible to the nation and its people for overseeing Agent Orange/dioxin clean-up (at bases like Danang), and for supporting the families and groups which care for its victims. Thank you for your consideration of this request. Sincerely, The VETERAN
Ten million gallons of Agent Orange, a chemical defoliant, were sprayed over Vietnam during the years 1962-1970; its purpose, according to the government, was to kill forests and vegetation that provided cover for Vietnamese forces.

The herbicide Agent Orange was created for use in Vietnam by combining two other herbicides—2,4D and 2,4,5T that have been around for years. Both contain a deadly poison, and resources from the battlefield.

The effects and use of Agent Orange became more than another ugly memory for Vietnamese veterans when, at the end of March, the Chicago CABSaffiliated aired a TV program called “Agent Orange: Vietnam’s Deadly Fog.” It pointed out that the Chicago Veterans Administration was confronted with up to 27 cases of veterans with diseases directly related to exposure to Agent Orange, a fact they “conveniently” failed to inform the rest of us about. In fact, a VA spokesman stated, “There is absolutely no evidence that Agent Orange can cause deaths and that this is borne out in a study by the Air Force.” There it is folks! This chump says it’s cool—forget it! But what about the flood of inquiries to the VA from Chicago area vets with some or all of the obvious symptoms of Agent Orange exposure: numbness of the fingers, reduced sex drive, skin rashes, excessive fatigue and nervousness, children with birth defects? The VA has continually stalled on treatment or even informing veterans around the country. But that’s no new policy for the VA.

This Agent Orange exposure is just one more of a string of exposures in the past few months. We learned that dipsona, a malaria pill commonly used in Vietnam, was an experimental drug being tested on US troops without their knowledge and now found to cause cancer in rats. We learned that in the 1950's US troops were used to test the effects of radiation during nuclear tests at the Nevada Atomic Test Grounds. Earlier this year, we found out that GI's were given powerful mindbenders like LSD or other hallucinogens without their knowledge and then filmed like rats. Many of the GI's were later confined to mental institutions or committed suicide as a result. For years, VVAW has pointed to the way that veterans are used once and then thrown away with an inadequate GI Bill, high unemployment, bad VA healthcare. This latest report about Agent Orange underlines the "concern" of the US government for its military, for the men it send off to do its dirty work.

We are outraged that not only did the government send us off to fight and die for the profits of the rich, not only did they kill and maim hundreds of thousands of us in the process, but now we face the residual effects of Agent Orange including the possibility that our children may be born deformed. As one report put it, we may be carrying a "chemical time bomb" because the effects of Agent Orange can appear years after the initial ideal was exposed. VVAW and vets across the country aren’t going to stand by and let them dump on us. Within hours of the broadcast, vets in Chicago called a press conference to put out the feeling among vets about this new abuse and to demand VA action. On March 25th, at Midwest Conference sponsored by VVAW on the problems and program for veterans, those attending came up with a plan of action to take the fight of Agent Orange back to the VA and to point at the class which was in fact responsible. Veterans demanded:

1) The VA publicize the potential effects of Agent Orange to all veterans know about the potential danger.
2) The VA provide tests for all veterans who may have been exposed, and that vets' families be included in this testing.
3) The VA or Pentagon (or what ever appropriate agency) contact the Vietnamese to see about getting all relevant information about the effects and treatment—the Vietnamese have been dealing with the problem for over 10 years.
4) The VA provide treatment for the effects of the defoliant, that the symptoms be declared "service-connected," and that disability and/ or compensation be paid to vets and their families.

Veterans in Chicago and Milwaukee, as well as other places, have mounted a campaign against the VA's non-treatment of Agent Orange including picketing lines at the VA and organizing vets to demand treatment. The VA went into shock. Their reaction has ranged from “What from you are saying is right and we're doing all we can," to "What are you talking about? We have no evidence of anything." Covering their image, they had the media film a VA worker filling out a form for a vet over the telephone. When vets called the announced number, however, there was no offer to take down the information, only a gloved suggestion to come to the VA. Later, the VA began to put out a toll-free information number for vets to call—but a week and a half after the announcement was made, it was still not in operation. The VA's insist manufacturing that “the concern” for vets is exactly the same as that of the government which sent us off in the first place!

Along with the actions of veterans to force the VA to do its job, we are using other avenues to get the word about Agent Orange and its effects. Veterans have filed suits under the Freedom of Information Act to force the VA to let us out whatever information is available. In some cities veterans have gone to local TV stations to demand that they show the “Deadly Fog” film and thus publicize the effects of the defoliant.

One of the tasks before vets is to get the word out nationwide—about what Agent Orange did in the war and what it's doing to us. Veterans across the country — unit— can stick a big fist in the face of the VA and their bosses demanding treatment for this poison, and decent healthcare for all veterans!
February 18, 1966, Subic Bay, Philippines: USS Ticonderoga (CVA-14) in port for one day before heading off to Japan for some time off-line. That is the day I was finally transferred from overseas duty after twelve months in Taiwan and twenty months on board the carrier. Even when the carrier was stateside, it counted as “oversea duty.”

By this time, the US now had nearly 400,000 troops in-country. Offshore naval forces had increased significantly. Where in late 1965 we had three carrier groups on station off Vietnam, we now had at least five. The 37-day bombing halt, LBJ’s so-called “peace initiative,” ended on January 31, 1966. The Vietnamese were being pounded day and night. It would only get worse.

I was now leaving the war zone, heading for my final duty station, shore duty with Helicopter Training Squadron Eight, based at Elyson Field, Pensacola, Florida. It was exciting to realize that I would be able to live with my wife and daughter during these final two years with the Navy.

From Subic I had to take a military bus to Clark Air Force Base, about forty miles away. Once at Clark, I had to wait for a military transport flight. As I recall, I waited for a day or two, staying in a quonset hut. Finally, we flew out of Clark, stopping at either Wake or Guam for refueling, then on to Hawaii. In Hawaii, I transferred to a civilian flight that would take me to O’Hare Airport in Chicago. I still recall that welcome-home feeling as our flight passed over the west coast.

Of course, home had changed significantly as well by the time I was coming back. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee just completed three weeks of hearings on Vietnam. It was there that former diplomat George Kennan warned about the US “illusion of invincibility" in regards to Vietnam. While Secretary of State Dean Rusk continued his hawkish stance on the war. Dissent, even mild dissent, was presented by General James Gavin and others at these televised hearings. The American public was being challenged to THINK about the war, even though the majority polled denied it was a mistake at this time.

The civil rights struggle was also heating up and many were beginning to connect the war with the policies at home. The slogan of Black Power was gaining more saliency among younger activists for good reason. This movement was connected with and monitored by the New Left as it challenged the old ways of doing politics. And, by 1966, something called the counterculture was thrown into the mix. Music and politics were now becoming inseparable. Minimal-alteration with older and newer drugs (LSD was legal until 1966) was the way to escape.

This was all backdrop to my arrival at O’Hare Airport on a cold February morning. All I was thinking about right then was getting to my parents’ home and seeing my wife and meeting my three-month-old daughter Lisa for the first time. They did not know when to expect me; it would be a surprise. And, it was.

Tears and laughter were part of the reunion. I held my wife tightly, we had been apart for six months since I left her the summer before the summer, when she was four months pregnant. My daughter was beautiful, though she did not care to see me—I was the stranger. She was happy in her grandfather’s arms at that moment. It took a little time for her to accept me in those first days back together.

I had nearly thirty days of leave before the three of us, Linda, Lisa and myself would need to get to Pensacola. It was great to be with family and friends again, to be away from the constant noise and the smell of carrier duty, to be away from the conflict in Southeast Asia. That was the physical part. Then, there was the mental thing.

My mother made the mistake of telling me that she would no longer have to think about me being “in that war.” We were all sitting around the living room, and I reacted, perhaps too quickly. My being home did not mean the war was over. In fact, I said, it was getting worse. People were still fighting and dying. The war needed to end before Vietnam was totally destroyed. This was the strongest statement I had made to my family up to that point. We did not talk much about it for the remainder of my time at home. I had become a different person.

Around the third week in March, it was time for me and my new family to fly down to Pensacola. We found a comfortable and affordable apartment down near the shoreline and began to settle in.

When I finally reported for duty at Elyson Field, I was assigned to work in the Personnel Office. One thing I did immediately was to turn my desk into a symbol of my feelings about the war. Under the glass top one would find quotations from anti-war Senators and photos of Vietnamese people trying to escape the war. One day the Senior Chief Petty Officer in charge of the office challenged me on this. I just told him I was a liberal on the war. He pointed out that I should not be too liberal. I was beyond the point of being too fearful to express my views.

The war had followed me home. I was now serving on a base that trained helicopter pilots for service in Vietnam. Many of the instructors were veterans of that conflict and would challenge my views on the war. Those views were becoming more and more solidified, the more I read and studied and paid attention to what was going on in the war and in our society. The war never left me.

