

MARCHING FOR FREEDOM IN TUPELO, MISS. PAGE 6



THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

25¢

Vol.8 No.3

VETS OF ALL ERAS, CLOSE RANKS!

FALL

1978

Chemical Time Bomb in Vietnam Veterans

VETS DEMAND "TREAT AGENT ORANGE, NOW!"



TREATMENT FOR THOSE POISONED BY AGENT ORANGE WAS ONE OF THE DEMANDS THAT BROUGHT VVAW MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS OUT INTO THE STREETS OF CHICAGO DURING VIETNAM VETERANS DAY, APRIL 22, 1978.

Vietnam Veterans
Against the War
National Office
Box 20184,
Chicago, ILL 60620

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

VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR



Vietnam Veterans Against the War is a national veterans organization which began in 1967 and which mobilized tens of thousands of veterans to fight for an end to the Indochina War. Our members are veterans not only of Vietnam, but vets from all wars and all eras.

"Used once and thrown away" summarizes how VVAW sees the situation of veterans. We were used once to fight a war for the profits of the rich. And despite all kinds of promises, we were thrown away once

we got out of the service--thrown away with high unemployment, an inadequate GI Bill, a VA hospital system that is next to worthless.

Both through our own experience, and the history of the struggle of veterans in the U.S. going back to the end of the Revolutionary War, we know that none of these abuses of vets are going to change if we just lay back and wait--that's why VVAW takes to the streets or does whatever is necessary to fight to improve the conditions of vets.



Having been in Indochina, many of us began to learn that we had more in common with the supposed "enemy" than with the rich class of people who sent us there. Because of what we experience there and because we see the danger of a new rich man's war, we take every opportunity to bring to the American people our slogan, "Fight the Rich, Not Their Wars."

We don't see ourselves as being unique in fighting for a better life. We support others in their struggles--we supported the coal miners in their recent strike, and we support the liberation struggles in Southern Africa.

Our experience has also showed us that vets, as individuals, can do little to improve our situation, but that a group of vets, united to struggle as one, makes a difference. VVAW emphasizes the need for organization and works to build a fighting veterans' movement. We aren't talking about being another American Legion which has a large membership, but has a leadership which pushes a boatload of backward ideas.

We bring together organization and action in our national program, in the fight for Jobs or Income Now, for Decent Benefits for All Vets--regardless of discharge; we take on specific campaigns such as Extend and Expand the GI Bill, particularly the 10-year limitation on the use of the Bill; and Decent Healthcare for all Vets--testing and treatment and compensation for victims of Agent Orange, for in-

stance.

VVAW is a democratic organization; organizational decisions are made, as much as possible, after local chapters have discussed them and provided their input. Regional and national meetings are held to bring together VVAW members from across the country to make plans and decisions for the national organization. Day-to-day coordination is provided by an elected National Office which also puts out THE VETERAN, our national newspaper.

You are invited to join VVAW we welcome all who want to build a real veterans' movement which will fight for the needs of vets! ■



Veteran throws back his Silver Star during Operation Dewey Canyon III in April, 1971.

To Hell With Their National Honor-We Won't Be Used Again! — Nov. 11

VETS' DAY ACTION PLANNED



San Francisco VVAW marches on Vets Day, 1971

VETERANS DAY, 1978. AS IN THE PAST, VVAW WILL TAKE THE DAY SET ASIDE FOR VETS AND TURN IT AGAINST THE GROUPS LIKE THE AMERICAN LEGION AND VFW WHO ARE USED TO PROMOTE FLAG-WAVING AND THE KIND OF PATRIOTISM WHICH LEADS STRAIGHT INTO FIGHTING ANOTHER WAR FOR THE PROFITS OF THE RICH.

TO THEM AND TO THE CLASS WHICH STANDS SQUARELY BEHIND THEM, VVAW SAYS "TO HELL WITH YOUR NATIONAL HONOR, WE WON'T BE USED AGAIN."

BECAUSE IN THE PAST YEAR THE MOST POINTED SINGLE ATTACK TO COME DOWN ON US VETS HAS BEEN THE REACTION OF THE V.A. TO AGENT ORANGE, VVAW IS ALSO TAKING UP THE DEMAND FOR DECENT HEALTHCARE--TREAT AGENT ORANGE ON VETERANS DAY.

VETERANS DAY ACTIVITIES WILL GO ON IN A NUMBER OF CITIES; FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE ACTION CLOSEST TO YOU, CONTACT THE VVAW NATIONAL OFFICE. ■

Contact the Local Chapter or the National Office for Details

P.O. Box 20184 Chicago, ILL. 60620 [312] 651-1583

Disabled Vet Denied Permit VVAW FIGHTS CITY HALL



Members of VVAW and the Michigan Association of Concerned Veterans at a picket line outside city hall in Leslie, Michigan to fight for the rights of disabled vet Charles Grantham.

There are probably several hundred thousand stories of ex-service men getting screwed up in Vietnam or elsewhere and coming home to get screwed in a different way by the same system that sent him off to fight in the first place. The story of Charles Grantham is one of those stories.

Charles returned from Vietnam in a wheelchair. Eventually he settled down with his wife and four children in the small town of Leslie, Michigan. To support himself and his family, Charles planned to run a gift shop from the front of his house, just as he had when he lived in nearby Lansing.

But he reckoned without the Leslie town council. The Leslie city fathers refused to let him have the shop because it violated zoning laws for resi-

dential neighborhoods. They said he would instead have to set up his shop downtown, something that is impossible for Charles because of his medical needs.

A VVAW member from Leslie knew Charles and VVAW began to help him fight for the right to be able to support himself and his family. Calling on members of the Michigan Association of Concerned Veterans and on other vets, they have held picket lines at the city building to protest discriminatory treatment of Charles, and have tied it in with the way that the system has dealt with the vast majority of Vietnam and Vietnam-era veterans. They have served the mayor with a summons and initiated a claim with the Circuit Court challenging the city council's discriminatory decision.

An appeal was also made to the Leslie Zoning Boards of Appeals. It cost \$30 to make the appeal, but the money was donated by residents of Leslie. Among the points made in the appeal was the fact that Charles' neighbors had no objections to his opening the shop. Also, such concessions were already made to the American Legion--a group which, incidentally, had no interest in helping out this veteran.

The case is still under appeal. If Charles loses, he will be forced to move to another town where he can operate the gift shop. But the city council is being besieged from all directions--vets picketting their meetings, angry newspaper articles and letters, court challenges to their quiet little world. If you want to increase their problems, and, more important, support the righteous struggle of Charles Grantham, send a letter of protest to Mayor Dick Huges, City Hall, Leslie Michigan, 49251. Send a copy of your letter to Charles Grantham, 416 W. Bellevue, Leslie, Michigan 49251. ■

17TH NATIONAL~ VVAW MEETING

The 17th National Meeting of VVAW was held in Milwaukee on the 5th and 6th of August with representatives from chapters as far apart as San Francisco and New York City. From the start, the meeting was action oriented. Everyone present participated in the discussions, comparing experience and hammering out our program. A good cross section of vets from around the country proved to be a real strength as we could figure out our program based on wide experience.

Barry Romo, a member of the National Office of VVAW opened the meeting with a speech on the international situation to set the context in which we would be working. He used the clear example of Africa as a key area of the contention between the two superpowers which is determining the world situation today. There was also a section dealing with the events going on in Cambodia and Vietnam which is of special concern to VVAW.

