



THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

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50 Years of VVAW

JOE MILLER

From the National Office

War, we soon learned that the system needed such wars. The system did not see us as heroes fighting for peace and social justice. The system saw us as a threat to its existence, along with all the other threats, such as Black Liberation, Women's Liberation, Student Power, etc.

So, we continued to fight, to organize, to exist. Fifty years later, we are still here - no longer young idealists, but still "angry young men and women" doing what we can to promote social and political activism in the long-term struggle for peace and social justice. Wherever VVAW members exist, they are willing (and mostly able) to join the fights, local and national. We remain true to our origins.

Now, our country and the rest of the world face new threats from a radical right wing Tweet Administration. This group of misleaders want to deconstruct the state machinery on the backs of the poor, the sick, the elderly, the very young, racial and religious minorities, the LGBTQ communities, and vets. It is a billionaire's club that is all about their bottom line, a line that keeps most of us on the bottom, grasping for crumbs.

One of the more obvious signs of where this so-called Administration wants to take us is seen in the recent debacle surrounding the attack on the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Tea Party members and moderates inside the Republican Party went toe-to-toe in an



VVAW, New York City, 1967.

effort to repeal the ACA, all with the full support of the Blowhard-in-Chief. This fundamental campaign promise was to be the major signal achievement of the Tweet Administration.

However, as the population learned about the real details of this planned repeal, they began to make noise. Republican town halls across the country erupted into shouting matches, as the politicians tried to convince their constituents of the positive aspects of the new plan. Facts got in the way. Numbers got in the way. Soon 60% of those polled declared their solid opposition to this attempt to hijack their health care. Finally, President Tweet and his minions had to back off.

Then, there is the somewhat uncomfortable situation of the ongoing investigations of the Russian connection with the 2016 presidential campaign. Was the American electorate cheated in their selection of the new

political leadership of this country? Were deals made with an outside power? What will be the ultimate outcome of all this? Impeachment? A Nixon-like resignation? Who the hell knows?

Activism against these right-wing attacks on the people's general welfare is on the rise, with the first worldwide demonstrations held the day after the inauguration of the new power clique. People everywhere are talking and acting in a resistance mode. We in VVAW will be there, perhaps in fewer numbers than in the old days, but we will be there. We call on all our members and supporters to be active wherever and however they can! Donate time, money, brain and muscle power. Act! Speak Out!

"A change is gonna come..."



JOE MILLER IS A VVAW BOARD MEMBER.

Reflections on My Recent Trip to Vietnam

JOAN DAVIS



Memorial at Ha Long Prison in Hanoi.

it at times bittersweet.

Touching down in Vietnam was intense. I'm finally here I thought. Our first stop was the Saigon Continental Hotel where many of the press stayed during the war. Although it showed signs of wear, it was worth staying

there for the history it evoked. The city was booming, with construction and busy, bustling streets. Welcome to a land with virtually no regulations. Between the taxis, motor scooters and cars, just crossing the street was a harrowing experience. Someone told us that one thousand new motor scooters arrived in the city every day, although I cannot vouch for that number. However, the city is exploding and developing at record speed. Go now if you can, because in five years the pollution may rival China, Vietnam's biggest investor.

Part of the trip was experiencing the beauty and culture of Vietnam. Part was dealing with the painful history and present political landscape. We spent only two days in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), including a side trip down the Mekong Delta, where rural poverty is still evident, and another to see the Cu Chi tunnels. Although the tunnels had been enlarged to allow

tourists to experience a bit of life underground, all I could think of was how young and scared our soldiers must have been. The Vietnamese must have experienced the same fear, yet they fought on. As I walked around the area it was clear we could never have won the war.

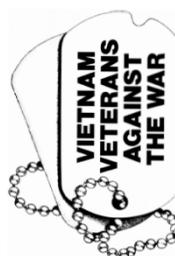
The Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City gave a chilling and fairly accurate account of the US's actions during the war with captured planes and tanks on display. A whole floor was devoted to Agent Orange, although the government's commitment to helping those affected is sadly deficient. As we moved north we found museums in Hue and Hanoi focusing on the war, both the French involvement as well as ours. In Hanoi we were disappointed with the Ho Chi Minh museum for its rather inaccessible historical coverage. However I would

continued on page 8

This past February I spent three weeks traveling throughout Vietnam with a brief stop in Cambodia to see Angkor Wat. I planned the trip with my new partner, an old anti-war activist who I met after my late husband, Bill Davis died in 2007. For Bill and I, the Vietnam War was not just history. As a National Coordinator of VVAW for over twenty years, Bill remained committed to helping veterans and fighting against this country's endless wars until he died. Until I retired from high school teaching in 2011, I taught a semester elective on the Vietnam War and the anti-war movement to high school seniors in a public high school near Chicago. So my trip to Vietnam was more than just a vacation.

Going without Bill was difficult, although I'm not sure he would have wanted to return. Like so many vets he talked a lot about VVAW's work but was selective concerning what he shared about his time in Vietnam. I know there were stories he could never share and he never expressed a desire to return. Nevertheless I felt he was with me on this journey, making

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VVAW 50th Anniversary

Join VVAW as we gather to celebrate our 50th Anniversary. No elaborate events, just gathering with VVAW members and friends for talking, eating, and drinking. For those who can't travel, we'll be having some virtual online events as well. Make sure to check www.vvaw.org for current details.

Sunday, September 10, 2017
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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50 YEARS

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR

**Founded in 1967, VVAW Pioneered
 Post Traumatic Stress Rap Groups and
 Work on Agent Orange
 From the '60s to the Present
 50 Years of Struggle for Veterans, Peace, and Justice**

VVAW Editor Notes

- We're sad to announce VVAW member Eleanor (Aunt Shorty) Wayman, who was featured in the Fall 2016 issue of *The Veteran*, passed away soon after her 100th birthday last Fall. She did appreciate the feature on her. She will be missed.
- VVAW is also sad to announce the passing of long-time VVAW member Jaime Vasquez from New Jersey. He served in the Marine Corps in Vietnam where he "earned" a Purple Heart. He was very active in the Veterans Support Vieques campaign. He was also a prime mover in creating the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Pershing Park, including the Hidden Casualties Memorial dedicated to Dave Cline.
- VVAW is glad to welcome

- Travis Landchild and his Stick Vet cartoons to *The Veteran*. We hope to run more in the future.
- VVAW is also glad to feature some of Steve Millard's drawings this issue. Steve was a Combat Artist with the 18th Military History Division in Cu Chi and the 25th Infantry Division from 1968-1969.
 - Last fall, VVAW gave more money to the Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin (VAVA) to build housing for victims of Agent Orange in Vietnam. More details in a future issue of *The Veteran*.
 - VVAW applauds the release of political prisoners and veterans Oscar Lopez Rivera and Chelsea Manning. We welcome future articles on their incarceration and release.

Thanks to Jeff Danziger, Billy Curmano, and Travis Landchild for their cartoons. Thanks to Steve Millard for his sketches from Vietnam. Thanks to Bill Branson, Joan Davis, Joe Miller, Kim Shallcross, Jan Barry, Stanley Campbell, Maurice Simon, Susan Schnall, Louis DeBenedette, Mike Hastie and others for contributing photos.

Veteran Staff

Jeff Machota	Bill Branson
Ellie Shunas	Jen Tayabji

20 Years of *The Veteran*

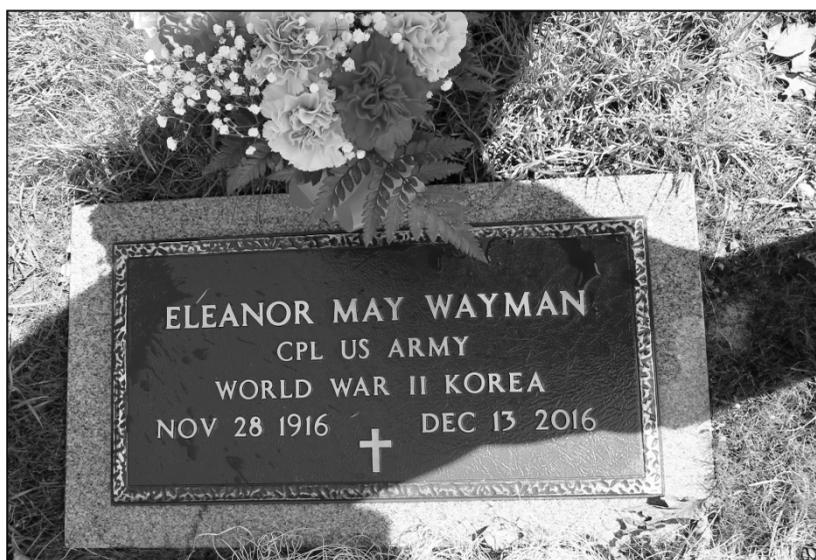
BARRY ROMO

All praise to Jeff Machota on 20 years of putting out *The Veteran*. Jeff is not a vet but loves VVAW people so much. He got his start in the struggle for peace and justice by working to end Apartheid in South Africa and didn't stop. He worked on the Jesse Jackson presidential campaign. He is an anti war activist from the Gulf to Iraq, an advocate for good affordable health care and a supporter of the rubber workers striking in Decatur IL. If it is racist

he is against it, including demanding the removal of racist sports mascots nationally and locally. I used to put out *The Veteran* and readers would race to find all the misspelled words. Now the paper looks very professional. What a man, thank you Jeff for helping to keep VVAW alive and kicking!!!



BARRY ROMO IS A LONG-TIME MEMBER OF VVAW.



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

VVAW National Coordinators:

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

VVAW National Staff:

Charlie Branson
Dave "Red" Kettenhofen
Jeff Machota

50 Years Since Dr. King's "Declaration of Independence"

JOE MILLER

"I should make it clear that while I have tried...to give a voice to the voiceless Vietnamese...I am as deeply concerned about our own troops there as anything else. For it occurs to me that what we are submitting them to in Vietnam is not simply the brutalizing process that goes on in any war where enemies face each other and seek to destroy. We are adding cynicism to the process of death, for they must know after a short period there that none of the things we claim to be fighting for are really involved...they must know that their government has sent them into a struggle among Vietnamese, and the more sophisticated surely realize that we are on the side of the wealthy and the secure while we create a hell for the poor." - (4 April 1967)

During our commemoration of the establishment of VVAW in 1967, it is fitting and more than appropriate for us to recognize the powerful statement against the war in Vietnam made by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at Riverside Church in New York that same year.

For nearly two years, Dr. King witnessed, with growing concern, how the growing war against the Vietnamese people undermined domestic policies and plans to eradicate poverty and improve civil rights in this country. As far back as July 1965, King made short statements against the war, but he was always criticized by others in the civil rights struggle and by some in the Johnson Administration. He was told not to get involved in issues outside of the civil rights realm.

However, he was not deterred. More and more, as he related in the speech at Riverside Church, he saw greater financial resources being sucked into the war machine. He saw more and more young men, black and white and brown, being dragged off to war through an increasing draft. In February 1967, in a California speech titled "The Casualties of the War in Vietnam," he reviewed the history of the conflict and challenged the US government to be more concerned

about peace and the protection of humanity.

On March 25, King led a march of 5,000 down State Street in Chicago in his first appearance at an anti-war demonstration. He upped the ante as the war dragged on. At the rally that day, he stated:

"Poverty, urban problems, and social progress generally are ignored when the guns of war become a national obsession. When it is not our security that is at stake, but questionable and vague commitments to reactionary regimes, values disintegrate into foolish and adolescent slogans."

A week and a half later, King spoke to some 3,000 people, sharing the stage with academics and other religious luminaries at the Riverside Church event organized by Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam (CLCV).

His speech opened with support for the CLCV's call to break the silence on the war in Vietnam. "A time comes when silence is betrayal." He recognized how difficult this would be, to oppose government policy during wartime.

"Over the past two years, as I have moved to break the betrayal of my own silences and to speak from the burnings of my own heart, as I have called for radical departures from the destruction of Vietnam, many persons have questioned me about the wisdom of my path."

King then elaborated on seven reasons for bringing the war in Vietnam into his "moral vision". Four of the seven are overtly political and social. Simply stated:

- 1) He saw the war as an enemy of the poor that had to be attacked as such;
- 2) Sending poor "Negro and white boys" off to Vietnam was a "cruel manipulation" of the poor that decimated their communities;
- 3) How can violence in the ghettos be stopped when "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world [is] my own government"?
- 4) To save the soul of America.

"If America's soul becomes totally poisoned, part of the autopsy must read 'Vietnam'."

The remaining three reasons are put in more overtly religious terms.

Following this section, King goes through an elaborate review of the history of US intervention in Vietnam's affairs, back to the days just after the end of World War II, when the US refused to accept Vietnamese independence, resulting in the First Indochina War (1946-54). Then, America manipulated the Geneva Conference to ensure that a unified Vietnam would not result. Then Diem. Then the military junta. And on and on. Bombing, increased US troops, "fortified hamlets" or concentration camps. Why should the Vietnamese people trust us, he asked? Why should we be surprised at the rise of the Vietnamese opposition we called the Viet Cong? Why should we be surprised that the leadership in Hanoi does not trust our talk about peace talks?

He then listed five "concrete things" that the US should do to begin the process of ending this awful adventure.

- 1) End the bombing, North and South;
- 2) Declare a unilateral cease fire;
- 3) End our military buildup in Thailand and Laos;
- 4) Accept the National Liberation Front's role in a future Vietnamese government;
- 5) Set a date for the removal of all foreign troops from Vietnam in accordance with the 1954 Agreement.

In the end, he argued, the US must 'undergo a radical revolution of values.' We must correct this "malady of spirit" or we will see more and more Vietnams in our future. We will see more interventions in Asia, Africa, and Latin America if we do not allow for peaceful revolutions in those regions. We must learn to curb our tendency to place our own economic interests above others.

"A true revolution of values will look uneasily on the glaring contrast

of poverty and wealth. With righteous indignation, it will look across the seas and see individual capitalists of the West investing huge sums of money in Asia, Africa, and South America, only to take the profits out with no concern for the social betterment of the countries, and say, 'This is not just.' It will look at our alliance with the landed gentry of South America and say, 'This is not just.' The Western arrogance of feeling that it has everything to teach others and nothing to learn from them is not just."

Overall, King laid out a program in this speech that called for a recognition of human interests, as opposed to sectional interests. If we only saw each other as brothers and sisters, regardless of race, creed, nationality, etc., then we might avoid other Vietnams.

On April 15th, King joined hundreds of thousands in New York City for a march to the United Nations. At the rally he touched on many of the themes he raised in Riverside Church. In attendance at that march and rally was a small group of Vietnam veterans marching under a hastily-made banner announcing "Vietnam Veterans Against the War".

A revolution in values?

The earliest publication of a condensed version of King's speech is found in "Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam," Ramparts Magazine, May 1967. [This is the version I first saw while still in the Navy].

The complete text of the speech is found online under the title "Beyond Vietnam". The quotations in this piece are from Claiborne Carson and Kris Shepard, Edited, A Call to Conscience: The Landmark Speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Warner Books, 2001, pp. 139-64.



JOE MILLER IS A VVAW BOARD MEMBER.



Barry Romo (left) and Walter Klim (center) at Dewey Canyon IV, Washington, DC, 1982.

Fraggin'

BILL SHUNAS

When a nation elects a Trump to be a president it causes one to stop and think. My first thought was that this guy is a grifter, a charlatan, or circus ringmaster or all three rolled into one. And maybe dangerous too. From him you can expect the worst. The next thought was that in my lifetime I've witnessed the administration of some piss poor presidents. And Trump? Give him time. Right now, he doesn't have enough of a track record to be named the worst. Actually, he's done some good. In his first eight weeks, his opinions and actions have generated debate, dialog, thought and activism. He still has his work cut out for him if he wants to achieve recognition as our worst president.

And my next thought was a question. Of all the presidents in my lifetime, who was the worst? Harry Truman would get some votes for starting the nuclear age and for ordering the second A bomb, if not the first. LBJ would get a lot of votes because of Vietnam. And many of you who read *The Veteran* might pick him. Eisenhower and Kennedy began the process, but it was under LBJ that most of the escalation and devastation took place. There were so many lives lost and ruined, both military and civilian. And then we find out from the "Pentagon Papers" and McNamara's confession that LBJ advisers thought that fighting in Vietnam was hopeless. Yet LBJ kept on because he didn't want to be known as the first president to lose a war or be known as soft on communism. Very strong candidate for the worst. And then came "I am not a crook" Nixon who left office in disgrace because of his crookedness.

And Reagan with his giant efforts to redistribute wealth to the rich.

With men such as these it is a hard choice, but my vote for the worst president in my lifetime goes to W. This is because of his implementation of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Wars are awful. There is a body count. So many soldiers on our side. So many soldiers on their side. So many civilians. So many maimed. So many maimed in the mind. So many relegated to the refugee life. So much resource and money that could have been better used. And then there are the unintended consequences.

The Iraq War had more than its share of unintended consequences. It created large numbers of refugees, many of whom fled to Europe. The Iraq War contributed to the situation in Syria today with its war and slaughter. Out of Syria came millions more refugees to join those from Iraq and Afghanistan. Most European countries, to their credit, accepted refugees. The problem is that some countries were overwhelmed. They received too many people in too short of a period of time. This resulted in anti-immigrant thoughts in the populace. This resulted in a newfound increase in support for the right-wing politicians and parties which are now affecting the politics as major players in European countries - blowback from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

And there was more blowback. A petty criminal with a life in and out of Iraqi jails formed a group of fanatics. Al-Zarqawi and his buddies prayed that the US would invade Iraq. We answered that prayer, and as expected that aided and abetted

recruitment for his group which for a while became Al Qaeda in Iraq. US mistakes weren't limited only to the invasion. By excluding Sunnis from the government and the army we aided al-Zarqawi's ability to recruit. He was eventually killed by the US, but he left a legacy. I would suggest that his followers contributed key players to the Islamic State. That, of course, brought to Europeans and Americans more acts of terrorism. IS is responsible for a certain body count in Iraq and elsewhere. It is involved in Syria. Worst of all is the psychological effect. It has stimulated paranoia which has resulted in reactions in the US and elsewhere far out of proportion to the damage IS has done.

After 9/11 there was a reason to send forces into Afghanistan. The general staff of the perpetrators of 9/11 were in the Tora Bora mountains of Afghanistan. However, there were time constraints. Our forces needed to get to Al Qaeda before the window of opportunity closed. We failed. Shortly thereafter Al Qaeda left Afghanistan, but for some reason we stayed to fight the Taliban. Bait and switch. And Iraq? There was no basis for invading Iraq. And these two wars have left us with many problems today.

Bush and his people changed reasons for the invasion of Iraq almost as often as Trump changed his promises on the campaign trail. None of the reasons were valid. During LBJ's war we saw a greater death toll than Iraq and Afghanistan among both military and civilians. Yet Iraq seems a worse thing. That's because - dare I say - there was a reason to go into Vietnam. It was a faulty reason, but it

was in the parameters of the political thought of the time. This was the Cold War. We fought the Russians by proxy all over the world. Here was Vietnam. Even though it was their civil war, Americans thought it was another proxy war. It got out of control. It shouldn't have happened, but it was not off the wall to expect something like that back then. And few in the US expected it would last that long or that we would lose. But when it was over it was over, unlike today.

For Iraq there was no reason. And it had those unintended consequences. They resulted from Bush's actions. As far as the prize for the worst president, it's not that Trump hasn't a chance to be our worst. From the way he's started, he could very well quickly get there. From more military buildup at the expense of needed social programs, to escalating military conflicts, to disrespecting the first amendment, to allowing the specter of fascism to lurk, to ruining our economy, to making parents hide their children when he speaks, Trump has a good chance to take the crown. Hell, even W said that Islam is a religion of peace. Trump couldn't understand that type of talk. W holds the crown at the moment, but Trump is coming up fast on the outside. And we don't yet know what the blowback will be from his executive orders, appointments and tweets. It could be devastating.



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

Notes from the Boonies

PAUL WISOVATY

I belong to a small Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) post in a town of 4,000 people. We have about half a dozen active members, very little money, and we meet in a small room donated by a local businessman. But we do some nice things in the community: provide color guards at veterans' funerals, give speeches at the high school, march in parades, raise money for relief for needy veterans and widows, things like that. I guess I'm saying that while we don't or can't afford to do a lot, the things that we do are nice. People seem to appreciate that.

But there is one thing we do, at every meeting, that really bothers me. We - like every other VFW and American Legion post in the country - observe a moment of silence and a prayer for "those missing in action and those held as prisoners of war." I guess that one way to put it is that, if I had just gotten here from Mars and was told what I just said, I would (1) be incredibly anguished that there are still American men and women wasting away in the Hanoi Hilton, and (2) wonder why the most powerful government on the planet can't find a way to bring them home. I'd be writing letters every day to my Congressman. Just how can this happen? I would wonder.

I'm going to quote from an excellent book which I just finished, by George Herring, called "America's Longest War." Mr. Herring is of course much more knowledgeable than I about Vietnam, and probably even more incensed about what I have just said. For openers, he notes that, "While normalization (of relations between the United States and Vietnam) languished in the 1980's, the POW/MIA issue took on the power and mystique of a religion." I'll say. This contained an assumption "that any of the missing might still be

prisoners...Between 1975 and 1993, various congressional and executive groups studied the issue intensively, and produced not a shred of evidence that a single American was being held captive in Vietnam." But none of that mattered to private groups that were not at all impressed by that intensive study. "The potent National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia created, before the end of the war, a stark black and white POW/MIA flag with the inscription 'You Are Not Forgotten,' which in time flew above the White House." Our VFW post has one too, of course. Ok, one last quote: "Sensationalist films such as "Rambo: First Blood, Part 2" and "Missing in Action" boosted popular acceptance of the myth."

I understand that I am not telling our readers anything which they don't already know. I also realize that this reads like a history lesson, and if you wanted a history lesson you'd buy a history book. But this is about a lot more than history. It's about something happening NOW. The Courthouse in which I worked for 35 years flies a POW/MIA flag every day. City Hall in Tuscola, Illinois does the same, and my guess is that the same may be said for just about every Courthouse and City Hall in America. When I drive around town smoking a bowl (Prince Albert, Ok?), pass more than a few residential homes flying that flag. Ok, so what harm does this cause?

This is purely a guess, but let me throw it out. If I'm a widow, child or grandchild of a Vietnam MIA, and I am constantly exposed to - if nothing else, the flags - might I just wonder about that? Might I wonder if maybe my husband (or wife), parent or grandparent might still be waiting for Sly Stallone to go back there and rescue him? I don't know. And if

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that scenario isn't real, then why all those flags? Why all those moments of silence and prayers at VFW and Legion meetings for those listed as "missing in action or prisoners of war?" Why?

I recently received an insert in a veterans' magazine, offering - for "a limited time only" - a very physically impressive "You Are Not Forgotten" POW/MIA ring, for a modest \$99. The ring includes several "appropriate" quotes, but the one that caught my eye was this one, "A portion of the proceeds from each sale will be donated to help the families of POW's and those missing in action." Ok, so the patriotic folks offering this item

not only know that there continue to be Americans held as prisoners of war... they know who they are! If only the CIA had intelligence that good.

In case you're wondering, I did bring this up once at a VFW meeting. I explained it pretty much as I set it forth here, and when I got done no one said a word. They just looked at me as if I'd, you know, hung up a photo of Jane Fonda in the window.



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

Gimme an "F"

STEPHEN SINSLEY

There I sat in front of the stage in that warm friendly bar in Milwaukee, gripping a cold beer (or maybe my fifth or sixth) and flashing back to a damp tent and sleeping bag in August of '69. I was 22 at the time and had hitchhiked up from Greenwich Village ... but that's another story.

That night in Milwaukee, Country Joe gave us a nice show, but never did give us more than an "F". He just used it as a teaser. Fucker. But here I was, sitting in a room full of my generation, still angry, still idealistic, and, most importantly still hopeful "after all these years." We have seen too many of our brothers and sisters drop out, burn out, or blow out.

But here we were, more wrinkles than we would want, more pounds than we would want, and more aches and pains than we deserve - but we were here. And we spoke of and drank to

those members who were no longer with us. We were here to celebrate VVAW's 35th anniversary.

As José Martí once said, "I have lived in the belly of the monster, and I know its entrails, and my sling is that of David." The monster is big, the biggest empire yet to acknowledge its own imperialism, but so was the Roman Empire, and empires come and go. Back in the Sixties we used to hear people scream at us, "Our country, right or wrong!" They probably didn't know that the whole saying, by Carl Schurz, is: "Our country, right or wrong. When right, to be kept right; when wrong, to be put right." That is where I believe we are all coming from. From our rude awakening in 'Nam, to Winter Soldier, to Dewey Canyon III, up to the present day.

I shared drinks and shot the shit with people I had known for a number



of years, and with others I had just met. There were those who had driven in from their homes 10 minutes away, to my grueling 22 hour bus ride from PA, to those who flew in from the coast. Electricians, journalists, postal workers, photographers, musicians, the same eclectic blue collar/white collar mixture that stood up 35 years

ago and yelled, "One, two, three, four, we don't want your fucking war." We gave 'em an "F"!



STEVE SINSLEY IS A MEMBER OF VVAW. THIS ARTICLE FIRST APPEARED IN THE FALL 2002 ISSUE OF THE VETERAN.

Memorial Day Memories

PETE ZASTROW

In 1987, the VVAW National Office, along with the Chicago Chapter, was a part of the various campaigns of the moment—treating Agent Orange, exposing the inadequacies of the VA, and watching for the next target of US foreign intervention. High on our list of activities was planning and enacting a 20th Anniversary celebration.

As had become customary in Chicago, we planned a celebration for Memorial Day in May 1987, held at the very public corner of Wacker Drive and Wabash Avenue, where there was a concrete island. In the past, a monument to veterans stood there. It somehow morphed into a Vietnam memorial fountain, and disappeared for years, a long shabby veterans' story. In any case we would, twice a year, bring several banners and a portable speaker system to rally the

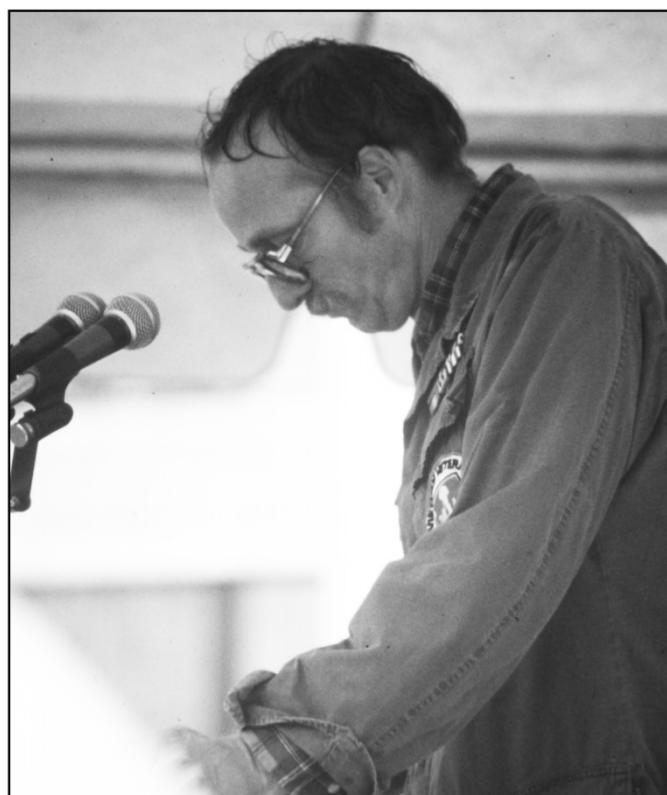
50 or so VVAW members and friends and assorted lefties who appeared on Veterans Day and Memorial Day.

On this Memorial Day, it was a new world. City workers built a speaker's platform with microphone. Chicago city police, who regularly paid scant attention to our activities were attentively around the area and Chicago's Mayor, Harold Washington, arrived and spoke. Previously, usually only one or two police/Vietnam vets would stop by to visit.

On this Memorial Day, Mayor Washington declared Vietnam Veterans Against the War Day.



PETE ZASTROW IS A LONG-TIME VVAW MEMBER AND FORMER VVAW NATIONAL COORDINATOR.



Pete Zastrow.



Mayor Harold Washington speaking at VVAW event, Chicago.

The Human Cost of War

JOSEPH GIANNINI

Recently I got a video called "The Class of 65" from an acquaintance of Les Bennet, a Vietnam buddy of mine. It is about two senior high school classes in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, one public and the other parochial. The tragic thing about these two classes is the number of young men who were killed in the Vietnam War. Edison High lost 66, the highest toll in America. And Father Judge lost a record number. The combined total was over one hundred.

The video shows the lives and speaks about the deaths of these young men who went from high school to

Vietnam. They were encouraged by their high school principals and our government to fight Communism in Southeast Asia. They were all working class, proud to serve; they bought the lies and were wasted. Each young man was a priceless treasure and his death brought unending pain and sorrow to his parents, siblings, family and friends. "The Class of 65" is a sorrowful and sobering story about the human cost of war.

I recently contacted LTV, the public access channel in our town, and told their office manager about "The Class of 65." LTV wanted to air

the video. I then contacted Fox TV in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the maker and owner of the video. Their rep said no problem, send the release form for LTV. I faxed the release and waited for Fox to respond. About a week later I received a call from Fox, they would send a broadcast quality tape directly to LTV. Then the next day I got another call from Fox TV, they wouldn't sign the release. They had a rights problem. Wouldn't you think that any and all rights problems would have been resolved before they made the video? Suspect. Could it be that Fox, known to support all our foreign

wars, had second thoughts about airing an anti-war video? If my suspicion is correct, this is chilling.