At one point I decided to join the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and became active in the local chapter. As anti-war voices inside the military became more visible, it seemed the smart thing to do. With a family to think of, I stayed within the bounds. I was now passing time until 1968, when I could get out of the service and join the anti-war movement in earnest.
Fifty Years Ago

FRANK DA CRUZ

Fifty years ago, February 2, 1966, the troop transport USS Geiger pulled into New York harbor and disgorged don't know how many GIs for release at Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn, including me. I had enlisted 3 years earlier, had Basic Training at Fort Gordon, Georgia, and Reconnaissance (Scout) training at Fort Knox, Kentucky, and then was assigned to the 3rd Reconnaissance Squadron of the 1st Cavalry Division in Kaiserslautern, Germany, and shipped there on the Geiger.

Previously I had been an Army brat in Frankfurt, Germany, and had gone to Frankfurt High School on the base (at the same time that Elvis was signed on for his military service). After the segregated South, an Army base was a revelation to me, and when I came back to the same segregated South I was very unhappy. I finished high school, waited a semester in college, dropped out, and all I wanted was to go back to Germany. That's why I joined the Army, cleverly choosing Armor and Europe.

I liked the Army. I learned a lot; how to work, how to be responsible for things, how to live with a diverse bunch of people over a long period of time, how to drive all kinds of vehicles and operate and maintain different types of equipment. I traveled all over Germany on passes and leaves. I spent a subterranean couple of weeks in Grafenwoehr, and went on numerous maneuvers in the German countryside.

The Army was like a small socialist society where people did their work and, in return, were provided with all the necessities of life—housing, food, medical care, education—as well as numerous amenities like movie theaters, PX, athletic fields, pool tables, Steak Night at the Snack Bar, etc.

But that was the peacetime Army. In 1965 two things happened that changed everything. First, at the end of April, the US Army invaded the Dominican Republic because the US government did not want to see the democratically elected president, Juan Bosch, restored to office after having been ousted in a right-wing coup. The Lie was called preventing the communists from invading America. The Lie was called the Domino Theory. It was the classic invading idea, that if one country falls, all the others will fall as well.

Then in July the "police action" in Vietnam exploded into total war when our government started drafting 50,000 kids a month to send them there to prop up a corrupt and brutal right-wing government by force. Many of them, including 21 of my schoolmates from Frankfurt High School, would not come back, and many others who did come back would be changed forever, and not in a good way.

These two events pretty much sealed my being on the Army. I started digging through Army regulations and found that I could apply for discharge as a conscript in effect and I did not want to be drafted anymore... certainly had never heard of it. I wrote a five-page essay citing the Sixth Commandment, Jesus Christ, Martin Luther King, and Mohandas Gandhi and attached it to a DA-1049 that went all the way to the Pentagon where it was finally disapproved just a week or two before my release, and now here I was walking down the gangplank of the Geiger feeling relieved not to have killed anybody or being killed myself.

I spent the next ten years doing all I could to end this war between those years since then opposing the endless provocations, subversions, incursions, coups, drone strikes, bombings, and invasions of other countries by the United States. I wore what was left of my Army fatigues in the largest demonstrations in the history of the world in 2003, just before the "shock and awe" stared in Iraq. None of it did any good, except perhaps in slowly raising more people over to what is essentially a movement to put back the Golden Rule.

And now, fifty years after I walked away from the Army, finally the first real ray of hope, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders running on a Democratic Socialist and "anti-regime-change" platform. Against all odds, and despite the best efforts of the political establishment, the defense industry, and Wall Street—the very cabal responsible for the unpeachable and disgraceful behavior of the US since FDR died—millions upon millions of people are flocking to support him. I don't know how it will turn out. All I can say is that I began life when FDR was president and I would very much like to see something like that again before I die.

FRANK DA CRUZ WAS BORN DURING THE FDR ADMINISTRATION IN 1944, SERVED IN THE US ARMY 1963-66, GERMAN. HE WENT ON TO BECOME A SOMEWHAT FAMOUS SOFTWARE DEVELOPER. NOW RETIRED.

Leaving Vietnam in 1966

allen meerce

Fifty years ago we were 18 and I had never seen an air conditioner, nor did we ever cook. We turned out to be good at being stationed offshore of Vietnam. We provided gunfire support to the soldiers who were attempting to occupy the "Republic of Vietnam." We did a Denzel Patten inside the Tonkin Gulf in a gunboat battle, and got rid of the Vietnamese. We fired a lot of shells, and slept in bunk beds, and had a lot of time to read.

Our warship was built in 1959 and had new five-inch, fifty-four caliber long guns that could fire a 500-pound shell an average of 10 nautical miles. We’d drop the anchor five miles offshore and a forward observer in the jungle would try and get the guns to fire. After growing up in whatever he wanted to have killed or destroyed. We fired off a ten-thousand-dollar-five-inch Shell every five minutes. Someone joked, “Why don’t we just pay them thousand dollars for each gun instead of fighting?” It probably more than they make in their whole five minutes. Someone joked, “Why didn’t you just pay them thousand dollars for each gun instead of fighting?” It probably more than they make in their whole five minutes. Someone joked, “Why didn’t you just pay them thousand dollars for each gun instead of fighting?” It probably more than they make in their whole five minutes. Someone joked, “Why didn’t you just pay them thousand dollars for each gun instead of fighting?” It probably more than they make in their whole five minutes. Someone joked, “Why didn’t you just pay them thousand dollars for each gun instead of fighting?” It probably more than they make in their whole five minutes. Someone joked, “Why didn’t you just pay them thousand dollars for each gun instead of fighting?” It probably more than they make in their whole five minutes. Someone joked, “Why didn’t you just pay them thousand dollars for each gun instead of fighting?” It probably more than they make in their whole five minutes.
"I'll go if you do," he said, looking at the building. "Don't know man, this is scary as hell," I replied still clutching the steering wheel. "Are you sure you want to?" I asked him and myself at the same time.

"Come on, man," he said, crushing his cigarette and opening the car door. "We've been through this discussion enough. I don't want to get drafted so let's see what they say."

"Shit," I said getting out of the car too and standing next to him. Across the parking lot the huge gray building sat looking down at us. Above the entrance the sign read US NAVAL RESERVE AND MARINE CORPS CENTER. "Now let's get this straight," I said. "We're just inquiring about joining and what they got."

"Ask them if they have a buddy plan. You know, jointed in," he said. "You ask them," I retorted, "Christ, don't know about joining. I just don't want to go to Vietnam. Maybe they got a deal where you can be drafted and sent to Vietnam. If I say I want to join, they got me," I said with a bit of a panic. My friend had to think hard on this one.

"Just put down that you are not sure you want to join but you want to know more about it," he said. "I was impressed by his unusual logic. What are you gonna put down," I said.

"I don't know," he replied. "What I chucked across the room, you don't know."

He gathered the papers and told us to sit tight and he would be back in a short while to talk to us.

"Man, I want a cigarette," my friend said as the sailor left. "Shit, who would have thought you could smoke during a test. This ain't high school," I cried. "Man, that test was really dumb. How did you do," he asked.

"I don't know. I didn't finish it all."

"Then we looked at each other in silence again. For all the experience we've had together in our lives, it seemed so unreal to be sitting here in this military classroom so unsure of ourselves and our future. I guess we really never had been faced with the questions of what the future would be for both of us, apart or together."

"I don't know if we were doing the right thing. Forces of life have grown so big and powerful that we bob along on one fate without just trying to stay afloat. Funny how I'm starting to think in sailor terms."

The classroom door opened and the expressionless sailor motioned for my friend to follow him. "I'll be back for you in a few minutes," said the sailor. "Now I sat alone. My gut feeling was that this did not feel right. I felt I was getting drawn in, but maybe that was a blessing, I surely didn't want to go to Vietnam."

It seemed like hardly any time had gone by and the sailor was back. I followed him down a corridor and into a private office. I sat in a plush chair. He sat behind his large desk with the mirror and said, "Come on, man. You don't want to go to Vietnam."

"I dunno," I said, "I almost smoked the last cigarette. I took the last cigarette from him as he crushed the empty pack."

"Shit, they are trying to get me to enlist," I said, "I don't know if we were doing the right thing."

"I don't want to go to Vietnam," I said. "I got behind the wheel. He got in.

"Come on man, join up. You don't want to go to Vietnam," I said. "I got behind the wheel. He got in."

"Screw it," I said, "Let's go cruisin'."

"I didn't have to decide right now. Go home and think it over. I'll call you in a few days."

I walked out past the picture of the president. He seemed to smile more now than outside. Outside, the parking lot looked darker. It seemed as if time had gone by one minute. My friend was standing outside the car smoking a cigarette. I was glad to see him.

"What took you so long," he began. "I almost smoked the last cigarette." I took the last cigarette from him and my friend was impressed by his unusual logic. "I don't know how you did it," he asked. "I don't know man, this is scarier than I thought," he said, re-appearing with a bundle of papers and some ink pens. He seemed a little softer now as he told us to fill out the forms. Then he was gone again.