Another member of the National Office, Pete Zastrow, followed this with a presentation on the situation of veterans in the U.S. today. As a result of his speech and the discussion that followed, it became evident that the numbers and problems and frustrations of all veterans, and particularly Vietnam-era

veterans, are growing.

Vets are dealing with that anger and frustration in one of three different ways. First, they can ignore it and hope it will go away; however, there's no way to escape being a vet. Second, the "correct" answer according to the people who run this country, is to "Go through channels." We've had a lot of experience with where that leads: right to the end of a blind alley. Third, there are the vets who say they just aren't going to take it anymore, who say "the hell with you" to the system in many different ways. Our main task as an organization is to break down the attitude of "there's nothing that can be done" and reach out to organize these vets into united action.

The meeting didn't have much trouble deciding on our two major campaigns for the next period: Agent Orange and Veterans Day. For a more detailed picture of the Agent Orange campaign, see the centerfold section of this issue of THE VETERAN. Our discussion of Vets Day was greatly aided by a written summation of the battles we fought last year around the country. Based on this, we were able to come up with some ways to strengthen our actions for this year. We have found that the main

response from vets around Veterans Day has been around the idea of kicking ass on the rich, not so much around any particular demands. Further, the demands we have put forward have been in two areas--fighting against war preparations and fighting for a decent life. So, this year, we decided to recommend that chapters use only two demands: the slogan, "To Hell With Your National Honor, We Won't Be Used Again," and the demand for "Decent Healthcare--Treat Agent Orange."

These two demands, the meeting believed, cover most clearly the way that vets are used once and then thrown away. They help to focus the Vets Day campaign and draw lines clearly between VVAW and the American Legion and VFW. Last year, our participation in Vets Day became a real social question beyond the people we talked to ourselves. People at the meeting stressed the need for chapters to go both broad (media outreach, for instance) and deep (digging in at schools) when building for this campaign. Also stressed was the need to make the campaign (or any campaign) a series of real hammer-away actions directed towards a specific target with definite goals.

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THE CHARLES GRANTHAM family

Cutting Thru the News, 'Officials', McGovern CAMBODIA: FACTS & LIES

In April, 1975, revolutionary forces of the people of Cambodia rolled into the capital of Phnom Penh, bringing to an end the five-year old dictatorship of Lon Nol. From that moment, there began an intense campaign by U.S. agencies and the media of slandering, distorting and outright lying about the conditions, affairs and activities of the Cambodian people and their leaders.

The smear campaign, led for awhile by Jack Anderson, noted Washington muck-raker, "proved" beyond a doubt that millions of people have been slaughtered by the "inhuman monsters" who rule Kampuchea. "Reliable sources" for these tales have been an almost endless line of supporters of the Lon Nol regime plus some leftover officials now become refugees. All of them have good reasons for splitting Cambodia. A recent Chicago Tribune article, basing their latest massacre story on refugee interviews, admitted that the refugees' stories were, for the most part, unreliable since they had a tendency to exaggerate both figures and events in order to gain attention (of course the Tribune printed their lies anyhow). Almost anything is better than the lives some of these refugees now live in the camps in Thailand. The article in the Tribune, after cutting down its "witnesses," goes on to point out that, with all these stories, "something was going on there (in Cambodia)."

The media barrage against Cambodia has its effects. With the cameras felling and the eager press in attendance, Senator George McGovern recently stepped up to add his bulk to the attacks on Cambodia. The "peace" candidate defeated in the 1972 presidential campaign by another "peace" candidate, Richard Nixon, called for an all-out invasion of Cambodia by an "international force," including the U.S., to "save the people of Cambodia."

And in mid September another voice out of the past appeared before the national press--ex-dictator Lon Nol, direct from his hide-out in Hawaii. In an emotional appeal, with cameras rolling, Lon Nol decried the "suffering of the Cambodian people" and called upon the handful of his wealthy countrymen in attendance for "any young Cambodian man to join with him in leading their people (their kind, that is) back into Cambodia." The press noted

that there were no takers for this offer.

As in the past three years, this was another outrageous shot at the people of Democratic Kampuchea ("Kampuchea" is the name which the people of the country have chosen to use). One network, NBC, even went so far as to say that the Lon Nol government had been the legitimate government of Cambodia, living in the beautiful and peaceful city of Phnom Penh, until one day, out of nowhere, the "commies" rushed into town out of the bushes and won the war--just like that! It's one more chapter in the book written by the rich in this country as they attempt to rewrite the history of the war and its aftermath in the minds of the American people.

These stories are part of the endless stream of lies accusing the people of Kampuchea of a "death march" during the evacuation of their cities, a continued "slaughter" of millions of Kampuchean people, and rule by a handful of leaders who are trying to take Kampuchea back to the stone age.

The ruling class here in the U.S., relying on the time-tested technique of "if you say it often enough someone will believe it," are wrong, however, if they believe the American people will forget everything about the war. Millions of us witness the slow death of the Lon Nol dictatorship in our living rooms over a period of years as the liberation forces tightened their steel trap on Lon Nol and company. Thousands of us, veterans of the war in Southeast Asia, remember clearly how we loaded U.S. aircraft with bombs for the then "neutral" country, or took part in the Nixon-ordered invasion of Cambodia. Others can recall the training, arming and dropping of CIA-backed mercenaries into Cambodia from Thailand and Vietnam, a disgusting lot of pigs and criminals who financed their operations with heroin sales to American GIs. With these memories, we aren't about to buy this new propaganda campaign. In fact, we've seen similar campaigns in the past.

When we were sent to Vietnam we were told how we would be saving the Vietnamese people. Then we discovered "Operation Phoenix," a computerized murder and assassination program that accounted for hun-



Liberation fighters entering Phnom Penh in 1975 to the cheers of the inhabitants of the city.

dreds of thousands of Vietnamese deaths at the hands of U.S.-backed forces. Many of us witness the thousands of killings of Vietnamese by U.S. troops in order to save the Vietnamese from themselves.

And now McGovern and Lon Nol want us to follow them into Cambodia to save the Cambodian people--from themselves! It's necessary, they say, because of the "genocide" going on in Cambodia. Well, if we add up the figures from "official" sources, from refugees and journalists, we find that there are no more problems in Kampuchea--the entire population has been wiped out several months back. It's not too hard to remember when, according to U.S. Pentagon figures on enemy kills demonstrated that 2 1/2 times the total population of North and South Vietnam had been killed--halfway through the war.

So what is going on in Kampuchea--what about the many bloody charges leveled at the new government and the people of that independent country? Much of the answer is already a matter of public record.

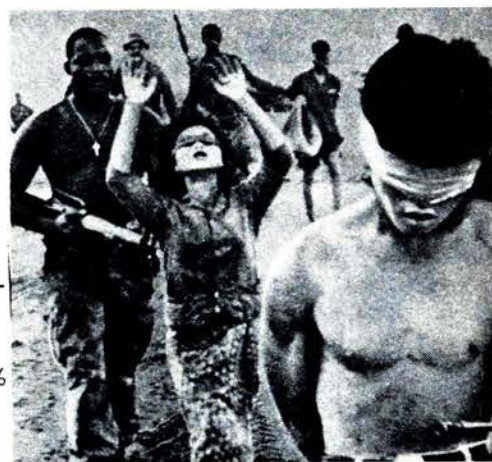
In March of 1970, Lon Nol took control of Cambodia from Prince Sihanouk in a CIA-led coup. During the period of the Vietnam War, the U.S. military conducted "secret" and later open bombings following the coup and, in the process, destroyed 90% of the existing structures in Cambodia, gutted the countryside and rice fields, and killed over 800,000 people--12% of the population--a genuine case of genocide. Thousands of people fled the countryside for the cities like Phnom Penh, swelling the population of this city from 60,000 to over 300,000. In May of 1970, the U.S.

invaded Cambodia which brought about a worldwide storm of protest, including the death of 4 students at Kent State University. The invasion resulted in U.S. troops getting kicked out.