What would the spirits of these young men say if they could speak to us? Fox demeans the memory and message of these lost men. How about sending a message to Fox, a boycott of everything they own?



JOSEPH GIANNINI IS A FORMER MARINE GRUNT WHO FOUGHT IN 'NAM 1967-68 WITH THE 1ST BATTALION, 3RD MARINES.

Veterans and the Affordable Care Act: Why the Repeal Would be Devastating

JEN TAYABJI

Right now, many veterans are very concerned, and rightfully so, about the changes that President Trump has been proposing for the Department of Veteran's Affairs, including dismantling the VA health care system with "reforms." Unfortunately, veterans should also be very concerned about the threats to repeal the Affordable Care Act (also known as the ACA or "Obamacare"). We know too well that many veterans do not meet the criteria for full VA coverage, which is connected to discharge status, service-related disabilities, income, and more. In addition, it is not always accessible or meets everyone's needs.

Even though the American Health Care Act (AHCA) – the first repeal plan proposed by Speaker Ryan this session – failed to garner enough votes to make it to the floor at the end of March, Ryan and President Trump, amongst others, continue to discuss repealing the ACA. To understand what this would mean, let's look at just a few of the provisions in the American Health Care Act. The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) scored the bill and reported that it would result in 24 million Americans losing their health insurance by 2026. Changes in tax credits from income-based to age-based would have put health insurance out of reach for low-income Americans. Allowing insurance companies to charge older adults even more (5 times as much as a younger adult, compared to 3 times under the ACA) would have put health insurance out of reach for older Americans. Significant funding cuts to Medicaid, combined with

changing the program to either a block grant or per capita program, would fundamentally alter the Medicaid program as we know it, affecting all recipients whether they are newborns or residents in long-term care. In last-minute negotiations before the bill was pulled, they were even considering removing protections for those with pre-existing conditions as well as taking away essential health benefits, which sets a minimum of what plans must cover to be considered health insurance.

A recent report by the Urban Institute, released in September 2016, researched the effects of the ACA on veterans. While veterans in general are less likely to be uninsured than the general population, about 11% of veterans under age 65 did not have health insurance before the ACA started in 2014. Because of the ACA, the uninsured rate among veterans under age 65 fell by 42% between 2013 (pre-ACA) and 2015 (one year into the ACA). Their families, including their spouses and children, also gained new health insurance options through the ACA.

Many legislators, including President Trump ran on the platform of immediately repealing the ACA once they were in office. They won't stop trying, despite failing in their first attempt. The ACA has provided millions with affordable insurance coverage. The ACA has also extended protections to nearly all of us, including no lifetime caps, protections for those with pre-existing conditions, a set of standard benefits that must be covered, protections in cost as we get

older, and much more. If the ACA were fully repealed with a replacement plan, 32 million Americans will become uninsured by 2026.

In addition to the repeal of the ACA, there are still other threats to how we all access our health care. Congressional leaders have proposed changing Medicaid to a block grant or per capita program. These threats have not gone away since the fall of Ryan's American Health Care Act. This would restrict Medicaid funding either by a set amount per state per year, or by a set amount per person. Basically, the states would have less funding; this means cuts. With the expansion of Medicaid, millions of low-income Americans were able to access insurance. If Medicaid is weakened so that its funding is given out in block grants or per capita grants, fewer people will be able to get coverage, states will have to cut what essential benefits it covers, and worse. Don't forget, Medicaid is the largest payer of long-term care in our country, covering many of our loved ones currently in nursing homes.

Lastly, Congressional leaders, like Speaker Ryan, along with the newly-appointed HHS Secretary Price are eyeing privatizing Medicare or turning it into a voucher program. Most veterans have Medicare (at least Parts A & B) to provide coverage when you need to get care at a non-VA facility. Keep in mind that Vietnam-era vets who don't already have Medicare coverage are aging onto Medicare as we speak. Don't be fooled by Ryan and Price! These plans will wreak havoc for premium costs and throw Medicare

into a death spiral. If these plans for Medicare go forward, you most likely couldn't afford to get similar coverage to what you have now under their plan unless you are willing or able to spend a lot more money.

Take action! Find out where your Representative and Senators stand on privatizing the VA, repealing the ACA, cutting Medicaid, and turning Medicare into a voucher program. Make your voices heard. You can reach your Representative and Senators through the Congressional switchboard at (202) 224-3121. Let them know that you're a vet in their district who stands against privatizing the VA, against repealing the ACA, and against cutting Medicare and Medicaid. The efforts to prevent the repeal of the ACA since Congress returned to session in early January is working as they could not successfully pass Ryan's American Health Care Act. Keep up the pressure!

Note: The Urban Institute report can be found at: <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/84441/2000947-Veterans-and-Their-Family-Members-Gain-Coverage-under-the-ACA-but-Opportunities-for-More-Progress-Remain.pdf>



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

Our Conundrum

*If you cleave to victory
it will elude you
like water in cupped hands*
—D. Nurkse

It's official. The debate is over. Questions answered. Doubts laid to rest.

No more excuses
No more secrets
No more lies
No more false hope

Our war is a major debacle. The impasse impenetrable. Stay, we fail. Leave, we fail.

—Barry L. Reece



IVAW member Aaron Hughes, Veterans Day, Chicago, 2016.

No Thanks

TOM DIXON

I want to be conciliatory. I don't want to end friendships. I don't want to be so damned angry and disappointed and disillusioned. Yet, I am fighting every single negative emotion today, Veteran's Day, while I try to reconcile what is going on in my county with the faux and vacuous celebration of me and my brothers in arms. Many of them, blind with anger and low information, voted with the electoral majority to put a group of people in charge who have shown over and over they don't give one good goddam about them. Led by an egomaniac who thinks getting 5 deferments for bad feet and a purple heart handed to him by someone who earned it is "smart patriotism," they have voted down numerous veterans' benefits packages. They wave the flag; they spout the "thank you's" and "honor our veterans," but repeatedly fail and decline to support the heroes they love

to fete with the funding necessary, when they come home.

So if you voted for this boatload of faux patriots, save your "thank you for your service" crap for someone who's needy enough to crave it. You owe us all right - but not the waving of flags and your empty concern and your negativity toward someone who demonstrates during the national anthem. No, you owe us the support we need to become functioning citizens, to battle alcohol and drug addiction, to overcome PTSD, and to ensure the family supports necessary to put things back together again from the rending of the fabric that often occurs when we're sent to war. Stop using me in your advertisements to make money off my back when you support politicians who refuse to do anything but give lip service to us. It's demeaning.

Finally, stop sending our sons, daughters and grandchildren off to

wars that are completely ill conceived, dredged up with false flags and information, and promoted through a media that is so befuddled and corporate, they might as well get paid by the Defense Department. Stop marching us out before every sporting event, relentlessly promoting us as heroes, and falsely proclaiming that sending us off to war in every far-flung location on the planet is what is keeping us free. Bullshit.

There are dangerous people in the world. Yes we need the armed services to protect and serve against some of them. But we have demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that reckless invasions and destabilization of various parts of the world have created far more enemies than they have induced friendships and have consumed trillions of dollars that could have been spent to truly make our nation strong.

Stop this militarization of everything American. It has not made us safer. It has not made us better. Honor us by creating fewer of us. Reduce our ridiculous footprint of 700 bases throughout the world, many of which can only honestly be considered offensive not defensive. Start funding teachers and community workers, and rebuild our infrastructure, and fully fund the programs that keep our elderly, veterans and non-veterans alike, from falling into poverty. Thank me for my service by making this a better nation for all of our citizens, not with more of your empty rhetoric and unnecessary invasions.



TOM DIXON IS A MEMBER OF THE VVAW FACEBOOK PAGE, WHERE HE POSTED THIS ARTICLE.

50 Years Later - Reflections on the Vietnam War

WARREN HUNT

Although my personal opposition to the Vietnam War began while I was there, it took many years of studying the historical context of the war before I was able to clearly understand it and coherently express it. To have opted to remain ignorant and blame the loss of the war on the media and student protesters would have been an insult to those who paid a far greater price than I did.

I served in Vietnam from July 1968 to July 1969 as a radio operator with the First Infantry Division. I was drafted in 1967 at age nineteen and sent to Vietnam when I was twenty-years-old. My unit, the 121st Signal Battalion, lost a total of sixteen soldiers in the Vietnam War, six of them during the years I served in Vietnam. During the campaigns of World War II, a total of five of the unit's signal corpsmen were killed.

Of the twenty young men in my school cohort, the class of 1966, twelve of us served in the armed forces, nine of us served in Vietnam, and three were seriously wounded. By the time I was drafted in late 1967, two of my classmates had already been injured in the war. A third childhood friend survived his wounds, but was never the same after that, and committed

suicide at the age of 50.

Even before entering the service, I sensed that there was not a great deal of enthusiasm for the war. Americans did not seem to have a sense of urgency, as was the case during the Second World War. Our country was then clearly in mortal peril, and Americans understandably rallied to the defense of their homeland. On the contrary, I often heard the ironic observation that the North Vietnamese had not attacked California, so why are we bombing them?

Nevertheless, I went to Vietnam with the hope that it would be all worthwhile in the end and that, like my parents' generation, I could live out my life feeling that I had contributed to something historically significant that would lead to a better world. Unfortunately, what I experienced in the war and learned after returning from Vietnam did not justify that hope.

The Vietnam War was not worthy of the sacrifice and suffering of my lifelong friends and the members of my unit who were killed and injured by incoming or were massacred when the VC overran Nui Ba Den. It did not justify my having to frequently dodge shrapnel for a year and live forever with the memory of seeing a GI blown

to bits from a direct hit by a .122mm rocket. Nor did it justify the 58,000 US military deaths and the over 300,000 total American casualties. Most of all, it did not justify the killing and maiming of millions of Vietnamese by bombs, bullets, unexploded munitions and the bizarre effects of exposure to massive doses of defoliants.

Looking back on it, I now understand the awful sense of dread and insecurity I felt the entire time I was in Vietnam. It was the feeling that every molecule of that country was trying to puke us out. My grudging respect for the enemy gradually evolved into a realization that their situation was not unlike that of our forefathers during their revolution against British colonialism.

For us Vietnam veterans, the story did not have a happy ending. Instead of dramatic footage of marines victoriously raising the stars and stripes, we were taunted by televised images of marines pushing back our frantic South Vietnamese allies as they rushed the last Huey choppers leaving the US Embassy, desperately trying to escape the coming retribution at the hands of the conquering Communist forces, distraught at their abandonment by the most powerful nation on earth.

Over forty years have passed since the end of the Vietnam War. The victory of the People's Army of North Vietnam did not result, as predicted, in the inexorable spread of communism to the rest of southern Asia. On the contrary, since the end of the war much has changed for the better. We now have full diplomatic and prosperous trade relations with a unified Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Although the country is still ruled by a Communist government, it is gradually liberalizing its economy and has become a favorite tourist destination, especially for young Americans. Many of them are children or even grandchildren of Vietnam veterans. Perhaps, in some inexplicable sense, we did win the war.

But the irony of it still haunts me: if Vietnam is able to cultivate a fruitful relationship with us now, after surviving our devastating invasion and uniting under Communist rule, why couldn't we all have just agreed to skip the war and leap together into the future?



WARREN E. HUNT WAS IN VIETNAM WITH CO A, 121ST SIGNAL BATTALION, 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION FROM JULY 1968-JULY 1969.

VVAW, Then and Now

AL DONOHUE

On Sunday, November 19, 1967, *The New York Times* published an advertisement headlined, "Vietnam Veterans Speak Out." It called the war "wrong, unjustifiable and contrary to the principle of self-determination on which this nation was founded." About 64 Vietnam vets' names were included in the ad, which noted that it was only

a partial accounting of signatories.

Today, we, as an organization, should add our voice to those calling for a complete review of the policies that equated all struggles for national self-determination with an attack on this country. VVAW should be calling for a nuclear-free zone in SE Asia, the withdrawal of our military from Korea

and Okinawa, and for the peaceful discussions and negotiations between the Korean parties that would lead to a meaningful reduction of tension in the area.

Millions protesting the war on the Peoples of Indochina didn't prevent the US from going to war against Iraq, but a deeper look at US foreign policy

since 1945 is needed, and at this time in our country's history, that examination might have a positive effect.



AL DONOHUE IS A MEMBER OF VVAW FROM 1971 UNTIL FOREVER.

Trump Card

We have a new president.
No blue president.
No true president.
He crawls inside our heads at night
And tangles up our brains.
He waves red flags all day
Taunting us to charge him.
But we know he has a sword
Hidden behind his back
Ready to run us through
If our horns get too close.

He's taking revenge on all the world
Because it only made him a president,
And not a king.
Because he's not the only billionaire,
Only one of the one-percent.
Because he didn't win all of the people
All of the time.
(He never could fool all of us-
I hope he's fooling fewer every day.)

But he is a master of marionettes.
He twitches our strings
And keeps our eyes glued
To his growing Wall
While behind our backs
He's tearing down the Constitution
Brick by brick.

—Susan R. Dewar



Vietnam Veterans Against the War being arrested at the Pentagon, April, 1971. (photos by Maurice Simon)

Reflections on My Recent Trip to Vietnam

continued from page 1

still recommend it as one of the most bizarre museums combining history and art that I have ever seen. One fifth of Ha Long Prison in Hanoi has been preserved and except for showing our prisoners having a great time playing volleyball, the depiction of the French is gruesome and well done. Of all the museums thank goodness I had a heads up from one of my former students – teaching English in Hanoi, small world – and went to the Women's Museum. I can't think of the equivalent here. It covered the women's role in the war as well as all the different customs of the many ethnic women in the country. It seemed to be the most honest, pointing out problems, especially for rural women.

Perhaps the most inspiring was Project Renew, an NGO devoted to making Quang Tri Province safe from cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of the war. It is an organization I am confident after meeting with the director, that its staff of over one hundred brave people would put donations to good use. It is also close to the DMZ where I walked across the bridge that separated the country during the war. In Hue, the evidence of the brutal fighting during Tet is still evident in the Citadel and the Imperial City. In Sapa, near the Chinese border, we spent time trekking with amazing Hmong guides and spent a night in their village. They are still living without many needed services, but were amazingly warm and welcoming.

So what to make of this beautiful

country today? We felt no anti-American feeling. The majority of Vietnamese were born after the war ended, to them it is ancient history. They just want to learn English so they can get a decent job and provide for their families. It is definitely not the socialist utopia I thought I was fighting for so many years ago. Public education and health care are not free for the vast majority of people. It is a developing country that is growing with what appears to be no clear plan. The people are better off than they were even fifteen years ago, but all development comes with a price. Little care seems to be placed on the environment. Capitalism is on steroids as the Chinese and Japanese pump money into many ventures. Huge high rises are being built on the outskirts of the cities, especially near Hanoi, for those leaving the poverty of the countryside. New hotels and tourist facilities are mushrooming.

The people are incredibly industrious. They are warm and very friendly. The food is great and the street food in Hanoi is something to experience – but you must be careful with the occasional scooter coming onto the sidewalk competing with the restaurants. It is a much more affordable place to visit than developed countries. Young backpackers are everywhere, taking advantage of the cheap hostels, food, and transportation. But the Vietnamese are smart and prices will go up depending on demand. Although American tourists are in the minority,



Joan Davis and Dave Jacobs with directors Ngo Xuan Hien and Nguyen Thanh Phu at PROJECT RENEW

other foreign tourists are coming in droves.

For a people who have lived through so much war, one hopes their future will be filled with peace and prosperity. Some of the Vietnamese veterans of the war we met were disappointed with government corruption, the lack of human rights, and government censorship. On our last evening, three university students joined us on a bench in Hanoi overlooking the beautiful Hoan Kiem Lake, wanting to practice their English. They too were unhappy with their government and wanted more democratic rights. However, they loved their country

and were optimistic that the future will improve. And in case you were wondering, most of the people we met thought Trump was an idiot!



JOAN DAVIS IS A VVAW MEMBER AND WIDOW OF BILL DAVIS, FORMER NATIONAL COORDINATOR OF VVAW. SHE IS A RETIRED HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY TEACHER, WHO TAUGHT HISTORY FROM THE SOCIAL JUSTICE PERSPECTIVE FOR TWENTY FIVE YEARS AND NOW MASTER GARDENER AND PART TIME TRAVEL AGENT FOR HER FAMILY. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS PLANNING A TRIP TO VIETNAM FEEL FREE TO CONTACT HER AT VVAW@VVAW.ORG.



Dave Jacobs and Joan Davis trekking with their Hmong guides in Sapa.



Ha Long Bay (where parts of the movies Indochine and Kong: Skull Island were filmed).



Carl Douglas Rogers, R.I.P.

JAN BARRY

Carl Douglas Rogers, a key figure in founding VVAW, died in Los Angeles last fall of cancer he attributed to Agent Orange. He served a tour in Vietnam with an Army unit as a chaplain's assistant from March 1966 to April 1967. The son of a newspaper columnist in Ohio, Carl had an amazing ability to vent outrage in creative ways. I met a lot of outstanding characters in the military and in the peace movement — Carl stood out and spoke out with the best of 'em. When I first met him, in the summer of '67, he was the toast of the *New York Post* for his brash dissent as a GI against the war. He instantly helped launch a fledgling band of odd ducks called Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) onto the national media scene. And this at a time when the mainstream media was whole-heartedly beating the drums, flying the flag, patriotically promoting the war.

As noted in "The Turning: A History of Vietnam Veterans Against the War", "Rogers, who could step tomorrow into a Wheaties ad (he wears a crew-cut and teaches Sunday school at New York's Presbyterian Church) has been in the news since his return from Vietnam," observed [a profile in] *Commonweal* magazine... He marched alongside Martin Luther King Jr., appeared on numerous radio and television programs, and became the subject of feature stories in the *New York Post*, the *New York Times Sunday Times Magazine*, *Redbook*, and *Eye*, a magazine oriented toward the nation's youth."

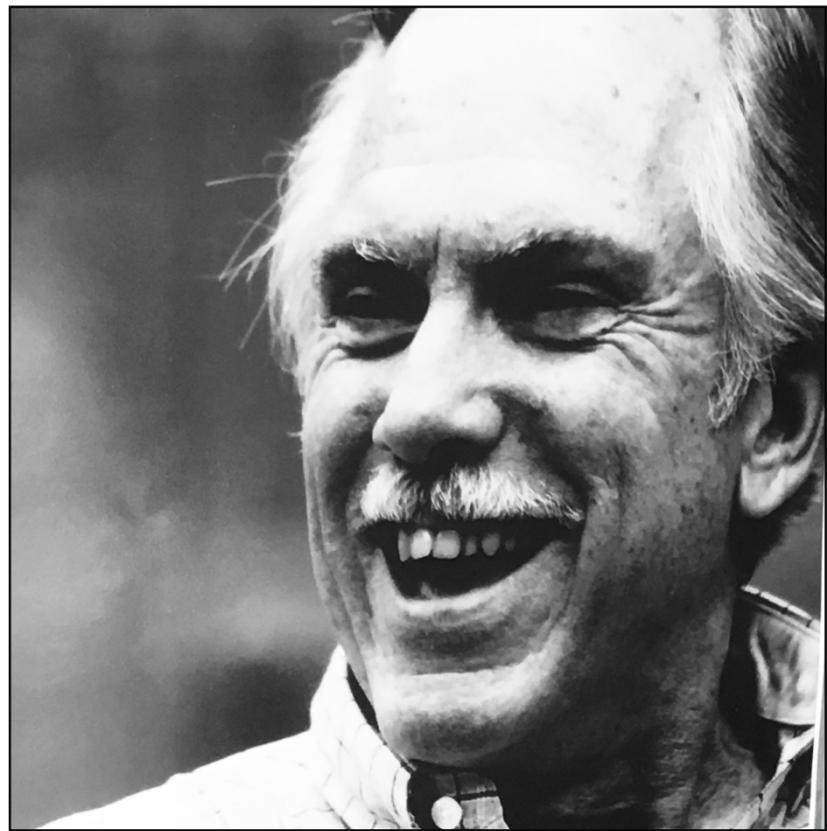
Helping launch VVAW shortly after arriving in New York City to hold a press conference announcing

his dissent as a veteran against the war. Carl dove into peace organizing, doing publicity work for the Negotiations Now campaign, working with Clergy and Laity Concerned about Vietnam on various projects, founding Vietnam Veterans for McCarthy and serving on Senator Eugene McCarthy's presidential campaign staff. He organized GI-Servicemen's Link to Peace, which provided support for anti-war GI coffee houses set up near military bases.

At a reunion in Chicago in 2007 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of VVAW's founding, Carl greeted the gathering with exuberant tales of the early days of organizing vets to protest the war we served in. In the 40th anniversary booklet, Carl recalled the April 1971 morning when hundreds of Vietnam vets threw their war medals onto the front steps of the US Capitol in protest of the war that never seemed to end. "The words and emotions that poured out were the most poignant and angry words I had ever heard in opposition to that dirty stinkin' rotten little war... I walked away from that moment in tears, but never more proud to have been a part of the founding group of brothers who created VVAW."

Walking in Grant Park near the reunion site, Carl was still outraged as he recalled when Chicago police stormed through the area in August 1968 beating people with batons - bystanders as well as anti-war protesters, journalists as well as staff members of Senator McCarthy, who was seeking the Democratic Party convention's nomination for president.

Yet Carl maintained a flair for creative responses to governmental



Carl Rogers

outrages. Another innovative project he worked on was Help Unsell the War, which countered the Pentagon's gazillion-dollar propaganda machine with a blizzard of anti-war ads created by simpatico advertising agencies on billboards, posters, radio and TV, and in magazines and newspapers across the country. Radio ads featured testimonials from Vietnam vets, such as John Kerry's 1971 address to Congress on behalf of VVAW.

And, with typical gusto masking a deep and abiding sense of grief and anger over the war's casualties, Carl helped stage The War Is Over concert in Central Park in New York

in May 1975. The concert featured Phil Ochs, Joan Baez, Pete Seeger, Tom Paxton, Paul Simon, Patti Smith, Richie Havens, Harry Belafonte and Peter Yarrow, among others, singing anti-war anthems to a cheering crowd of 50,000 of Carl's closest friends and fellow peaceniks.



JAN BARRY IS A POET AND WRITER. A CO-FOUNDER OF VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR, HE IS ACTIVE IN VETERANS FOR PEACE AND WARRIOR WRITERS/COMBAT PAPER, WHICH PROVIDE CREATIVE ARTS PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS AND FAMILY MEMBERS.



Republican Convention, Miami, August, 1972.

Three Stars

JOHN KETWIG

"Look up in the sky, up towards the north.

There are three new stars brightly shining forth.

They're shining oh – so bright from heaven above.

Gee, we're gonna miss you, everybody sends their love."

Those words, from the song "Three Stars," were composed by one Tommy Dee (Thomas Donaldson) in 1959 as a tribute to Ritchie Valens, Buddy Holly, and J.P. "The Big Bopper" Richardson who were killed in a plane crash earlier that year. The event was also remembered as "The day the music died" in Don McLean's classic 1972 song "American Pie." I readily admit that I am overly influenced by the truths and insights so abundant in the popular music of the sixties and seventies. I was overjoyed when Bob Dylan was recently awarded a Nobel Prize in literature for the lyrics of his life's work.

This morning's second cup of coffee has grown cold as I sit stunned and contemplate the recent loss of three influential anti-war activists. Tom Hayden left us on October 23rd, 2016, Charlie Liteky on January 20th of this year, and Marilyn Young on February 19th. They emerged from varied backgrounds, and spoke from different soap boxes, but their voices were clear and optimistic. They were vivid, effective soloists from the great chorus of American voices opposed to militarism and repression. Above all, these three personalities valued the lives of every human being near and far. They dared to believe that

governments should exist to organize the world's various societies, not to annihilate the poor or powerless or force compliance at the point of a gun.

Tom Hayden was brilliant, imaginative, and committed. Perhaps the most effective spokesman for the student unrest of the sixties, he helped found Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), was a Freedom Rider, and dared to suggest a "radically new democratic political movement" in a document known as the Port Huron Statement, the theoretical manifesto of the New Left. At the height of the war in Vietnam he traveled to Hanoi and reported upon the damage American bombing had done to civilian neighborhoods, schools, and hospitals. He helped to organize the protests at the 1968 Democratic National Convention, and stood trial as one of the Chicago Seven. Along with his second wife, Jane Fonda, he inspired dissent and resistance to the Vietnam War until its end, and advocated for amnesty for draft evaders after the hostilities ended. He became a powerful spokesman for the environment, animal rights, solar energy, and renters' rights and was elected to the California State Assembly (1982–1992) and State Senate (1992–2000). Tom Hayden was a tireless progressive activist and educator. In 2015, in response to the Obama administration and the Pentagon's 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the Vietnam War, he organized a national reunion of peace activists and accomplished some reluctant acknowledgement of the historical importance of the Vietnam anti-war movement. His last of 19 books,

"HELL NO: The Forgotten Power of the Vietnam Peace Movement" was published by Yale University Press in January of this year. The final sentence declares "Mistakes were made, serious mistakes, but our America is a better place because we stood up against all odds." The same can be said of Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

I have previously submitted an article for this issue of The Veteran remembering the life of Charlie Liteky (on page 12). He was a Catholic Chaplain in Vietnam, accompanying an infantry patrol when they were ambushed. Charlie crawled out under withering fire and dragged or carried twenty men to safety despite being wounded twice, an action that earned the Congressional Medal of Honor (CMOH). In the 1980's he left the priesthood and married Judy, a former nun, and became aware of America's involvements in Central America. He traveled to Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala, and to protest what he had seen there, became the first American in history to give back the CMOH. Charlie was one of four vets who fasted on the steps of the Capital in protest of the Reagan administration's policies toward Central America, and that widely-publicized fast probably prevented a full US military invasion of Nicaragua. Years later, Charlie was on the streets of Baghdad in 2003 when America's Shock and Awe bombs were falling upon the citizens of Iraq. Charlie Liteky's autobiography will be published later this year.

Marilyn Young was a Professor of History at New York University, with a determined anti-war and anti-militarism voice that was heard worldwide. *The New York Times* obituary described her as "a towering figure in the history of US foreign relations, a celebrated critical historian of the Vietnam War and US intervention overseas. But her prominence as a scholar was matched by the strength of her political convictions, and by her unwavering use of her public platform to fight misogyny, US empire, and unending war." The author of numerous books, her 1973 "American Expansionism" was one of the first books to recognize a recurrent theme of militarism supporting American imperialism since the Civil War. A determined feminist, her "Promissory Notes: Women and the Transition to

Socialism" examined feminine roles in revolutionary movements in second and third world countries around the globe. Marilyn Young's best-known book is "The Vietnam Wars 1945–1990", a meticulously documented but very humanistic examination of the US war on Vietnam and the Cold War policies and ideologies that fueled its fury. In the liner notes, Howard Zinn called it "a marvelous achievement," and noted that it had been "written with grace, wit, and passion." That is a wonderful description of Marilyn Young! Marilyn could use words like a swordsman uses a rapier, but her intellectual brilliance was balanced by an infinite sense of humor. She loved a good laugh, single malt Scotch, and good, caring people. She was distraught over America's ongoing follies in the Middle East, and dismayed at the election of Donald Trump. I have a favorite photograph of her, relaxing on our back porch while a deer wandered past the door.

The Vietnam era was a time of great passions, appalling truths but enthusiastic hopes, and lofty ideas. Some were written, some came as songs, and many were shouted in the streets or on campuses. Most of America's history since that time has inspired continued outrage, and Tom Hayden, Charlie Liteky, and Marilyn Young used their talents to storm and shout in the face of our country's deadly policies and cultural calamities. They spent their lives inspiring us to believe that something far better was possible, against all odds. Looking up at the sky tonight, I hope we can all recognize three new stars. As the second verse of Tommy Dee's song states:

"With your stars shining through the dark and lonely night.

To light the path and show the way, the way that's right.

Gee, we're going to miss you, everybody sends their love."



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



Dave Cline (center), Charles Liteky (right - holding banner), 1989.

Ralph Kall, R.I.P

STANLEY CAMPBELL

Walt and Ralph Kall, two US Army veterans, from Rockford, Illinois, died within five years of each other.

Walt was drafted into the US Army shortly after his 18th birthday and served his country honorably, including duty in the occupation of bombed out Germany in 1945 and 1946. The GI Bill helped him get a B.A. degree from Augustana College in 1951. Ralph was a veteran of the Korean War, and both attended many of the local Rockford Peace and Justice Action Committee meetings. He, and his brother Walt, supported their local peace group, and me (as a Vietnam Veteran Against the War member), through their many donations to the group and individuals, as well as their presence at peace activities. They were true Veterans for Peace.

I remember when they first showed up at Coffee Talks, when they were held at the Irish Rose. "Ralph and Walt," as they introduced themselves. We were always getting the two mixed up, because both would answer to either name.

I received a pair of boots that Ralph wore during his time in service. I left the pair of boots, nicely shined and spit polished, on Congressman Don Manzullo's desk after asking him

to oppose the war in Iraq. The boots represented the many soldiers killed in that wasted war.

Both had a subtle sense of humor, and a very strong sense of righteousness and, when asked, spoke clearly for the poor and downtrodden, and against war and injustices. They made presentations at Veterans For Peace gatherings, and especially at reunions of Cuba travelers. They'd traveled there on a study trip in 1999 offered by Rockford College. They both spoke eloquently for dropping the embargo and having friendly relations with the Cuban people.

The two were always proud to lead anti-war marches we had here in Rockford, and were active participants in many discussion groups.

I salute Walt's and Ralph's service to their country, which included long time work helping the poor, speaking truth to power, and seeking more peaceful ways for the US.