My friend and I looked at each other but there really was nothing more to say. We went to work on the forms. Name, address, social security, employment history, schooling, nothing unusual about the part asking WHY DO YOU WANT TO JOIN THE NAVY? We must have seen the question at the same time because we saw the dilemma in each other's eyes.

"Man, I don't want to join the Navy. I just want to get out of being drafted and sent to Vietnam. If I say I want to join, they got me," I said with a bit of a panic.

My friend had to think hard on this one.

The president sat behind his large desk with the mirror and said, "Come on man," he said in a soft voice. "I almost smoked the last cigarette." I took the last cigarette from him as he crushed the empty pack. I instinctively sat straight up and said, "Well I don't want to go to Vietnam."

"I dunno," I said, "It's your own ticket. Write your own ticket, California, Write your own ticket."

"Are you gonna?"

"No, I'm impressionable in white sailor with an arm full of gold stripes met us in the lobby. The shiny floors, the huge flags, the picture of the president and this stern looking military man just screamed for respect and obedience. It was mesmerizing to me and my friend were talking about this one.

"Man, this is scarier than I thought," he said, realizing that my voice echoed too. "They ain't done the echo of the door closing."

"The sailor's eyes narrowed. I'm sure you want to join but you want to think it over. I'll call you in a few minutes," said the sailor. "You don't want to go to Vietnam," I said.

"I almost smoked the last cigarette," I took the last cigarette from him and thought it over. I was glad to see him. "What took you so long," he began. "I almost smoked the last cigarette." I took the last cigarette from him as he crushed the empty pack. "Screw it," I said, "Let's go cruisin' while we still got the time."

Post script: We both went to Vietnam, me in the Navy and my friend in the Army. We are both 100% PTSD disabled and still best friends. He made E-5 and I never got past E-3.
She made it clear that my case was most exceptional, and that a very large number of deserving veterans were still unable to get the medical care they need because Health Net refused to assist or communicate with me. I also assured them that it was a nationwide problem.
It is also out of patent, so there is no ongoing clinical research on MDMA, and it is not approved for human use by the FDA. However, there is ongoing research on the potential therapeutic uses of MDMA, including the treatment of PTSD.

A Warning

According to the FDA, take caution when considering a setting for your first MDMA session. The organization recommends that you do not have a spouse, partner, or a family member present, as they may become too attached to you during the session and be affected by the experience.

A Warning

It is important to note that the use of MDMA for therapeutic purposes is still in the early stages of clinical research and is not yet widely available. It is recommended that anyone considering using MDMA for therapeutic purposes should consult with a qualified healthcare professional to discuss the risks and benefits of the treatment and to ensure that they are properly informed about the procedure.

A Warning

It is important to keep in mind that the use of MDMA for therapeutic purposes is still in the early stages of clinical research and is not yet widely available. It is recommended that anyone considering using MDMA for therapeutic purposes should consult with a qualified healthcare professional to discuss the risks and benefits of the treatment and to ensure that they are properly informed about the procedure.
I was asked to write about the Standdown events by a commands years ago. I was very much flattered to do so, but I did struggle a little with a few of them although at this point I cannot really give you a number when discussing these events. I have written so many times about the loss of my life that I never really thought of keeping count, just that a year or two a day I dedicate a few days to clean up, organize, and feed the Vets. I have thought so much on how to eloquently speak about this even that, yes, it has taken me years to organize my thoughts. It is very tough to describe this even to those that have not experienced one on their own. It is chaotic, lots of running around, tons of clean up, stack this, throw this out, cook this, mix this, there are so many people involved that I also stopped trying to memorize names. Faces though, those I know are good at.

The event starts bright and early, either at six or eight in the morning depending on the day. As I am walking into the respective Armory that holds these events I am greeted by smiles from the Vets that have spent hours lined up outside, waiting to be banded to them. Men and women who have lost a lot, and not just in the war but also in their time beyond the military. Many have thanked me for being a volunteer. In moments like this I just want to hug them and weep, tell them there is no need to thank me. Tell them that I am sorry they find themselves in the predicament they do. Yet I feel a smile from them, a good morning, and I have no other choice but to carry that smile with me throughout the day and work just that much harder for them.

Being a volunteer has allowed me to meet so many great people. People that devote their time to this cause on more than just those few days. They fight the good fight for Vets because they know they deserve that and more. I have also had the great pleasure of befriending Veterans whether of Vietnam, the Gulf war, or the still ongoing war against terrorism. Despite their experiences they are more than willing to lend a helping hand to those in need. They talk about what they have gone through, and in those talks I gain so much knowledge, respect, love, and understanding for the sacrifices made by those Vets. It was often hardest for me to comfort and understand for I knew the situation in our country were a much better one and that their sacrifices made a difference.

He was not offended by this at all, in fact he confided in me that he does not say that to Vets either. Instead he says “Welcome home.” They might appear like two simple words, but a Vet they might mean so much more. And even though home might be different to them now, this new approach of being welcomed could lead to a conversation and some understanding. I have learned throughout my volunteer work that sometimes all that a Vet needs is to know that they are being heard.

The Standdown events have become a home to me, a home to many others as well. It is our family reunion of sorts. We check up on each other when we can, catch up on how the months between events have gone. We get older together, we laugh, we cry, and plan. Yet we do it all with a smile on our face. We do it with the knowledge that there are so many other men and women that attend the event will feel welcomed, loved, appreciated, and somuchmore. We also do it knowing we have a helping hand just around a corner when needed, our family is there to lend that hand. To my Standdown family reading this, see you soon!
Fowler claimed he acted in self-defense after Jackson grabbed his gun from its holster. After two grand juries failed to indict him, Fowler was transferred to the police department in Birmingham and promoted. Some time after the incident he stated, “I don’t remember how many times I pulled the trigger, but I think I just pulled it once, but I might have pulled it three times. I don’t remember.” He didn’t know his name at the time, but his name was Jimmie Lee Jackson. He wasn’t dead. He didn’t die that night. But I heard about a month later that he died.”

The shooting sparked the first Selma to Montgomery march that occurred a few days later on what became known as Bloody Sunday.

One year later, while at the Alabama Police Department, Fowler allegedly shot 34-year-old Nathan Johnson, who’d been arrested for suspicion of drunken driving. Officer said Johnson had grabbed a billy club from Fowler and was attacking him when Johnson was shot twice in the chest. Subsequently, both killings were removed from Fowler’s personnel records.

In 1968, Fowler was dismissed from the state police for severely beating his supervisor, T.J. Barden, who had given Fowler a low performance rating. State troopers who witnessed the event saw Fowler ram Barden’s head into a car windshield, knocking him unconscious. Fowler appealed the decision, but lost the case. Not long afterward, his brother, CSM Robert Allen Fowler, assigned to C 1/5 First Cavalry, was killed in Vietnam. Having previously served in the military, at age 35 Fowler joined the Army to avenge his brother’s death. After basic and advanced infantry training he was sent overseas to his brother’s old unit in Vietnam.

Recalling his time as a medic in Charlie 1/5, Roger Byer, who is black, declined to speak about Sgt. Fowler, saying that he “didn’t remember. I don’t remember. I don’t remember how many times I pulled the trigger.”

In 2005, Fowler’s daughter, Tracey Schraeder Fowler, sued him, claiming he beat her in the back of the head, and choked her. Fowler countered, claiming his daughter owed him $5,000 and she assaulted him; he prevailed in court. In 2015 Schraeder Fowler told the UK website Daily Mail.com that her father was an American hero and not racist. Interviewed by John Fleming of The Nation, Fowler claimed that he’d been born and raised among blacks, but was unsettled by the civil rights movement.

“Him on the side of J. Edgar Hoover. I think [Martin Luther King Jr.] was a con artist. I don’t think he’s got a snowball’s chance in hell of getting into heaven. No more chance than I do. His goal was to screw and fuck over every white woman that he could.”

“They don’t want to be called nigger, they don’t wanna be called jigaboos. But they won’t hesitate to do that. They won’t hesitate to do that. They won’t hesitate to do that. They won’t hesitate to do that.”

“I think that segregation was good, if it were properly done. Now, you got to give equal funds and they got to be handled right. I don’t believe in completely mixing the races. I don’t think that is gonna help anything.”

James Bonard Fowler died on 5 July 2015. A local obituary omits his law enforcement career. Jimmie Lee Jackson was a Vietnam veteran. I have requested his records from the National Archives. The FBI’s Civil Rights-Era Cold Case Initiative is re-assessing dozens of unsolved or inadequately solved racially motivated homicides from the civil rights era. Among them is the death of Nathan Jackson, Jr.