The next five years saw the eventual control of over 90% of the country by liberation forces who obviously enjoyed a great deal of popular support. The circle around Phnom Penh grew tighter and the city turned into a huge human cesspool.

In April 1975, revolutionary forces took Phnom Penh. The U.S. and Soviet-backed dictator, Lon Nol, loaded up what was left of the government treasury in gold on U.S. planes and made their break to Hawaii where they are still holed up to day. The evacuation of Phnom Penh by the new, revolutionary government, brought outcries of rage from the U.S. press which decided they had finally found the "bloodbath" that U.S. politicians had been predicting all

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American GIs capture suspected members of the Khmer Rouge, the liberation forces in Cambodia, during one of the U.S. invasions of that country.

Serving Same Old System

NEW ACTION ARMY, KILLS TWO RECRUITS



The U.S. Army has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars promoting its new image to cover over the scars of Vietnam. Billboards, magazines and TV screens are plastered with the "Action Army" ads promising a bright future to those who are smart enough to join up. Glib-tongued recruiters sign up the unwary with dreams of foreign travel, a career in a skilled job, and all the great vets' benefits waiting for you once you get out. Even the hard-nosed drill sergeants got a face lift to reappear as "personnel counselors" who train their recruits with manuals and good English.

On June 29th this facade crumbled enough to expose the real Army, when two recruits

on their first day of training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, collapsed and died. The Army stated, officially, that the recruits had died from heat stroke after extensive, strenuous and prolonged exercise, which is contrary to policy at Ft Jackson. Four members of the training company clarified the Army's rhetoric when they charged that the dead recruits were forced to crawl on their stomachs in sand pits as the temperature went past 90°, carry 100 pound duffel bags during a trot in the midday sun, and as punishment in the early evening to perform calisthenics and run in place for 30-40 minutes.

In an effort to salvage the image of the military, the brass

and its ruling class bosses began trying to bail out their system by digging a deep pit for the drill sergeants. Closed hearing are being held to determine if the DI's should be court martialed on charges of involuntary manslaughter, dereliction of duty, and maltreatment of recruits. No hearings are planned for the system that values GI's only as cannon-fodder.

Two Senators and a Congressman are demanding a full investigation, while the House Armed Services Committee is probing the incident to find if this is an army-wide problem or just an "isolated incident." The brass has worked overtime to put on a similar face of false concern. The Commandant of the Drill Sergeant School explained that drill sergeants are from the top 50% of the Army's non-coms, and that today, the DI's must be "the most professional man in the Army." Chief of the recruit reception center, LT COL Lenti, said, "If I see

anybody swearing or dropping trainees to the ground for push ups in my area, he's out." And the commander of the basic training brigade, COL Katter, asked, "With a 1000 drill sergeants in the Army, how are you going to legislate against one drill sergeant who is a goof?"

Of course all this pious concern does nothing for the dead recruits nor for other recruits in the future. So long as the U.S. military is being used as the strong arm of the country's rulers the brass will continue to have to brainwash the GI's, to break down individual ability to think--a thinking GI is too likely to see what he is being used for. This is the reason behind the hours of repetition, the stupid classes from dreary sergeants, the hours of drill, exercise--and the abuse of DI's. Wash the brain clean and then fill it up again with the ideas of "nationalism" and "patriotism" which are necessary to be willing to go off to fight and die. ■

Chicago VVAW

JAMMING THE V.A.

"What's it to you?" demanded the V.A. counselor. A Chicago VVAW member replied, "We're here with this vet to make sure he gets his benefits and to help him cut through the red tape that's keeping his check out of his hands!"

VVAW was at the Chicago Regional V.A. Office, handing out leaflets on Agent Orange, when one vet ran his rap on the V.A. runaround he was getting with his checks, and how he was tired of the constant screwing.

He'd been in the Army in 'Nam and come back less one kneecap. In the time since his discharge, he'd been in the situation of getting a job, work towards a better-paying position, but just before moving up, ending up in the hospital for another operation. After two years of the work-hospital-find a new job routine, all he had to show for his efforts was a plas-

tic kneecap and unpaid bills. Finally he started back to school to get some education and to use the GI Bill so he could scrape by. He was getting an education, all right, but most of it was on the inefficient VA system that doesn't give a damn about the vets its supposed to be serving.

The V.A.'s multi-million dollar computer consistently refused to spit out his checks; after three months of waiting, it was time to act. The landlord was on his back for the rent, the electricity in his apartment was turned off, and he needed something to keep his wife and four kids fed. Countless phone calls to the V.A. resulted in empty promises and meaningless waiting. Finally, he cut classes for a day (and we all know the V.A.'s feelings on attendance) to pay the V.A. a visit and straighten things out.

After four hours of waiting, the V.A. still owed him over \$1000, and all he had accomplished was to get a good jacking around from the red tape menace and Mr. Hearn, the V.A.'s supervisor of counselors. His records showed one emergency check mailed, but since it never arrived, it was "probably lost in the mail. Hearn didn't give a damn about anything except the required paperwork to be filled out and tossed into the V.A. shuffle system.

The vet just wanted his check and was determined to get it that day; he asked for our help. So, we went along with him to check out the big hold-up. Hearn was no help; he had already sent the paperwork on for approval, and that's damn well all he planned to do. So, we went to the official who had to approve it--the office of the Regional Director!

Even though we were unex-

pected, and certainly uninvited, the secretary asked us to wait for the Regional Director to finish a short meeting. We sat in the plush office which looked just like what it was--the office of a corporate executive, with plastic plants and all.

The Regional Director finally got out of his meeting to talk with us, said there shouldn't be any problem with the check, and that the vet could expect it in the next day or two. We explained that he needed it today, so finally the Regional Director grudgingly sent his secretary prancing off to hunt down the check request. The next two hours were a real circus. When the secretary wasn't sitting at his desk twitching and fidgeting, he was off running to various offices channeling the check. Security, not exactly sure what was going on, hung around to protect everyone from the group of crazy vets.

Finally, after the Regional Director had already gone home, the check appeared. Old Buddy Hearn was no longer stonefaced.

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Standing Up For Freedom In Mississippi

MARCHING IN TUPELO

On Labor Day, in Tupelo, Mississippi, veterans, workers, students and youth from many cities joined with members of the community to take a stand against the city bureaucrats, the white owners and their hired gun thugs of the police and the KKK. VVAW went to Tupelo as part of a coalition which joined with the United League of Northern Mississippi to demand Justice For All. We witnessed the strength and unity of people who have taken a stand and are fighting back on many fronts. The people of Tupelo and the surrounding area opened their arms and welcomed us as brothers and sisters.

We began the day with a picket line where vets from Milwaukee and Chicago marched in front of Fred's Hardware (other groups were picketing other stores in the downtown area as part of the United League's boycott of businesses which refuse to hire Black workers). We could see for ourselves the power of the League's boycott of lily-white businesses who only want the bucks and cheap labor of the Black community--a boycott which is 90% effective. People would come to the store and, after seeing our picket line, drive away; others drove by shouting their support. One man who crossed the picket line tried to intimidate the vets with a baseball bat, but his wife kept him from harm--we later saw him marching with the KKK.