STANLEY CAMPBELL IS A LONG-TIME PEACE ACTIVIST AND A MEMBER OF VVAW SINCE 1971. HE IS THE DIRECTOR OF ROCKFORD URBAN MINISTRIES.



Walt Kall with Kathy Kelly

Remembering Tom Hayden

CARL DAVIDSON

I got the news as soon as I awoke. Even though I knew he was seriously ill, it still came as a shock. It seemed too soon, still too much to do, and too many things I would still like to hear him speak and write about, but now would be unspoken and unwritten. Tom was a comrade in our same organization, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and in the same battles for peace and justice before I got to know him well enough to be among those he called his friends.

My first indirect contact with him was through typewritten mimeographed pages stapled together in an SDS pamphlet that sold for ten cents. These were his writings as a student journalist and activist from the front lines of the freedom struggle in Mississippi and Georgia. In addition to his accounts of vivid battles in well-written prose, we also got other deeper messages about commitment and physical courage. It was not enough for us just to hold good opinions about social and political matters. We had to be engaged, body and soul, willing to be, as Tom was, on the receiving end of a billy club in Mississippi or the insides of a Georgia jail. He inspired me and many others to go to these battlegrounds ourselves and put our bodies on the line.

Soon Tom had also written, together with Carl Wittman, another mimeographed SDS pamphlet I read, entitled "An Interracial Movement of the Poor." It was about the need to get beyond the campuses and organize among those most in need, into community-based organizations in the inner cities. Again indirectly, he inspired me to visit an SDS community organizing project in Cleveland on my way back to the University of Nebraska via hitch-hiking. What I learned inspired our SDS chapter in Lincoln not only to get our own mimeo machine, but to rent an SDS House in the midst of Lincoln's small Black and Native American neighborhood, called T-Town, after 22nd and T street. Hanging out on our porch there with our neighbors one afternoon, we got the news that James Meredith had been shot attempting a March against Fear through Mississippi. Within hours, we had two carloads, students and community folks, off to Memphis to continue the March. Those experiences were powerful and changed my life. A few months later I found myself elected to the SDS National Office in Chicago.

At the National Office, I learned more about Hayden, this time in regular print. We distributed, of course, the nicely printed Port Huron Statement. One day I was thumbing through it, and commented to Greg Calvert, "This is really well done, especially the beginning, even if the last half is a bit reformist for today." Greg laughed, "That's Hayden's writing. The beginning is all his, and that's what turns everyone on."

My job at the NO was to focus on internal education and it meant visiting chapters, and over two years, I must have visited 150 of them. This brings

me to my next way of knowing Tom, through black-and-white celluloid film. We had very little money, so to travel, I took literature to sell and films to show along the way, at each stop making enough money to get to the next. One of the films, about 30 minutes long, was called "Troublemakers." It was about our community project in Newark, and featured Tom, among others. We got to see him at work, bringing people together, asking lots of questions, drawing people out to feel comfortable with their own ideas, and their own potential for political power. Tom was always laid back, non-domineering, but still serving as a catalyst, working toward united action. It was a good model for us who aspired to be organizers.

My next knowledge of Tom was through the newspapers. He had raised a ruckus by joining Herbert Aptheker of the Communist Party and Staughton Lynd, a pacifist Yale history professor, in going behind enemy lines to North Vietnam, to make a direct contact between the US peace movement and the other side in Hanoi. Most of us SDSers had years before decided that justice was on the side of the Vietnamese, so we were quite pleased with the trip, even as the news pundits were scandalized. We felt Tom had hit one out of the park with this move. In fact, it changed his life, since on his return he shifted away from local organizing among the poor to the larger and more intense struggles that were developing around the escalating Vietnam war.

By 1968, I finally got together with Tom directly. We met, in of all places, at the famous round bar at the top of the Havana Libre Hotel, formerly the Hilton, made famous in pre-revolution days with the likes of George Raft, Humphrey Bogart and others of their pack hanging out there. We were both delegates to the International Cultural Congress of Havana, and others at the bar those nights that I met were Andre Gorz from France and Robin Blackburn of *New Left Review* in the UK.

Then one night that week Tom and I got a summons. Together with anti-war leader Dave Dellinger, we were to be whisked off to a private meeting with Fidel Castro. We entered a car with several soldiers and were treated to a topsy-turvy high-speed route around the city, finally ending up at an ordinary suburban house, but with soldiers with machine guns in the shadows. "Sorry for the security measures," one of the soldiers told us, "but due to your CIA, we still have to practice the clandestine ways." Inside were Fidel, and two of his top people, Red Beard and The Doctor, an official who had trained at Harvard. They said little, but helped Fidel with translation, even though Fidel understood English rather well. We discussed everything under the sun for a few hours, with Tom and Dave giving Fidel a full account on the anti-war struggle. We asked about the fate of Che Guevara and Regis DeBray, and Fidel wanted more of our opinions of various political

figures in Congress.

After those intense days, I wasn't in direct contact with Tom for some time. He had continued his anti-war work through the battles in Chicago's Grant Park in 1968 and the ensuing trial, then with wife Jane Fonda, their tireless efforts in the Indochina Peace Campaign and the GI coffee house movement. Finally he entered electoral politics, eventually becoming a State Senator in California. I went a different direction, through years at the Guardian then into the 1970's party-building movement and several trips to China, finally settling in Chicago, working in the election campaigns of Harold Washington and Jesse Jackson, among other projects, especially anti-war work.

As the war in Iraq unfolded and our movement was growing around the state, we decided on a statewide meeting in Champaign-Urbana, home of the University of Illinois. I offered to get Tom to be the keynote speaker — he had just written a book on Iraq — and he agreed, and did an excellent job. In that speech, Tom made a deep lesson click in my mind. Wars end in three ways: when the streets become ungovernable, when the soldiers refuse to fight, and when a Congressional majority refuses to pay for it. Pick all three, any two or any one of them. But get to work. It's not crowded up front.

Members of the campus Green Party were at that conference, and I had given them some space in my office for their national work on the Ralph Nader campaign. A few months later, they invited both Tom and I to speak at their national convention at the university in Lawrence, Kansas. My talk was in a small group workshop, but with about 50 people, with Tom listening in. It went well, with Tom later telling me "You have a great way with stories." Tom spoke to a full auditorium the next day. I sat in the back, taking it all in. He was in great form. Both prose and poetry rolled off his tongue for over an hour, covering everything, and his audience was both spellbound and inspired. It was vintage Hayden, even through the long Q and A session.

During my electoral and anti-war work in Chicago, we helped a young guy named Barack Obama to get elected to the statehouse, then got him to speak at our anti-war rallies, and elected to the US Senate. After a major successful anti-war rally in 2007, I decided to move back to the Pittsburgh area where I grew up, and continue to organize there. Hayden knew about our anti-war work with Obama, and one day he called me up, inviting me to be webmaster for an independent media project, loosely connected to the Progressive Democrats of America (PDA), called Progressives for Obama. By this time, I had moved from backing Dennis Kucinich for the Democratic nomination for President to backing Obama, so I readily agreed.

The next year was some of my most intense work with Tom, with

weekly, even daily, phone calls, and two trips to Los Angeles. The web site project was both controversial on the Left and quite successful. Once the results were in, I recall Tom tearing up at a TV shot of Michelle and the kids. "Watching them playing on the White House lawn. Such a beautiful sight I never thought I'd see."

We both knew the fight was far from over. We now simply had tough problems on another level. Tom focused on writing about the danger of sectarian warfare breaking out between Sunni and Shia in Iraq and elsewhere. I focused on building PDA and the Congressional Progressive Caucus as groups that would give us some clout at the base and in Congress. "You're always the organizer, Carl," he noted once. It was only partly true. I knew the importance of organization, but I did better work as a teacher and propagandist, aspiring to be one of Gramsci's "organic intellectuals" and "permanent persuaders." And Tom helped me to finally get one of my articles placed in *The Huffington Post*.

Some people in my corner of the Left had a lot of criticisms of Tom, most superficial, like marrying Fonda, others more serious, related to his electoral work. But I had a different take, and I once told Tom it was the reason why we got along. I surmised that he was never really a Marxist, and hence it made no sense to me to find fault with him over not upholding this or that Marxist view. Instead, I thought he was simply a consistent radical democrat, a left populist fully in the American grain, and he was quite good at it. Tom laughed and agreed, adding that I was one of the hard Marxists he got along with, because I saw an open future, not dogma, and was willing to get outside the box, like with our 1967 Theory of The New Working Class.

Tom and I talked about other things we shared, like both being raised Catholic. He told me he never learned until later in life why his middle name was Emmet, after the Irish patriot. Due to the suffocating nature of the 1950's, his parents had never told him why they picked this name, due to fear. I told him my Catholicism was from the family's German side, and my Irish ancestors were largely Orangemen from Ulster. We both agreed that if we had the Berrigan brothers as our parish priests, we might still be deeply tied to the Church.

With that in mind, some on the Left were scornful of Tom's visit to the casket of Robert Kennedy, where he let the tears flow. For me, I understood exactly where it was coming from, and it was a tribute to Tom's humanity. He inspired a militant minority, but he was also never afraid of uniting a progressive majority, and even holding out hope for common decency for a few at the top. If those hopes failed to come through, or were answered only in small part, it was not due to the radical authenticity of the man who held them. He will be missed, and not just for a short time. He made many waves that will rise and fall for some time to come.



CARL DAVIDSON IS A VETERAN PEACE AND JUSTICE ORGANIZER AND A NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEES OF CORRESPONDENCE FOR DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM, A LEFTROOTS COMPA, AND A DSA MEMBER. IN THE 1960S, HE WAS A LEADER OF THE NEW LEFT, TWICE ELECTED AS A NATIONAL LEADER OF SDS, A MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM MARCHER, AND A WRITER AND EDITOR FOR THE GUARDIAN NEWSPAPER. HE NOW LIVES WHERE HE WAS BORN, IN BEAVER COUNTY, WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA.



Bill Branson and Joe Miller at Chicago Women's March, January 21, 2017.

Remembering a True American Hero

JOHN KETWIG

I am saddened to report that one of America's true heroes, Charlie Liteky, has gone to his final reward. At age 85, just six months after his beloved wife Judy died of cancer, he went to join her. He had spent his final months at the VA Hospice facility in San Francisco.

Charlie Liteky was a Catholic chaplain in Vietnam. On December 6, 1967 he went out with a patrol and they were ambushed by a large enemy force. Charlie crawled out under intense enemy fire and dragged more than 20 wounded soldiers back, coming within 15 meters of an enemy machine gun, placing his body between the gun and the wounded. One of the wounded was too heavy to carry, so Charlie placed the man on his chest and crawled on his back, using his heels and elbows, and brought

the man to safety. He gave last rites to soldiers under fire, directed the medevac helicopters in despite heavy fire, and he was wounded in the neck and foot. For this action, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor by President Johnson. Well after the war, Charlie left the service and the priesthood and married a former nun, Judy, who introduced him to numerous victims of the American funded and equipped war in El Salvador. In 1986, he went to Central America to see for himself, and on July 29, 1986 he placed his medal and a letter to the president at the base of the Vietnam Memorial wall in Washington, DC to protest America's activities in El Salvador and Nicaragua. The National Park Service retrieved the medal and letter, and they are on display at the Smithson-

ian Museum of American History. On September 1, 1986, along with three other veterans, he began a water-only fast upon the Capital steps to protest, an action that mobilized a movement that prevented the US from openly invading Nicaragua. In later years he was a frequent protester at Fort Benning's School of the Americas, now called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. In May of 2003, he went to Baghdad as a human shield, hoping to discourage the Shock and Awe bombing that was devastating that Iraqi city. An autobiography is expected to be published later this year.

I was privileged to know Charlie Liteky, and to spend time with him on a number of occasions. I do not recognize many heroes from the

war in Vietnam, but Charlie Liteky was a true American hero there, and throughout his later years. He was a quiet-spoken, spiritual and thoughtful man, aghast and bewildered by man's cruelty and institutionalized killing of other human beings. Charlie Liteky was an inspiration to all who knew him, and to anti-war activists around the world. May he find peace with Judy in a very special place in heaven. Presenté!



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

...Another Brother

LOUIE DeBENEDETTE

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW). We will never forget our brothers and sisters, both American and Vietnamese who died or were maimed on the battlefields of southeast Asia.

Today I am writing about another brother, Antonio Oporta Mejia, a Nicaraguan Sandinista. Antonio is a product of the 1984 war of National Liberation who died of complications from the wounds of that war.

I have many memories of my brother and friend. We first met in Managua at the Veterans Peace Convoy in 1988. We were greeted with beautiful flowers welcoming us along the route as we traveled into Managua. Upon our arrival, we were greeted by Daniel Ortega and a whole host of paralyzed vets.

Afterwards, we attended a wheelchair basketball game. Antonio asked me to buy and wear the same color shirt that his team wore. Later, he invited me to his home in Boaco, which is north of Managua.

Boaco was known as Contra Land. Almost every family had a member killed by the Contra. Boaco was coffee country and a money maker for the Sandinistas. The Contras were doing all they could to destroy the coffee crop. We slept with open eyes those nights. Upon leaving I gave Antonio some money to start a leather craft shop. Later, he bought a taxi and hired a driver.

When I proposed an action at the

White House, which would protest the CIA intervention in the 1990 elections and the actions of the Contras, Antonio and other paralyzed veterans supported the action, which consisted of North Americans picketing the White House. At one point, I threw human blood over the wheelchair entrance plaque on the east gate. The wheelchair entrance symbolized the Sandinista vets. We also carried a photo of Antonio, representing all paralyzed vets. I was arrested and tried a year later. We knew Daniel Ortega lost the elections that year. He would, however, eventually gain the presidency after a long 17 years. Daniel remains President to this day. All voting is now done by elections, not guns.

In 2015, Antonio developed a severe wound on his leg due to complications of 29 years in a wheelchair and Type 2 Diabetes. Shortly thereafter, he developed a more serious sore on his hip. Barometric treatment (a barometric oxygen machine that feeds oxygen to heal the wound) did not seem to work. He was also exposed to degenerative arthropathy on his hip, HPAFC (ballistic trauma), tropic skin changes, tropic skin infections, and paralysis from a gun wound. Eventually, his right lower leg was amputated due to uncontrolled infection, all products of the War of Liberation. The prognosis was never good and there was no cure. Pain meds no longer became useful.

I called Antonio each day and



Louie and Antonio.

we had good memories. He always thought of me as his best friend. I sent him money for medical supplies, medicine, and daily living essentials as needed. I loved Antonio as a brother.

Antonio died in agony, on January 13, 2017, at 11:30 am. I was present by video. He was surrounded by his wife, Estela, and many neighbors. His mother died three weeks earlier and his brother was killed in the Revolution, as were 36,000 others. Antonio was

loved and honored by his community. I will miss my friend... another Brother.

Antonio Presenté!

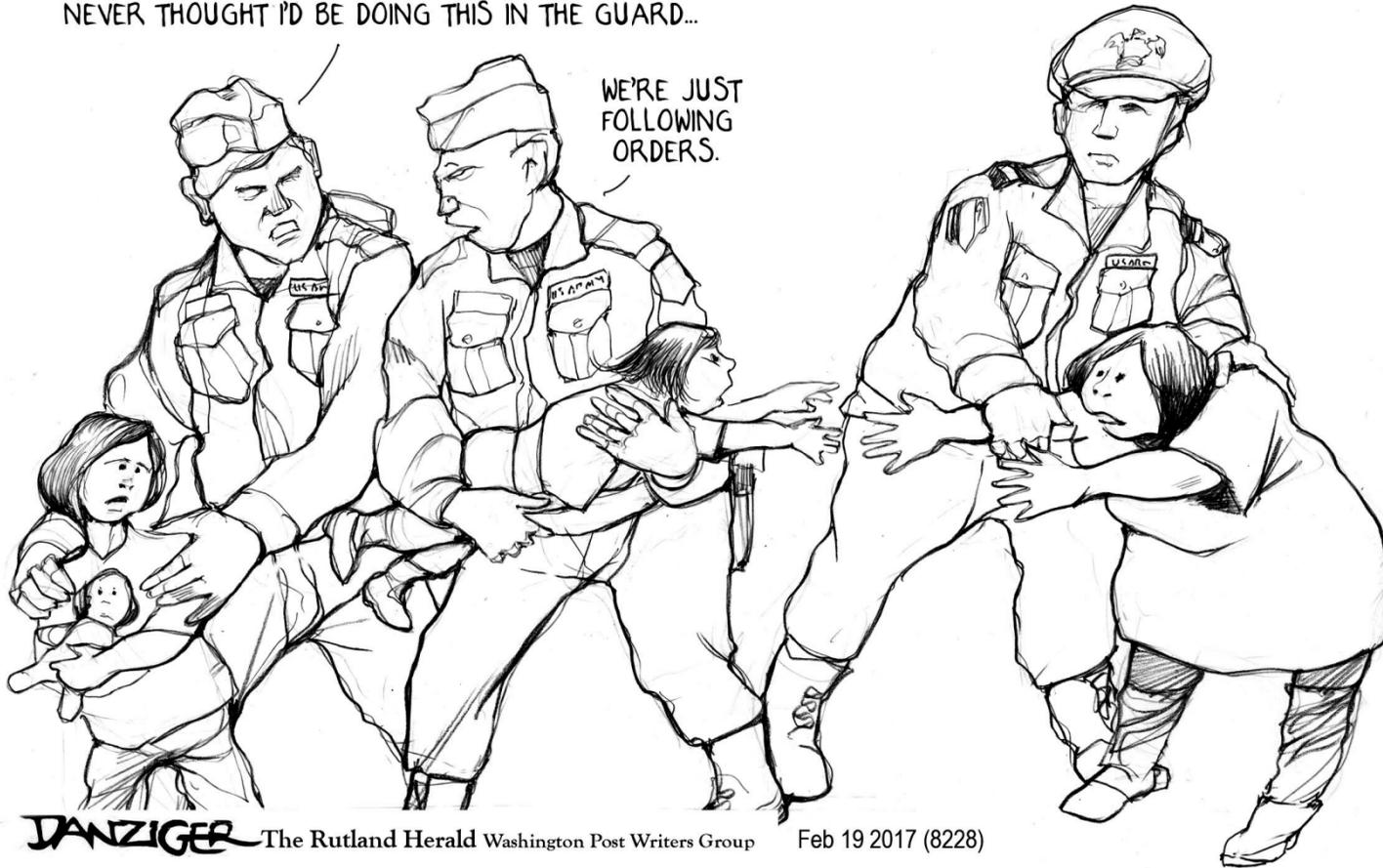


LOUIE DeBENEDETTE IS A LONG TIME ANTI-WAR ACTIVIST AND A VVAW CONTACT IN ITHACA, NEW YORK. CURRENTLY, LOUIE REGULARLY PARTICIPATES IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL ANTI-WAR MARCHES AND PROTESTS.

National Guard Troops May Be Used to Round Up Aliens

NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE DOING THIS IN THE GUARD...

WE'RE JUST FOLLOWING ORDERS.



DANZIGER

The Rutland Herald Washington Post Writers Group Feb 19 2017 (8228)

Our Neighbor

DANIEL CORRAL

Our family moved to the US from Mexico in the 1970s. Our paternal grandfather, Ignacio Corral, had worked all over the country for about 20 years and had decided to move his family to the Aurora, Illinois area. Our parents lived in the house next to our grandparents, with one fence joining the two yards. We always had guests and visitors. And one day around 1984, Dr. Charles Smith moved into the house across the street. He didn't have any water or electricity, so my grandfather took the water hose across to Dr. Smith and said he could have water. He then brought an extension cord across and said he could use them for however long he needs. My grandfather didn't know English and Dr. Smith didn't know Spanish, but they both understood each other just fine. Neither of them have any volume control, so everyday they'd see each other and yell hello to each other across the way, and our grandmother Margarita would send us over with plates of food and hot sauce, Dr. Smith's favorite.

Dr. Smith spent his days building things; we didn't really know what or how, but he let us know that whatever stones we had or wood from building

or tearing down things, he would take it. One day we took apart the whole sidewalk, and Dr. Smith happily used the concrete pieces to build things at his home. We realized that he was making art. He made his home a masterpiece, but it was more, a message. His whole yard was also art, the site of what would be known as the African-American Heritage Museum and the Black Veterans Archive. His mother taught him how to make art, and he spent hours building, crafting, and teaching. All day he had his signature tobacco pipe with him, his hat, and his laugh. We'd hear him teaching everyone who would stop to see what it was he was doing, from the kids from the neighborhood, to people who passed by. Then we started seeing people from out of town come, whole buses. Dr. Smith was always happy to teach people and share his message about each piece he created, works of art from what others considered garbage or disposable materials. He spoke of the people our society and country treated the same way, he spoke of his people, and his veteran brothers and sisters. And his pieces and stories illuminated them to their true identity as majestic greatness. My favorite

one is the soldier he put on top of his house, with an American flag. It was his best friend, his Sarge, killed in Vietnam. He always took care of that piece with great tenderness.

One day a couple of neighbors came to knock on our door. They had a petition that they said we needed to sign. It was to kick Dr. Smith out of the neighborhood, because they thought he was crazy and a disturbance. Our grandfather told them that our neighborhood was filled with violence, day and night, and the neighbors who lived in that house before Dr. Smith caused hell every day, yet not once did they come over then. And now, when this man of peace and goodness comes in, they want to kick him out? He kicked them out, and told them never to come back. And that's pretty much how it continued to go. Some people in the city and neighborhood really liked Dr. Smith and his work, and others didn't. But we? We were his neighbors.

He came to our parties, had a great time, we went to his house to visit him and watch him work. We heard him teach countless visitors. He sent over food, and when we brought him a plate he always laughed and

spoke highly of my grandparents. He always prayed and said that our house was always a full house, and it made him happy. He moved back home to Louisiana in the early 2000s, after a museum came and bought many of his works of art. He went and did the same there, turning other people's garbage and disposable materials into art. Teaching the children in the neighborhoods—who long were considered disposable human beings—that they are indeed magic.

I still call Dr. Smith today, to see how he's doing, and he calls me. Sometimes he'll visit and have a group of influential people there at the site of his original home and site in Aurora. And when I walk over to say hello and give him a hug, people ask me who I am and how do I know Dr. Smith? And I look at him, smile, and say to them, "he is our neighbor."



DANIEL CORRAL IS FROM AURORA, ILLINOIS. HE SPENDS HIS DAYS CARING FOR HIS FAMILY AND BUILDING KINSHIP WITH THE WORLD.

Boots

Left, right, left, right, left, right
Boots, boots, boots, boots, boots
Long flight, across the pond, snow to heat
Exchange; change, black for green
Orientation, information, orders
Say farewell to your boots
Questions, Answer
Dry season dust no boots
Rainy season mud no boots
Mornings come
Boots on
Every evening
Wipe em down
Wash em off
11 months 26 days
Now Tet, boots on 24/7
Short timer 20 days left
Homeward bound across the pond noise to quiet
Clean em up
Pack to go
Stow em away
Years pass
Closets to clean
Rediscovered
Memories flash by

—David Sandgrund

VIET-NAM VETERANS SPEAK OUT

We are veterans of the Viet-Nam war. We believe that this "conflict" in which our country is now engaged in Viet-Nam is wrong, unjustifiable and contrary to the principle of self-determination on which this nation was founded. We believe that the activities and objectives of our forces in Viet-Nam are directly contrary to the best interests of the Vietnamese people and of the people of the United States. We believe that our policy in Viet-Nam supports tyranny and denies democracy. We believe this because of our experiences in Viet-Nam. We know, because we have been there, that the American public has not been told the truth about the war or about Viet-Nam.

We know:

- that Viet-Nam is one country—historically, culturally and as specified in the Geneva Accords of 1954.
- that this conflict is basically a civil war.
- that the government in Saigon, despite the recent "election", is a military dictatorship—supported by a small feudal aristocracy, the ARVN (Saigon) officer corps and half a million American troops.
- that the majority of the people we are fighting in south Viet-Nam are south Vietnamese.
- that the basic problem in Viet-Nam is not military—but social, economic and political; not American—but Vietnamese. There is no military "solution." There is no "American" solution.

We believe that if the American people realized this they would join the dissent of the millions of Americans already against this war.

We believe that true support for our buddies still in Viet-Nam is to demand that they be brought home (through whatever negotiation is necessary) before anyone else dies in a war the American people did not vote for and do not want.

Sgt. Alfred L. Ackerley, USMC	Sp/4 Peter J. Coe, USA	Cpl. William D. Hamilton, USMC	Sp/4 Carl D. Rogers, USA
Sgt. Albert B. Adams Jr., USA Special Forces	1/Lt Peter G. Conrad, USMC	Sp/4 Norman J. Harrods Jr., USA	J03 Joseph M. Ryan, USN
A/1C Samuel J. Albury Jr., USAF	SM George Cross, USN	Sp/4 Jonathan Horwitz, USA	Sp/4 Stanley J. Scholl, USA
Sp/4 Robert F. Barnes, USA	Sp/4 Jan B. Crumb, USA	Lt/JG Richard M. Howland, USNR	Sp/5 Jeffrey J. Sharlet, USA
Cpl. Joseph J. Barr, USMC	Sp/4 Marshall D'Arcy, USAF	Pfc. Dalron C. James Jr., USA	Cpl. Lanny R. Siewers, USMC
M/Lt Bernard Bartz, USN	A/2C Richard J. Davis, USAF	Pfc. F. J. Johnson, USMC	SM2 Dennis W. Sinclair, USN
Capt. Arthur S. Blank Jr., M.D., USA	Sp/4 Dennis M. DeMello, USAF	YN2 Stephen J. Kessler, USN	Sp/5 Edward Walter Smith, USA
Sp/5 Philip E. Beck, USA	YN3 Mark E. Donnelly, USN	Sp/4 Anthony Liotta, USA	Sp/4 Gerald M. Suttiff, USA
L/Cpl. G. James Boggio, USMC	M/Sgt. Donald W. Duncan, GMG2 G. Newell Eisele, USN	Sp/4 James Mackenzie, USA	1/Lt Carl W. Walker, USMC
Sp/4 Allen D. Brandon, USA	USA Special Forces	Sp/5 Dink McCarter, USMC	Pfc. Joseph Washington, USA
Sp/5 David C. G. Braum, USA	1/Lt Carl Fogelberg, USMC	Pfc. James N. Oss, USA	A/1C Robert Wilkins, USAF
1/Lt M. Daniel Burdekin, USA	Sp/4 Steven M. Fox, USA	S/Sgt. Richard Parker, USMC	Sp/4 Chuck Williams, USA
L/Cpl. Carl Joseph Campbell, USMC	Sp/5 Neil Friedman, USA	Ph/3 Sheldon Ramsdell, USN	Sp/4 Jack E. Wilson, USA
Sp/5 Daniel E. Cleghorn, USA	Sp/4 Christian K. v. Grammitz, USA	Pfc. Joseph Renard, USA	Pfc. William F. Wilt, USA
	Sp/4 Stephen Greene, USA	Sp/4 Richard N. Reynolds, USA	A/2C James A. Zaleski, USAF
	Sp/4 Samuel M. Grupper, USA	Sgt. Francis R. Rocks, USA	(This is a partial list)

I enclose \$_____ to help pay for this and future ads.

I am interested in your work. Please keep me posted.

I am a Viet-Nam Veteran. Please add my signature to your statement for future publication.

Please cite and send to "Viet-Nam Veterans Speak Out" War, Box 719, Times Square Station, N.Y., N.Y. 10036
Jan Crumb—Co-ordinator

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LWA: Living While Angry

GREGORY ROSS

Living in a state of anger is senseless and desperate, but it seems in my life, at times, unavoidable. DWA, driving while angry, a subset of LWA is dangerous, self destructive and hazardous to others. I try to avoid both. Some strategies I use are meditation, yoga, group and individual therapy and on a less healthy level, isolating myself from the outside world. Don't go anywhere unless it is absolutely necessary, especially by car. But, some days I could not get further than my bathroom if I followed that rule religiously.

The day I am thinking of I was trying to get to the Oakland Veterans Assistance Center to be on time for a weekly PTSD Check-In group. I was driving down a four lane main street to get to a freeway. I got stuck behind

a delivery truck taking up the whole lane, too high to see over, which makes me nervous since I can't see what is happening and driving at least ten miles under the speed limit. To say I was getting impatient, would be an understatement. I kept trying to get around it, but the left lane was filled. I had my blinker on, but no one let me in. I have a self imposed principle to let in cars in the very situation in which I found myself. Unless they are a giant pick up truck, SUV, Humvee or 18 wheeler trying to use their size to intimidate me, then I stand my ground. Until it gets too dangerous.

Just as the delivery truck turned onto another street a small car cut in front of me, then quickly darted back to the left lane. This involved some quick brake skills on my part. I was able to

pull up next to it as the light turned red. I gave the young male driver a one finger salute. To my surprise, he powered his passenger window down. I put my window down and he said, "What are you so angry about?" I replied, not the obvious "Your asshole driving skills," but without thinking, "I am a Vietnam Vet who survived a war for starters. I am in almost constant pain due to arthritis, I have to use a cane and a walker and I take too many medications." He replied, "Oh, uh, thank you for your service," a hot button phrase for me. He immediately powered his passenger window up. The light changed to green. Surprisingly, I did not smash into him.

When I got to the Check-In Group I brought up the event. We discussed,

with some humor, the irony of life post war. Me, rushing wrathfully to get to a meeting and designed to help me curb my anger. So what if I was late? If only I truly could embrace that calm approach to life concept. I made it home uneventfully, but drove nowhere the rest of the day.