Readers of Medic in the GreenTime.com and of CounterPunch know that Medic’s decorated Grenadian friend Roger Byer, upon completing his tour with Charlie 1/5 First Cavalry in Vietnam and Cambodia, returned home, only to be arrested by the Car and when the US invaded Grenada. By coincidence, Roger was a platoon mate of Sgt. James Bonard Fowler, the man who sparked the Civil Rights movement.

State-side in 1965, as the civil rights movement was simmering, Alabama State policeman Fowler shot and killed 26-year-old Jimmie Lee Jackson, an unarmed black man. He and around five hundred people had just left the Zion United Methodist Church in Marion, Alabama. They were attempting to peacefully walk to the City Jail, about a half block away, where a young civil rights worker was being held. They were met by Marion City police officers, sheriff’s deputies and Alabama state troopers. In the standoff, streetlights were switched off (some sources say the police shot them out) and the police began shooting them out) and the police began shooting. Photographers were clubbed, their cameras were smashed, and an NBC cameraman was clubbed, his camera was smashed, and an NBC cameraman was clubbed. Police officers, sheriff’s deputies and Alabama state troopers. In the standoff, streetlights were switched off (some sources say the police shot them out) and the police began shooting them out) and the police began shooting. Photographers were clubbed, their cameras were smashed, and an NBC cameraman was clubbed, his camera was smashed, and an NBC cameraman was clubbed. Police officers, sheriff’s deputies and Alabama state troopers. In the standoff, streetlights were switched off (some sources say the police shot them out) and the police began shooting them out) and the police began shooting. Photographers were clubbed, their cameras were smashed, and an NBC cameraman was clubbed, his camera was smashed, and an NBC cameraman was clubbed. Police officers, sheriff’s deputies and Alabama state troopers. In the standoff, streetlights were switched off (some sources say the police shot them out) and the police began shooting them out) and the police began shooting. Photographers were clubbed, their cameras were smashed, and an NBC cameraman was clubbed, his camera was smashed, and an NBC cameraman was clubbed.

In 1968, Fowler was dismissed from the state police for severely beating his supervisor, T.J. Barden, who had given Fowler a low performance rating. State troopers who witnessed the event saw Fowler ram Barden’s head into a car windshield, knocking him unconscious. Fowler appealed the decision, but lost the case. Not long afterward, his brother, CSM Robert Allen Fowler, assigned to C 1/5 First Cavalry, was killed in Vietnam. Having previously served in the military, at age 35 Fowler joined the Army to avenge his brother’s death. After basic and advanced infantry training he was sent overseas to his brother’s old unit in Vietnam. Recalling his time as a medic in Charlie 1/5, Roger Byer, who is black, declined to speak about Sgt. Fowler, saying that he “didn’t remember. I don’t remember. I don’t remember how many times I pulled the trigger.”

In 2005, Fowler’s daughter, Tracey Schraeder Fowler, sued him, claiming he beat her in the back of the head, and choked her. Fowler countered, claiming his daughter owed him $5,000 and she assaulted him; he prevailed in court. In 2015 Schraeder Fowler told the UK website Daily Mail.com that her father was an American hero and not racist. Interviewed by John Fleming of The Nation, Fowler claimed that he’d been born and raised among blacks, but was unsettled by the civil rights movement.

“I’m on the side of J. Edgar Hoover. I think [Martin Luther King Jr.] was a con artist. I don’t think he’s got a snowball’s chance in hell of getting into heaven. No more chance than I do. His goal was to screw and fuck over every white woman that he could.”

“They don’t want to be called nigger, they don’t wanna be called jigaboos. But they won’t hesitate to do that. They won’t hesitate to do that. They won’t hesitate to do that. They won’t hesitate to do that.”

“I think that segregation was good, if it were properly done. Now, you got to give equal funds and they got to be handled right. I don’t believe in completely mixing the races. I don’t think that is gonna help anything.”

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Marc Levy was a medic in Delta 1/7 First Cav in 1969–70. He lives in Salem, MA. You can reach him at medicinthegreentime.com.
For a number of years, we have all believed that Vietnam veterans were poisoned by Agent Orange, and that the vets who have conducted the War on Terror in Iraq and Afghanistan had their very own unique plague in the form of the after-effects from Depleted Uranium-tipped projectiles. We haven’t heard much about DU recently. Maladies blamed on DU are prevalent in the black smoke from burn pits, which are gap open holes where the American military has burned the waste over the past fifteen years of our adventures in those two countries.

Now, it should be pointed out that military installations in the US of A are required to use environmentally-friendly incinerators to burn their garbage, but that requirement was never imposed upon our occupations in the Middle East.

When the US first moved large numbers of American troops into Iraq and Afghanistan, it was soon clear that those troops were creating an enormous amount of waste, garbage, and trash.

The military did not feel their highly-trained and all-volunteer soldiers should be relegated to garbage men or women, so the Pentagon turned to KBR to construct burn pits where the accumulated trash of war could be incinerated. KBR, of course, has a huge defense contractor, formerly Kellogg, Brown, & Root, a subsidiary of Haliburton Corporation. KBR does many millions of dollars of business with the Pentagon, and is considered a go-to company whenever the military needs something done. So, back in 2003, the Pentagon tasked KBR with constructing and maintaining burn pits to dispose of the trash from our wars against terror in the Middle East. Surprisingly, those contracts only required the burn pits, with no mention of future plans to construct environmentally friendly incinerators or state-of-the-art KBR brought out their bulldozers and dug big pits, threw in all the trash, covered the mess in jet fuel and tossed in a match. According to “The Burn Pits,” the wastes that were burned in these pits, day and night, for years, included petroleum, human waste, hazardous electronic wastes, office equipment, glasses and adhesives, solvents, treated wood, rubber, pesticides, asbestos, styrofoam, plastics, aerosol cans, gas cylinders, explosives, batteries, medical waste, paint and paint thinners, human body parts, and animal cadavers.

The pit at Camp Taji in Iraq burned approximately fifty tons of waste per day, and the one at Balad Air Base disposed of roughly one hundred and forty-seven tons per day. In virtually every case, the burn pits were constructed in close proximity to barracks, mess halls, work stations, medical facilities, and areas where large numbers of American soldiers and local civilians were forced to live in thick, black, pungent smoke clouds day and night. To make matters even worse, a number of American bases were actually built upon the sites of former Iraqi chemical weapons factories or storage units. Perhaps the most troubling aspect of this entire affair is the author’s interview with retired Lt. Col. Richard Hickam, who had been stationed at Camp Victory, and he found that vets who had been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan have far higher rates of cancers and leukemia than vets who were never sent to those countries. Also, he found that those vets were having children with birth defects at a rate three times greater than vets who had never been to those countries. At the rear of the book, the author lists over 160 symptoms and diseases that are occurring at significantly higher rates among the soldiers who have lived in the black clouds of smoke from the burn pits. There are no statistics available to tell us the effects of the smoke on the people of Afghanistan or Iraq, but it can be assumed that they are also affected. The real scope of this tragedy is unknown. Unfortunately, our government and the companies it employs have shown that they intend to keep it that way.

When we sent our young people to the Middle East to fight the War on Terror, it was very easy to see vehicles traveling the streets and highways of America sporting yellow stick-on ribbons exhorting us to “Support Our Troops.” Of course, those stickers were never allowed on military or government vehicles. If America’s soldiers and veterans are ever going to get a fair shake from the DOD and the VA, it will be due to the efforts of Joseph Hickman, and the relentless pressure from veterans’ organizations. "The Burn Pits" is an important book that should be on the shelf of every high school library across the United States.

The Burn Pits: The Poisoning of America’s Soldiers by Joseph Hickman (Styxhorse Publishing 2016)

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SECTION C

The Burn Pits

John Ketwig (reviewer)

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The Vietnam War

John Ketwigs review of Vietnam: We Are Away from The War

Ed Damato.

We are among the many admiring fans who fill the venues where Ed Damato's music is performed. His music is a timeless reminder of the sacrifice and service of those who served in Vietnam. We were moved by the power of his voice and his ability to convey the emotions of those who fought in that war.

As a matter of fact, we were moved to tears by his performance of the song "Landslide" by Fleetwood Mac. The lyrics of this song, which are about the loss of love and the mourning of a loved one, spoke to the pain and suffering of those who lost family members and friends in the Vietnam War.

We hope that this review will help to raise awareness of the sacrifices made by those who served in Vietnam and the importance of remembering those who paid the ultimate price.

The Pentagon's "New Law of War Manual" (LOWM) sanctioning nuclear attacks and the destruction of cities, "reads like it was written by Hitler's Ministry of War," says international law authority Francis Boyle of the University of Illinois at Champaign. "Historically, this is a terrible development," he added in an exclusive interview with this reporter. "We are reducing ourselves to the level of Nazis today," Boyle says. He termed the new manual a "warmerging" document. "The new document seeks to distinguish between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' acts of military violence against civilian targets, using the criterion of military necessity," points out Peter Martin of the World Socialist Website. "Thus, acts of mass slaughter of civilians could be justified if sufficient military advantages were gained by the operations." The bulk of the document, Martin continues, "amounts to a green light for military atrocities, including mass killings."