Joining with other picketers, we marched past a parking lot where, under the Confederate flag, the Klan was putting on their dresses and gowns, and past the police station where local cops operate their own form of racist harassment.

The afternoon march was 800 strong and ready to move out through the streets chanting "We're fired up, ain't taking no more," when "The Invisible Empire" appeared with about 40 of its members trucked in from around the South for the occasion. As the Klan marched by, people saw what real Klan terror was--the racist dogs were reaching under their skirts to clutch their guns with terror in their eyes from the anger vented on them by people of all colors. But instead of scaring people away, the march stepped off with more strength and unity than it had before the KKK appeared.

The present struggle in Tupelo is a continuation of the

fight led by the United League throughout the spring and summer. It was touched off by two cases of police terror: James Garrett, a 25-year-old unemployed Black was found with hands and feet bound, hanging in his jail cell. Two days later two Tupelo cops were found guilty by a federal court of beating a Black man into a confession. The United League demanded that city officials fire the cops. Tupelo bosses, through their own "legal" system, found the cops innocent and kept them on the force, knowing the value of the racist scum when it comes to enforcing discrimination and oppression.

In response the League organized a boycott against local businesses; as the struggle progressed, they added to their demands. In addition to firing the cops, they demanded that the city enact an affirmative action program that would raise the percentage of Blacks on the workforce to a percentage reflecting their percentage of the population. Demands included that Tupelo schools hire Black teachers and administrators, that the police and fire department be fully integrated at all levels, and that businesses hire Blacks for superintendent and managerial positions. In short, the United League was and is demanding economic equality along with justice and dignity.

The United League, under its leader Skip Robinson hit the streets and built support for the struggle. Thousands of people have come out to take a stand against racism and to fight for integration and justice for all. The struggle could no longer be held inside Tupelo, but has spread to the surrounding counties and towns in Northern Mississippi.

The unity of the struggle has triggered new forms of attack, trying to return Tupelo and its people to the "good ol' days." One attempt came from the city administration which slapped together a bi-racial committee to fill a void left by a city council which had never in the past had to worry about treating Blacks as equals. The boycott forced businessmen to try anything to salvage their stores--but Robinson refuses to deal with the committee because, as he points out, every system is designed for a few Blacks to make it as long as they sell out. While the bi-racial committee



Tupelo marchers jeer Klan during Labor Day march in Tupelo, Mississippi.

meets, the city officials have been busy drawing up ordinances to keep the "radical leaders of the United League" out of Tupelo. Both efforts have failed miserably, leaving the system to resort to other tactics.

The KKK is one of them. They crawled out of their holes to help the city "put Blacks back in their place." The Klan has used Tupelo as a focus for protecting "white rights" and to oppose the United League by holding counter marches and terrorizing anyone who calls their bluff. The Klan made the news when they burned a 25-foot cross at one outing, and beat a white minister who exposed their racism and hatred at another demonstration. When they are out dragging their hems on the streets, they're busy sniping at local Black leaders (a couple of them got shot for their trouble in one such attempt) throwing rocks through windows, or working their eight-hour shift as cops. In fact when several KKK members unsheathed themselves on local TV, a couple of Tupelo cops and a deputy sheriff emerged. The Klan has enjoyed the company of the mayor and his cronies at their rallies, protected by city police.

While the struggle exposes the racist power structure of elected officials in the state, it is also uncovering some of the interest of big industry and the unions. Tupelo is characterized by a low-wage, non-union labor force, making it perfect for the runaway shop from the north. Multinationals like Rockwell International, Ford, and ITT have set up shop to reap still greater profits. But few of them go to Blacks. Official Black unem-

ployment is twice that of whites, and their median family income is some \$2500 less. Meanwhile, the AFL-CIO has made Tupelo the headquarters of its deep South organizing drive. So far the major accomplishment of union officials is to get employees of one packing house \$2 an hour less than its union brothers and sisters in the North, claiming it as a mystical "southern differential."

Lines are clearly drawn in Tupelo but the battlefield stretches far beyond Mississippi to the many other places where people are fighting oppression and fighting the class of people who live off their sweat and blood. The determination of Tupelo is expressed by Robinson himself: "I'll be in Tupelo until justice comes down like rain, and if someone should take my life or the life of other leaders, let blood rain." The fight in Tupelo is an inspiration to all people who are tired of being ground down and beaten back. ■

SUPPORTS VVAW CAMPAIGN

Dear VVAW,

This is a totally inadequate check sent to thank you for the material you sent. The two leaflets were excellent (one on Agent Orange and the other on Fatigues for Freedom Fighters). Especially vigorous was the folder on Southern Africa. Will do the best I can; am 83 and have to stretch a small income. More success to you--I tremendously appreciate your efforts in this crazy, unjust--to put it mildly--world. Mrs. K.B.

Dorchester, MA

Defoliant Agent Orange

CHEMICAL TIME BOMB IN VIETNAM VETERANS



A South Vietnamese jungle after Agent Orange.

Even those of us who didn't like the idea of being sent to Vietnam were still aware that we could get killed or wounded--we all knew that was part of going to war. Not that it was a very happy part, of course, but it was one which we could accept as part of the duty of fighting in the military.

We also knew about the compensations--the excellent medical care and quick pickup of the wounded on the Indochina battlefields, with the V.A. standing ready to treat us if in fact we emerged disabled from the war. Even those of us who saw that we were fighting a war to extend and protect the profits of the rich somehow felt that, if we

were hurt, we would be taken care of. If nothing else, people would appreciate the sacrifice we were making.

But in the process of fighting that war, and then getting out and becoming vets, we learned a couple of things. First, the "patriotic duty" we were performing was a bunch of crap--straight out, we were fighting against the interests of the people of Indochina and against the interests of the people of the U.S. In fact, the only thing we were fighting for was the profits of the U.S. rulers who, along with milking Indochina for its resources, its labor, and its markets, were trying to keep a political foothold in Southeast

Asia.

Second, we found out that the promises we were given about V.A. care were another bunch of crap. We had to fight tooth and nail to get the least little thing out of the V.A. And once we got it, then we had to fight like hell to keep it--as shown by the many vets whose disability has been slashed by the V.A. in order to squeeze each and every last penny.

That's all bad enough; vets have kind of got accustomed to being used once and then thrown aside like a squeezed out tooth-paste tube, even though each new abuse, each new mountain of red tape that we have to climb, makes us a little madder, a little more ready to take on the V.A. and the whole damn system behind it. And now, after ten years since the height of U.S. involvement in Indochina, we've found out something else--that we were sprayed with AGENT ORANGE in Vietnam, and that the effects of that defoliant are both long-lasting (maybe permanent and irreversible) and deadly. As one Vietnam vet from New York put it, "THEY KILLED ME IN VIETNAM AND I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW IT!"

Five million acres of Vietnam were defoliated between 1961 and 1970. Only massive pressure flooding in from all over the world forced the U.S. government to finally cease this form of chemical warfare. Pregnant women in sprayed areas had spontaneous abortions;

children that were born were deformed--no tear ducts, unable to stand, extra toes. The list of atrocities went on and on. But the jungles were defoliated (10% of the jungle area of Vietnam was stripped bare) and crops--which might have been used to feed the liberation fighters--were killed, and the land made barren for at least the next fourteen years.