GREGORY ROSS: NAVY, MOROCCO, SINKING OF THE USS LIBERTY AND THE 6 DAY WAR [1967-68]. VIET NAM; 7TH FLEET ON THE GUN LINE [1969-70]. GRADUATE, VA DETOX AND PTSD PROGRAM [1980]; ACUPUNCTURIST, DETOX SPECIALTY, 1989 TO 2011. PUBLISHED IN ANTHOLOGY: "VETERANS OF WAR, VETERANS OF PEACE" EDITED BY MAXINE HONG KINGSTON.

Mr. President, Hear Our Pleas

SUSAN SCHNALL

On January 5, 2017, the second day of the 115th Congress, Representative Barbara Lee introduced the Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2017. The Act directs the Department of State to provide assistance to address the health care needs of individuals harmed by the US spraying of Agent Orange/dioxin. The Act is designed to provide assistance to institutions in Vietnam that provide health care to affected individuals, to repair and rebuild substandard homes for these individuals and their families, and to remediate geographic areas of Vietnam that contain high levels of Agent Orange. The bill amends veterans benefits provisions to provide benefits to the children of male (currently only female) Vietnam veterans who are affected by certain birth defects. The VA shall require any health care provider with whom the VA enters into a contract for the provision of health care to such children to provide the VA access to the medical records of such children for research into the intergenerational effects of Agent Orange exposure.

During my August 2016 visit to Vietnam for the Vietnamese Association for the Victims of Agent Orange (VAVA) International Conference on Agent Orange/dioxin, I met Pham Thi Nhi. She is an Agent Orange victim who suffers from major medical issues, including severe hip dysplasia that causes her body to constantly slant downwards on her left side, creating unstable walking and moving without assistance. Nhi is very active in VAVA and wrote a letter to President Obama prior to his visit to Vietnam asking him to meet with the victims of AO. Her plea represents so many of the victims who, because of the severity of their cognitive and physical issues are not able to articulate for themselves. Please read Nhi's letter and write or email your representative asking them to become a co-sponsor and supporter of HR 344 Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2017.

Ho Chi Minh City, May 22, 2016

To Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States of America,

These past few days, people from all walks of life in Vietnam have been looking forward to your visit, but with mixed feelings and a wide range of emotion. Some excited, others hopeful, a few concerned, and many still haunted by memories of the past and visions for the future.

One thing, though, is for certain, I will not have the privilege to stand alongside those beautiful Vietnamese ladies, donning our traditional "áo dài" and handing you bouquets of flowers as you arrive at the airport. But behind all those friendly smiles that greet you there, there's this one woman silently watching from afar, who would like to extend to you, as well as the rest of the US envoy, a warm welcome and all the best wishes.

Mr. President, my name is Pham Thi Nhi.

I was born in 1966, in a small village in the province of Quang Nam, where many children are suffering

from disabilities as a result of war legacies. As for me, for almost 50 years ever since I learned how to perceive things around me, there has never been a moment when I was not physically and mentally suffering from the effects of dioxin. I am a second-generation victim of Agent Orange in Vietnam. American soldiers are long gone, yet the pain that's left behind still remains, and will remain for years to come.

Mr. President, I've seen you cry on TV many times before. On one of the most recent occasions, you shed a few tears while speaking about lives of innocent Americans being taken away by gun violence. I know that the tears of a powerful leader like you are capable of global impact, are capable of leading to many changes. But to me, when it comes to pain and tears, be it the pain and the tears of a President or any other person, they are all the same, and should deserve the same level of attention.

We, the victims of Agent Orange, have seen tears streaming down our faces for dozens of years now. Every single day, we cry tears of pain, and even when the pain subsides, we cry tears of despair thinking about a grim future awaiting us, a future filled with endless suffering from this wicked poison.

There's nothing we can do about it.

Our tears did not make chemical companies think twice about producing the dioxin that was dropped on Vietnam. Our tears did not make those calling the shots in the US government stop. I've never met you, Mr. President, yet I could see in you a sense of affability, of friendliness. You're a responsible man, a loving father and husband, and a compassionate leader. You've always valued peace, friendliness, and equality. Because of that, I wish you could come to my hometown Quang Nam someday, or to Quang Tri, Hue, Da Nang, and many other provinces here in Vietnam. You'll enjoy the beautiful scenery here, and you'll get to meet wonderful, hard-working Vietnamese. But you'll also shake hands with those who have lost a limb, exchange a smile with those with cleft palates, all because of one decision made decades ago by your predecessors.

I'm sure you will shed a tear while doing so.

Victims of gun violence in America, like those suffering from the effects of Agent Orange in Vietnam, are human beings. All of them have their own families and friends, all share the right to live and to hope, instead of having their right taken away from them, or having to suffer both physically and mentally.

Even though I am a second-generation Agent Orange victim, I cannot fully describe the pain that has persisted through half a century. Only by witnessing it first-hand will you realize that your superpower of a nation needs to take responsibility for the suffering of each and every victim. 3,000,000 victims in Vietnam (200,000 of those are second-generation like me, 80,000 are third-generation, and in some places there have been reports of fourth-generation exposure) have



Pham Thi Nhi and Susan Schnall.

been waiting for that a long time ago.

This beautiful country has gone through more than its fair share of pain and suffering from war. The people of Vietnam care for each other, we care for the lives of the unfortunate, but no matter how much we care, our circumstances will always prevent us from easing the pain, both materialistically and emotionally. The victims of Agent Orange in Vietnam are always fighting, to rise above hardships, and make positive contributions to the community.

But we say that mainly to comfort ourselves and ease the pain, because it's impossible to stay positive when every day you go out there, you see images of handicapped fathers and mothers with their exposed children, whose faces are barely recognizable, as they struggle through their daily dose of pain, pitying themselves and feeling left out. Even so, I and other victims always have one thing on our mind: that is to leave the past behind, and look to the future. We are all happy to see you come to Vietnam, to see the two nations building new bridges to move closer to one another.

I understand that your schedule is packed, and that we are not part of your agenda. Yet, I hope that you and your fellow Americans will show compassion, to listen, to share, to care, and to sympathize with our pain, and later convert that into real action.

When the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York in Brooklyn dismissed our lawsuit, millions of Agent Orange victims once again felt the pain. But we will not give up: the truth lies in the lives of those directly involved, those who have gone through endless suffering; the truth lies in humanity's conscience. Women like me, dying to love and be loved, will never get to fulfill our vocation of motherhood. The poor little souls who have their lives taken away from them even before birth: those are the most bitter and painful truths.

When you visit Ho Chi Minh city, if you can, please take some time to drop by Peace Village Tũ Dũ. You will undoubtedly be struck by images of dead fetuses stored in tubes. Then you'll hear normal, little kids talk about their simple dreams in the most innocent ways possible. I'm sure the stark contrast will reduce someone with a warm heart like yours to tears.

I have left my hometown, leaving behind my ailing parents to listen to my heart. I've made sacrifices on my quest to pursue happiness, yet for

the past 20 years, all I ever receive was one burning question: why can't the Americans stand up and take responsibility for what they've done? All these years, the victims of Agent Orange in Vietnam have embarked on quests for justice to America, not to ask for pity, but to demand Americans to take responsibility for the serious consequences that their action has caused to the environment as well as the well-being of Vietnamese.

Mr. President, there are 3 things I can never afford.

I can't afford a home, and always have to rely on others for shelter.

I can't afford to love, for my disability and dire circumstances would prove too much for my significant other to bear.

I can't afford to have a family. A long time ago, I've come to realize that I could never bear my own child. I could never have a child knowing full well that my kid will have to suffer.

The truth is evident. Many scientists have spoken about the dangerous ramifications of dioxin, yet why are Americans still turning a blind eye?

As long as our heart still beats, we should know what pain feels like, we should know what it means to sympathize. Isn't that right, Mr. President?

I have thought about this for a long time, and ultimately all I ever wanted was to find justice for all the victims of Agent Orange. Thus, I have reached a decision to donate my body for medical research. American scientists, as well as scientists from around the world, can use my body as proof, to make Americans aware of the devastating consequences that their use of dioxin during the war has led to. Should that happen, I can die happy knowing that all my sacrifice would be worthwhile.

I wish that this letter reaches you and all those Americans responsible. I also wish that Vietnamese and worldwide media would lend me an ear, listen to my story, and join me on this quest for justice.

Don't let us cry in desperation any longer.

Pham Thi Nhi



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.



Anti-Nazi Rally in Chicago, July, 1982.

The New Agent Orange: Military Burn Pits in Afghanistan and Iraq

H. PATRICIA HYNES (REVIEWER)

The Burn Pits: The Poisoning of America's Soldiers by Joseph Hickman (Hot Books, 2016)

They are called this generation's Agent Orange – the open fire pits operated on more than 230 US military bases across Iraq and Afghanistan during our wars there. Every kind of waste—from plastics, batteries, old ordnance, asbestos, pesticide containers, and tires to biomedical, chemical, and nuclear waste; dead animals; and human waste, body parts, and corpses—was incinerated in them.

The word "incinerate" misleads, however, suggesting an enclosed burning facility with pollution controls. These barbaric burn pits were dug on military bases in the midst of housing, work, and dining facilities, without any pollution controls. Tons of waste—an average of 10 pounds daily per soldier—burned in them every day, all day, and all night, blackening the air; coating clothing, beds, desks, and dining halls with ash laden with hundreds of toxins and carcinogens. The burn pits recklessly violated the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and Department of Defense (DOD) waste disposal regulations; and, predictably, base commanders temporarily shut them down when politician and high-ranking generals visited the bases.

Even more perilous, some of the US bases were built on the remnants

of Iraqi military bases that had been bombed and flattened by US air strikes. A handful of these bases—at least five—had contained stockpiles of old chemical warfare weapons, among them the nerve agent sarin and the blistering agent mustard gas. The American military base burn pits were placed and dug within the chemical weapons residues, without a single soil sample taken.

In his no-holds-barred book, "The Burn Pits: The Poisoning of America's Soldiers," former Marine and Army sergeant Joseph Hickman exposes the knowing contamination of thousands of soldiers stationed on bases with these lethal pits. After interviewing more than a thousand very sick veterans and military contractors about their exposures and investigating the non-response of the Pentagon, high-ranking military in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the author concludes: "In my experience as a non-commissioned officer, and after serving twenty years in the military, I can honestly say I would believe the words of a private over a general any day of the week."

The tragic tale of burn pit victims replicates the bitter chronicles of Vietnam War veterans' exposure to Agent Orange, the ongoing "Gulf War Syndrome," and depleted uranium exposure, from which hundreds of thousands of veterans are injured

and disabled. Further, some of these exposed veterans were likely victims of the epidemic military sexual assault in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Yet, those victimized by these crushing maladies have been ignored, disbelieved, blamed for their plight and refused help by their government. They tell an inconvenient truth that yields, at best, years of often inconsequential study by a reluctant government, a government that will spend hundreds of billions each fiscal year on defense industries and weapons of war but penny pinches its injured veterans.

A final word on the ultimate war victims. The people of Iraq have been multiply poisoned from our initial 1991 war there through the current war on ISIS. The arc of poisons begins with the oil fires in Kuwait set by fleeing Iraqi soldiers, which burned for 7 months, depleted uranium used by the US in the first Gulf War (1991) and in the Iraq War (2003-2011), and extends to the burn pit air toxins from US bases that wafted into nearby towns and cities and the recent oil conflagrations set by ISIS and ignited during US bombing of ISIS strongholds.

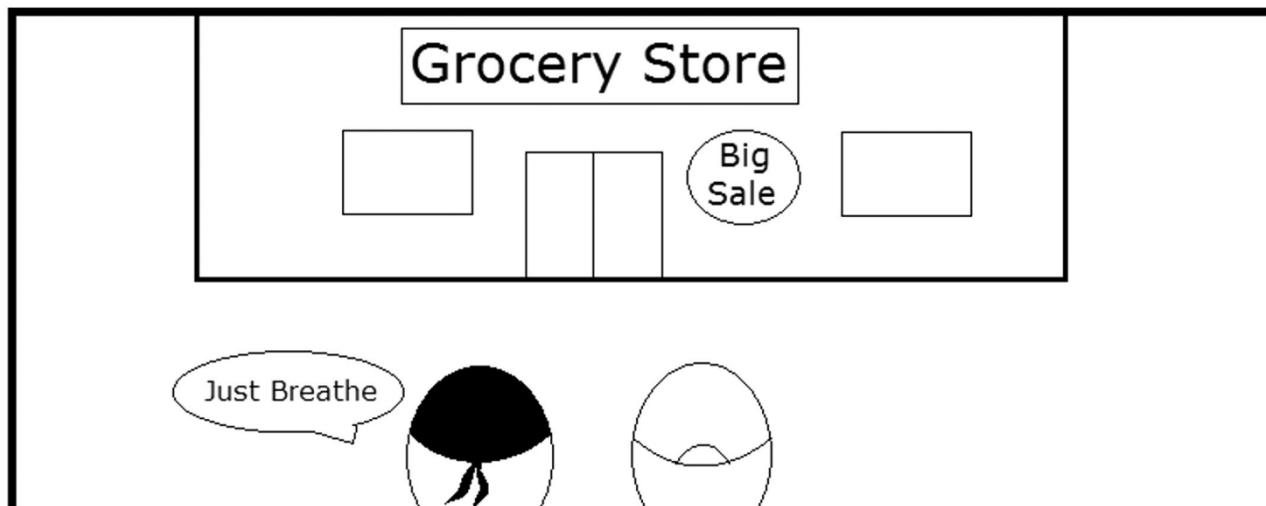
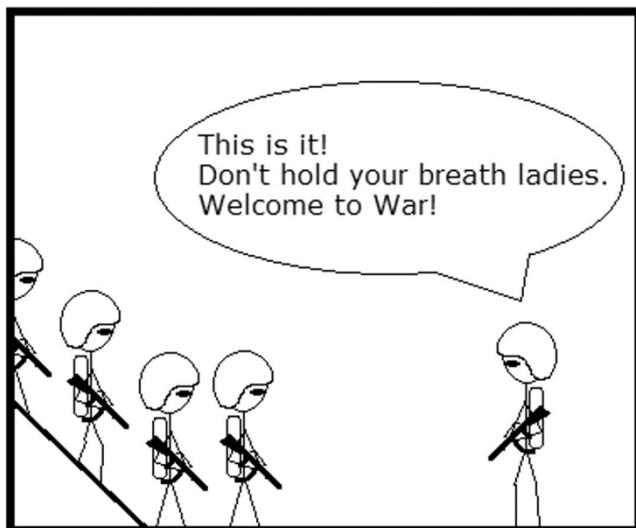
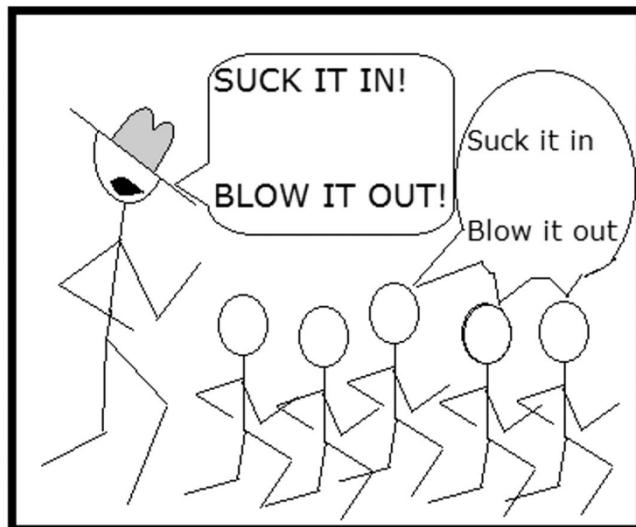
Once among the best health systems in the Middle East, Iraq's system of care has been decimated by war; its health facilities destroyed and not rebuilt; and doctors have fled the incessant violence. Massive

civilian suffering is unrelieved, with severe shortages of medicines, unsafe drinking water, a broken government, millions dead or displaced by 25 years of war, and the surge of fundamentalist subjugation of women, especially since the Iraq War. The startling rise of birth defects and cancers in Iraq and high lead levels in baby teeth of Iraqi children are, in large part, the legacy of our war-created pollution in that country.

We, the United States, have never fixed what we have broken in war since World War II. Our imperial ambitions lie at the core of many now-ruined countries, millions of dead across the world, millions of living dead and displaced, toxic environments, and hundreds of thousands of disabled US veterans who fought for the war machine. In the words of economist Jeffrey Sachs: "It's time to abandon the reveries, burdens, and self-deceptions of empire and invest in development at home and in partnership with the rest of the world." 

PAT HYNES DIRECTS THE TRAPROCK CENTER FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS. SHE HAS DIRECTED TWO PROJECTS ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF AGENT ORANGE: THE PEACE VILLAGE PROJECT ([HTTP://TRAPROCK.ORG/AGENT-ORANGE/](http://traprock.org/agent-orange/)) AND 10,000 TREES FOR VIETNAM ([HTTP://TRAPROCK.ORG/10000-TREES-FOR-VIETNAM/](http://traprock.org/10000-trees-for-vietnam/)).

Stick Vet



By: Travis Landchild

My Part in the War: 1968-1970

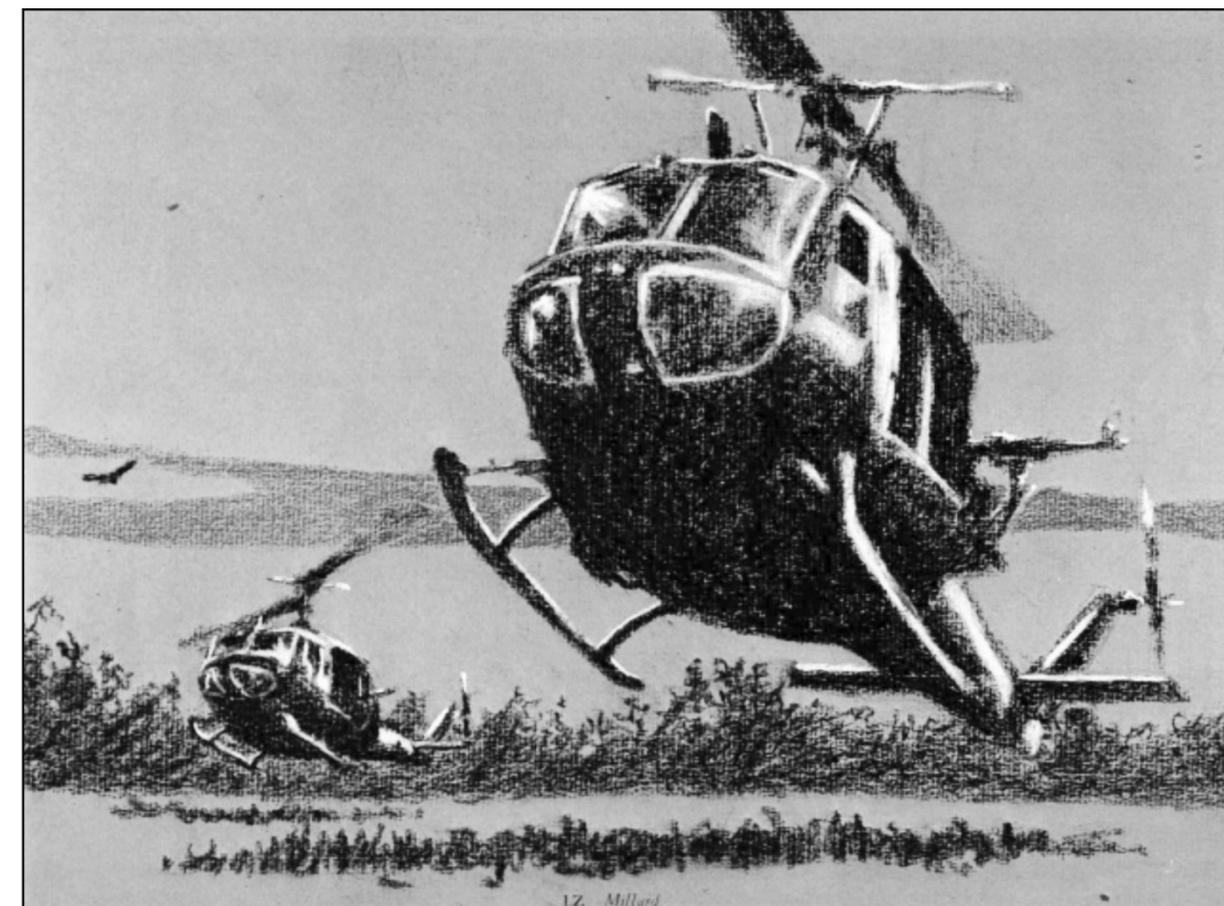
MARTIN TREAT

A buddy killed, an inability to do something about it, the wrong war to die in, the chain of command and a conflict in MOS (Military Operational Specialty) all converge in my memory of my part of the American war in Vietnam. Upon being drafted after a BA from college, blind-sided by Nixon's canceled deferment for graduate school in the spring of 1968 (Speech and Drama, heavy on the Acting, no use to the Army, I thought), I landed at Bien Hoa and was deployed at Dong Tam in the Mekong Delta as a helicopter maintenance, my MOS. I knew it was the wrong war to die in because I realized right away we were an army of occupation. I mean you couldn't miss it: no front line, civilians intermixed with operations, a vast network of paved roads, equipment up the wazoo and intimate connections with the Vietnamese civilians; they did my wash, kept the hootch clean and they could party in town. I felt like a Nazi in France in 1942. I had too much education for this American war.

I had a safe MOS, helicopter maintenance, which was better than infantry for the risk. I had the cutest helicopter in the Goddamn Army, a LOCH (for Light Observation Combat Helicopter). I trained at Ft. Eustis in Norfolk, Virginia in two months of AIT, I loved fixing that little sucker. It was like an armed toy, like the M15 we carried aboard: a mini-gun on the side and grenades you could throw down on people. And the danger and thrill of flying in a bee. No metaphor intended and it was a tactic that worked to save many a soldiers' life: the pilot, the crew chief/gunner/co-pilot in the front seats and in the back, often, a wounded soldier sprawled on the floor with an attending medic. It could land in tight spaces and get out quick. And it was an efficient weapon in league with the Cobra gunship, its main combat mission. The Cobra looked like a rocket ship and it dives raining explosive rockets on enemy targets spotted and directed by the low flying LOCH. The LOCH buzzed around about a hundred feet off the ground while the Cobra waited at a thousand feet to be called in by the LOCH when we spotted signs of a target; then, the bee would circle around, after the Cobra rocket hell, and strafe the target with its mini-gun firing fifty caliber bullets at four rounds a second and circle around again, slower, to count the kills. And sometimes land to confirm kills. All the pilots and gunners were having fun. And, I didn't have to do it, just keep my little bees running. I had read Orwell's "1984" and our shooting from helicopters at combatants and some civilians mixed in was eerily similar. I fixed them but didn't have to kill.

All that would change when the third squadron of seventeenth battalion air cavalry moved from the Mekong up closer to Saigon at Diem to fly the parrot's peak area and no longer in support of the ninth infantry division who stayed in the Delta. No more wounded soldiers and the crew chiefs were relieved not to have to clean up the pools of blood, guts, and brain from the back any more. We were exclusively flying missions with the Cobra helicopters, the hunter killer teams, close to the Cambodian border and where the North Vietnam army were gathering force. And close to Saigon, the ultimate party town of the occupation forces.

And my MOS changed as well. I was Specialist Fifth class by now and head of the maintenance team for the LOCH's of the Squadron. The old man moved up to Colonel, skipping a rank because of our success and we



all gained rank fast. I sent most of my money home to my wife in preparation for graduate school, accepted at a fine university and I planned to have a child and wrote her: death all around makes you think that way. So, a new old man (commander of a squadron), a major, and new rules: a specialist is not a command rank so I was replaced by a lifer staff sergeant who didn't know his ass from fixing helicopters!

I went to my officers - pilots were all officers and we draftees and enlisted worked for them under such mutual respect as life depended on, first name basis - and said I can't work for this ignorant sergeant lifer asshole. They understood and transferred me to the flight line and I went into training to be a crew chief.

I thought I'd been saved, but soon was to find out that a crew chief meant that I had to fly, co-pilot, and shoot people. I was terrible at it, not because I had pangs of conscience, but I got extreme air sickness. Flying around in a bee, jerking up and down, banking around at 150 mph to strafe targets made me vomit all over the interior of my helmet, on my flight suit, the cabin, and my pilot. After two weeks of trying I was gratefully grounded to become assistant line chief. My best buddy was the real line chief so we made a good team and there was a step up of missions. He was also a drama student and we knew plays and Broadway shows and were joined by a new pilot who had actually seen Broadway shows.

The new warrant officer was tall, golden skinned, a Black Boston Brahman, with such an outgoing personality that he was endeared by B company of 3rd Squadron of the 17th Air Cavalry. And officers loved to fly and shoot bad guys. The war in Vietnam was won by the spring of 1970 and casualties were down as Nixon's bombing went up and the Cambodian invasion was imminent. The deployment was half a million military personnel in country and new college graduates, like our new ebony LOCH pilot, filled the ranks with a thrill for the job. Back home the economy was tanking and so I considered myself lucky to be making \$800 a month towards school and looking forward to the GI Bill and even a family. The officers had better salaries and similar plans. We were making a living; armed flying was a nine to five job, with lunch break, and the target was hiding in the ground. All the pilots and their gunners had to do was move quick, look for trail signs or gaps in the Agent Orange

sprayed jungle and bombed out crater landscaped terrain below and clean up.

Tom arrived about noon on the flight line. I had one LOCH left and all the other choppers had gone hunting since first light. After inspecting the work done by maintenance, they had just rolled it out from the hanger, I wrote in the flight log "clear for takeoff" and was ready to go back to my hootch and catch some z's when I heard Tom singing, "This is our once a year day, once a year day..."

"The Pajama Game, Adler and Ross, late 50s. You couldn't have seen it"

"My parents took me; I was ten. My third Broadway show."

"I was stuck with Doris Day in the movies and then I played the Salesman for our amateur group

"The Salesman?"

"Tiny part but I got to sing all the chorus parts and dance close in Fernando's Hide-Away."

"Good for you Martin. Is she ready to fly?"

"Spick and span. New engine. After start, I'll need to look at it for leaks."

"Don't you trust 'em"

"Sure, I trained 'em well before that sergeant showed up. It's just regs."

"Always a stickler for regulations. That's why I like you, not just cause you know Broadway."

"Speaking of which, how come you're here so late and going up alone? That's against regs."

"Well, you know what the new old man says every morning briefing 'All aircraft up all the time!'"

"No, I'm here on the flight prepping choppers like all enlisted. Does he really say that, 'aircraft?'"

"Yeah, he's from the chain, he commands men and this his first squadron, no experience and he wants his full bird. And the maintenance sergeant called this chopper in as soon as it was fixed."

"Good ol' chain of command, the sergeant wants another rocker and major wants to be colonel. But hold on, you don't have a gunner. Regs say you have to have a spotter."

"I don't mind, it's just a mission for road construction survey, and you know I like to fly."

"I hate it, makes me sick."

"Are you sure? I mean it's not a combat mission and I'll take it real slow. You're such a one for regs now."

"Naw, I'd just slow you down and there's no helmet or flight suit out here. I'd have to go all the back to base and the old man screaming at the delay. Does he know you're flying alone?"

"Oh yeah, all the co-pilots and gunners are up, there's only one 'aircraft' left and one pilot and I..."

"Love to fly (cutting him off) singing, "This I know of you / nothing more / gently your eyes look back on mine, surely you heard me say..."

"Rogers and Hammerstein, Flower Drum Song

"Right, we're even. I'll get the charger."

I hooked the chopper into the charger while Tom saddled up and started the turbine. It spit a little but it's brand new and whirred fine. I went back behind, squatted down and scanned the asphalt for leaks. Clean. I took one last look, shut the engine doors, pulled out the charger, wheeled it clear, stood clear of the LOCH and gave the thumbs up sign and he returned it, and waved. I waved back. He took her straight up then banked to the right. I watched until he disappeared beyond the trees.

I never saw him again.

Tom was shot down by a hand-held rocket in a blaze of exploding fire. The memorial service for a fallen air cavalry officer was kind of corny. There were black boots surrounded by a scarf synched with the battalion emblem topped with a black cavalry hat on display in front of the lectern on a platform. Years later, when I saw "Apocalypse Now" and the part played by Robert Duval going into battle in our dress outfit, I was appalled by the inaccuracy. And attacking a peaceful village of civilians. We never did that. We honored the free fire zones set up by command and stuck with it. The movie stank in my opinion. In the battalion chapel, the officers were crying to a man because Tom was loved and no one was listening to the platitudes of the preacher; he finally just shut up. The major was not there, for he had been removed from command for violating regulations by sending a lone pilot up without a gunner/co-pilot who might have spotted the bad guy and saved both lives. That should have been me, but I was lousy at that MOS. Had I gone on that flight, we would probably both be on The Wall instead of just Tom; going slow and singing show tunes as we died.



MARTIN TREAT IS A RETIRED TEACHER AND ACTOR LIVING IN MANHATTAN. HE IS CURRENTLY SUFFERING FROM THE EFFECTS OF AGENT ORANGE WITH MOTOR NEURON DISEASE. HE HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF VVAW SINCE 1975.



Veterans Must Join the Poor People's Campaign for a New Winning Strategy

REV. SHAWNA FOSTER

Joining the military is another one of those false bargains that separates the poor from one another. The promise is that if you lay your life down for your country, your country will do everything for you - send you to college, finance your house, pay your healthcare, grant you citizenship, bury you in a nice cemetery, and tend to your orphans.