Martin said the most comprehensive previous such document, the 1956 Pentagon field manual, did not state that civilians, unlike military personnel, should be spared "unnecessary suffering" because it assumed... "that any deliberate targeting of civilians was illegal and a war crime."

Among the flagrant violations of international law sanctioned by the Pentagon's new LOWM, Martin writes, are:

- **Legitimizing the use of nuclear weapons.** LOWM states, "There is no general prohibition in treaty or customary international law on the use of nuclear weapons." This flies in the face of a number of existing international covenants. Under the UN Charter as interpreted by the World Court in its Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, even threatening to use nuclear weapons, as the US and Israel have threatened Iran, is illegal and thus a war crime.

- **Authorizing the use of banned incendiary weapons such as napalm, herbicides (as Agent Orange in Vietnam), depleted uranium munitions (as used in Iraq). Napalm, for example, is banned under Protocol III of the 1980 UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.**

- **Authorizing the use of cluster munitions, mines and booby-traps, the LOWM rationalizes that the "United States is not a Party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions." This is a disgrace, of course, when the overwhelming majority of nations have signed it.**

- **Defends drone missile attacks, both by the Pentagon and intelligence outfits such as the Central Intelligence Agency, declaring flatly: "There is no prohibition in the law of war on the use of remotely piloted aircraft." To the contrary, targeted killing off the battlefield is illegal.**

- **Authorizes the use of exploding hollow-point bullets, stating the US is not a party to the 1868 St. Petersburg declaration banning such bullets. As this writing, the US is only 147 years late.**

- **Contributes to national magazines and hosted a talk show on WOL, Washington, DC. In the 1960s he was active in public-relations director for a Move a Civil Rights organization.**
President Truman realized he was in over his head as the Soviet Union and China emerged from WWII as world powers, and he allowed Dulles brothers, along with a number of other anti-Communist ideologues, to orchestrate a great east vs. west struggle that would become the Cold War. It was their life's work to eradicate Communism and to fight to the death wherever it might be suspected, much less found. John Foster Dulles became President Eisenhower's Secretary of State, and Allen became head of the new Central Intelligence Agency. Dulles was particularly effective in helping a number of his countries wound down, Allen was particularly finding buyers for the vast treasures seized by the Nazis, and discreetly political rewards for laundering assets. Dulles, his brothers enjoyed huge financial and international rewards, and many of his cohorts labelled the government, and employed any clandestine abilities and daring, but he was also feared. He seemed to find mortal enemies everywhere under the category of Communism, but he swore no real allegiance to any country, political party, or government. Dulles was a technician, a zealot focused on international destruction of what he saw as the enemy he abhorred, and the attentions changed regularly. He organized the overthrow of Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran, and the youthful charismatic Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala, and he played a key part in organizing an unsuccessful coup attempt to depose the French military against their President Charles DeGaulle. The CIA was deeply involved in the efforts to topple Lumumba in the Congo, a campaign that was directly opposed to the wishes of President Kennedy. Dulles was recognized as having no limits to his mission to safeguard America's national security. He allowed the CIA to create a vast scientific study into “deprogramming” and “mind control” that might be useful to the US military to extract information from supposed Soviet agents, but the experiments were performed upon unwitting American GI's and prisoners, with no accountability for the results.

Dave Cline Was the First To Shake My Hand And Say Welcome Home Brother

same Kakashimos, newer M-16's cities bigger: the Joplins and the Hendrixs sandstorms instead of monsoons same buming homes hair was cut to a short top we conveyed, never humped near beer instead of beer no day passes, no Tu Do street but sometimes cold and rain snow, freezing snow, wind of winter, no day passes, no sun, but sometimes cold and rain sandstorms instead of monsoons same buming homes hair was cut to a short top we conveyed, never humped near beer instead of beer no day passes, no Tu Do street but sometimes cold and rain snow, freezing snow, wind of winter, no day passes, no sun, but sometimes cold and rain

American Refuge

A place for being angry A place to co-exist with thugs A place of great significance in the absence of strong leadership A place where you're accepted by your peers A place where youbg hold off the fear of being alone A place where your pain is acceptable

A place where you're accepted by your peers A place where your pain is acceptable

The Devil's Chessboard: America's War with the World

Welcome Home Brother

Stung by the death of his Nazi friends from prosecution. President Truman realized he was in over his head as the Soviet Union and China emerged from WWII as world powers, and he allowed Dulles brothers, along with a number of other anti-Communist ideologues, to orchestrate a great east vs. west struggle that would become the Cold War. It was their life's work to eradicate Communism and to fight to the death wherever it might be suspected, much less found. John Foster Dulles became President Eisenhower's Secretary of State, and Allen became head of the new Central Intelligence Agency. Dulles was particularly effective in helping a number of his countries wind down, Allen was particularly finding buyers for the vast treasures seized by the Nazis, and discreetly political rewards for laundering assets. Dulles, his brothers enjoyed huge financial and international rewards, and many of his cohorts labelled the government, and employed any clandestine abilities and daring, but he was also feared. He seemed to find mortal enemies everywhere under the category of Communism, but he swore no real allegiance to any country, political party, or government. Dulles was a technician, a zealot focused on international destruction of what he saw as the enemy he abhorred, and the attentions changed regularly. He organized the overthrow of Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran, and the youthful charismatic Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala, and he played a key part in organizing an unsuccessful coup attempt to depose the French military against their President Charles DeGaulle. The CIA was deeply involved in the efforts to topple Lumumba in the Congo, a campaign that was directly opposed to the wishes of President Kennedy. Dulles was recognized as having no limits to his mission to safeguard America's national security. He allowed the CIA to create a vast scientific study into “deprogramming” and “mind control” that might be useful to the US military to extract information from supposed Soviet agents, but the experiments were performed upon unwitting American GI's and prisoners, with no accountability for the results.

Left to his own devices, Allen Dulles built the CIA into an all-powerful intelligence band of rogue agents who created and administered America's war strategy. He was given a great deal of power. Allen Dulles had a great amount of influence in determining the American foreign policy, he had an army of intelligence operatives spread across the globe, and he was a master of manipulation and disinformation, ideological murder and mayhem, international intrigue, and raw treachery could be done by an insider working within the US government, in fact bringing us to the very brink of nuclear war. How did the CIA seize so much power and control, defy the elected structure of that government, or avoid prosecution for unimaginable crimes? And, why did so much of the stories in this well-documented book are true, what does that say about the true extent of secrecy? Clearly, America's prestige has been severely damaged by the history of our foreign policies since WWII and, through the eyes of one of the most terrifying architects of those policies are influencing the current election-year debates that have America divided and Americans feeling desperate. "The Devil's Chessboard" is well-written, entertaining, a disturbing but most informative book, and highly recommended.
Waging Peace

Paul K. Chappell (reviewer)

Waging Peace: Global Adventures of a Lifelong Activist by David Hartsough with Joyce Hollyday (BookSurge Publishing, 2009)

Combat is best described as hours of boredom fractured by moments of complete insanity. At this time, we were praying for some period of boredom, but we knew an offensive probably was building against us. We didn't know when they'd hit. All of the probing, sniping, hit and run tactics, and shelling were to wear us down, so they could catch us exhausted and with our guard down. We'd been in the bush more than a month, and needed relief badly, but it seemed that every unit along the DMZ was under attack, taking casualties, and short of men. We had to do with what we had.

The Marines wanted tough kids who didn't understand they weren't bulletproof, and we were tough kids. But momma's lit, so they were easily disciplined and were malleable. All of us always thought it would be someone else. I suppose that's the way they worked, or insanity would take place.

I had put off the draft as long as I could and turned 24 in Vietnam. I was the oldest in my platoon including the LT. I was twenty-four-years old, and the oldest in my unit along the DMZ was under attack, taking casualties, and short of men. We had to do with what we had.

When I returned to the US in 1969, I couldn't get Vietnam out of my mind, and I didn't understand our involvement. I knew the story line about fighting for freedom and democracy for the people of South Vietnam. After a short time in Vietnam, I knew that line was unadulterated bullshit! So begins the journey for Cpl. USN. Duane Jones USMC in Vietnam 1968-69.

He went to Vietnam, Duane and came back Suel Jones. I've known Suel since I met him at a VVP convention in Boston. His Texas drawl is fun to listen to, and as nice a fellow in Boston 2004. His Texas drawl is fun to listen to, and as nice a fellow in Boston 2004. His Texas drawl is fun to listen to, and as nice a fellow in Boston 2004. His Texas drawl is fun to listen to, and as nice a fellow in Boston 2004.