It wasn't only the Vietnamese, Laotians and Cambodian people who walked through the jungles, drank the water or breathed the air--2.3 million American GIs were also in Indochina, most of them before 1970. GIs who worked directly with Agent Orange, mixing the chemicals or loading it on planes or choppers to be sprayed remember breaking out in fierce rashes when the chemicals got on their skin. Small blisters popped up on the skin, accompanied by a painful red rash. GIs who complained enough were given a salve and told it was all part of the war--forget it, and it will go away. For many of the GIs, the rash did go away, though it now reappears in hot weather with all the pain and irritation that was part of the original symptom of direct exposure to Agent Orange.

These direct effects of Agent Orange (called "chloracne"), however, were barely the tip of the problem; the much more de-

Continued Next Page

Treat effects of Agent Orange

DEMAND VA ACTION



TO BRING NATIONWIDE ATTENTION TO THE EFFECTS OF AGENT ORANGE AND THE REFUSAL OF THE V.A. TO DEAL WITH POISONED VETS, VVAW IS CALLING A NATIONAL AGENT ORANGE DAY ON THE 21ST OF OCTOBER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ACTIONS IN YOUR AREA, CONTACT THE CHAPTER ON THE FRONT OF THE PAPER OR CALL THE VVAW NATIONAL OFFICE (312-651-1583).

WHILE VETS HAVE A PARTICULAR INTEREST IN AGENT ORANGE AND ITS EFFECTS ON THOSE OF US WHO WERE USED ONCE TO FIGHT A RICH MAN'S WAR AND THEN THROWN AWAY, WE ARE ALSO JOINING WITH THE MANY GROUPS WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE USE OF CHEMICALS SIMILAR TO AGENT ORANGE IN THE U.S. TODAY BY CORPORATIONS WHO CARE MORE ABOUT BUCKS THAN PEOPLE.

WE INVITE ALL INTERESTED PEOPLE TO JOIN WITH US OCT. 21.

DEMONSTRATE on OCT. 21

TREATMENT FOR DECENT HEALTHCARE WHAT IS AGENT



vastating effects of the chemical were hidden from GIs. Only in March of 1978, when Maude DeVictor, a V.A. worker in Chicago, began to put a group of cases together and found a pattern among vets who had been exposed to the defoliant, did most veterans find out about this latest way in which the U.S. government had victimized its GIs. Symptoms of Agent Orange poisoning range from numbness of toes and fingers through excessive fatigue and nervousness, a lessened sex drive, through liver cancer and skin cancer, to deformed children. Because the poison in Agent Orange is stored in the fatty tissues of the body, it is difficult to detect, and its effects may appear years after actual exposure.

Typical reactions among vets were, "Oh, you mean that's why my arms break out in a rash every summer?" Or, "I've been feeling rundown and sick for some time, but the doctors can't find anything wrong with me--is this Agent Orange?" The mother of one veteran called to try to get help with her son who, six years after Vietnam, suddenly quit his well-paid job and now does nothing but sit in a chair, occasionally getting so nervous and shaky that he can't even hold a spoon. Another vet who had been in Bien Hoa while the area was being sprayed to destroy the undergrowth on the perimeter told VVAW about his attempts to have children--the first two had been born dead, the third had died at the age of three months, and the latest was now 5 months old, way underweight and constantly sick. Still another veteran talked about the spontaneous abortions his wife had suffered--and now she was pregnant again and he just didn't know whether to tell her to go ahead and try to have the child or to go ahead and have an abortion.

This is just a small sampling of the veterans that VVAW meets at the V.A. office in Chicago.

the picture of the effects of Agent in human terms begins to come through. But when assessing the role of the U.S. government in Indochina, the indictment is even more blatant. It's no joke the government didn't have the necessary scientific data concerning 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D, the major ingredients of Agent Orange. These chemicals were clearly identified as killers with long-lasting genetic effects as early as 1963. The U.S. government knew exactly what it was doing by spraying Agent Orange across the length and breadth of Indochina.

It goes further than that, too. Once vets began to learn about this newest illness, they went to the V.A. to demand treatment. After all, vets had been told that the V.A. existed to take care of medical problems caused by military service. But it turned out not to be quite so simple, as anyone who has filed for disability as a result of Agent Orange can testify. When VVAW members in Milwaukee went to the V.A. to demand disability for Agent Orange poisoning, they were given a blood test--which is of no use whatever. When pushed against a wall, the V.A. director there was at least honest: "The V.A. isn't going to do anything about Agent Orange until it's forced to," he said.

In Chicago there wasn't even that honest a reaction. When talking to the press, the V.A. was so friendly and cooperative that most vets couldn't believe it was the same outfit they have to deal with. Even when talking officially to VVAW, the V.A. director wanted to "do whatever he could to help." But for individual vets the story was far different. While V.A. workers were helpful in filling out the disability forms, the V.A. itself was a pain in the ass, up to its usual slimy tactics of trying to shuffle off the responsibility on to vets.

Vets who applied for the disability were sent letters (and

We know a little about the effects of Agent Orange on the vets who were sprayed with it in Vietnam. Experimentation on the ingredients of Agent Orange have gone on at least since 1963; what follows is some of the chemical and medical facts that have been discovered. While VVAW doesn't have all the information, and probably couldn't handle it if we did since it is both scientifically complex and voluminous, what we present here is established fact. We believe it's important for vets to have some idea of what the stuff is so that we can better build the fight to get it tested and treated. People interested in going to the original sources should get in touch with the VVAW National Office and we'll give you the necessary information.

Agent Orange as used throughout Southeast Asia was a 50/50 mixture of two chemicals--2,4-D and 2,4,5-T. Between 1961 and 1970, at least 10% of all the forested land in South Vietnam (which amounts to 6.5% of the total area) was sprayed at least once with the herbicide.

2,4-D and 2,4,5-T were developed at the U.S. Center for

them to explain where and when they were in contact with Agent Orange, and requiring a medical history to establish any connection between the defoliant and the symptoms. This might make sense if vets had access to a huge medical network like that of the V.A. (which not only runs the largest hospital system in the country, but also puts out uncounted millions of dollars for research in private hospitals and laboratories), and access to the Pentagon computer tapes which can point out what unit was in what area on what day, and where and when chemical spraying took place. By matching these tapes it should be possible to tell who was directly affected, though that will still not account for the GIs whose exposure was more indirect (drinking water which had chemical residues in it, for instance).

But the V.A. is running scared. First, it's probably true that they know very little about the effects of the defoliant. Beyond that, they can see what will happen when the connection between Agent Orange and the multitude of illnesses that it causes is finally established--there is, at this point,

Chemical and Biological Warfare at Fort Dietrich, Maryland, during World War II. Widespread manufacture began in the late 1940's. They are officially described as "chlorinated phenoxy compounds," with 2,4,5-T having one extra atom of chlorine in its chemical make-up. For the purpose of looking on labels to see what you're getting, 2,4-D is an abbreviation for 2,4 dichlorophenoxyacetic acid. 2,4,5-T is 2,4,5 trichlorophenoxypropionic acid. Their chemical basis is what's known as the benzene ring, made up of hydrogen and chlorine atoms. When applied to plants, both of these compounds kill by disrupting plant cell growth, promoting uncontrolled expansion and division of cells (which is also a description of the way cancer works in humans).

A by-product of the production of 2,4,5-T is tetra-dioxin, one of the most deadly poisons known to man. When 2,4,5-T is produced, the chemicals require a temperature above 160°; at that temperature dioxin is created. 2,4-D is produced at a lower temperature and does not have the same by-products. Up to a certain point, the higher

means the V.A. will end up paying disability claims to a large number of vets. And in a situation where the rich who run this country are trying like hell to cut back on every service which does not put more bucks in their pockets--everything from unemployment compensation to food stamps to vets benefits--the V.A. can see itself having to shell out big bucks to disabled veterans.