It gives a reason for people in the United States to go over to countries to kill people they never knew for freedoms people of color and the poor are not granted equally back at home anyway - one of the reasons why Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King was opposed to militarism.

Benefits promised to people who served in the military were realized for white people during World War II but not so much for people of color, as Ta-Nehisi Coates shares in his article, "The Case for Reparations." Now, with the aim of the elite to eliminate most avenues of upward mobility, white people are finding the military makes them poorer too.

This is true in my own family. 33 years ago, we were not given what was promised us. I was born and raised in the military. Once my mother and father realized they would be parents (thanks to me!) my mother was forced to drop out. She made more money as a sergeant in the Air Force picking out bomb targets from Guam than my father did as an Air National Guardsman. The sexist military policy said that she had to quit and my father had to apply to go full-time. He was homeless, and with the forced resignation of my mother, my parents lived on my grandmother's farm in Falmouth, Kentucky, until my father got his first duty station - Shaw AFB, South Carolina. My parents drove in the night before the first day my father was to report; I was born that same day, two weeks early. My father being a freshly enlisted private was not provided military housing and went around to mobile home associations to offer his services as a handyman part time to save on rent. Thus, I spent the first years of my life in a trailer park, my mother getting assistance from the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program even though my father was employed by the military full-time.

Poverty did not leave us until my father took Clinton's buyout package in the 90s. My mother became a computer programmer, and my father a boiler worker for the United States Postal Service. This trend continues today, as in 2014-2015 the active duty military spent \$24 million on food stamps, something we think only happens with unjust employers like Walmart.

So, it goes to show, that for at least two generations now, the military has turned its back on the poor, immigrants, poor whites, women, and people of color, and most of us are not aware. I joined the Nebraska Army National Guard as a Nuclear Biological Chemical Specialist partly because it had the biggest sign-on bonus of \$6,000 dollars. It was also the only branch that promised to pay full tuition for school. Not books, or board, or any other fees. Just tuition at the state school. Something I didn't know as the first in my family to ever go to college. I still carry \$25,000 worth of debt for my undergraduate degree

thanks to the scaling back of benefits. Not one of my military friends were just given the benefits they were promised for their service, they had to fight for it. Many who were fighting for healthcare immediately after they came home from war died before they got what they were promised. It's hard not to think that this isn't by design, it's cheaper to bury a soldier than it is to pay for their healthcare. Also, if you join the military as an undocumented person, that will not grant you citizenship; but if you die in the service, they will at least bury you a citizen.

Most people are unaware of just how much the military has been gutted. During WWII over 50% of the nation was in the military, during Vietnam, 25%, and today, 1%. Yet, the United States spends more than the next 17 nations combined on military spending - if that money is not going to military service members, where is it going?

It's certainly not going to help veterans. Many of us know about the 55,000 military personnel that were killed or missing in action during Vietnam. What many of us don't know is that about 150,000 Vietnam veterans have died by suicide, a 1:3 ratio of those killed or missing in action. With these current unending wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, this suicide ratio continues on, unabated.

Many charities have sprung up to try and help these veterans; but we are suffering not just from PTSD or physical wounds, but what Rev. Nakishma Brock calls a moral injury, which means we shouldn't have been in Vietnam or Iraq or Afghanistan in the first place. We know it's wrong, especially after we serve there. No charity can fix this sin of the nation. We need the nation to admit it was wrong to conduct these wars, and apologize to our armed services for using them for ill. If not for the innocent dead citizenry of those nations, then at least for our veterans.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. knew this in his famous address in 1967, "Beyond Vietnam." He knew that the lies that caused that war, the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, would cause the United States to lose its soul in continuing to fight it. They lied! We military service members cry out today, as it is revealed there were

never any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and the Bush administration knew it before they sent us to die, killing millions of Iraqi and Afghani citizens; we know, say the veterans of Vietnam. The evidence of the lost soul of our nation is in every veteran's suicide - 22 a day.

Let me tell you - the same reasons Rev. Dr. King opposed Vietnam back then are the same reasons why Iraq Veterans Against the War fights against the military industrial complex today - though we didn't see this at first. At first, we just knew it was wrong. That they lied. Our organizing strategy was based simply on us telling the truth. We did not realize we were becoming a political pawn against the Bush administration. If we tell the truth, the war will become unpalatable to the public, and it will end, so we thought. We marched on the DNC in 2008 to secure a promise from then candidate Obama to end the wars. We got that promise, which was never delivered.

First Obama tried drones, then surges, and then the fear of ISIS rose and now the Syrian war; I've lost count of the times the government has said there aren't "boots on the ground" and yet military personnel are there as advisors and drone operators, and military spending continues unabated. President Obama was the mastermind at lying through his teeth as a peace candidate.

While we succeeded in making the public hate the wars we failed to end them. We rethought our strategy. I started thinking about all the feminism I was studying, about the intersectionality of oppression.

I thought to myself that was the place from which we must organize. Not just for the straight white male veteran who was lied to, but from the woman of color experience, trans people in the military, from the perspective of those who were suffering the most - the citizens of Iraq and Afghanistan. From the perspective of the veteran who died by suicide, unable to cope with participating in wars with no end, with no purpose beyond corporate gain. We had to start organizing from the perspective of the US communities who were the most robbed because of rampant spending on militarism, from the majority of people of color communities who were occupied at home because of

the programs for local police to buy military equipment they didn't know how to use. Like the police pointing military-grade weaponry straight at citizens in Ferguson - military folks know you don't point a gun at someone unless you're going to shoot them.

We realized that the root was not the individual wars, but the militarism that feeds our society. Since my father's time, there is a backdoor draft, in which the mythology of the military being able to lift you out of poverty preys on the hope of the poor thinking the only thing they have is their life to lay down for their country, in hopes that maybe they will not have to die or have to kill anyone to make it out of the trailer park or ghetto; but will if they must. They don't know that Costco offers more benefits today than the military does, and you don't have to pledge to kill anybody to get those benefits from Costco.

We are lending the veteran's voice to many organizations outside the peace movement. With immigrants, we talk about deported veterans. With the environment, we talk about the vast expense to protect the extraction fossil-based economy that we don't need anymore. For Black Lives Matter, we talk about over-militarized police and occupation of communities. For women, we talk about the sexual assault and degradation we faced in the military and our ability to achieve mission no matter our gender or sexual orientation. For voting, we talk about how we laid down our lives for these freedoms. In every issue, you can find the veteran's voice, because militarism is so ingrained in our society. This voice reaches beyond left vs. right politics. We are a mainstreaming force even as it is very radical for the military to speak out for these basic rights and against militarism.

For the poor, for labor, we talk about all that dang money that isn't even going to us in the military; we were sent to fight without even the proper armor, yet our combat pay is cut. Where the hell is all of this money going?

The mythology that surrounds veterans is being used as a smokescreen for private contractors. It is public risk, and privatized gain. In 2015, the Pentagon spending was \$589

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IVAW members at Veteran Day 2016 in Chicago.

Reporting Back on Standing Rock

DANIEL CORRALL

In the week after Thanksgiving, my cousin Reggie and I traveled to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North Dakota with our friends from Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), to be in solidarity with the Indigenous protectors camped there against the Dakota Access pipeline. There were to be over 2,000 US military veterans that weekend, joining with hundreds of other tribes to stand against the North Dakota governor-ordered evacuation of the camps that Monday, December 5.

We arrived the weekend prior at the Oceti Sakowin Camp, and were graciously given a military tent to stay in, set up by the Cheyenne River Sioux Nation. A group of veterans with IVAW went to a welcome ceremony by the Sioux Nation, and we stayed to walk around the camp and pay our respects to the Sacred Fire. The fire burns day and night, without end, and is kept by elders. There was hot tea and coffee available for all, and many prayers and songs shared. In the morning, the women led a Water Ceremony from the fire to the Cannonball River, which was beautiful.

When our friends and brothers—Oliver, Aaron Hughes, Matt Howard, and many others—returned from the welcome ceremony and from the medic camp, we took a walk to the Sacred Fire and were invited to a sacred Grass Dance. It was so special to be in Standing Rock: lands where the Sioux people were forced to reside in after so many wars with the US, who broke treaty after treaty with the sovereign nation of the Sioux; lands where one of their greatest leaders,

Sitting Bull, was murdered; where American Indian Movement leader Russell Means was shot in the back; and where now the 7 bands of the Great Sioux Nation were coming together for the first time in many years—again for the protection of the earth and their rights as Indigenous peoples. It was a historic moment to be a part of, in which hundreds of First Nations peoples from all over the continent and world came together to make a stand.

It was an honor to be there. We were privileged to be among over 10,000 people that week, along with over 4,000 vets. There were so many things we were able to be a part of. We were there on December 5, when the veterans made a ceremonial apology to the Sioux nation, and we were present the day before at the Sacred Fire when it was announced that the US Army Corps of Engineers had denied the Dakota Access pipeline the permit to drill under the Missouri River.

I remember at the veteran's apology, the elder Faith Spotted Eagle spoke about her father, a WWII veteran that lived with PTSD. He had given instructions for all of his children to not enter into military service, but instead to fight the wars that we have here, for justice and peace, on occupied First Nations lands. The elder continued to list off many of the struggles that they have fought for hundreds of years, among them the genocidal wars and policies against them by the US government, the forced imprisonment of children in boarding schools, the forced sterilization of Indigenous women, etc. I remember

Faith Spotted Eagle saying that now both veterans are united, the ones fighting wars outside and the ones fighting wars against oppression here: "The intersects of your PTSD intersects perfectly with our PTSD."

I also remember a story that the military vets shared about the welcoming ceremony, in which they were given instructions by the elders that there was to be no direct actions by the vets, that instead they were being asked to pray, to heal, to be a presence of peace. And one of the vets approached the elders then, shaking, saying that he was so happy that there were not going to be any taking of the hills, and that he could now focus on spending his time helping around the camp and healing.

Veterans have a right to heal. We as citizens of this nation and world have a right to live without war, to live in peace. Indigenous peoples have a right to self-determination, sovereignty, lands, etc.—a true peace. Instead what we have is a system that operates as a military industrial complex, for lands, riches, and power. This isn't peace, it is violence. And when the Sioux people put a call out for the Seven Council Fires to come together, many all over the earth came to join them—on a path towards building a true peace and to end the violence of our systems. We have indeed a long way to go.

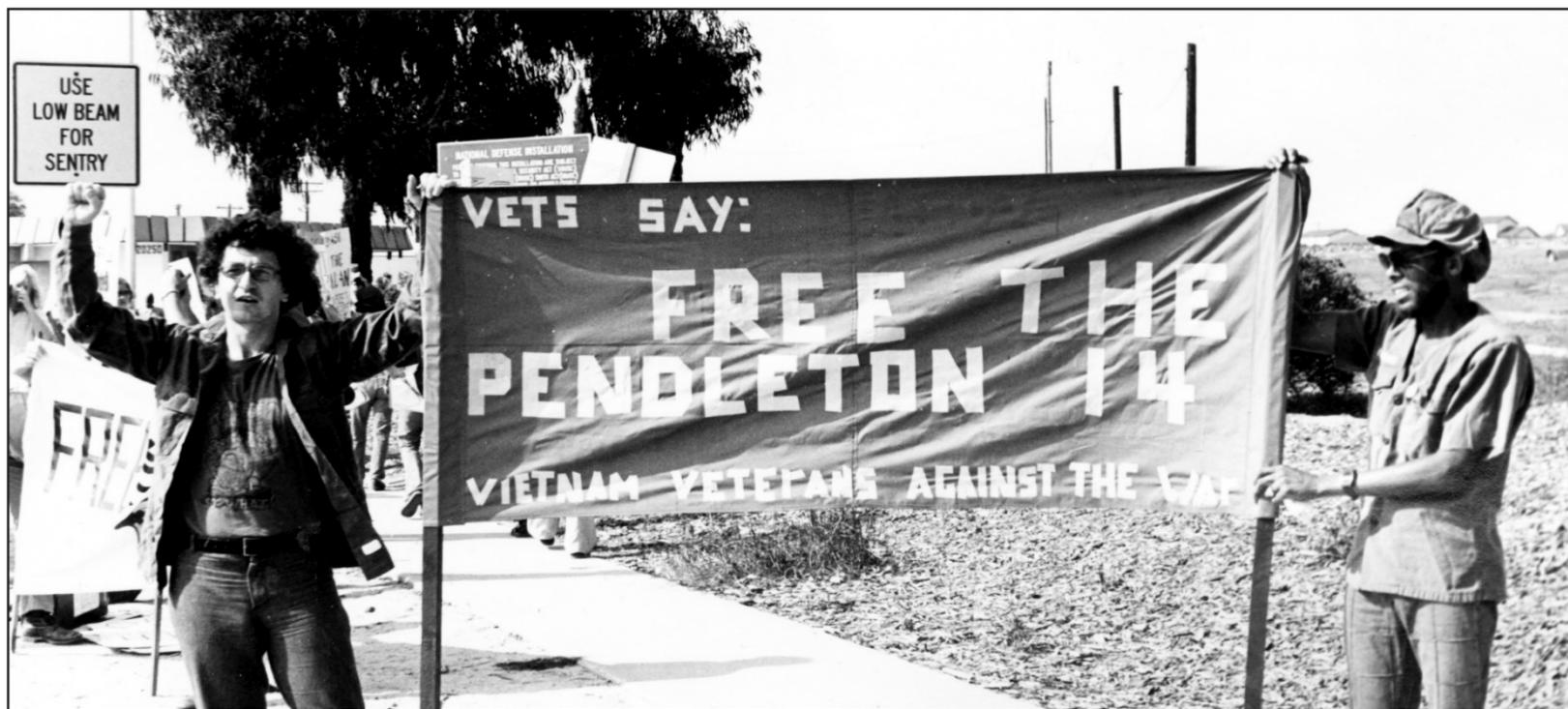
And as my friend and brother, Barry Romo of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) has said: "Struggling for freedom is liberating in and of itself. It gives life an existence that you can't have in any other way, it

allows you to meet people who are only of the highest caliber... people that you can trust with your lives, people you can trust with your sanity, people you can trust with your friendship. The movement for liberation is a movement that empowers you and other people as you fight for other people to be empowered... when you tell the truth, when you cut through the lies, when you end the culture that military service is what makes you a man or a woman, as opposed to political action—to fight for justice to fight for an end to violence, that is the real legacy that we have to leave behind."

So, let us as military vets and vets of the struggles for justice and peace here continue to unite, to work together, to be one, to heal together. We can continue to tell the truth, to deploy for righteous causes and movements here and elsewhere. And yes, sometimes we are prophets of a future that is not our own, sometimes we are builders, planters, of spaces and fields for our children and the next generations. However, as we already know, it is in the struggle that we have our freedom, that our life has purpose, where we build true kinship, and model a beloved community in the here and now, that will more and more fully be in the days to come.



DANIEL CORRALL IS FROM AURORA, ILLINOIS. HE SPENDS HIS DAYS CARING FOR HIS FAMILY AND BUILDING KINSHIP WITH THE WORLD.



Camp Pendleton, California, 1976.

Veterans Must Join the Poor People's Campaign

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billion on discretionary spending. The proposed budget - this is budgeted, not discretionary, military budget - for 2017 is \$542 billion. Lockheed Martin has 287 billion dollars of contracts and pays 3 million to lobby congress yearly. Boeing, Raytheon, Northrop Grumman, BAE Systems, they all have DoD contracts totaling 533 billion dollars. Reuters reported this past December that the Pentagon rejected a study saying that we could save \$125 billion by renegotiating these contracts and other administrative costs. All of these corporations are engaging in blatant war profiteering, while veterans fight to get the government to recognize we were dying from lung cancer caused by the use of burn pits. The public thinks the majority of the military budget is not going to the very elite, but to their uncle who is going to the VA to treat his diseases associated with Agent Orange. Or to the homeless military, which make up about 1 in 4 of every homeless person.

The privatization of the military provided the blueprint for the

privatization everywhere else. So, what happens is that taxpayers pay for young people like me to join the military. Once I realize that the benefits won't come through and I'm getting paid less than if I worked at Starbucks, I see private contractor jobs doing my military job for 80 to 150k a year. This lures me out of securing any time in grade for the military, so I do not get what little benefits are promised because I am thinking I am going to get big bucks now. It is completely unknown how many defense contractors our Department of Defense employs or even how many have died while in service for private defense companies. Somehow, if I die in the military I get a street named after me, if I die doing the same job as a contractor they couldn't be bothered to tally me up with all of my fellow dead. The military is forbidden to organize as a union, in an effort to prevent our country being overthrown by a military coup. So, we could not stop our benefits from being denied as a matter of course to save money.

We could not stop the privatization of our own jobs. When I told one of my mentors, Ricardo Martinez, about this, he asked me a question I still do not know the answer to: what happens to a democracy when its military are basically mercenaries?

You can see this dynamic applied to all of our public institutions today. Starve the public system, declare it a failure, privatize public funds, and militarize that profit. Capitalism requires infinite resources and cheap labor in order to function, and it's running out of that frontier to exploit. Most resources have been claimed and conquered. The money to be made is in the exploitation of the workers and the privatization of public monies and property. That's the only thing left. It is to rob the poor of the little taxes they pay and give it to the rich on top of the tax breaks they get in the system and hide wealth through multinational corporations. It's no surprise to me that with the rise of statelessness of corporations, how they do not respond to national laws and

evade international standards, we also have the rise of stateless terror groups.

Veterans, I feel, can create the connections across these different silos because we have seen the end-use of these policies; we have been the oppressors, and we have seen how war and strongman policies do not make us any safer and kill a lot of people. By building a united front, we at Iraq Veterans Against the War, want everyone to believe the poor as strongly as they believe veterans, because the plight of the poor is the plight of the veteran.



REV. SHAWNA FOSTER IS BOARD CHAIR OF IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR. REV. SHAWNA WAS A NUCLEAR, BIOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL SPECIALIST AND LEFT THE NATIONAL GUARD IN 2006 ONCE SHE REALIZED THERE WERE NO WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION, AND THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION KNEW THIS BEFORE SETTING UP COLIN POWELL.

The Light Where Shadows End

DANIEL LAVERY (REVIEWER)

The Light Where Shadows End: A War Hero's Inspirational Journey Through Death, Recovery, and a World Without Home by r.g. cantalupo (New World Publishers, 2015)

A member of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, the author took part in the 1971 Winter Soldier Investigations where he confessed to committing crimes and atrocities. A Radio-Telephone Operator (RTO) with the 25th Infantry Division in 1968-69, cantalupo (a nickname, actually Ross Canton), served in Vietnam and was awarded a Bronze Star with a Combat V and three Purple Hearts. He describes himself as a war criminal who fired white phosphorus mortars and called in napalm bombs on civilians using weapons banned by the Geneva Convention.

He returned to the scene of his action in 2015 "to survive my looming suicide... to Trang Bang where Nick Ut photographed the Napalm Girl." That was also where he ordered villagers to lie down while they destroyed their village and where "Lonny, Baby, San, Devil and I lay dying not for God, or flag, or country, but simply because we were The Chosen, draftees offered up from poor black, brown, or white families by an upper-middle-class draft board that didn't want to take sons from their own."

He describes his boot camp training droning into him like a mantra: "They are gooks, dinks, commies, savages, nothing resembling us, nothing close to human. And, it worked. When I was shooting at a cardboard man, when I was stabbing a dummy to death with a bayonet, when

I was on the edge of terror, it was the only voice I heard. But four months in Vietnam changed me. The kids along Highway 1 chanting 'GI Numba One' as they begged chocolate bar or cokes looked no different than the kids from my tenement, Asian rather than black, or Puerto Rican or Pollok or Jew. They were hungrier maybe, more desperation in their eyes, but under the grime and stink, they were no different than the kids I grew up with carrying hopes and fears and dreams. And so I heard a different voice, my own. How long does it take to kill a man - from inside? How long before I was no longer a man but a rifle. A bullet, and I inside a soulless body?"

After his good friend Lonny is killed when he made eye contact with an enemy soldier who was badly wounded and groaning in the Elephant grass, cantalupo raised his rifle, "I put his head in the crosshairs, held my breath, and put my finger on the trigger guard. I didn't squeeze the trigger. I couldn't. Not anymore. Lonny was dead. Nothing I could do would bring him back. Not killing this soldier. Not killing the whole fucking North Vietnamese Army. Lonny was dead. Shot in the throat and chest by his own men. Friendly fire. Friendly. As if killing was somehow friendlier if done by your own men. And who was to blame? The soldiers on the perimeter who opened fire from fear of being overrun? The C.O. who sent us out? General Westmoreland? Nixon? Kissinger? The Pentagon? The Army? The rich? The whole fucking US of A? My mother? My war-hero father? Yes, everyone was to blame. Everyone carried Lonny's blood on their hands. I lowered my rifle. I was done. I was

done with killing, done with death, done with war. For a long moment, the wounded soldier held my eyes, then he turned and slowly crawled away."

He recounts his horrendous injuries from a mortar exploding a few feet away that hurled his body into the dark sky and then crashed down leaving him covered in warm blood. He remembers a nurse nicknamed, Peaches, who helped him through hours, days and weeks of care and with whom he says he seriously fell in love. "And then I rose. Above my body. Above my life. Is this my soul parting from my flesh, my spirit rising toward eternity, flying through the tunnel of white light toward people I loved? I rose in darkness, in shadow, the body below me — my body — graying to a shade, the medic slowly dimming to a hazy silhouette. I rose, but my wounds did not fly away on angel's wings, nor did I see my mortal life bleeding into light as if I were eternal. I merely slipped in and out of a world filled with fire and burning pain."

A film crew from Vietnam TV International recorded his anguish following his journey toward a reconciliation meeting with former members of The People's Army against whom he fought. They shared the truth of where the People's Army hid in tunnels awaiting to attack and used a map to describe each of their locations in battles. After awkward embraces, they shook hands and said goodbye through the pain such a meeting engendered. The war's legacy in Vietnam, cantalupo says, includes "leaving hundreds of thousands of unexploded bombs to kill more children," as well as "fourth generation birth defects and genetic mutations

The Light Where Shadows End
by r. g. cantalupo



A War Hero's Inspirational Journey Through Death, Recovery, and a World Without Home

caused by our massive spraying of Agent Orange." That situation "will not allow for my reconciliation." This was the most profoundly moving memoir I have read on Vietnam, showing how a man changed from a war criminal to a sensitive human being aware he was lucky to have survived and gained an inspiration and awakening that changed his life.



DAN LAVERY GRADUATED FROM ANNAPOLIS, NAVIGATED A JET, THEN A SHIP TO VIETNAM. HE RESIGNED, JOINED VVAW, AND BECAME A CIVIL RIGHTS LAWYER FOR CESAR CHAVEZ'S UFW, THE ACLU AND IN PRIVATE CIVIL RIGHTS PRACTICE. HIS MEMOIR, ALL THE DIFFERENCE, DESCRIBES HIS CHANGE FROM A PAWN IN THE MILITARY TO CRUSADER FOR JUSTICE.
WWW.DANIELLAVERY.COM



Anti-Nixon march, Chicago, 1974.

The CIA as Organized Crime

LARRY CRAIG (REVIEWER)

The CIA as Organized Crime: How Illegal Operations Corrupt America and the World by Douglas Valentine (Clarity Press, 2017)

Well holy shit.

I'd like to help out here but I must warn you that I personally interacted with an Air America pilot in Saigon so there is no way I can write anything about this book that is unbiased. And besides, I did not finish the book.

First off, let me tell you that this brilliant author is pretty much telling us things that we already know.

Of course, the CIA ran the killing operation in Vietnam known as Phoenix, which targeted civilians who were unwilling to bow to the corrupt puppet government in Saigon.

Of course, they ran drugs around the world and made sure they wound up in minority communities in America. Gee, I wonder who wanted to be sure these victims of CIA criminality were disenfranchised?

Valentine convincingly documents the crimes. He shows that the CIA worked with and facilitated domestic gangsters we know as the Mafia. They had no problem arranging for gangsters to go to Cuba to assassinate Castro. Fortunately for Cuba and especially Africa, the Cubans outsmarted the mob.

An early warning about the

academic nature of the book comes on page 19: "Also, for a year before I started interviewing people, I'd read everything I could find about Vietnam and the CIA. I was knowledgeable, plus I looked like a good Methodist."

No, good Methodist is not an oxymoron. Some are actually Christ-like. Go figure.

Talk about balls, cojones if you prefer, Valentine started at the top. He sent former CIA Director William Colby a copy of his book, "The Hotel Tacloban," which is the story of his father who enlisted in the army when he was sixteen and was captured by the Japanese in the jungles of New Guinea. Along with British and Australian POWs, he was kept at the Hotel Tacloban from which he escaped.

Colby read the book and was impressed so he agreed to meet with Valentine. Colby told him who to meet with to get the story he wanted about the CIA. He went to his interviews with the former agents letting them believe he had Colby's blessings to open up. So, they told their stories. They seemed to be happy to get the garbage off their chests.

These agents were men who had always been headed for lives of crime. They went to the best schools but for many of them the CIA was the only place they could work where their criminal instincts would be

respected and used. I suspect plenty of them found the welcome mats out at Goldman Sachs and Citibank as well.

I don't want to scare you off this book but those of you who trust people like Daniel Ellsberg, Amy Goodman and the *New York Review of Books* are going to see them all trashed.

Ellsberg worked with the worst of the CIA in Vietnam planning the slaughter of civilians in the Phoenix program.

When Valentine called Ellsberg to arrange an interview, Ellsberg said, "You can't possibly understand me because you are not a celebrity." In fact, the CIA wanted the Pentagon Papers released so they would be big news as Congressional hearings looked into the Phoenix assassination program.

The nitty gritty about our killing of good government around the world, from the Congo, to Guatemala, Chile, and Iran is all here.

Back to Saigon in 1966. I don't recall how I got tangled up with an Air America pilot named Charles but looking back I don't suppose he was at all special. In his apartment, he had a framed photo of himself posing by a small Air America plane. He owned several night clubs. I made the rounds with him once. He collected huge piles of cash at each stop. The young women working for him obviously

drank a lot of Saigon tea.

At the time, I was dating a beautiful German blonde who worked on the Helgoland, a hospital ship parked right downtown on the Saigon River. He was jealous and talked me into fixing him up with another woman from the ship for a double date. That got me in trouble with the Germans. They seemed to smell his criminality and told me to never bring him to the ship again.

Now I think I'll close this review with this fine summary from page 39: "Meanwhile the CIA, the military and the cops are covering their collective asses through their propaganda outlets. They're corrupting our understanding of the world by controlling the information we receive. They create the myths we believe. If we were allowed to understand the CIA, we'd realize it's a criminal organization that is corrupting governments and societies around the world. It's murdering civilians who haven't done anything wrong. The military does the same thing in a more violent way. Cops too."



LARRY CRAIG WAS IN THE 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION FOR 1966, IN 1967 HE GOT A BRONZE STAR FOR COVERAGE OF OP JUNCTION CITY. HE TESTIFIED IN DETROIT AND WAS IN DC FOR THE MEDAL TOSS.

Vietnam Dreams

R G CANTALUPO (REVIEWER)

Dreams, Vietnam by Marc Levy
(Winter Street Press, 2017)

I don't remember my dreams. Not anymore, anyway, not for a long, long time.

When I dreamt before, I dreamt trauma dreams. Dreams that were not really dreams, but re-enactments, a reliving of terrifying moments during firefights or mortar attacks I survived.

That was 1969, and I was in a hospital in Saigon or Yokohama recovering from brain surgery to remove shrapnel from my frontal lobe. The trauma dreams were mixed with Demerol dreams, spectacular, panoramic, Technicolor, psychedelic dreams akin to peyote-inspired experiences, where I morphed from Bengal tigers to snub-nosed monkeys to blood pythons to water buffalo, dreams where blown off limbs flying through a turquoise sky shape-shifted into kingfisher's wings.

So when I began reading Marc Levy's enriching book, "Dreams, Vietnam," that's what I believed - that all trauma dreams were a reliving of traumatic experiences (PTSD dreams). But what Levy shows in his dream journal, and what is invaluable, is the continuity and range of traumatic dreams over almost a forty year period from 1970-2008.

I doubt whether there is another book like Levy's in the lexicon of Vietnam War experience books. Certainly, I have never read or heard about one. Dream entries like this one from "28 June 1970. We're being overrun by sappers. They've gotten past the trips and Claymores and crawl forward. I wake up from the dream and see a boot tread near my face. Slowly, I take my .45 from its holster, pull the hammer back, aim it. Then the moon came out and I saw the boot treads were American. It was Jerry's foot..."

These images are jarring, startling. The language is stark, direct. At first, we're not sure if the dreamer wakes up to the boot tread, or if it's a dream within a dream, until we find out later in the entry that, "In the stillness I pointed the .45 straight up, pinched the hammer, re-holstered the pistol and went back to sleep."

Imagine what a terrifying moment that must have been and this is a re-lived dream of a real experience couched in a dream entry. Levy was a combat medic for D 1/7 First Cavalry Division, and the dream takes place in the bush, on the night before his company re-crossed from Cambodia back to Vietnam, when Jerry Bieck, his squad leader, slept head to foot with Levy. In his half-waking state, after dreaming of being overrun, he

cocks his .45 and is ready to shoot his squad leader.

Such is the nature of PTSD dreams, where reality and dream-life overlap and morph into dangerous waking moments that often end in tragic events. It's like having an extended flashback where you don't know where you are, whether you're in the middle of a firefight or a 4th of July celebration.