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into the first category. Containing John Buquoi’s wonderful work falls of jumbled words. Luckily for readers, genre. The best of it has the ability to won’t soon forget. Poetry is a unique of a war” is a collection that readers will appreciate. John Buquoi, “snapshots from the edge In a beautiful and emotional work of Independent Publishing Platform, poetry collection. The poems in this volume all the emotions that go along with wartime experiences, as well as the insight of a clearly reflective man, the vignettes contained in “snapshots from the edge of a war” are simply a collection of perfection. I loved “snapshots from the edge of a war”. Loved. How’s that for a review? Well, it’s honestly how I felt about this masterful work. Poet John Buquoi has done a fantastic job at creating poems that are emotional without being syrupy, that are realistic but still vivid, and that tell a complete and total story about his experiences in Vietnam. Any reader who enjoys poetry in any form should absolutely include this collection. And any person who is not 100% sure about poetry, but is interested in history, especially the history of the Vietnam War era, should give “snapshots from the edge of a war” a chance as well. I very highly recommend this collection of poetry. I hope that poet John Buquoi will work on a second collection. If it’s anything like “snapshots from the edge of a war”, it will be a work to treasure.

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Frankie and Jonny and Mommy Too

By Greta Marsh (1stWorld Publishing, 2013)

One kind woman’s determination to adopt a Vietnamese War orphan, make one kind woman to answer this truly an inspirational story. Written by Greta Marsh’s wonderful story of Frankie and Jonny and Mommy Too. The author Greta Marsh has given the story, how she succeeded in saving the life of a Vietnamese orphan who became integrated into a loving American family with the first spark of humanity. She reminds us at the end of her inspirational story the novel says: “To Save One Life is as if you have Saved the Entire World.”

Frankie and Jonny and Mommy Too was a summary of the My Lai Massacre, military problems of rape, sexual harassment, suicide, civilian casualty statistics, Agent Orange, and the extension of the Vietnamese War to Laos and Cambodia. The author Frankie and Jonny and Mommy Too Greta Marsh gave the experiences of saving a child, how she succeeded in saving the life of a Vietnamese orphan who became integrated into a loving American family with the first spark of humanity. She reminds us at the end of her inspirational story the novel says: “To Save One Life is as if you have Saved the Entire World.”

An Idea, and Bullets

Jack Mallory (reviewer)

An Idea, and Bullets: A Rice Roots Exploration of Why No French, American, or South Vietnamese General Could Ever Have Brought Victory in Vietnam by William Haponski (Amazon Digital Services LLC, 2016)

We lost. They won. When a nation loses a war, it’s not a judgement on the morality of the war, on the bravery of our soldiers, on Congress, on the media, on hippies or anti-war protesters. It’s because one side fought longer, smarter, better than the other. In a world in which we are too frequently at war, we should want to know why we lost the war in Vietnam.

Lt. Col. William Haponski wrote “An Idea, and Bullets: A Rice Roots Exploration of Why No French, American, or South Vietnamese General Could Ever Have Brought Victory in Vietnam” to explain why and how the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong were able to fight longer, smarter and better than the French, the Americans, and the South Vietnamese. How and why, as he puts it, “The Vietnam War was lost before our first American shot was fired,” or the first French shot, or the last South Vietnamese shot. Haponski touches on both sides, information from interviews with Vietnamese military and North Vietnamese unit histories, and US, ARVN, and North Vietnamese unit histories.

Haponski argues that fire in the belly comes from the power of an idea: independence. He argues that fire in the belly comes from the power of an idea: independence. Haponski leaves it up to his readers to abstract lessons to be learned from Vietnam, other than to say that such lessons exist relevant to our current war(s) in the Middle East. He quotes “the commander of US Special Operations in the Middle East” who says, “We do not understand the movement, and until we do we are not going to defeat it . . . We have not defeated the idea. We do not even understand the idea.”

 Dakine Mallory is a long-time VVAW member.
When the draft board got me, and eventually orders came for SVN. I knew then and there that we had to stop the commies. At the age of twelve I also noticed that we had to stop the commies. At the time I was still pro-war, but I was in awe at his defiance. Eventually my mind changed. Maybe a contributing factor was visiting Saigon a few times and seeing poor people in the neighborhoods on the outskirts of the city, while downtown were the fancy buildings left by the French. Maybe it was the time a buddy talked me into going golfing. Where? The Saigon Country Club. There we became a threesome with the wife of a CIA agent. After golf we sat around on the terrace, and she bought us a few drinks. Too spooky. Same guy liked the horses and talked me into a trip to the Cholon racetrack. If golfing was elegant, this was dicey. Cholon in its track had been a center of attention during Tet as you could tell from all the bullet pockmarks on the walls. It had been closed for months after Tet. Didn't seem like they wanted us here.

Then there was the mama-san who cleaned our hooch. Due to language differences, communication was pretty simple. But I did find out that she thought President Thieu was a big number 10. Other casual contacts with Vietnamese civilians produced the same number.

I was always interested in newspapers and in the back of my mind had an interest in journalism. That being the case, press freedom was an important concept to me. Somewhere around Thanksgiving I read where President Thieu closed down a Saigon newspaper. This was the thirty-fifth newspaper closed by the Saigon government. Maybe it wasn't a big issue in and of itself, but for me it was the final nail. This war was wrong. We were fighting on the wrong side for the wrong people.

About two weeks later I received a Christmas present from my sister. It was a shirt she had made with a peace symbol on the front. Wow! What to do with it? The company was against any anti-Army. Guys didn't generally talk against the war. Mainly they bitched about being stuck here. Then there was Hans. When I arrived, Hans only had three or four months left in his tour. He lived in the same barracks down at the end other. Never once did I talk with him, but a friend told me that Hans said that when he went back home he was going to protest the war. At the time I was still pro-war, but I was impressed with Hans, maybe a little in awe at his defiance.

I decided that I would wear this shirt to protest the Cambodia invasion. I went down there, and I was a little late. The march had already started and was going by me. Then in the proudest moment of my life I stepped off the curb and joined the march. I was razzed about my GI haircut, but accepted. Two weeks later I went to another march protesting Cambodia and Kent State. Four students were shot down.

When I Was Stupid
BILL SHINAS

When I joined the Army and went to Vietnam I was older than most, having already graduated from college. At the time I was a supporter of the war, taking my cue from US News and World Report, Newsweek and the daily newspaper. I thought communism needed to be stopped. I wasn't gung ho enough to enlist, but when the draft board called, I said okay. I did support the war as if it was my turn, well... Actually, I had thought about this before there was a Vietnam war. When I was twelve, the Soviet Union invaded Hungary. I knew then and there that we had to stop the commies. At the age of twelve I also noticed that we were having a war every five to eight years. I figured that we were due for a war about the time I would be the right age. That was scary and about the only thing I had correct before Vietnam.

So the draft board got me, and eventually orders came for SVN. I thought that me being in a non-combat MOS that maybe this wouldn't be a bad year. I could be safe, and because we were kicking ass I would be lucky enough to experience both war and post-war operations. At Cam Ranh Bay, where I landed, I noticed the troops who were leaving. Unlike us who had fresh fatigue and fresh faces we sat around on the terrace, and she bought us a few drinks. Too spooky. Same guy liked the horses and talked me into a trip to the Cholon racetrack. If golfing was elegant, this was dicey. Cholon in its track had been a center of attention during Tet as you could tell from all the bullet pockmarks on the walls. It had been closed for months after Tet. Didn't seem like they wanted us here.

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About two weeks later I received a Christmas present from my sister. It was a shirt she had made with a peace symbol on the front. Wow! What to do with it? The company was going to have a Christmas party, and I decided that I would wear this shirt to the party as a statement. After that decision, days were filled with dread and angst until Christmas came. On the day I put the shirt on and with much anxiety went to the party. This was probably the second most proud thing I did in my life.

It turned out that my shirt was a big deal. That's because I was tame compared to many of my fellow soldiers. This party had a local band and lots of food, beer and booze. Guys became surly. The US Army was cussed up and down. The CO, the XO, the First Sergeant and the Supply Sergeant sat at a table in the middle of the area. Guys were yelling at and disparaging them and their war and Army life and what have you. Things were said in no uncertain terms. Those at the CO's table sat stone faced with their arms folded tight against their chests. More beer brought out more threats. It wouldn't have surprised me if things had gotten physical. And so went the night. My Christmas shirt with its little peace sign was background material.

I returned to the States in April of 1970. If you remember your history, in April of 1970 there was a large troop withdrawal, and there was our invasion of Cambodia. That invasion sparked more anti-war rallies and marches. At one of those rallies at Kent State, four students were shot down.

I came home on a Thursday, and on a Saturday, nine days later, there was a march in downtown Chicago to protest the Cambodia invasion. I went down there, and I was a little late. The march had already started and was going by me. Then in the proudest moment of my life I stepped off the curb and joined the march. I was razzed about my GI haircut, but accepted. Two weeks later I went to another march protesting Cambodia and Kent State. That was two marches in less than four weeks as a civilian.

About face.