Because the V.A. will do whatever possible to avoid having to spend money, they're using every possible tactic to make sure that vets do not apply for Agent Orange disability. Their first technique is the simplest--try to make sure that as few vets as possible know about it. That's why VVAW's first demand around Agent Orange is that the V.A. use its resources to make sure the problems are publicized widely and thoroughly.

At this point the V.A. has no test for Agent Orange, as far as we can find out. One does exist--it involves a biopsy of fatty tissue and can detect the presence of dioxin, one of the contaminants in Agent Orange, down to one part per trillion. Of

R AGENT ORANGE ARE FOR ALL VETS NT ORANGE?

the temperature, the more dioxins are created; forest rangers fighting California forest fires, in places where the forests have been sprayed, have come up with chloracne, one of the most direct symptoms of Agent Orange poisoning. The implications for food which has 2,4-D or 2,4,5-T on it, once that food is cooked, have only been touched on, not investigated.

EVIDENCE

While statistics from Vietnam are hard to come by (the Vietnamese had more important tasks in the late 1960's and early '70's), some are available. In Tay Ninh a heavily sprayed area, there were 58 still births per 1000 hospital births. In Saigon, not sprayed, during the same period of time, there were 29 stillbirths per 1000. Interviews with refugees in Hanoi in 1970 showed 22 women of 73 asked had miscarriages shortly after their areas were sprayed with Agent Orange. Around Hue in 1969-70 where Agent Orange was repeatedly used, stillbirths at hospitals were up to 48.5%; 7.4% of the children born had serious deformities. Chromosome breakdowns were six times greater than in the survivors of Hiroshima. In 1972 a group of 30

that Agent Orange could have been the cause of any problems, so their interest in getting together testing is small. VVAW's second demand is to develop and give a test--an effective test--to vets and their families.

There have already been years upon years of research to establish the connection between Agent Orange and the various symptoms that veterans are now reporting. But what there has not been is any attempt to find out how to treat individuals who were poisoned by defoliant sprays. That is the third demand of VVAW: that the V.A., through its medical and financial resources, accomplish the task of finding treatment for the victims of Agent Orange. As part of this, the V.A. should be in contact with the Vietnamese who have been doing research on the effects of Agent Orange since the mid-'60's. In the mountains of research that has already been done, the names of Vietnamese scientists stand high on the list--they have had to deal with the problem directly.

Finally, VVAW demands that the V.A. stop its waffling around on the issue of Agent Orange. When the furor about the defol-

workers was hired to spray brush along the Swedish National Railway; 5 died. A sixth died a year later. Survivors reported headaches, loss of taste, poorer vision and impotency. The Swedish government stopped spraying with Horoslyr, a mixture of 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D.

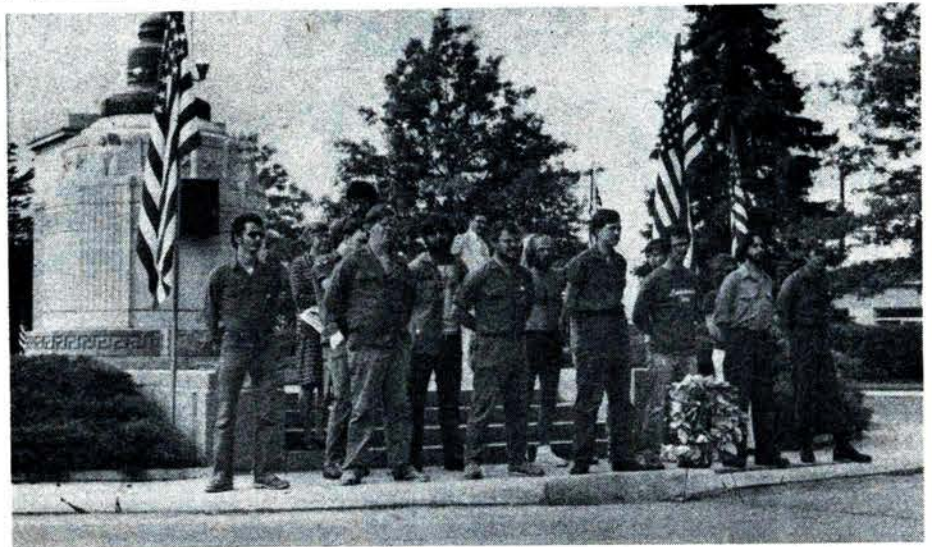
2,4-D, 2,4,5-T and dioxin have all been tested on laboratory animals under a wide variety of conditions. While there are some differences in the results reported, deformed offspring, cancers, cleft palate, and brain malformations have all been noted in high numbers.

After the American "experiment" in Southeast Asia, the most famous case of dioxin poisoning among humans happened in Seveso, Italy, on July 10, 1976, when a chemical factory which produced the ingredients for hexachlorophene (a supposedly antiseptic ointment used in hospitals) exploded, emitting a dioxin-filled smoke into the area. The resulting bureaucratic confusion and criminal mismanagement, plus the corporate refusal to admit what had happened for weeks afterwards, resulted in people in the most af-

fluent first erupted, the V.A. responded that "there is no cause and effect relationship between Agent Orange and supposed symptoms." Their pious statements did nothing to stop the noise, however, so they went one step further. V.A. instructions around Agent Orange now admit there may be some problems--"Except for a skin condition known as chloracne, there are presently no firm data to incriminate the herbicides as causative agents of any other known category of disease or chronic symptom. However, a contaminant dioxin, found in small quantities in defoliants is toxic...."

As usual with the V.A. there's a trick hiding behind this declaration of responsibility. As they are defining chloracne, it was temporary and was the direct result of handling the defoliant. No one has done that for some years, so of course there are no vets affected by the poison.

VVAW is demanding that the V.A. recognize Agent Orange poisoning as a service-connected disability, and that means paying disability payments to vets and their families (or survivors) as well as treating the effects. Compensation must be



Members of Minneapolis/St Paul VVAW and supporters during Memorial Day action publicizing Agent Orange.

paid to the families of vets who died as a result of their exposure to Agent Orange.

The V.A. is an agency of the same government and the same system which sent us off to fight and die in Indochina, and which covered us with the rotten chemicals. They cannot continue to try to shift the responsibility and the blame for this crime on to the individual vets. If it takes forcing them to move before anything happens, then that's exactly what us vets need to do. In Chicago there have already been several picket lines outside the V.A. Regional Office to demand treatment for Agent Orange. Just to get the defoliant's effects out to the millions of potential victims is a big job--the film, "Agent Orange, Vietnam's Deadly Fog" which kicked off the struggle against Agent Orange in Chicago, is a good introduction, and VVAW chapters in places around the country have gone to their local CBS stations to demand that the film be shown. In New York City, there was even a picket line inside the lobby of WCBS, the home station of CBS in New York.

But while there have been some good initial steps in forcing the V.A. to take action, the battle is really just getting started. For the V.A. and the system behind it there are millions--maybe billions--of bucks at stake (taxpayers' money, of course) which they do not want to spend. And so they are resisting as best they can. We cannot count on them doing one damn thing on their own--we have to force them to move.