Take another dream from almost 40 years later: "9 October 2008. My brother and I are in the jungle. My brother is new to Vietnam. I'm breaking him in. I receive a message from a pilot...in a reconnaissance plane. The pilot names a mechanical part he needs. I take out a pen, spread a napkin on the ground, and tell my brother to hold it flat while I write it down. My brother laughs at me. I take out my forty-five pistol. I say, 'If you do that again, I'll kill you.' My brother laughs. I shoot him...in the chest. I wake up saying, 'You didn't listen so I killed you.'"

There's a courage to writing down such dreams. As readers and veterans, we can look at them and see how damaged our minds have become by the horrific experience of war. We can see how a traumatic re-enactment of a real-life experience can morph into a violent reaction in a confused PTSD

state. And, hopefully, the writing and recording of such dreams helps those of us with similar traumatic dreams to process them, to dilute or titrate the violence we all experienced, into some semblance of relief or resolution.

I honor Levy's dream journey. Reading his book invoked memories of my own traumatic dreams and pushed me to re-imagine and re-process them. I believe this is essential in our journey back toward a healthy assimilation of The World. I encourage anyone who has, or continues to suffer from, traumatic dreams to read it and begin their own dream journal. I believe it is one of the ways we as combat veterans can move toward reconciliation of the brutality done to us, and the brutality we perpetrated on others.



RG CANTALUPO, (ROSS CANTON), IS A POET, PLAYWRIGHT, FILMMAKER, NOVELIST, AND DIRECTOR. HIS WORK HAS BEEN PUBLISHED WIDELY IN LITERARY JOURNALS IN THE UNITED STATES, ENGLAND, AND AUSTRALIA. HE SERVED IN THE 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION AS AN RTO FOR AN INFANTRY COMPANY FROM 1968-69 AND RECEIVED THREE PURPLE HEARTS AND A BRONZE STAR WITH A COMBAT V FOR VALOR UNDER FIRE.

Search & Destroy

Blue breaks through my machete's slash, but no wing rises in flight. In slivered light, a pink lotus sways, a punji's spear hidden in the palm-shaped leaves. Up the trail, bamboo cages rage with pigs' squeals, water buffalo bellow our malevolent odor, faces blank as body bags await our eternal

return. I lean against a hootch, light a smoke, finger my Zippo like a charmed ear. My face, double-exposed in the lighter's mirror, bleeds thru rushes and clouds; my shadow ignites, then flares. I rub the thatch, flick, see the serpent's flame dance in the hellish air. This is my power, I command. This snake. This fire. This god.

—rg cantalupo



Two Books by VVAW member Marc Levy

"...I was excited to read *How Stevie Nearly Lost the War and Other Postwar Stories* and I was not disappointed. Levy's writings are not limited to Vietnam, but his descriptions of war are (for me) the most vivid parts of his book. Any family member, any therapist, any history buff who wants to know something of the pain that vets carry in their heads and hearts 50 years later should read this book."

Hamilton Gregory, author of *MacNamara's Folly*

"As far as I know, *Dreams, Vietnam* is the first instance in which a large number of dreams from a war veteran suffering from PTSD has been made available in print to everyone...As such, this remarkable dream journal is a gift to all of us for what it conveys about the horrors of war and the agony of PTSD."

G. William Domhoff
Distinguished Professor Emeritus and Research Professor
University of California, Santa Cruz

Available on Amazon



Milwaukee VA Demo, 1977.

Pearl Harbor Memories

MICHAEL NELSON

The day after Pearl Harbor, my father, like thousands of others, tried to enlist in the Marine Corp. He signed the papers and stood up to shake hands with the recruiter and the officer noticed he had a digit missing on his little finger. It was from a drill press accident...and it prevented him from becoming a Marine. He walked across the street and joined the Navy. They didn't seem to care that he had only 9.5 fingers. He told me that instead of landing on Guadalcanal he was performing anti-submarine patrol around the island...and the little finger accident probably saved his life.

He was a sonarman on a destroyer

in the South Pacific during the war. Whenever I attempted to talk to him about it he always shrugged it off. About all that he would talk about was the fact that his ship was the first to fire on the Japanese mainland and they were part of the occupation force after the war.

It wasn't until I was living in Palm Springs to help him with his end of life issues that he opened up. He asked me if I remember when I left for Vietnam. I said "sure I do...you shook my hand and said have a good tour." He asked if I noticed he had tears in his eyes...and I said sure.

He said that was the worse day of

his life. He was convinced that it was the last time he was going to see me. And then he started crying...and then I started crying...and then we talked about war. I assumed it was because he thought I could now understand and comprehend what war was about.

So we talked about the Gilbert Islands, Marshall Islands, the Marianas, Saigon, Dong Ha and Danang. We talked for hours...and we shared good and bad experiences. We both agreed that war was an ugly concept and we need to change our thinking. And we both agreed that we probably won't.

I asked him if he was ever afraid

of dying. He said "I was then...but not now."

Several weeks later, I woke up in the middle of the night thinking I heard the phone ringing...but it wasn't. It was the night he died. I found him in the morning with his phone on his chest. He was 93...and he had a great tour.



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

The CIA and the Phoenix Program

SANFORD KELSON (REVIEWER)

The CIA as Organized Crime: How Illegal Operations Corrupt America and the World by Douglas Valentine (Clarity Press, 2017)

Douglas Valentine details that the CIA created the Phoenix Program in 1967 during the Vietnam War to "neutralize" the leaders and supporters of the Communist-led insurgency in South Vietnam. Phoenix was directed against Vietnamese patriots resisting US aggression in their country. The US considered these patriots the enemy. The Phoenix Program, used laws written by American officials for the South Vietnamese "government", to allow the US to identify, detain, torture and kill Vietnamese patriots by any means possible.

Phoenix was a bureaucratic model that used spying and systematic repression for population and political control. It targeted those who could not be ideologically assimilated, as well as those who actively opposed the US war. Everyone who did not actively support the US war effort became targets. People who simply did not want a foreign power fighting a war in their country or who believed that the war should be ended by negotiation were targeted. The fear created by Phoenix was so pervasive, people had to watch every word.

Phoenix paid bribes for information and led to arrests and torture based upon hearsay and rumor from anonymous informers. The CIA knowingly used false accusations to terrorize the Vietnamese people into compliance. Innocent people who were arrested and tortured would only be released if friends and relatives paid a bribe to those on the CIA payroll. Valentine explains that the unstated yet obvious goal of the program was to terrify the entire civilian population into submission. The Phoenix Program changed how America fights its wars. Political and psychological warfare became and continues to be an integral part of all American military actions.

Douglas Valentine explains that the US National Security Establishment, represented most directly and clearly by Hillary Clinton, believes all its enemies, foreign and domestic, must be suppressed both ideologically and militarily. Valentine's book explains that, in the wake of 9/11, the Phoenix concept of employing all forms of terror to control, organize and pacify societies has become the preferred template for policing the American empire and fighting its eternal so-called war on terror. For

example, the Phoenix approach was so successful in overthrowing the Ba'athist Party regime in Iraq, one of the US government's top terrorism advisors called for a "Global Phoenix Program."

Valentine warns us that the Department of Homeland Security has brought Phoenix to America. The Department's bureaucratic structure is like that of the Phoenix Program in Vietnam and similarly claims to be "protecting the people from terrorism." The laws written by the US for the South Vietnamese "government" legitimized the Phoenix Program. The Patriot Act has done the same thing in America; legitimizing spying and systematic repression against US citizens for population and political control.

US history extensively and clearly documents that our government has frequently spied on peaceful and lawful dissident movements. Labor unions, opposition political parties, and many anti-war, environmental and civil rights groups – such as Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter and NO DAPL – have been targeted by the US government. Police and intelligence services have infiltrated such groups and engaged in illegal acts, including the threat and use of violence, to oppose and destroy them. No one is held accountable or punished for these gross and repeated breaches of the law.

Today, the US government relies on spies, rumor, hearsay and mass surveillance systems, such as the NSA program exposed by Edward Snowden. These more pervasive, secret surveillance activities against Americans expose the frightening truth. The Deep State brands ordinary Americans who are simply exercising their democratic freedoms and constitutional rights as dangerous domestic enemies.

James Madison, author of the US Constitution, disdained democracy and the average American. He intended the Constitution to keep governmental power in the hands of a few elites; wealthy, white, male land owners. He disrespectfully called all other US citizens, members of the "grazing multitude." Other "founding fathers" were equally dismissive of the people, calling them the "great beast." Walter Lippmann agreed with these elitist founders, describing the public as mere "spectators of action," not participants. Lippman's 1922 book, *Phantom Public*, claimed the public could not truly be well-informed. It described ordinary people as easily convinced to side with an educated

minority, while believing they were part of a system of majority rule. Similarly, Edward Bernays, creator of many modern propaganda techniques, described the role of the elites in a democracy as the "manufacturing consent." He believed the public should not engage in democracy, but merely ratify the decisions of their betters.

More recently, Karl Rove, a Republican political operative, said something very similar to Madison, Lippmann and Bernays. He described how reality is manipulated to keep power away from the people and in the hands of a few elites. Rove said, "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality — judiciously, as you will — we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors... and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do."

Doug Valentine's warnings came before Donald Trump's election. Trump's rhetoric is utterly confusing, but still discloses that he has not been fully ideologically indoctrinated into the policies of the controlling members of the Deep State. Trump said that he wants to work with Russia and not engage in regime change or nation building overseas. Trump has opposed the intelligence community's efforts to vilify Putin and Russia to gain American citizen support for yet another war.

There is widespread speculation that the CIA may be engaging in a soft coup. Is a Phoenix-style CIA operation being used to identify and purge Trump supporters, like Michael Flynn, who favor better relations with Russia. Has Trump's administration acquired Phoenix capabilities that are being used to identify and purge his "enemies," real or imagined?

A few quotes from Doug Valentine's book appear to suggest some answers.

"The Phoenix process began immediately after 9/11 with the repressive Patriot Act and a series of Presidential executive orders that have since legalized the administrative detention and murder of American citizens said to be involved in terrorism."

"As part of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2012, the military (no mention is ever made of the CIA) was given the right to administratively detain and assassinate US citizens without due process."

"The fascistic merging of government and corporate forces

against the public interest is the most insidious facet of Phoenix in American society. And it is done with the full cooperation of the corporate media, which exploits each and every mass murder we endure, whether it is a terrorist attack or not – like the gay attacker's assault on the gay nightclub in Orlando – to terrorize the public into consenting to greater restrictions on civil liberties and more wars overseas."

"Through their control of the media, political and bureaucratic systems, America's secret rulers engage in terrorism abroad and at home for economic purposes... The objective is to maximize profits and concentrate wealth and political power in fewer and fewer hands. The Global War on Terror and its domestic homeland security counterpart are flip sides of the same coin. They are the capitalist ideology applied to foreign and domestic security policy. And like the capitalist system it serves, an unstated national security policy is consolidated in fewer and fewer ideologically correct hands as the empire expands and its contradictions become more apparent."

Douglas Valentine's book is based largely on CIA insider information. He has used that first-hand information to provide us with names, dates, and documents regarding a continuous process of USG criminality, including treason, against the interests of the American people. Additionally, facts and knowledge Valentine has accumulated as an investigative journalist over many decades are included in this book. I believe Valentine's collective writing has shown him to be one of the most important journalists in US history. If you haven't yet heard of Doug Valentine, it may be because corporate media outlets have been doing the job envisioned for them by elitist founders such as Madison and subsequent commentators, like Lippmann and Bernays. The corporate media may only be printing the news they believe you need to "ratify" the decisions of the wealthy, white, male, corporate elites and not printing what might just arouse us, the "great beast", who the founders feared, into action.



SANFORD KELSON WAS IN THE US ARMY FROM 1963-66, SGT E-5, 171ST INFANTRY BRIGADE, ALASKA. HE IS FORMER NATIONAL PRESIDENT VFP. HE IS A LAWYER, MEDIATOR, AND EDUCATOR.

T-rump Preamble

We, the cretins, of these dis-united states,
In order to form a more perfect dis-union,

Reinforce injustice and ramp up the hate!

Insure police state tranquility,
Provide for the uncommon defense,
Promote Corporate Welfare
and secure the blessings of a
Fascist Oligarchic offense!

To us and our posterity
Do ordain and establish,
This re-constitution
of a genocide, under which
we will languish!

—Michael McGraw

Fight Song

Hypocrisy,
a necessity,
to send us all off to die.
The gutting of morals,
surrounded with laurels
of glory and other such lies.
Serves only the masters
as we try to run faster,
through the gauntlets of
blood soaked mud and lye!
The art of the craven
heart,
lies manifest in part,
disboweling the soul from
the eye!

—Michael McGraw

Changes: The Coming of Age in the South During the Vietnam War

DR. BOB VADAS (REVIEWER)

Changes: The Coming of Age in the South during the Vietnam War by JD Morgan

(CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016)

The back cover of this book entices the reader by asking, "How much of this tale is fact, and how much is fiction? That's for you to figure out!" and I suppose the fun was supposed to begin there. Perhaps it is a reference to Tim O'Brien's view that "all war stories are false...but all war stories are also true." This story tests the parameters of believability with the unending adventures of a 17-year-old enlistee in the realms of hookers, drugs, guns and with, almost as a distant and vague side-show, the War in Vietnam as a back drop. One of many struggles I had with this story is that there is no war story. Vietnam seems to be almost a mythical distraction to the hedonistic desires of this young lad who seeks only to feed his narcissism while generally ignoring the contemporary anti-war movement, racial conflicts, or even the developing GI resistance

movement. It was as if the 60's and 70's existed solely to provide him with new and better drugs.

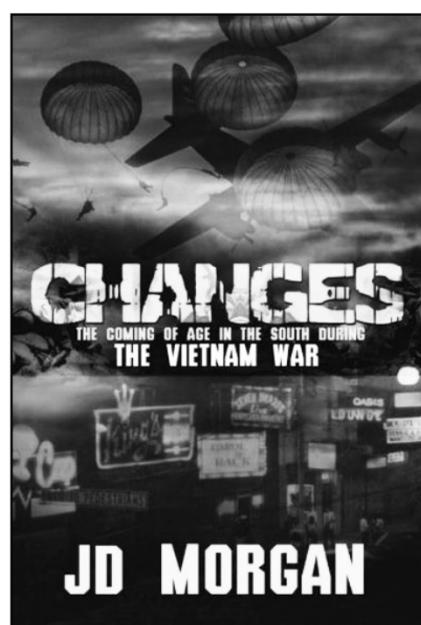
Enlisting in the US Army the day after the failed Son Tay raid, our new and unlikable anti-hero, farm-raised in Kansas, trained at Fort Leonard Wood and then did stints at "Tigerland," and Fort Bragg, while anxious to engage in combat in Vietnam, a goal he never realizes. Though just 17, he dallies with untold numbers of hookers, friends and girlfriends of his buddies, drinks and parties and engages with the realities of the home-front during the war like a crazed youth trying to hit all the curve balls sent his way. Most, if not all, he seems to always hit out of the park. If he ever gained mature wisdom during his coming of age, you surely could not tell at any point in this hard to read narrative.

For those seeking a nice read to soothe the need for either romantic or meta-physical notions, or perhaps revisit your passionate and political youthful indiscretions, you will be greatly disappointed. With continual graphic porn-like descriptions of too

many absolutely loveless and almost robotic sexual adventures, it is difficult to understand who the author is trying to appeal to. Perhaps, like the main character, the story might interest those 17-22 year-olds who simply exist to pleasure themselves, pun intended, as this book was difficult for me to find its end.

The book resembles a Kerouac-like road trip complete with the bums but without the dharma or accompanying cultural nuance. If you like only to get smashed and party, then read this book but the only cool thing I thought about our hero is his '63 Corvette.

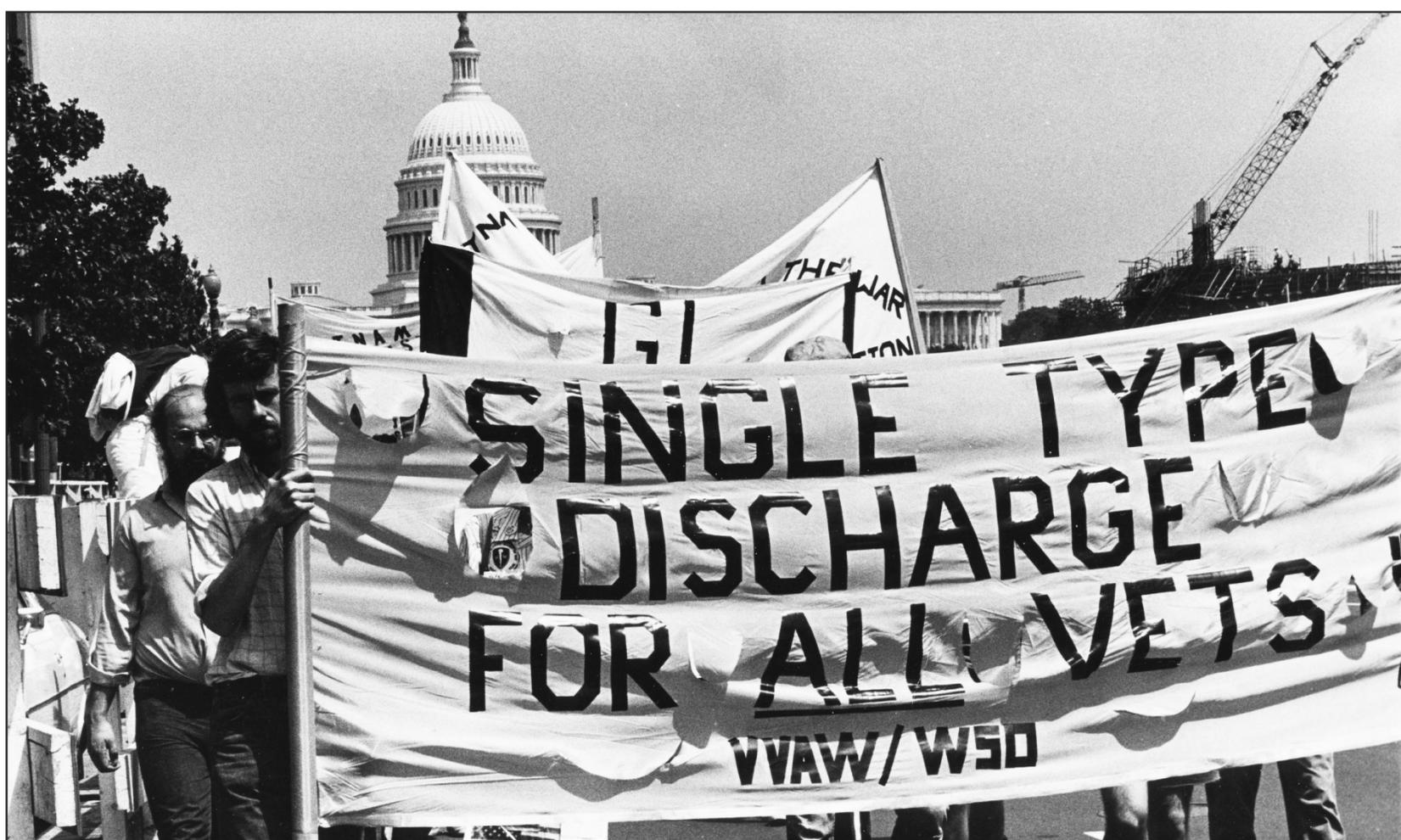
So, is it a true story? I could not tell, however, most of the vernacular and music, from CCR to his beloved Alice Cooper, checked out, though if you are a Beatles, Dylan, Paul Simon, or Doors fan, forget it. The author did, at times, slip up with his history, referencing the DEA, as example, nearly a year before Nixon signed it into existence on July 28, 1973. He also perpetuated urban myths such as the long-told and unverifiable accounts



of Donkey Shows south of the border. I ended the story, not soon enough, without knowing or even caring.



DR. BOB VADAS, IS A PROFESSOR AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NY IN POTSDAM AND TAKES STUDENTS ANNUALLY TO VIETNAM.



Long Way Out

DANIEL LAVERY (REVIEWER)

Long Way Out: A young woman's journey of self-discovery and how she survived the Navy's modern cruelty at sea scandal by Nicole Waybright

(SpeakPeace Press, 2016)

After eight years of writing and research, Nicole Waybright finished her memoir, "Long Way Out" that tells the story of her coming-of-age struggles while deployed as an officer on a US Navy destroyer. Waybright reports the psychological critical moments that she experienced when she discovered she was not cut out for a naval career during her five-year military commitment. Her book sets forth the factual detail based on her service as an officer in the Surface Warfare (SWO) Navy when the initial group of women were stationed aboard naval ships. This intense offering gives the reader a view into a deplorable and tragic account of an egregious executive officer criticized by her seniors when removed from command for "cruelty and maltreatment" of her crew. Nevertheless, she was the first such United States female to command an Aegis destroyer and was infamously known as the female

Captain Bligh.

The author uses the name, Brenda, to tell her story. She served for 18 months aboard Navy destroyer USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG-54) in 1997-1998. She reports the incredibly stressful Navy life during five years of service before her honorable discharge. Her nightmare removed the adventure, romance, and excitement her parents and others, including herself, thought would await her in a world of opportunity for a woman so few had previously had the opportunity she earned. This intense ordeal forced her to find her authentic self after studying the military for her career and catalyzed discovery of her authentic self when she submerged into an intense study and self-realization of Jungian psychology.

At Boston University on a Naval ROTC scholarship Brenda graduated with an M.S., Cum Laude, in Mechanical Engineering. Later as a summer intern with the CIA she had sea duty on a summer cruise aboard the destroyer USS Spruance (DD-963). After college graduation and then six months of Surface Warfare Officers School in Newport, Rhode Island,

Brenda flew to Sydney, Australia to rendezvous with her first ship, whose home port is the US Naval Base at Yokosuka, Japan.

A determined daughter of conventional patriotic parents, Brenda absorbed their ideals and planned a practical career in the US Navy dreaming to attend Naval Nuclear Power School. She hoped to serve on one of 10 US nuclear-powered aircraft carriers since women were banned from serving on the 70-plus nuclear submarines. To qualify for nuke school, she had to win the essential Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) pin. However she experienced chronic sleep deprivation, difficult technical duties, and discovered her past academic success was insufficient for complex shipboard problems. Then she had to deal with a new Lieutenant Commander who made life miserable.

Midway through her memoir she met the new Executive Officer, Lieutenant Commander Heather Gates. A woman's blue eyes piercing her like daggers. The XO's routine of profanity and screaming at subordinates destroyed morale and endangered the ship. The Captain

ignored her outrageous conduct since the Navy hierarchy wanted the XO to help recruitment of the new women naval officers. Not surprisingly, after twelve years she was relieved of command and discharged from the Navy for cruelty toward her crews and conduct unbecoming an officer. Yet her record appeared unsullied until her discharge when enough was known to end her disgraceful naval career.

At the end of her story, Waybright became a full-time writer, featured speaker and resided in New England. She found her radicalized self exploring building a culture of peace. She was honorably discharged from the Navy in 2001.



DANIEL C. LAVERY GRADUATED ANNAPOLIS, NAVIGATED A NAVY JET, AND THEN A SHIP TO VIETNAM. HE RESIGNED, TURNED PEACE ACTIVIST AND BECAME A CIVIL RIGHTS ATTORNEY FOR CESAR CHAVEZ'S UFW AND THE ACLU. HIS MEMOIR, ALL THE DIFFERENCE, DESCRIBES HIS CHANGE FROM A PAWN TO AN ADVOCATE CRUSADING FOR JUSTICE.

WWW.DANIELLAVERY.COM

Vietnam: A History of the War

ALLEN MEECE (REVIEWER)

Vietnam: A History of the War by Russell Freedman (Holiday House, 2016)

This history book starts with a Benjamin Franklin epigraph that is a broad truth: "There never was a good war or a bad peace." The Vietnam War ranks at the top of the list of bad wars and on the third page is a statement that John Kerry made in 1971 to the US Senate, "In our opinion and in our experience there is nothing in Vietnam that threatens the United States of America. And to attempt to justify the loss of one American life by linking such a loss to the preservation of freedom...is to us the height of criminal hypocrisy."

Kerry was not exaggerating when he used the word criminal. It does not matter how big the authority is that needlessly kills fifty-eight thousand Americans and two million Vietnamese, it is an establishment of criminals.

Any political solution would

have worked better than that war, but American racism and chauvinism got in the way of a simple, non-violent solution: Recognize Ho Chi Minh's government when he kicked the French colonialists out of Vietnam at the battle of Dien Bien Phu way back in 1954.

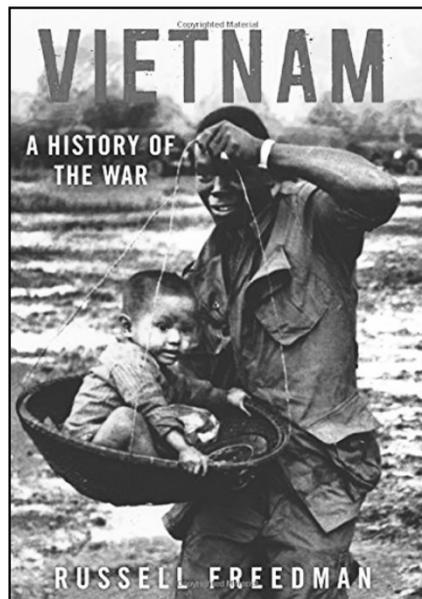
This book explains Vietnam's deep commitment to independence that dates back to the Chinese occupation before the time of Christ. By the time the Vietnamese had ousted the Chinese imperialists and later the Japanese imperialists in 1945 and the French colonialists in 1954, they had had enough of being dominated. By anybody.

Russell Freedman recounts America's first mistake: Not helping Ho Chi Minh to establish a new and unified country after he had wrested its independence from colonial France. Ho thought we loved independence, since we made such a huge deal out of the Fourth of July but he found that we do not support independence

when it's practiced by a socialist country. Witness the Nixon regime encouraging the 1973 coup of Salvador Allende, a freely-elected socialist President of Chile.

"Vietnam a History of The War" stands up high with Howard Zinn's "A People's History of the United States." Both authors' deep research is boiled down to clear, thorough, simple explanations of the dirty tricks and secret agendas that suck America deeper into the quicksand of utter violence. Violence makes impressive noise and gore and corporate profits but solves nothing.

Freedman quotes President Johnson admitting to an aide, "It's the biggest damn mess I ever saw. I don't think it's worth fighting for and I don't think we can get out." Excuse me and fifty-eight thousand of my dearly departed peers, Mr. Johnson but we knew the answer all the time. It was called Peace.



ALLEN MEECE WAS A SONAR TECHNICIAN ON A DESTROYER OFFSHORE OF VIETNAM AND HAS WRITTEN A NOVEL ABOUT A FICTIONAL TONKIN GULF INCIDENT TITLED "THE ABEL MUTINY" AVAILABLE AT AMAZON.COM

A War Hero – and a Peace Hero

HAMILTON GREGORY (REVIEWER)

The Light Where Shadows End: A War Hero's Inspirational Journey Through Death, Recovery, and a World Without Home by r.g. cantalupo (New World Publishers, 2015)

A highly-decorated hero of the Vietnam War, r.g. cantalupo has produced a masterpiece of war, suffering, and redemption. This book grips you and won't let you go until you reach the end. As an example of his vivid, strong memories, here is an excerpt of his near-death battlefield experience:

"And then I rose. Above my body. Above my life.

"Is this my soul parting from my flesh, my spirit rising toward eternity, flying through the tunnel of white light toward people I loved?

"I rose in darkness, in shadow, the body below me – my body – graying to a shade, the medic slowly dimming

to a hazy silhouette.

"...and then I fell ... I fell as if I would fall forever, as if this life – our lives – from birth until death – was surrounded by this endless dark matter through which we all must someday fall.

"...When my soul returned to the medevac, the only words I heard, came neither from a god nor an angel, but a man – green, insectlike in his helmet – his voice muted by whirling blades chopping through the heavy air, yelling – 'Wake up! Wake up, soldier! What's your name!? What's your name!?' What's your name!?"

Cantalupo shows the sickening ease with which Americans accidentally killed comrades during the madness and chaos of combat. Of his friend Lonny, he wrote, "Lonny was dead. Shot in the throat and chest by his own men. Friendly fire. Friendly. As if killing was somehow friendlier if done by your own men."

After Lonny is killed, cantalupo makes eye contact with a badly wounded enemy soldier groaning in the grass. He raises his rifle, prepared to kill him. But he stops himself. "I lowered my rifle. I was done. I was done with killing, done with death, done with war. For a long moment, the wounded soldier held my eyes, then he turned and slowly crawled away."

In 2015, in a journey towards reconciliation, Cantalupo returns to Vietnam and meets former members of the People's Army, against whom he fought in Trang Bang in 1968-69. But "the legacy of leaving hundreds of thousands of unexploded bombs to kill more children; of fourth generation birth defects and genetic mutations caused by our massive spraying of Agent Orange – will not allow for my reconciliation."

He concludes, "All I can do is witness and tell, tell as I told the American public when I marched and

protested as a member of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War; tell as we told in the Winter Soldier hearings when we admitted to war crimes and atrocities."

With admirable wisdom, he points out, "Perhaps reconciliation is not an end, but a beginning, a healing process that starts with compassion and ends with grace."

Cantalupo is a war hero, and he is also a peace hero who has written a valuable book that is filled with compassion, grace, and redemption.



HAMILTON GREGORY, A VVAW LIFE MEMBER, SERVED WITH ARMY INTELLIGENCE IN VIETNAM IN 1968-69. HE IS THE AUTHOR OF McNAMARA'S FOLLY: THE USE OF LOW-IQ TROOPS IN THE VIETNAM WAR, AND HE APPEARS IN A YOUTUBE VIDEO ENTITLED "McNAMARA'S FOLLY."