BILL SHINAS IS A VIETNAM VETERAN, AUTHOR AND VVAV MEMBER IN THE CHICAGO CHAPTER.
New Year

“Merry Christmas, Boys”—greeting on a wreath at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial of Baltimore County.

In the winter dusk, I round the corner of the courthouse and there it is— that block of granite carved with the names of so many boys of my generation, same as ever, but grace no snow now. I remove a glove to and hand to a boy I might have hobbled toward in the dim light of the CYO, a boy I might have kissed but for a certain number in the draft.

I take a photograph. I don’t know why. I see myself reflected in polished stone, bundled against the cold, camera blocking half my changed face. Oh, dear boys, all these hometown years, these Christmas wreaths, Easter lilies, paper flags on Memorial Day and the Fourth of July—I don’t know what to bring, but here I am. My kids are older now than you were when you kissed your weeping moms and flew away to Nam. My kids have children of their own.

—Madeleine Myeko, served in the Army Nurse Corps from 1969-1970 on the “burn ward” of Brooke Army Medical Center.

Rice Paddies Moonlight

Aloof and full, the moon Floats over the house by the paddies. Into the night the water reflects the stars above. The bright silver spills on the water never still.

In the summer heat, wide and warm and empty, with the occasional brightness in his eyes when he first saw the scene of the company’s foremost hootch 20. Both that and hootch 19 had been emptied and the doors boarded up by then. The latter had been the scene of the company’s foremost heads sharing T at Bill Back’s bunk.

Jonathan received his draft letter on the day MLK was shot.

On the Internet, I got a hit. So here’s what I’ve long wanted to reread an old story written in ’73 and finding your name finally induces me to do so. (Don’t laugh too hard now, hey?)

I remember that first time I saw the movie “Platoon” it was more than a revelation, it was a time-warp – corkscrewing downward in that twin engine Caribou, banana trees contrasted against redded terrain, all the red dust in dry season covering every square inch of our lives, the stench of wasted men, wasted lives lined up on my window, their needing to send a package homeward, then jump a Siklic in misery, back to the boonies with arms and bandoliers and monkeys perched upon their shoulders, the monstrous beetles crawling in through the doors to escape the deluge, white phosphorus exploding at the edge of that gorge.

The very last one that I could forget would be Black, he with his laconic heavy lidded air of disgust with the military, most particularly with our parents and their mores which had brought our landing on the other side of the world. Every time that I’ve read of photographers Sean Flynn and Tim Page I’ve thought of him and the battle which erupted as he landed, ran for cover at LZ Meredith, his later reflection that any of us rear echelon commandos would give our right nut to be able to get out there and see front line reality. Having revelled in hiking and exploring back home, in the fields, dry and yellow high above the sun beats down on the fields, dry and yellow said cheers.

The same clear glory extends for a thousand paddies.

The bright silver spills on the water never still.

Floats over the house by the paddies.

Rice Paddies

Variation On A Theme

A narrow rim along the rice paddies crunches underfoot to each step high above the sun beats down on the fields, dry and yellow

in the summer heat, wide and warm and empty, with the occasional bush emphasizing the clarity of an open landscape inviting him to keep them focused ... The living are imprinted with the blood of young men and women.

Blood.

Blood stains from any war are the same.

Blood of young men and women.

Names do not matter.

They have hearts as that stopped bearing, families who began to cry and the enemy marks one more kill.

Red blood.

Red blood marks us all. When it dies upon the canvas, it leaves room for the next.

The living who witness young lives falling away, while the deafening sounds of bombs, gunfire, helicopters scream to keep them focused ... The living are imprinted with the onslaught of all 5 senses for the rest of their lives.

Peace to all.

—John Crandell

Continental Army Command at Fort Harker and the First Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, he chased Jane Fonda through Westover Village circle, 1978 to try and thank her. She wouldn’t have any of it. John lives in Sacramento, California.

—John Sandgrund

the scene of the company’s foremost heads sharing T at Bill Back’s bunk.

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Rice Paddies

Variation On A Theme

A narrow rim along the rice paddies crunches underfoot to each step high above the sun beats down on the fields, dry and yellow

in the summer heat, wide and warm and empty, with the occasional bush emphasizing the clarity of an open landscape inviting him to sit down, back against a hot rock, pleasuring, soothning. Staring ahead into the trembling distance having no thoughts of tomorrow or yesterday - there's the rock, and the wide, wide prospect, falling away, falling slowly, slowly away.

—David Sandgrund
I was a member of VVVAW in the 1970s and met Ashby Leach while I was attending City College of New York. I maintained a correspondence with him. When he began his Free Ashby Leach campaign, Ashley observed me studying an organic chemistry textbook while I was with other veterans marching in support of his trying to get accepted into medical school. I was in a special situation because I had been called the CUNY Buchanan program and graduated magna cum laude. I got into this program after working at the National History in New York City making plastic reproductions of actual artifacts. I was able to apply for this town to get college credit for that work and allowed me to make my own curriculum and attend school with the City University System.

At the end of each semester I sent the VA all my transcripts. During that time, the VA allowed me to cut off a benefit for 6 months twice because they would only accept one transcript and said I was only attending school once a year. I had to prove that my effort was measurable to survive so I ate peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and lived on my savings. I would ride a bicycle and roller skates to get to school. All the money I had left were pennies I saved over the years. I had no way of getting a job at night or in the morning in order to get to school. After waiting in line to get to the token booth, I could see that there was no room for me at the back of the line because he had no time to count the pennies I put into a coin. My train was coming into the station, and I cycled as fast as possible to get to the token booth. I was told they want to see if I was a student before giving me a roll. My train was coming into the station, and I cycled as fast as possible to get to the token booth. I was told they want to see if I was a student before giving me a roll. My train was coming into the station, and I cycled as fast as possible to get to the token booth. I was told they want to see if I was a student before giving me a roll.

After school I roller skated to the VO office to confront them about my class so I gave him all my pennies a roll. My train was coming into the station, and I cycled as fast as possible to get to the token booth. I was told they want to see if I was a student before giving me a roll. After school I roller skated to the VO office to confront them about my class so I gave him all my pennies a roll. My train was coming into the station, and I cycled as fast as possible to get to the token booth. I was told they want to see if I was a student before giving me a roll. After school I roller skated to the VO office to confront them about my class so I gave him all my pennies a roll. My train was coming into the station, and I cycled as fast as possible to get to the token booth. I was told they want to see if I was a student before giving me a roll.
Am I the Only One Who Saw This?

GARY HUBBARD

I arrived in Da Nang in July of 1969 and was shuttled off in a cattle car to Camp Tinh Shaw [sic]. One of our first indoctrination classes was held by a Navy Lt. He told us of the evils that lurked just outside the main gate - grus, pussey and the like. After the meeting most of us went outside the main gate to purchase exactly that.

Thanks Navy Lt.

After a few days I was assigned to the A.F.D.L. 23, a floating dry dock in Da Nang Harbor. At the time I was a 20-year-old Seaman 1st Class. We worked 12 hour shifts, 10 days a week, with 1 day off, and stood a 2 hour watch every 15 minutes.

At some time into my watch, I tossed my percussion grenade, turned my back on the bay and fired up a joint. Then the sky behind me lit up like it was noon time. I turned around and a huge fireball rose in the sky over either Army side or Air Force side. Understand this is across the bay several miles and it looked like an atomic bomb. Then the rumble of the blast came across the bay and the bay itself began to produce swells that rocked the dry dock.

I asked my C.O. about the blast the next morning and he knew nothing about this. Respond to VVW at vvaw@vvaw.org if you know anything.


Epiphany

I hear the lost children of Viet Nam singing

Here comes the endless stream of girl and boy singers

Dressed alike in white blouses with red neckerchiefs

Smiling she hands him

With a sweet, tender look

At the river's edge

Their thin blouses

Their baggy pants

The breeze blowing

Straw hats covering their heads

Another collecting the water hyacinth

A woman washing clothes

Catching on the rocks

Green vegetation floating by

He watches brown water rushing past

Shielding his eyes from the river's glare

His clothes sticking to his body

Heart pounding, sweating

Leaving him alone

His chothes drenched with water

The helicopter lifted off

In the hot and humid breeze

Smiling she hands him

Heart pounding, sweating

Leaving him alone

Their once terrified, innocent faces marked for death

Singing of forgiveness, singing “God Bless America,”

As the children crowd around them, having no fears,

Singing of forgiveness, singing “God Bless America,”

Their thin blouses

Their baggy pants

The breeze blowing

Straw hats covering their heads

Their once terrified, innocent faces marked for death

In the sweltering, tropical sunlight of the reedy river

Leaving him alone

In the place where echoes of a bygone century

Heart pounding, sweating

Leaving him alone

Their once terrified, innocent faces marked for death

In the sweltering, tropical sunlight of the reedy river

Not in a hundred years, not in two hundred years.