As part of the long-range campaign to win the VVAW demands around Agent Orange, VVAW is calling a national AGENT ORANGE DAY on the 21st of October, when VVAW chapters around the country will be holding actions to put forward our demands. We are also talking to a number of environmental

groups which are also concerned about the use of defoliants, asking them to join with us in these actions.

Although at this time there is no single national organization taking up the overall question of chemical sprays in the U.S., there are a number of local groups and organizations which are taking action around the problem. In fact, though the concentrations are lower, the same ingredients as are in Agent Orange are being used in the U.S. today; an area larger than the total of 5,000,000 acres sprayed in Vietnam are being sprayed yearly in the U.S. today.

In many cases the effects are the same. Pregnant women have a high proportion of spontaneous abortions, children are sick, farm animals die or produce mutated offspring. In several places around the country, the environmental groups have grown from people who live in the areas near where the spraying is going on.

Across the country there are millions of people, vets and non-vets, who are united in seeing the need for people to be safe from chemical warfare, whether the U.S. government variety in Southeast Asia, or the corporate variety as in the forests of Oregon, Upper Michigan, or northern Wisconsin. As the government and big companies (particularly Dow Chemical which is the principle manufacturer of the defoliant at this time) refuse to deal with the results of their crimes against the people, more and more individuals and groups are joining to fight against them.

In many places vets are in the middle of these struggles, not always working so much as Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange (though this is the case in some places)

CATARACTS BLAMED ON NUCLEAR POWERED SHIPS

Some vets have never faced the atrocities of the Vietnam war and many vets will not suffer the effects of Agent Orange. But if you're one of these "safe" vets, and if you spent your time on a nuc ship or sub, you might have some extra "benefits" from your sea duty tour.

Nuclear powered ships or subs are most touted for the extended months they can spend at sea, the enormous kill power of the nuc weapons they carry, and

Cont. from p. 9 Time Bomb in Viet Vets

but as individuals who have had enough and are fed up--and are ready to join with others to fight against the source of the problem. VVAW will continue to do all that we can to join with these efforts. At the same time, as put forward at our National Meeting in the beginning of August, a veterans' organization such as VVAW has particular responsibilities to build the struggle of vets and our campaign around Agent Orange is one way we must do this. It's a campaign which we will win, and we're not going to have to wait 20 years like the brother who just now received compensation for being a military guinea pig during nuclear tests in the 1950's. We've had enough of being used by the rich for their purposes, only to be discarded once they're done with us. They haven't seen the last of us yet, no matter how much they would like to cover us over or have us die off from their defoliants, or give up in frustration from their red tape and bullshit.

The V.A. director in Milwaukee had it right--the V.A. will move when it is forced to move. VVAW calls on vets to join in the struggle to get the V.A. off its ass and to deal with our problems--to provide testing and treatment for Agent Orange and compensation for affected vets. They've done enough to us already--it's time they did something for us. We've had enough and aren't taking any more!■

the great hotel-type living and working accommodations. The crew members, however, most remember the subs for the crowded living conditions, long work hours, incompetent officers, and the constant threat of a disaster from the unsafe conditions of the ship or sub and its systems. These stinking conditions continually exist and get worse while the big time brass get more and more money to advertise the great education, travel, and benefits of being a nuc-power trained sailor.

Most nuc sailors have outlived their sentence--have lived through the numbers of casualties on board ship, have lived through the periscope snapping and depth charging of Russian patrol boats (a few miles outside Russian harbors) and have made it back from the hot spots they're constantly sent to. But, just like the "guinea pigs" at White Sands in the '50's, or the 'Nam vets who were sprayed with Agent Orange, nuc sailors haven't collected all of their active duty "benefits." It appears that the Navy left out some facts from its nuc power education program.

Recently, one sailor stationed aboard a nuc sub complained of cataracts developing in his eyes, and felt it was a result of exposure to radiation. The Navy, upholding its tradition of disregard for the safety of its crews, ran out the old line on how safe nuc power is, so safe that the 80-year-old "Father of Nuclear Power," Admiral Hymen Rickover, actually drank a glass of radioactive water once. Despite the concern of the Navy and Rickover's heroic feat (even though he wears glasses, and probably glows in the dark) the GI did a little research on his own.

References from medical studies on the effects of radiation, many dating to the years from 1953-1964, substantiate the sub sailor's claim. The characteristic appearance of early stages of a radiation cataract appears as a dot in the lens which the man doesn't even notice. But as the cataract develops and grows, the lens be-

comes opaque, followed by loss of vision.

Such a cataract can take place from 6 months to 28 years after exposure to relatively small amounts of neutron-gamma radiation (common to all nuclear powered vessels). The exposure of the eyes to this radiation is especially serious:

1. Unlike other parts of the body which shed cells daily, the lens of the eye is unique in that the cells are not eliminated, but remain within the lens, capsule during the life of the individual.

2. Other cells in the human body which have received radiation exposure to the extent that there is latent damage can be

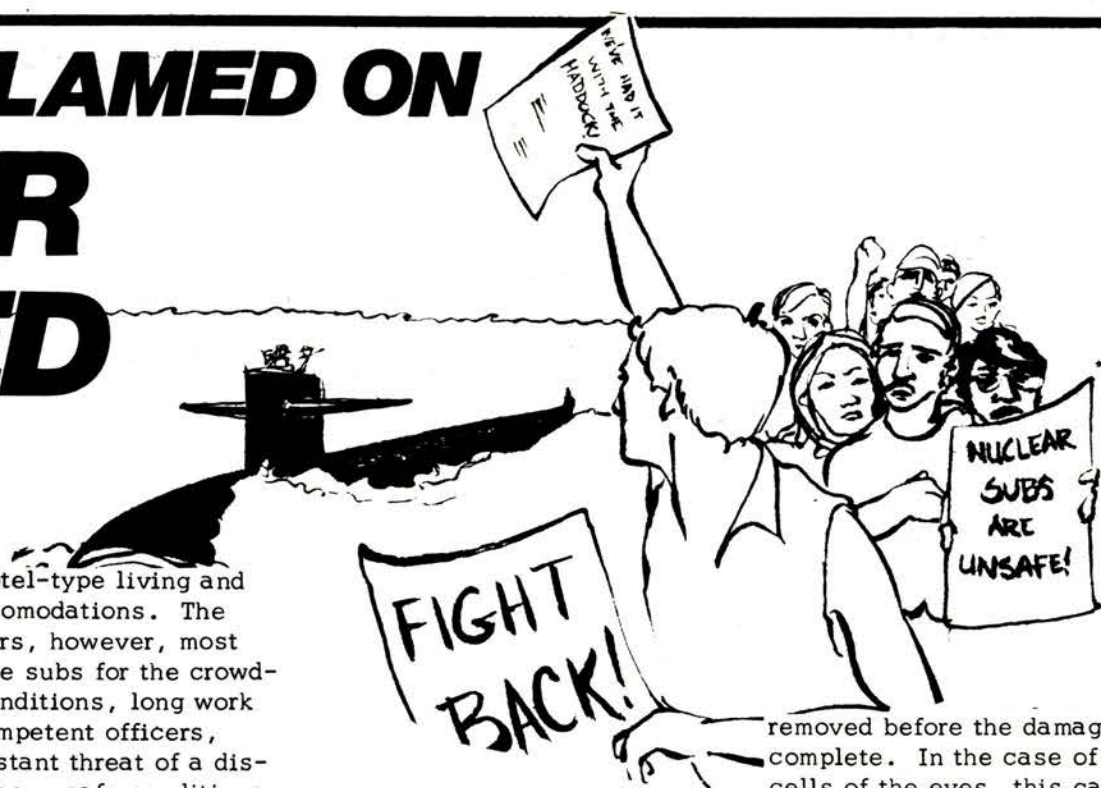
Cont. from p. 9 What is Agent Orange?

affected area being left in their homes for two weeks. Meanwhile, animals died, birds fell from the skies, trees withered and died, children got sick and were hospitalized, residents got skin growths. Finally the area was evacuated--and is still barren today. One hundred and seventy-nine people who lived in the immediate area were sent away, forbidden to take anything with them. By that time 36 people had been hospitalized; bird life was devastated; carcasses of birds were everywhere along with thousands of rats, moles and mice; rabbits died by the hundreds, chickens by the thousands. And the long range physical effects, to say nothing of the economic dislocation of the population, are still to be discovered.