Making America Great Again

a found poem of Trump products
& where they are made

I. Bangladesh: shirts

II. Canada: facial soap

III. China:
bath towels, body wash, ceramics & conditioners
eyeglasses, kitchenware, laundry bags & light fixtures
moisturizers, mirrors & neckties
pens, pet collars & pet leashes
shampoo, shirts, shower caps & suits

IV. Germany: brass fittings

V. Honduras: shirts

VI. India: sport coats

VII. Indonesia: neckties

VIII. Mexico: suits

IX. Netherlands: vodka

X. Turkey: furniture

XI. Slovenia: barware

XII. Vietnam: neckties & shirts

XIII. United States of America:
"Make America Great Again" campaign hats

—W. D. Ehrhart

The Campaign to Demilitarize Public Schools

GERALD R. GIOGLIO (REVIEWER)

Counter-Recruitment and the Campaign to Demilitarize Public Schools by Scott Harding and Seth Kershner
(Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)

Professor Scott Harding and author-researcher Seth Kershner have joined forces to grace us with a highly readable, well-researched and extremely useful overview of counter-military recruitment efforts in America. At 180 pages (including copious notes and appendices) the authors once again prove the old adage, "good things come in small packages."

The book includes a fine introduction, penned by writer and long-time activist David Cortright, that presents the topic and summarizes the issues. Also, front and center, is an always welcome and helpful list of "Commonly Used Abbreviations." Beyond the front matter, you'll find five pertinent chapters and a brief conclusion.

But that's not all. The authors include two important and useful appendices: Sample Lesson Plans for Classroom Teachers and Additional Resources that reference several organizations and websites. Finally, the work is highly footnoted with a substantial bibliography.

In "Counter-Recruitment and the Campaign to Demilitarize Public Schools," Harding and Kershner promote the idea that middle school and high school are places where the military does not belong. They write, "A key theme in this book is that school militarization has reached scandalous levels in the United States, and urgent action is needed to reverse this harmful trend." The authors focus mainly on counter recruitment efforts in high schools looking at ways activists, parents, and educators can "challenge the socialization of youth to a culture of militarism, confront US foreign policy and contest misinformation spread by military recruiters."

Harding and Kershner spent three years interviewing key stakeholders, activists, teachers, parents, and students, from twenty-

five communities in fifteen states. They also researched the available literature to present a well-rounded picture of the "40-year-old [counter-recruitment] movement." The result is a satisfying piece of seat-of-your-pants, qualitative research and reporting which is both substantial and accessible.

The authors describe a variety of methods used by military recruiters to gain access to schools and to engage with students. They speak of "the recruitment pitch" given to so-called "future soldiers" that is part of a "highly sophisticated system... designed to coax impressionable young minds toward a favorable view of military service." The authors inform us that the recruitment effort in America is "enormous." They say, the annual budget for military recruitment is more than \$1.4 billion. This enables military recruiters to visit thousands of public schools, administer the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery to nearly a million high school students and enroll half a million students in Junior Reserve Officers Training (JROTC).

They also note that much of this effort is directed toward low-income communities—creating what has become known as the poverty draft. They remind us that kids in these depressed areas, where educational and employment opportunities are scarce, are more likely to respond to messages that promise a job, status, training that translates to future civilian employment, and college benefits. The authors point out that in low-income areas school budgets have been cut and there are fewer guidance counselors. If there are no counter-recruiters present, kids are less likely to consider alternatives to military service, to attend community college or to apply for financial aid. In many cases recruiters are a constant presence, going beyond merely sitting behind a table to befriending and advising potential recruits, thereby becoming de-facto guidance counselors. Sadly, and all too often, the authors note that these de-facto guidance counselors—who

have enlistment quotas to fill - are not above using "deceitful practices" and/or giving misleading or incomplete information to get kids to sign up.

The push by the military to get access to even younger populations, like middle school kids, brings to mind another old adage variously attributed to Aristotle, the Jesuits, and Lenin, "Give me the child before he is (6, 7, 10) and I'll have him forever." Counter-recruiters, in response, see their work as protecting children and teens from sophisticated military salesmanship while protecting schools from what the military calls, "total market penetration" or (...wait for it....) "school ownership!"

Counter-recruiters are also concerned with protecting student privacy and the primacy of parental consent. Goals include providing information to children and families so they can make informed choices and understand their rights, like the ability to opt-out of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery or to de-enlist from the Delayed Entry Program. This consumer advocacy technique reminded me of draft counseling approaches used during the Vietnam War. Back then, draft counselors did all they could within the law to help young men understand their rights and procedures under the Selective Service System.

Harding and Kershner consider and report on several strategies used by activists involved in counter-recruitment. Such tactics include not being perceived as anti-military but rather as advocates for kids, and using "American themes" in their presentations raising issues like privacy concerns and freedom of choice when it comes to testing and opting out of JROTC.

The authors point out that counter-recruitment work is "multidimensional." They see personal contact with students and parents as key. They strongly recommend getting students involved as peer counselors and as activists helping to end JROTC in the schools. Additionally, counter-recruiters lobby school boards or school administrators to get into

schools and/or try to get them to monitor the behavior of military recruiters who may be abusing their visitation privileges.

Be assured that there is a lot more useful information here. For example, the authors discuss ways of linking counter-recruitment efforts to preventing future wars, discuss ways to assess the impact of local efforts, consider the possibility of nationwide coordination and present references to legal opinions/rulings that establish the rights to have a presence in schools

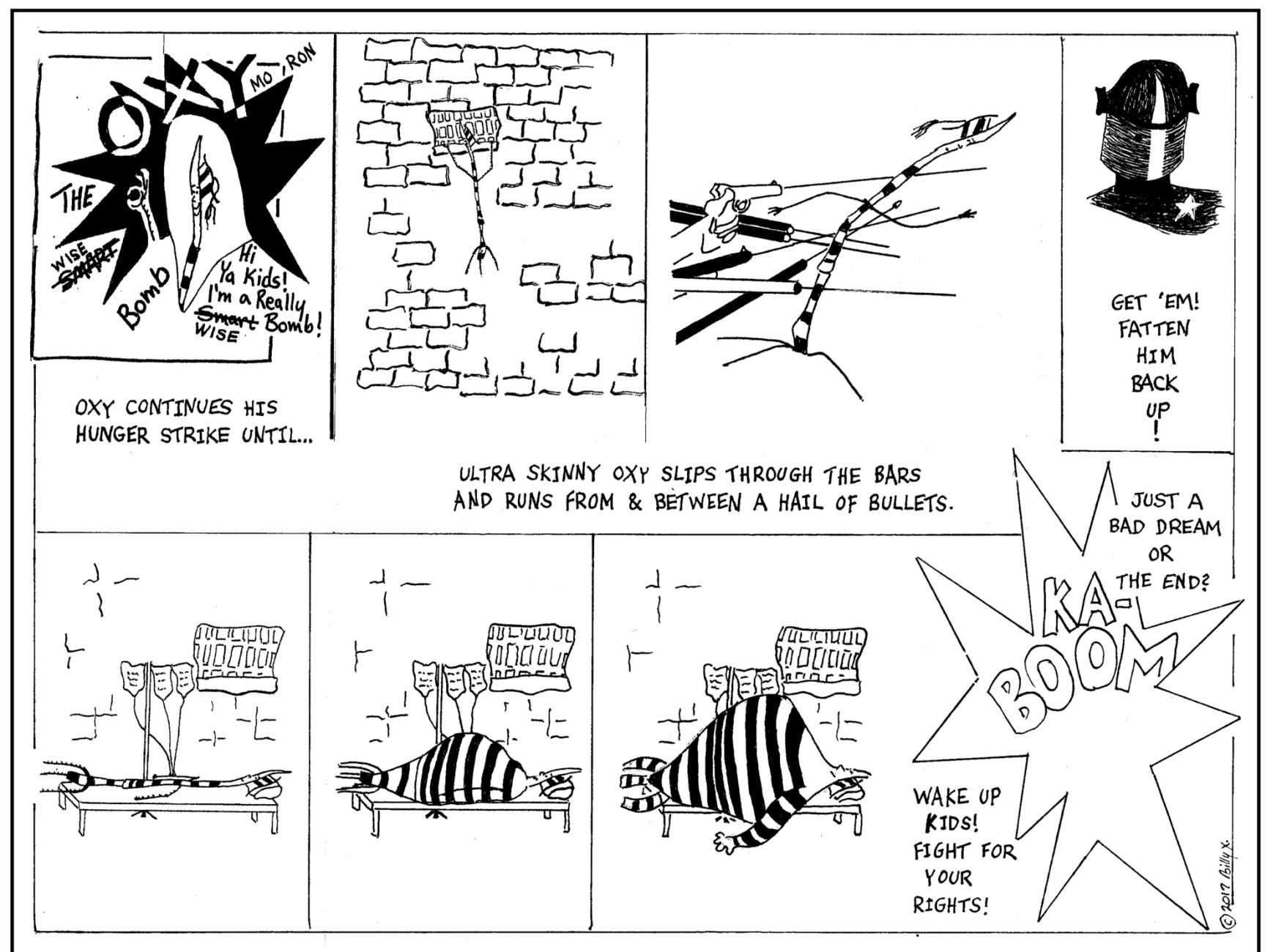
"Counter-Recruitment and the Campaign to Demilitarize Public Schools" is a down-right informative and effective title. I also found it to be heart-felt. These authors clearly write from experience and truly believe that something must be done to counter-balance what is going on in our schools. Those currently involved in counter-recruitment will be refreshed and inspired by it. Further, I suspect the authors hope that activists, parents and educators who are not involved in counter-recruitment may find themselves wanting to look at what's going on in their neighborhoods and take necessary action.

In closing, note that the book features many anecdotes and quotes from folks who are doing this work. Here is one particularly powerful testimony:

"I think that child soldiering is wrong in Nigeria, and it's wrong in the United States too. When we have military recruiters that are sitting at a desk speaking with 14-year-olds in our school, that's child soldiering and it's happening in our own back yards... These kids are being filled with lies... That's unacceptable."



GERALD R. GIOGLIO IS A VVAW MEMBER, SECULAR FRANCISCAN, AND AUTHOR OF "DAYS OF DECISION: AN ORAL HISTORY OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS IN THE MILITARY DURING THE VIETNAM WAR." HE WAS DISCHARGED FROM THE ARMY IN 1969 AS A CATHOLIC CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR.





My Lai Massacre Anniversary

MIKE HASTIE

March 16, 2017, is the 49th anniversary of the My Lai Massacre, located in Quang Ngai Province, Vietnam. It was Saturday morning, March 16, 1968, when approximately 115 US Army soldiers of the Americal Division's Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, landed in helicopters just outside the village of My Lai 4. Over the course of the next four hours, these American soldiers, and their Military High Command, who were flying overhead in helicopters observing the massacre, took part in a horror show far beyond the human imagination. They took the term "war crimes" and added a butcher shop to the equation of morbid extermination. In essence, they became a US version of the final solution. They committed an act of barbarity that would redefine the war in Vietnam. It would take years to decipher what happened that day, as denial is the elixir that protects us from experiencing national shame. It is these two words, "national shame," that continue to hide the truth of what really happened in Southeast Asia.

This is what the US military did on that day on March 16, 1968. I use the word "we" because our taxes paid for the massacre, and our ignorance about the war wrote the check. Among the dead were 182 women, 17 of them pregnant. 173 children were executed, including 56 infants. 60 older men were also murdered. The museum at My Lai, includes the accounting of another important fact: there was another village located about a mile away from My Lai 4, called My Khe 4, that US soldiers from Bravo Company on the same day, also committed atrocities. So, 407 were murdered at My Lai 4, and 97 were murdered at My Khe 4, for a total of 504 Vietnamese civilians. It also must be noted, that there were 20 rapes committed, not including attempted rapes. I have chosen not to go into detail about how those executions were committed, or the torture and extreme suffering that was committed by American soldiers under Pentagon command. This butcher shop mentality would be extremely difficult to read and comprehend by most people. But I will say this, and it is a quote from Larry Colburn, who was a door gunner on Hugh Thompson's helicopter that landed on the ground during the massacre, and attempted to stop the killing: "The only thing the US soldiers did not do was cook them and eat them."

In order to understand WHY these two massacres were committed on March 16, 1968, a synopsis and history of what happened in Quang Ngai Province during the war would be helpful for the reader. I came across an article written on October 2, 1994, by award-winning author, and Vietnam veteran, Tim O'Brien. The title of the article is "The Vietnam in Me." These are his words:

"In the years preceding the murders at My Lai, more than 70 percent of the villages in Quang Ngai Province had been destroyed by air strikes, artillery fire, Zippo lighters, napalm, white phosphorus, bulldozers, gunships and other such means. Roughly 40 percent of the population had lived in refugee camps, while civilian casualties in the area were approaching 50,000 a year. These numbers, reported by the journalist Jonathan Schell in 1967, were later confirmed as substantially

correct by Government investigators. Not that I needed confirmation. Back in 1969, the wreckage was all around us, so common it seemed part of the geography, as natural as any mountain or river. Wreckage was the rule. Brutality was S.O.P. Scalded children, pistol-whipped women, burning hootches, free-fire zones, body counts, indiscriminate bombing and harassment fire, villages in ash, M-60 machine guns hosing down dark green tree lines and human life behind them. In a war without aim, you tend not to aim. You close your eyes, close your heart. The consequences become hit or miss in the most literal sense. With so few military targets, with an enemy that was both of and among the population, Alpha Company began to regard Quang Ngai itself as the true enemy—the physical place, the soil and paddies. What had started for us as a weird, vicious little war soon evolved into something far beyond vicious, a hopped-up killer strain of nihilism, waste without want, aimlessness of spirit. As Schell wrote after the events at My Lai, 'There can be no doubt that such an atrocity was possible only because a number of other methods of killing civilians and destroying their villages had come to be the rule, and not the exception, in our conduct of the war.'"

In the book "Kill Anything That Moves" by Nick Turse, he states on page 11, "The war's casualty figures are staggering indeed. From 1955 to 1975, the United States lost more than 58,000 military personnel in Southeast Asia. Its troops were wounded around 304,000 times, with 153,000 cases serious enough to require hospitalization, and 75,000 veterans left severely disabled. While Americans who served in Vietnam paid a grave price, an extremely conservative estimate of Vietnamese deaths found them to be proportionally 100 times greater than those suffered by the United States."

Also, on page 61 of Nick Turse's book, he states, "According to Westmoreland's memoir, MacArthur 'urged me to make sure I always had plenty of artillery, for the Oriental,' he said, 'greatly fears artillery,'" and suggested that Westmoreland might have to employ a "scorched earth policy" in Vietnam.

As I did more research in writing this article, I had to put my mind in a place that required the attention of bearing witness. So much of the research is heart breaking, especially when you watch video of Vietnamese grieving the loss of loved ones. The shame you feel is gut wrenching. As an Army medic in Vietnam in 1970-71, the Vietnam War completely redefined my life.

I was raised in a military family, as my father was a career Army officer, and combat veteran in North Africa during World War II. I spent my early life on US military bases in Japan, Germany, and bases on the East Coast and West Coast of the United States. My core belief system was a direct result of that upbringing. As far as I was concerned, the United States was the greatest country in the world.

I wholeheartedly believed that until I went into the Army in March 1969. By the time I got to An Khe, Vietnam in September 1970, I was experiencing the rapid deterioration of American involvement in Vietnam. I was seeing periodic casualties coming



Main statue at the My Lai Memorial.

in by medevac helicopters from the field, occasional attacks from mortars and rockets, but mostly internal violence in my own unit. Heroin addiction was rampant, suicides and shoot-outs between US soldiers could happen at any time.

I spent most of my time on a reconnaissance support base, that included three other heavily armed fire bases. The 155mm howitzers on those bases occasionally fired into free-fire zones just like most bases throughout Vietnam. Our assault helicopters, and gunships went out often on hunting missions. To this day, I have no idea the damage they inflicted on the Vietnamese people.

In early April 1971, I was working in our aid station, when an Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) pulled up to our aid station, because one of the crew members had a minor injury. On the front of that APC, the crew had painted in large white letters: KILL A GOOK FOR CALLEY.

Lt. William Calley was of course the only one who was found guilty of the My Lai Massacre. He was found guilty of war crimes on March 29, 1971, and was sentenced to life in prison. However, President Nixon pardoned him, and he eventually returned to Atlanta, Georgia to work in his father-in-law's jewelry store.

During his trial, millions of Americans believed he was not guilty, and sent thousands of letters to the White House asking for his release. Even though Calley was guilty, the one thing most people do not realize, is that you always protect the upper echelon of military command. It is an unwritten rule in the military. The military almost always blames it on a bad apple in the lower ranks.

The important thing to remember, is that the My Lai Massacre was a military operation that had a predictable outcome. You do not bring the enemy to the peace table by just killing military combatants. You ultimately bring the enemy to the peace table by killing innocent civilians. They are military targets. The primary

goal of the aggressor nation is to break the will of the people, and its ability to defend its homeland. This strategy is as old as warfare itself.

It is now March 16, 2017, 49 years after the My Lai Massacre. Since the end of World War II, during my lifetime, as I am now 72, the United States has bombed 30 countries. The atrocities have never stopped.

What happened at My Lai is extremely important to understand, because atrocities during the war were US Policies! My Lai is a metaphor for the entire Vietnam War. My Lai was NEVER an aberration.

The most important realization that has come out of writing this article, is that it always comes back to me, because my country did this. I cannot divorce myself from this reality. When I came back from Vietnam I finally had to face the truth, that I was the enemy in Vietnam. That realization was to eventually put me in two psychiatric hospitals.

My core belief system was completely dismantled. I felt like a stranger in a strange land. And, whenever I tried to convince people that we were the barbarians in Vietnam, the more people avoided me.

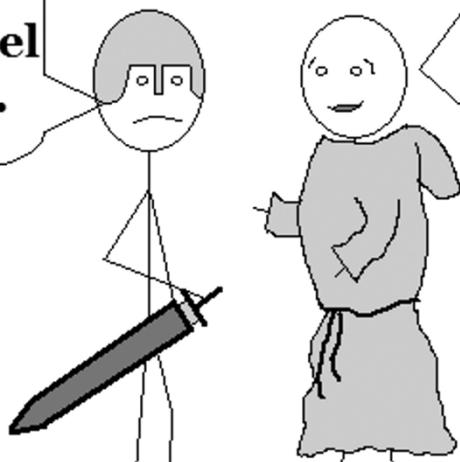
People don't want to hear that toxic truth, because I was violating the existing beliefs of society. I was like the 16-year-old girl who blurted out that her father raped her. This kind of information is taboo, and the only course was to blame the victim.

I have met many Vietnam veterans who were involved in atrocities, and that pain was very excruciating. Some of them have worked through what happened, but the trail of suffering they went through had to be done behind closed doors with counselors.

Our society is never part of that healing, because they don't want to hear the truth. And, of course, you have to ask why? They do not want to feel the shame, the National Shame,

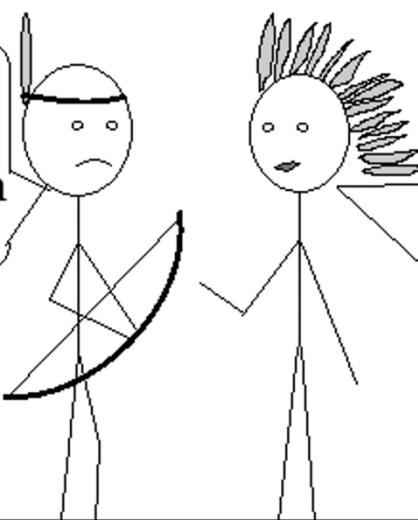
Stick Vet

I have returned from Battle. I feel cold in my heart.



I understand as I too once fought in war. Come with my young warrior. We will pray to God for Forgiveness and Healing. Your soul will know peace again.

I have returned from Battle. I feel my spirit filled with darkness.



Follow the guidance of our Ancestors. Come with me, we will sweat into the earth and ask the spirits for Cleansing. The path is hard but we will travel together.

I have returned from battle. I feel lost and alone.



Yep, Sounds about right. Well kid, Don't do what I did.

By: Travis Landchild

A handwritten signature of Travis Landchild.

www.StickVet.com

My Lai Massacre Anniversary

continued from previous page

because it is so frightening. If they were to feel that shame, they would have to redefine their entire lives.

In the end, I came to realize, that whenever the truth threatens one's core belief system, there is an urgent need to deny its reality. That is why denial becomes a sacred cow.

I have personally known many Vietnam veterans who were destroyed by their experiences in Vietnam. At least four of my friends died from Agent Orange exposure, including my brother-in-law. One died from a head-on car collision, one died homeless on the streets, and two hung themselves.

It does not surprise me that more Vietnam veterans have committed suicide than were killed in Vietnam. According to the Veterans Administration, one veteran commits suicide every hour in this country.

The survivor, then, is a disturber of the peace. He is a runner of the blockade men erect against knowledge of "unspeakable" things. About these he aims to speak, and in so doing he undermines, without intending to, the validity of existing norms. He is a genuine transgressor, and here he is made to feel real guilt.

The world to which he appeals does not admit him, and since he has looked to this world as the source of moral order, he begins to doubt

himself. And that is not the end, for now his guilt is doubled by betrayal—of himself, of his task, of his vow to the dead. "The final guilt is not to bear witness. The survivor's worst torment is not to be able to speak." - Terrence Des Pres, *The Survivor*

In closing, I have to remind myself that lying is the most powerful weapon in war. I am reminded of what Dalton Trumbo wrote in his famous novel, "Johnny Got His Gun." These are his words: "If the thing they were fighting for was important enough to die for then it was also important enough for them to be thinking about it in the last minutes of their lives. That stood to reason. Life is awfully important so if you've given it away you'd ought to think with all your mind in the last moments of your life about the thing you traded it for. So, did all those kids die thinking of democracy and freedom and liberty and honor and the safety of the home and the stars and stripes forever? You're goddamn right they didn't."

Viktor E. Frankl, who wrote "Man's Search For Meaning," was very instrumental in my healing, when he wrote, "Suffering ceases to be suffering when it has meaning."

In 1994, and 2016, I made trips back to Vietnam, with special emphasis on spending time at the My

Lai Massacre site. This past year, I helped raise \$8,600.00 with the help of Veterans for Peace, to restore a very large mosaic tile mural, that depicts the massacre of those civilians in the last moments of their lives. It is a very powerful piece of art.

While I was there, I met a Vietnamese woman who is the co-director of the My Lai Museum. She has worked there for 17 years, and has met countless tourists who make the journey to this place. I told her I was a veteran, and that millions of Americans who were adamantly against the war, see this memorial as being very important. I also said to her, that as far as I was concerned, the My Lai Massacre site was sacred ground. In an instant, she broke down and cried.

The emotional connection I felt was beyond understanding. I think it was the closest thing to love I had felt since I came back from Vietnam in 1971. Shortly after I met her, she asked me if I wanted to meet one of the lone survivors of the massacre.

His name is Pham Thanh Cong, who was eleven-years-old when US troops came into his village that early morning on March 16, 1968. An American soldier threw a hand grenade into his family hut, and killed his mother, three sisters and a six-year-old brother. He was protected by their bodies during the explosion. He himself was wounded in three places.

It was a privilege to meet him, but I have to admit, I was somewhat apprehensive, because I had been an American soldier in HIS country. Shortly after we met, he asked me if I had been at My Lai during the massacre. I assured him that I had not, and that I was in the Central Highlands two years after the massacre. I could tell he was relieved.

We talked for about ten minutes through an interpreter. There was a brief recording of that conversation made. When I began to see his eyes turn red, with tears welling up, I switched the conversation to having a picture made with him and me, and another American veteran who was with me by the name of Sandy Kelson.

In the back of my mind, I didn't really know what I would say to him as we parted. In the end, I kissed him on the cheek, and told him I loved him.



MIKE HASTIE WAS AN ARMY MEDIC IN VIETNAM. HIS FATHER WAS A CAREER ARMY OFFICER AND WWII COMBAT VETERAN. HE SPENT MOST OF HIS EARLY CHILDHOOD IMMERSSED IN MILITARY CULTURE. WHEN HE CAME BACK FROM VIETNAM, HE PICKED UP A CAMERA TO PHOTOGRAPH THE LIE OF HIS CHILDHOOD. HE FEELS THAT LYING IS THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON IN WAR AND THAT LIBERATION FROM DENIAL IS EVERYTHING.

Unspeakable

JOHN KETWIG (REVIEWER)

Unspeakable by Chris Hedges
(Hot Books, 2016)

The full title of Chris Hedges' latest book is *Unspeakable: Talks with David Talbot about the Most Forbidden Topics in America*. Chris Hedges has emerged as one of the most thoughtful, acerbic, and outspoken commentators in American literature over the past few years. A graduate of Harvard Divinity School and war correspondent for *The New York Times*, Hedges has challenged his reader's acceptance of the American status quo in such landmark books as "War Is a Force that Gives Us Meaning," a deep and disturbing study of the role of militarism in our society and the dangers of modern war to the emotional and spiritual health of anyone who witnesses it; "American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America;" "Death of the Liberal Class;" and *Wages of Rebellion: The Moral Imperative of Revolt*."

His regular columns on *Truthdig.com* are always informative and usually intensely challenging. Hedges was a regular participant at the Occupy Wall Street activities; and in 2012 he sued President Obama and the US Congress, along with Daniel Ellsberg, Noam Chomsky and others, challenging the ambiguity of the National Defense Authorization Act which allows detention of citizens suspected of providing "support" to Al Qaeda, the Taliban, or other groups hostile to the US. Ultimately, the courts ruled that Hedges and the others "lacked legal standing" to

challenge the government's authority. Hedges teaches college credit courses at a maximum-security prison, and supports his family with his writing and speaking.

"Unspeakable" is the transcript of a lengthy interview between Chris Hedges and David Talbot, author of "Brothers: The Hidden History of the Kennedy Years;" and "The Devil's Chessboard: Allen Dulles, the CIA, and the Rise of America's Secret Government" which I reviewed (very enthusiastically!) in a previous issue of *The Veteran*. Basically, it seems the two men enjoyed a lengthy and mutually respectful conversation in and around Hedges' hometown of Princeton, New Jersey. The topics range from "Life at the New York Times" where Hedges found a climate of corporate ass-kissing and ineffective journalism reporting from "official" government briefings versus getting out into the real world and talking with the peasants and people most directly affected by current events, to reflections upon the Trump/Clinton election, "The Seductions of Power," "The Bankruptcy of the Liberal Elites," "Crime and Punishment," "The Morality of Capitalism, Climate Change, Pornography, and Meat," and "Maintaining Your Humanity Even While Cruelty Reigns." These are troubling, even dangerous times in America and Chris Hedges dares to examine the cause and effect of many key issues of the day.

"Did the prospect of a Hillary Clinton presidency disturb you any less than a Trump reign?" Talbot asks, and Hedges responds: "Our political

and economic elites—including Trump and Clinton—are hostile to genuine change. They don't work for us. They don't work for the planet. And they are well paid for it. The wars will still be waged no matter who wins the White House to enrich the arms manufacturers. Wall Street will still carry out its casino capitalism and push us ever closer towards another financial meltdown. The security and surveillance state will still make us the most monitored and watched society in human history. The trade agreements will still be signed to further weaken national sovereignty and send more jobs overseas. The prisons will still swell with the bodies of the poor. Social programs will still be diminished or terminated in the name of authority. These corporate forces lie beyond the control of the state; indeed the state has become the vehicle for further consolidation of corporate power and profits. We do not have any institutions left that can be authentically called democratic, if we define democratic to mean the expression of the popular will. Civic virtue has been transformed into economic rationality. We have to start rebuilding from scratch outside of the system, including the creation of third parties that openly defy corporate power."

"Unspeakable" is a small book, only 149 pages, and you can read it in a couple of evenings. It is scary, as Hedges believes our country is on the verge of something he calls Christianized fascism. "Violence," he observes, "has been directed against all who appear to have been empowered

at the expense of a disenfranchised white working class – African Americans, Muslims, undocumented workers, homosexuals, feminists, artists, and intellectuals." He foresees an onslaught of violence, rage, and a search for scapegoats. Power will be seized by "ethnic nationalists, warlords, gangsters and demagogues." Factories will close, we will see high unemployment and hyperinflation. "When a society disintegrates, as ours is disintegrating, when you acculturate people to speak in the language of violence, you will eventually get violence. I don't know how far it will go. But it will get worse."

Chris Hedges has seen, up close and at great personal risk, civil wars and ethnic struggles in Central America, the Balkans, and the Middle East. He is a spiritual man, and a patriot with deep concerns about the America his children will inherit. As Vietnam veterans, we have seen many similar examples of the cruel exploitations and inhumane corporate profiteering that he describes, and many of us share his concerns. Few of us can put our background knowledge or insights into words as eloquently or effectively as Hedges, but we can certainly learn a lot from him. "Unspeakable" is a terrific little book, and highly recommended.



JOHN KETWIG IS A LIFETIME MEMBER OF VVAW, AND THE AUTHOR OF ...AND A HARD RAIN FELL: A G.I.'S TRUE STORY OF THE WAR IN VIETNAM.

Destroyer

At the Hukilau bar
there's a chart
laminated on the table
with depths and heights
of beautiful Pearl Harbor.

My thoughts go winging away
like the tradewind clouds
floating overhead that day
the destroyer enters
Pearl Harbor bay.

In a Key West tiki bar
I remember Pearl Harbor
and the day we went in.
An "ocean greyhound" in the garden.

Long Tom five-inch guns
pointing straight ahead
to misty mountain forest
rising from the sea bed.

Hawaii. DD 950 on her way to war.
They lied. Called it just
"a military conflict."