The two American men of conscience,

Are restored to life. Here they are greeted by

Another collecting the water hyacinth

Here comes the endless stream of girl and boy singers

Dressed alike in white blouses with red neckerchiefs

Smiling she hands him

With a sweet, tender look

At the river's edge

Their thin blouses

Their baggy pants

The breeze blowing

Smiling she hands him

—Sherwood Ross

Vinh Long, 1st View

The helicopter lifted off

A water hyacinth

Leaving him alone

Blue petals sparkling

Heart pounding, sweating

In the sunlight

In the hot and humid breeze

A gift from

His clothes sticking to his body

A serene beauty

Shielding his eyes from the river's glare

Behind him traffic noises

He watches brown water rushing past

Tinny motors, squeaky horns

Green vegetation floating by

Mingle with the distant

Veterans Wayne Morse and Ernest Gruening

The last two American men of conscience,

Are restored to life. Here they are greeted by

Another collecting the water hyacinth

From passing boat

From the market

Another collecting the water hyacinth

From passing boat

Straw hats covering their heads

The air filled with strange odors

The breeze blowing

Fish, drying vegetation

Their buggys panting

Food from the market stalls

Their thin blouses

Avoiding the bicycles and motor bikes

At the river's edge

He turns and walks

A young girl stands

Down the road

With a sweet, tender look

—David Sandground

US Admits “Mistake” in Bombing Hospital

YOU JUST TELL ‘EM IF THEY DON’T WANT MISTAKES DON’T START WARS...
These are photographs I made at an anti-Vietnam War demonstration on the Mall in Washington, DC, on April 24, 1971. Long ago, I know. There were 200,000 of us there that day. The event was organized by several anti-war organizations. But the major event was the previous week. It was organized by Vietnam Veterans Against the War. There were 200,000 of us there that day. The event was organized by several anti-war groups. Our four-hour trip started at 6:00 am. There was the opportunity to make new acquaintances, talk, sing and sleep. We all had different agendas. I had my camera and spent the entire day photographing. It was a photo opportunity for me.

Having just graduated college, I was beginning my career in professional photography; in advertising, not journalism. Nonetheless I was against the war in Vietnam. I was a veteran in service before Vietnam and served in Germany in the Army Medical Corps. I was there just long enough to see some of the first seriously wounded treated in the major Army hospitals.

On Saturday, April 24 many of the VVAW vets stayed to meet and march with the new arrivals, 200,000 of them. Many VVAW members mixed and marched with the newcomers, adding meaning and legitimacy to the day. Their presence gave great significance to the proceedings. You could feel the excitement in the air. The upside down flags, an officially recognized signal of distress, were visible everywhere. Some of the new arrivals were older veterans who had experienced Korea and WWII. Everyone wore buttons from one or another organization. All were serious. They had come to see and to be seen. There were numerous spontaneous conversations, marches and demonstrations.

My entire time was spent watching and photographing.

NOW IN RETIREMENT I HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACCOMPLISH THINGS I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO DO. I HAVE MADE AN ARTIST’S BOOK OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS.

I am currently a VVAW member. I was in the Army Medical Corps stationed in Germany 1962-1965. After discharge I went to college and studied professional photography. I then moved to NYC to pursue a career photographing for advertising. In 1980 I began a career teaching at the college level which brought me to Rochester Institute of Technology, in the School of Photographic Arts and Sciences. I am now retired and am pursuing a career in fine art photography.
Shooting Flies with My M16
continued from page 32

The beat on the other side of the war was the economic defeat. Did we not learn from the

Shooting Flies with My M16

Michael Paul. A 1970 time VFW
member. He joined in 1971 when he
got home, laid off in membership for
many years, but returned a few years
ago. He was in Vietnam August 1967 to
August 1971. He went to NCO school
and achieved Buck Sergeant. His unit
was B-Battery, 2nd of the 120th Artillery.
He got 14 days leave before going to Vietnam, didn't
like how short that was, so he took
another month. He spent his time there as a
Corporal.

by the size of the soaring area over a prospective food source
where were they? Was there a hidden reserve unit of flies
about a hidden reserve unit of flies) that I could see them in profile. That was
better because it wouldn't leave a bullet
hole. So adjusting my aim, I started
to see a hollow in the earth that I
aimed and did a little calculation to
adjust my aim for something as close as
one when an aircraft landed as the
reserves flies always there to fill the
empty slots? Was there a master fly in
that so far has not demonstrated the
same astonishing will to
continue. Is it possible to
continue to wage war. Our presidents are
not Napoleon Bonaparte! They are
not our generals. They are
not our civilian commanders in
chief of our armed forces, but only,
and here's the rub, the only CPUs do its constitutional duty and votes
on whether to send our troops
into war. The Gulf of Tonkin Act and the
Presidental War Powers Act are both
blatantly unconstitutional! We need to
stop WARS OF CHOICE.

Thank you for attending. I casually leaned
against the side of the tower and gazed
around like I was diligently looking for
Charlie. Not body moving. It was

nominous and later and everybody was
wishing for a thinner one. I didn't have
to worry about a sneak inspection
(although they tried), as anybody
coming up the ladder would cause
the whole tower to shake and sway.
I sat down again.

Looking up, I noticed that
some flies had joined me. I
could see them in profile. That was
better because it wouldn't leave a bullet
hole. So adjusting my aim, I started
notch-shooting the little bastards
off the rail. I shot the railings in the holes
a few times, but I got so I could hit
them every time. I actually ran out of
ammo. And amazingly my shift was over —
I'd killed not only a bunch of flies, but a bunch of time.

But for the next week the planes,
especially the four-engine C-130's, took off and nobody would hear

I missed the little bugger by 2-3 inches. Finding another one,
I adjusted my calculation, waited
by 2-3 inches. Finding another one,
I adjusted my calculation, waited
by 2-3 inches. Finding another one,
I adjusted my calculation, waited
by 2-3 inches. Finding another one,
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I adjusted my calculation, waited
by 2-3 inches. Finding another one,
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 veterans 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 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 is over 40 years old. The insignia, VVAW® and Vietnam Veterans Against the War is a registered trademark belonging to VVAW and no other organization or group may use it for any reason without written permission from the VVAW Board of Directors.

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 has come to represent veterans fighting against new 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.

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.

Beware of VVAW-AI

This notice is to alert you to a handful of individuals calling themselves the "Vietnam Veterans Against the War Anti-Imperialists" (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.

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 has come to represent veterans fighting against new 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.

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.

Beware of VVAW-AI

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It's NOT the Boots on the Ground that Matter...  

Peter Sablock

It's Whose Feet are in the Boots on the Ground...

Mike Paul

I was drafted at 18 and was a perfect example of an apolitical, carefree and quite un Concerned young adult. I was well read, really knew my history, knew what war was, but really, it was the other guy who died, it would never be me. In my foolishness I was an immunot. I cared nothing about politics and longed to see what war was about. Hell, I was raised on dozens of Hollywood movies where the bad guy dies and the good guys (mostly) lived. And they all died quietly, fell over when hit, and it was done. I went a baby and came back 100 years old, scared of noises, scared of crowds, dark of the especially, the dark, good deed? Do they feel noble now from nothing, it and angry. Oh the anger, the tendency to go calm to uncontrollable rage in 15 seconds. How did that happen to me?

When someone says "thank you for your service" I respond "thanks" and then change the subject. But really, I'm angry. Did they just get completely rapped up? Why was I not eaten? No one can know what it was like unless they were in your VN. And crap they were good soldiers; the NVA 22nd Regiment is the stuff of my nightmares. After almost 50 years, I can still strip down my M60 step by step. I can feel the receiver tucked under my right arm, the belt feeding over my left, and the grip pistol. I can remember the percussive "ka-chik ka-chik" of the B1 and B33. I can still taste that god awful unchewable Hershey jungle chocolate bar. I remember the smell of burning shit in half a 55 gal drum, a body 2 days old, feel the blast wave of a Chimio, and the ball of plasma from an RPG going off beside me.

For a brief period of time I walked the edge and came through it. And on one dusty late afternoon in dry season, when I was the only one left capable of standing, I did my job.

Fact, the plasma jet from an RPG going off 5 feet from your face looks like a miniature sun and will deafen you for several minutes. Daily questions I ask myself. How did I not get completely rapped up? Why was I not eaten? No one can know what it was like unless they were in your VN.

I often think that there are dozens of Vietnam's. The VN of the units that first deployed together, the VN of the replacement, the VN Army pre-drug and drug. The VN of anti-war attitude, the VN before the attitude "outed." The VN of the delta, the VN of the tea plantations, the VN of triple canopy and steep hills and mountains. The VN of war, the VN of settled populations. The Army of the brigades and division base camps and the Army of remote company sized fire bases. The VN of fire fights, with all locals removed to large camps. The VN of an armored/mech unit, the VN of an infantry unit. The VN of cold war and ice cream at dinner and the VN of a canteen of warm water with beans and franks. And all this is important because no one can know what it was like unless they were in your VN.

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