Over the USS Arizona we glide
that monument to hate
where twenty-five years earlier
two thousand sailors met their fate.

All on a Sunday morning.
They're still there
waving their bony hands
saying "Don't go, let it wait."

Three sailors rented a jeep
and around Oahu sped
then set sail for Viet Nam
to kill whomever
the capitalists said.

Young man do listen
and listen with your head
if you're alive
and love the living
let the dead bury the dead.

—Allen Meece

The Girl in the Picture

for Phan Thi Kim Phuc

"Whatever you run from becomes your shadow."- traditional

If you're a namvet, a survivor of sorts,
she'll come for you across the decades
casting a shadow in the dying light of your dreams,
naked and nine, terror in her eyes

Of course you will have to ignore her -
if you wish to survive over the years -
but then your daughters will turn nine
and then your granddaughters nine

As the shadows lengthen.

So, you will have no choice on that one night
screaming down the Ridge Road, lights off,
under a full moon, she standing in the middle of the road,
still naked and nine, terror in her eyes

Now you must stop to pick her up, to carry her back
home to where she came from, to that gentle
village where the forgiving and the forgiven
gather at high noon. There are no shadows.

—Doug Rawlings



MOTHER AND SON Millard

My Last Few Days Across the Pond

DAVID SANDGRUND

I am sitting in the radio shack and as usual it is very hot, the three small windows give almost no ventilation and the door to the sleeping quarters is closed so John can get some sleep. But tonight I don't care. Two days to go and this short-timer is outta here. Most of my stuff is stowed in my duffel. My flight is scheduled to leave Tan Son Nhut Airbase AM on the first. I have been in country for twelve months, ten of those on this radio Teletype machine. It is time to go home.

Rumors have been flying around about a countrywide offensive by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese. Most of the soldiers don't believe a word, but those of us who have been working the radio room know that something is up. For the first time since I've been here, there have been a dozen messages in one day, most in the past three hours, now it's midnight, Jan 30th turning to Jan 31st, the Lunar New Year.

I'm on duty and John, one of the two other operators, is asleep in our hooch attached to the radio shack. Usually I could nap, and be woken by the radio alarm if there is a message, but tonight I'm awake because the Officer of the Day requested that I monitor the radio constantly. Now he's back to tell me we are on high alert and that Nick, the third radio operator, is at the command bunker with our portable unit.

"Oh and by the way all flights in and out were canceled until at least Feb 3rd."

"SHIT!!!! Does that mean I am stuck here another frigging week.... SHIT!!!"

He just smiles and walks out.

I pick up an alert on the radio from three separate units at the same time - the Marine base at Natrang, the 1st Infantry up the road from us about 15 miles in Ben Cat and MACV headquarters in Saigon, all advising they were under attack. I check my watch, it's twenty minutes after midnight. I date stamp the messages and I call the command post on my hand-set and advise them of the incoming messages. The OD requests that I wake up John and send him up the hill to the radar post with the large portable radio unit to set up contact with our batteries.

About ten minutes after waking up John, I begin hearing gunfire in the distance. I suspect, with the shift of the wind, that what I am hearing is the attack at Ben Cat. The firing is getting closer and I can see flashes of explosions and flares from the area of USARV HQ about 5 miles up the road. It is quiet in our immediate area. The radio is now alive with reports of attacks. The rumors are correct and the Viet Cong and the People's Army of Vietnam have launched a coordinated attack throughout South Vietnam.

Our batteries at Tan Son Nhut

Airport report fighting all around them, but nothing in their immediate area, the same is true for the battery at Bien Hoa Airbase. However, our battery at the 1st Infantry base is reporting heavy fighting in their immediate area and some incoming mortars and rockets. They have been advised by headquarters of the 1st to take cover and not return fire, stay out of the fight. These instructions are reinforced by the battalion commander, through me and acknowledged by the battery commander. Shortly after that we lose contact with them.

The remainder of the night is nerve-racking and very noisy. I hear the fighting at Ben Cat, at Long Binh Junction where USARV HQ is located and Bien Hoa. The night is quiet in the immediate area of our compound, but there is unusual activity in the Widow's Village on the northwest edge of the compound. I report this to both our command post and the command post for the 11th Cavalry Div, which is stationed on the hill above our compound, protecting our radar center. The morning dawns sunny and hot as usual, with high alert called off.

It is also very hazy, a mixture of normal morning haze and the smoke from the overnight fighting. It is the first morning I can remember that did not dawn quiet. There is continued small arms and mortar fire. There are fewer rockets than during the night, but the constant gunfire and mortar rounds makes napping difficult and after about half an hour I give up. All three of us radio operators are on alert, only one, me, is actually on duty. About 1100 hours the OD orders all personnel on duty and re-establishes high alert. All the perimeter foxholes and watchtowers are manned and the mess and other facilities close down. Only the kitchen is open and food is hand carried to each position. I remain at the radio unit and the other operators return to their posts of the night before.

The gunfire continues all day. The gunships and helicopters were inactive in the morning, but as the afternoon wears on more and more of them can be seen and heard in the sky. By now most of the US Army and Marines and the RVN Army positions have been attacked and are either still fighting or have beaten off the attack. The Viet Cong are hitting and running as usual. Although some positions have been captured, like the army bases at Hue, where the entire city has been overrun, in Saigon, Danang, Bien Hoa and other location they are attacking and being beaten off, But now, unlike the past, even when driven off, they are coming back. At about 1930 I receive a message from Saigon that they are under heavy artillery fire and ground forces have re-entered the city after the Army and Marines had driven them out. I pass the information to the command post.

As evening approaches the sound of gunfire seems louder and closer. The soldiers on the top of the hill can see that the 11th Cavalry is under attack. It is coming from the south, the furthest point away from the compound. As darkness closes in, the shooting becomes not just noise but now also visual. I can see the red tracers and the orange flares, the fire trails from the rockets and sometimes funny-looking crooked white lines in the sky where mortars and other shells create disturbances in the atmosphere.

Suddenly I hear the high pitched whine of incoming, the first mortar and rocket rounds explode with earth shaking violence within our compound, mostly on the south side of the hill. Sounded like a rocket. Shit! Close! I hunker down a bit and cover the window facing south with a sand bag. I hear the OD ordering everyone on firefight alert and I advise the 11th Cav that we are under mortar attack. Suddenly I realize that the rounds are coming not just from the south, but also from right in front of us from Widows' Village. I contact command and also advise the 11th Cav.

More small arms fire, closer. Now machine gunfire, nearby. I look up, out the window, clear sky beautiful stars, tracers among the stars, red streaks among the white spot. The teletype is buzzing, flash through the window, more flares that blot out stars. This night is orange and yellow with puffs of white. Again machine gun firing, this time behind the compound. More helicopters gunships over head. BOOM!!! BOOM!!! BOOM!!! IN COMING!!! Mortars, small rockets close very close. Machine gun fire from the gunships. Then quiet as the copters and gunships move off. Now I go to the window, the moon is rising but the stars are still gone lost in the white and yellow of the flares.

Now the incoming is from only the east, from Widow's Village, and we are caught in the crossfire between the 11th Cavalry and the Viet Cong in the Widows' Village. The 11th Cavalry instructs us not to take part in the firefight, that we are to lie low and they will advise if we need to join the firefight or if we will need to evacuate. The commander of the 11th Cav does not think there are enough troops in Widows' Village to attack directly and so sooner or later they will give it up. If there are too many casualties in the next few hours they will send in Armored Personnel Carriers to flush the VC out.

I pass this information on to command and wonder what constitutes too many casualties.

As night two passes into day, I take the chance to stick my nose out the door and realize that the small arms fire is so low in some places along the hill that you can't cross that part of the compound standing up, you either need to crouch or crawl. Back inside I exchange updates with USRV command, the 11th Cav and our battalion command. No sleep, one nap.

The day ends and the third night of fighting begins. The 11th Cav has started sending more and more mortars and rockets into Widows Village. The noise is deafening. The earth and the entire radio shack shake almost non-stop.

I have never

been so scared as I have been during these past days and nights, but it does seem to be less scary at night then during the day. What makes it even weirder is that I am not even involved in the actual firefight. The battle is raging around and over me mostly. I can't help feeling that if I were fighting I would be involved and have less idle time to worry and be scared. At least working the radios in the midst of all the firing gives a sense of being busy and less time to worry and be scared. That doesn't happen during the day. I am convinced that before and after are the scariest parts of a battle and that during a firefight, while the most dangerous, is the time when you are least scared...no time to be, even for a radio operator.

Now following the mortar and rocket barrage the 11th Cav sends a small force of APC down the side of the hill into Widow's Village where they come under heavy VC small arms fire. I can see the APC from my window and watch as they exchange fire with the VC. In the midst of the APC attack I am involved in an exchange of messages with USARV and MACV HQ and our battalion commander. The next time I look up the APC are moving back up the hill and light is starting to show in the sky behind Widow's Village.

The day dawns hazy and hot once more. It is quieter this morning, the Teletype is not clacking away as it has been for the past three nights and days. I am awake, the alarm on the Teletype is screaming in my ear, I must have been asleep for some time because the sun is fading over the hill and the alarm is buzzing and the machine is clacking out new messages.

The messages advise that the VC have retreated from Saigon and Danang. I pass these on to command and respond to several messages from other nearby units. Suddenly I realize it is dark out. It is night four since the VC/NVA offensive began. I can hear the whoosh and scream of mortars being launched and the rumble of APCs. I look out my window and I can see at least twice many APCs in Widow's Village as last night They have set up a perimeter around the village and are slowly closing the circle.

There is less firing from the VC. It is at this point that my heart skips a beat at the prospect of an end to this fighting. The machine starts clacking away and I am too busy passing messages back and forth to follow what is happening outside. Suddenly I realize it is quiet, no small arms, no chugging APCs, and the teletype has gone quiet. I look out the window. Through a thick haze the sun is rising behind Widow's Village.

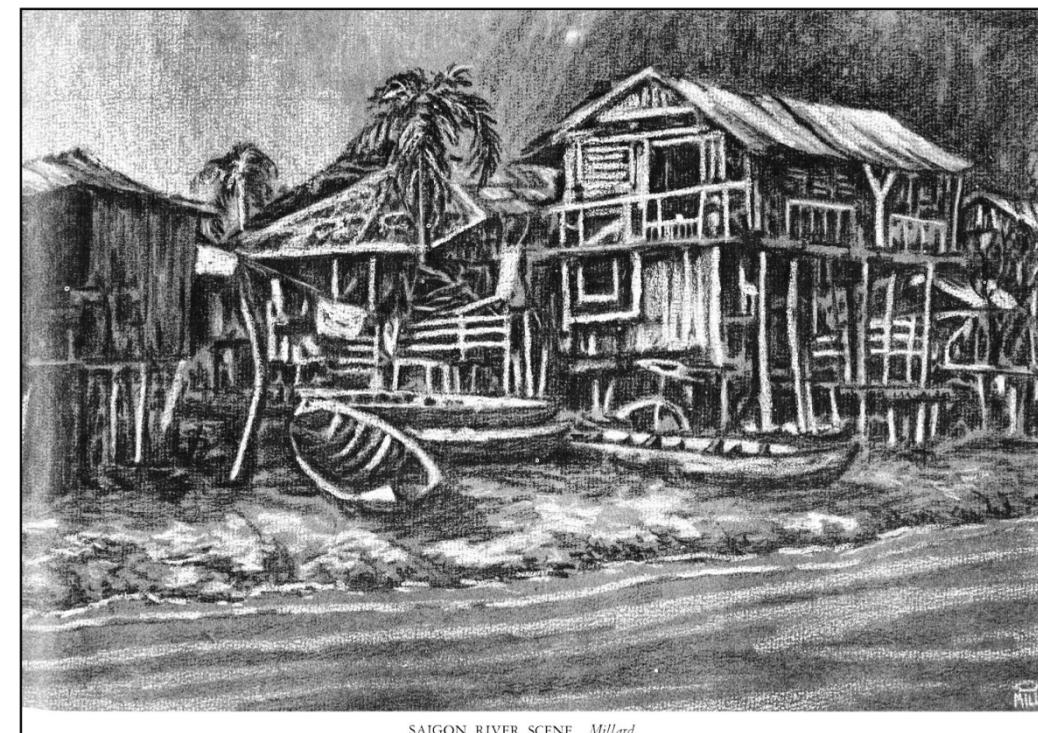
The OD comes in with a stack of papers with information that needs to be sent to USARV and MACV. I begin typing away. John returns from the radar section with sandwiches and beers in hand. Eating and chatting we tell each other our little stories. I lie down.

I awake.....it is the fifth night, silence.

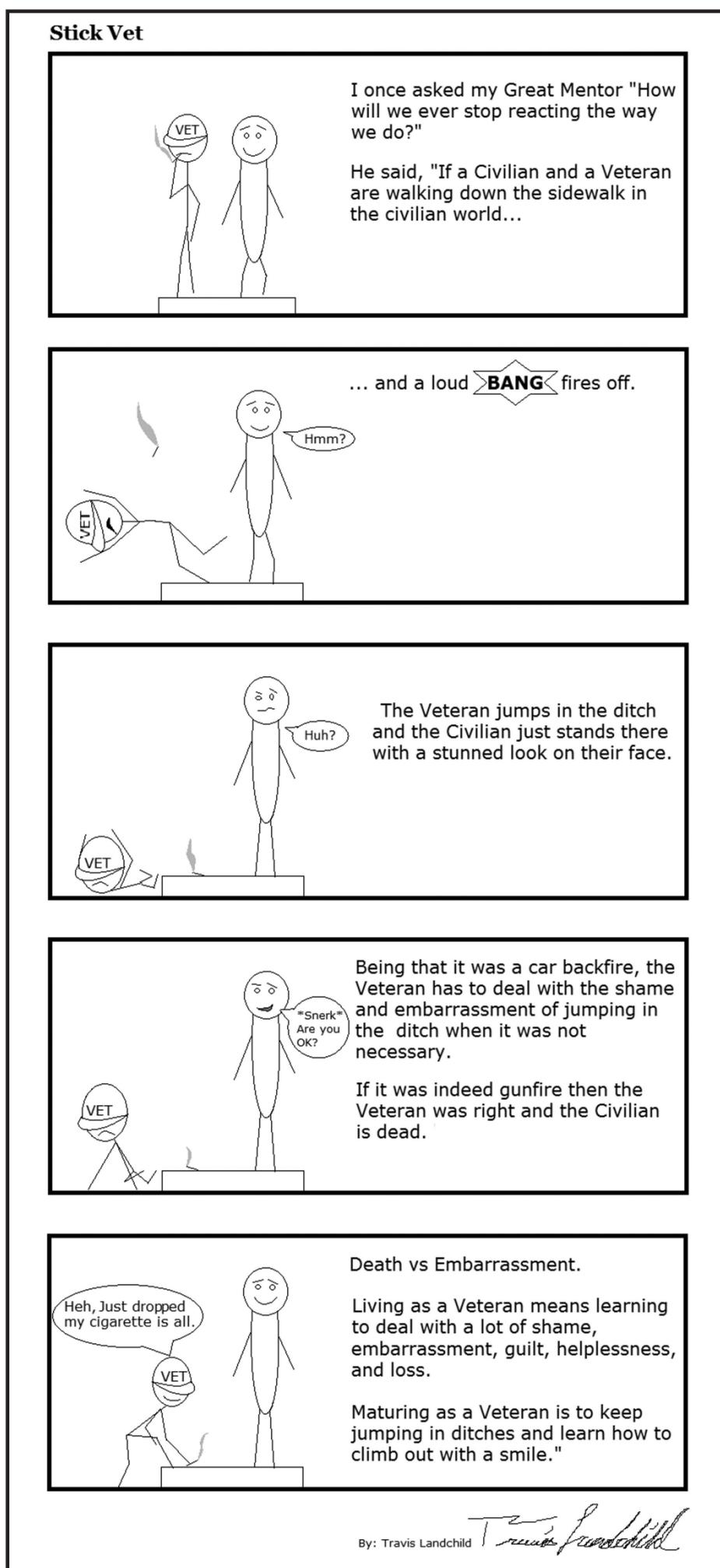
Early the next morning the communication officer comes in to let me know my flight out is in three days. I will be leaving for Saigon the next morning to process out. Finally this short-timer is on his way home!!!!



DAVID SANDGRUND WAS ATTACHED TO THE HHB 6TH HAWK MISSILE BATTALION, 56TH ARTILLERY.



SAIGON RIVER SCENE Millard



Trump Moves the Doomsday Clock Closer to Midnight

HARRY PETREQUIN

For decades, the global scientific community has warned of the two greatest risks to humanity's survival: nuclear war and climate change. Recently, they have cited how the Trump administration has accelerated both risks.

The "Doomsday Clock" was created by the Academy of Atomic Scientists during the Cold War to warn of the likelihood of a nuclear war. In late January, *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* moved the hands of this clock to two and a half minutes before midnight, the closest they have been since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1963. Notably, it was the first time these hands were moved on the basis of statements made by one man: Donald Trump.

Trump's cavalier remarks, "What good are nuclear weapons if you can't use them?" his proclamations about bolstering the number of nuclear weapons thereby reversing decades of American policy, allowing current allies to develop their own nuclear arms, and other bellicose declarations have set off alarm bells around the world.

In the wake of these pronouncements the Mayor of Hiroshima invited President Trump to come tour the museum in that city which commemorates the first use of nuclear weapons. The missiles for which Trump now has the launch codes carry multiple hydrogen bomb warheads with hundreds of times the explosive power of that

first atomic bomb. There are 450 of these on a "Hair-Trigger Alert Status," meaning they can be launched within seven minutes.

Mikhail Gorbachev, who presided over the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and who in 1991 signed the START treaty with the United States sharply reducing the number of nuclear weapons, stated that we are now closer to a nuclear war than we ever were during the Cold War. Vladimir Putin, Russia's current Premier, does not think the Cold War ever ended, and in his quest to restore Russia to the world status the former Soviet Union once enjoyed, cites the United States as the principal obstacle in this endeavor.

Gorbachev calls for an immediate convening of the United Nations Security Council at which all those nations possessing nuclear weapons, particularly the United States and Russia with over 90% of the nuclear weapons stockpile, would agree that these weapons would never be employed.

The second greatest risk to humanity, climate change, has likewise been intensified by the Trump administration. With Trump having declared climate change a "Chinese hoax," climate change denial became a requisite qualification for all those considered for cabinet or advisory positions. The very word,

"Climate," was scrubbed from the White House website. Trump's liaison team requested the names of all federal employees who had participated in any of the international conferences dealing with climate change, obviously, the preliminary step in purging all departments and agencies of such personnel; fortunately, these requests were not honored.

Likewise, there has been a gag order on all agencies and departments having activities relevant to the climate. Any document with mention of the climate must be submitted to Trump's designated personnel for prior review and probable modification before release to the public.

The previous Secretary of State, John Kerry, considered as his greatest achievement his role in convincing 196 nations to sign the Paris Accord, the most comprehensive international agreement yet produced to address climate change. His successor, Rex Tillerson, as the CEO of ExxonMobil, the world's largest oil corporation, spent hundreds of millions of dollars financing campaigns and institutions to undermine the scientific proof that pollutants created by use of fossil fuels intensified the rate of climate change. Ironically, it was the scientists at ExxonMobil in 1981 who noted the damaging effects of fossil fuel emissions on Earth's atmosphere. Recently Tillerson signed an agreement with

Putin giving ExxonMobil drilling rights in the Russian portion of the Arctic Ocean.

Trump now has a compliant legislature and a complacent judiciary. With 85% of the media controlled by six giant corporations, traditional channels for expression of concern are denied the public. It appears the only route to follow is that just pioneered by women from around the world who united in protest of Trump's misogynist statements and treatment of them. That should serve as a model for the populace here and elsewhere to unite in protest of the Trump administration's leading humanity down the road to annihilation.

Such action is now a moral imperative for this generation if we are to have a positive response to that inevitable question our children and grandchildren will ask us, "You knew they were destroying our planet; what did you do to stop them?"



HARRY J. PETREQUIN, JR. IS A RETIRED FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER, U.S. STATE DEPT. FORMER FACULTY MEMBER, NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE. SERVED AS DECK OFFICER, U.S. COASTGUARD (1951-53), INCLUDING ON A DESTROYER ESCORT IN THE KOREAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS, AND ALSO ABOARD A CUTTER IN VIETNAM (1971). NOW RESIDES IN BLACK MOUNTAIN, NC.

This is Where We Have Come

JIM WOHLGEMUTH

Take a look.
 This is where we have come.
 Twenty-two veterans take their own lives every day. Many of them are our generation, but many of them are young veterans, who were sold a bill of goods like we were. Many of whom believed that they were on an honorable mission only to find out that, like us, they were pawns in the scheme of the rich. However, these youngsters are part of an all-volunteer army. That means that the public is deathly silent when they come home dead and injured. That means that when they look for assistance often the response is "well you volunteered."
 Militarism is now the chief export of the US and we are internationally viewed as the biggest threat to world

peace. Seriously, Gallup did an international poll in 2014 and the US was seen by 24% of the people as the biggest threat to peace. Second place, I think, went to China or Pakistan at 8%.
 We have been killing people with drones to the point where we as Americans don't care. It is clean and we don't get hurt. But we do not realize the consequences, the recruitment of more people to hate us. Now we have a reckless Commander in Chief, more of a child in a man's suit, playing soldier, being disengaged as one of ours gets killed while killing thirty innocents (eight children, including a US citizen).
 I truly believed that our generation would be the last to suffer this fate. I thought that as we grew older that

we would stand up and forbid our politicians to send us into another debacle, but we didn't. We allowed it to happen again and again and again from incursions into Central American to endless war in Afghanistan and Iraq. And we lead the world in the sale of arms to other countries. So, we are perpetuating not only our own wars but those of other countries.
 I hate to say this but sometimes I feel that all the soldiers and sailors and airmen who died for this country may have died for nothing. I know I said all from the Revolution on. We are only 240 years old but we have lost many aspects of our democracy and have become the world's bully. Those who died fighting the Nazis a mere 75 years ago would not recognize our

country. The 750,000 who died in the Civil War would be so disappointed to see that we are no longer a country of the people, by the people, and for the people, and the people don't seem to care. The Founders, who realized that in order for this country to succeed would require an engaged populace and never a peace time army, are probably rolling over in their graves and saying to each other, "Well we tried!"
 I wish we would try.



JIM WOHLGEMUTH IS A MEMBER OF VVAW WHO LIVES IN NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE.



Anti-Nixon demo, April 27, 1974, Chicago.

Stick Vet ~ Introducing Chick Vet

When did you Deploy?

I went to Baghdad in '04 and then Afghanistan in '08 What about you?

I was in Baghdad in '06, we just missed each other.

Thank you for your service.

I appreciate your support.

Oh. Was your husband in the military?

By: Travis Landchild *Travis Landchild*

www.StickVet.com

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

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

VVAW also took up the struggle for the rights and needs of veterans. In 1970, we began the first rap groups

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

Today our government still finances and arms undemocratic and repressive regimes around the world in the name of "democracy." American troops have again been sent into open battle in the Middle East and covert

actions in Latin America, for many of the same misguided reasons that were used to send us to Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, many veterans from all eras are still denied justice—facing unemployment, discrimination, homelessness, post-traumatic stress disorder and other health problems, while already inadequate services are cut back or eliminated.

We believe that service to our country and communities did not end when we were discharged. We remain committed to the struggle for peace and for social and economic justice for all people. We will continue to oppose senseless military adventures and to teach the real lessons of the Vietnam War. We will do all we can to prevent future generations from being put through a similar tragedy, and we will continue to demand dignity and

respect for veterans of all eras. This is real patriotism and we remain true to our mission. Anyone who supports this overall effort, whether Vietnam veteran or not, veteran or not, may join us in this long-term struggle. JOIN US!



Insignia of Vietnam Veterans Against the War



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

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

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

Beware of VVAW-AI

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

SUPPORT VVAW!

DONATE OR JOIN TODAY!

Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc.
 VVAW Membership
 P.O. Box 355
 Champaign, IL 61824-0355

Membership Application

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

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

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

Signature _____
 Date _____
 Total Amount Enclosed _____

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



Agent Orange march, 1980s, Milwaukee.

RECOLLECTIONS

Nixon's Revenge

STEVE MILLER

The loud banging on my front door was startling. It was 3 am. My first thought was someone needed help. I had just returned from spending a week sleeping outdoors in April in Washington, DC and the bed felt good. Operation Dewey Canyon III had concluded and I was back in California.

I had returned from Vietnam in early 1969. Homecoming was unsettling. Everything seemed to be wrong and either I or the world was out of sync. It was hard to define but the rejection and the indifference was real. I still had time to serve on my enlistment. I was given a cushy assignment as I counted the days. But I was continuing to unravel around the edges.

The anti-war activities were raging and they looked a lot different stateside than they did in Vietnam. The more sense they made the more I learned and the more troubled I became. I was not comfortable around the anti-war groups and I don't think they were comfortable around me. I soon met the people I needed to talk to at Cal-State University, San Bernardino, fellow anti-war vets. Since I was still on active duty my time with them was limited. I was motivated now to participate in anti-war protests. I would soon learn how costly that decision would be.

By now it was late 1969. I began to notice that I had an entourage with cameras at anti-war rallies. Then, men in PX suits came to my work site looking for Sgt. Miller. They identified themselves as Officers from the Office of Special Investigation (OSI). They escorted me deep into a building I had never noticed before. I was left with one officer in an interrogation room furnished to look like an office. I was too naive to realize that the excessive mirrors hid other Officers who would soon join us. To this point I had forgotten that there is no "free speech" option for active duty service members and I spoke candidly to the pleasant man in the PX suit.

We were then joined by about six more PX suits and the shit hit the fan. Leavenworth seemed to be an ultimate destination. But in the meantime, life got ugly. After reporting to my usual work site, I was met by military police who introduced me to my replacement and escorted me to the ammo dump on the far side of the base. I was assigned to palletize 90 pound boxes of ammo and prepare them for shipment. The San Bernardino heat was relentless.

My cushy job was gone. I was married and living off base. Too bad. I was to report to an assigned barracks to pull CQ all night and then back to the dump in the morning. But I knew this would be over soon. I had applied for and had been granted an early release in order to attend college San Bernardino Valley College (SBVC).

I attempted to begin the discharge process when I was given the bad news. They told me they couldn't find my paperwork: translation, "You aren't getting out." Furious, I contacted Senator Alan Cranston who was a strong anti-war advocate. In short order my paperwork was found and I was discharged. Now, I was not only anti-war but very angry. I traded an OSI entourage for unknown "intelligence" groupies who wasted a lot of film on me.

I started school more adrift than ever. It was at SBVC where I found the newly forming VVAW and my dear friend Barry Romo. Barry would be a very important influence in my life and VVAW was immensely helpful. It was now 1970 and the year would be filled with school and anti-war activities. It was really good to be with like-minded vets. We vets had already been marginalized and discarded but now in the eyes of the "Greatest Generation" VVAW members were bordering on treason.

We frequently held planning sessions at my house and as 1970 was coming to a close, the big event, Operation Dewey Canyon III, was about to take center stage. Barry handled all of the national coordination, which was substantial. As April approached, our organization was relatively small and we were always looking to accept new members. And that is when he showed up.

No one knew him. Nothing about him fit. He just appeared at one of our planning meetings. Our typical dress was OD green jungle fatigues. He wore stateside fatigues that looked to be late 50's early 60's vintage. He sported Captain's bars but didn't look old enough to be a Second Lieutenant. Everything about him was wrong but he managed to worm his way in. We were all very distracted at the time. Barry was especially busy we just let the "Captain" slip by. He was granted an airline ticket for DC.

The night before we left there was a final meeting. The Captain showed up. As the meeting broke up the Captain approached me and wanted to trade a film canister of pills for



Operation Dewey Canyon III, 1971.

some weed. I declined but gave him some weed. He said there was some really good drugs in the canister and I would probably change my mind. He stuck them in my refrigerator. There was a lot of excitement about our pending departure and it was no time to split hairs. Soon we were on our way to DC. It was an amazing week and the support that VVAW received was tremendous. Richard Nixon was furious at the anti-war vets. The anti-war movement was emboldened by us. I was so glad to be a part of it.

But where was the Captain? No one had seen him since we arrived. He was a no-show for the flight home. We were now absolutely convinced we had taken some type of undercover agent into our welcome organization.

And there it was again. The banging on my front door was louder and voices were now yelling. I made my way in the early morning darkness to see what the fuss was about. As I opened the door the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department presented me with handcuffs and a search warrant. First stop was the refrigerator and a new

nightmare was just beginning.

They thoroughly trashed the house as they savored the opportunity to punish me. After all, many intelligence officers had worked months to see this night happen. There were frequent snide comments about my being a communist and that they knew I was taking money from Hanoi. The long arm of Richard Nixon had neutralized me and I was never again able to participate in VVAW work. And I learned later that I was not the only one. Other VVAW members around the country met similar fates.



STEVE MILLER SERVED IN USAF FROM 1966 TO 1970. IN VIETNAM, HE WAS WITH THE 15TH AERIAL PORT SQ. AS AN AIR FREIGHT SPECIALIST. HE WAS WITH THE UPS OF I-CORP BUT INSTEAD OF TRUCKS THEY USED C-130'S, C-123 AND C-7 CARIBOUS. THEY DELIVERED EVERYTHING AND RETURNED BODIES. FOR 12 MONTHS PRIOR TO DEPLOYMENT, HE WORKED 12-HOUR NIGHT SHIFTS PREPPING CARGO AND WAREHOUSING BODIES.



Mar 16 2017 (8255)

DANZIGER
The Rutland Herald
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