2,4-D is still widely used in the U.S. The Environmental Protection Agency, responsible for regulating production and use of herbicides, has done nothing to stop its use. 2,4,5-T because of its association with

removed before the damage is complete. In the case of the cells of the eyes, this can't be done. Thus, the cells remain in the lens and obstruct vision.

Thousands of vets and GIs that were "safely" tucked away on nuc chips, along with the thousands of sub base and shipyard workers who spent many hours repairing the steel hulks, could be affected by this exposure to radiation. But just like in the case of Agent Orange, the military will stand on its hind legs and bellow about the safety of nuc power and the V.A. will echo that the effects of radiation exposure are "not service connected." Well, it's clear that you didn't have to be in 'Nam to be a victim of the rich man's profit system--you could have been "safe."■



Cont. from p.3 Meeting

There was a discussion on the situation in Africa which began with a short description of the situation in Eritrea by a woman from that country who talked about the liberation forces and their struggle to free their land from the oppressive forces of Ethiopia, supported, financed and using soldiers of the Cubans and the Soviet Union. The Fatigues for Freedom Fighters Campaign (during which VVAW collected over 50 full sets of military fatigues which were sent to members of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania for use in their fight against the racist government of South Africa) was summed up as excellent, particularly in Milwaukee. Generally the discussion resulted in seeing Africa as the focal point of the contention between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. VVAW must continue to work around the question of Africa, paying attention to its changing and explosive situation. Especially in the next period of time people should be aware of the phoney "elections" planned for Zimbabwe in late December which might well provide the basis for the U.S. government to drop all pretense of opposition to the present Ian Smith government in that country.

Several organizational questions were also dealt with. First there was the question of a new name for VVAW. Chapters where there are few Vietnam veterans (though there are Vietnam-era vets) particularly brought out the question. After some discussion, the sense of the meeting was that we could not now change the name of the organization and, second, that we must keep ourselves open to changing the name in the future. At a time when we are taking up the campaign around Agent Orange,

which the name fits with, and when there is a scab VVAW (see below) we are not about to surrender the name. Everyone agreed that, in the long run, people will judge us less by our name than by our actions.

The second organizational question dealt with attempts by a group calling itself the Revolutionary Communist Party to split VVAW and establish their people as a new "VVAW." These attempts included setting up a bogus VVAW Newsletter and even a newspaper in the name of VVAW. A brother from the Bay Area of California talked about the things he had gone through with the scab VVAW there--everything from threats to being forbidden to come to chapter meetings (even though he was an elected member of the chapter steering committee). As a result of the discussion, the meeting voted to censure and condemn the RCP for their attempts to split VVAW, and their blatant disregard for the democracy of a mass organization, and to throw out the leaders of the scabs from VVAW. A brother from New York City aptly pointed to a leaflet which the scab VVAW had written about Agent Orange as a perfect example of their activities--preaching from on high to the thousands of vets whom they believe to be "stupid." It exemplified, he said, the "difference between what we are doing and what they are saying."

This meeting gathered experience from actual practice of organizing vets in various parts of the country. We put that experience together into a workable, active program for the next several months. When we get out and implement these campaigns, we can lead increasing numbers of vets in some hard battles, win some important victories, and give the rich an ass-kicking they won't forget for a while!■

Continued from 5 Jamming

Instead he bubbled with excitement and smiles, glad to have been of help to the vet. With the check Hearn also gave some free advice. He explained how the vet would have gotten the check today, and that the only reason VVAW helped was to get their hands on the check. He went on to blabber how VVAW was just a bunch of trouble-makers no one really needed and that the V.A. certainly didn't want them hanging around their building. Proud of the V.A. timely service (under much pressure), Hearn also asked the vet to sign a statement saying that VVAW had solicited him in the lobby. Hearn's smooth tongue and slick speech didn't get over

as the vet walked away, check in hand, to run down Hearn's proposition to VVAW.

Well, we've got a message for the V.A. and other loyal system men--the same one we gave to Hearn. VVAW wants to put our hands on something, but not vets' checks--rather, right around the throat of the system that uses us once and then throws us away. We sure aren't afraid to shakedown the system and jam the V.A. every step of the way to fight for decent benefits for vets. Going through the V.A.'s system produces long waits and few results, exposing their don't-give-a-damn attitude toward veterans. As long as the rich and their faithful servants, the bureaucrats, keep cutting our benefits, VVAW will be there to fight.■

FRAGGIN'



Sp5 Willy(Ret.)

ITEM: During the Vietnam War about 400 officers or lifers were shot or fragged by their own men because they were too gung ho or just plain stupid.

ITEM: When Jimmy Carter became President, he appointed former Captain Max Cleland as head of the Veterans Administration. Knowing that vets are pissed off at the V.A., he wanted to clean up the image. So he hired Max--one of "us." After all, Max had lost two legs and an arm in Vietnam!

But is Max one of us? What do these two items have in common? Well, the story of how Max lost his limbs has begun to creep out. It seems that a grenade rolled off a supply truck (or according to some sources, a helicopter) and got him! I know that people like Cleland or Carter are sure that we're stupid, but we aren't--and weren't--that stupid. It sure sounds to me like Max got himself fragged. Max was never one of "us." And some one knew that all the way back in the 'Nam.

* * * * *

An ad for McDonnell Douglas (the airplane builders) says: "The F-15 Eagle. The Peace Keeper, America's Air Ace!"

Peacekeeper? I thought the F-15 was used to fire rockets at ships or bullets at soldiers (or sometimes peasants or water buffalos).

* * * * *

The V.A. says that it gives out a lot of information about pensions, educational payments, retirement pay and many other items of great importance to many vets. Yet, a lot of vets are in the dark about all of these things. Why is this? The General Accounting Office provides an answer. They did a study on the V.A. and found that sensitive information about vets and their families is given out to federal and state agencies, hospitals, schools, lawyers and even foreign governments, but not to veterans!

So, fellow veterans, you want to know about your benefits? I wouldn't recommend going to a state or federal agency. If you have to go downtown to sift through bureaucratic red tape, you might as well go to the V.A. Hospitals? I don't know. What do you see there? A bone specialist? Schools are a possibility, but that's only if you're in school and have a good vets' counselor who'll spend extra hours digging out information. That leaves lawyers and foreign governments as places to find out about your benefits. It's a hard choice. I'd recommend against the lawyer. Everyone knows that there are a lot of shyster lawyers. If you just picked one out of the phone book you might get robbed. What I recommend is that you take some of that money you earned from that good job you got because you learned a skill in the Army just like the recruiter said you would. Take that money and travel to Greece. That way you can get information on your benefits and have a Greek vacation at the same time.

* * * * *

The Internal Revenue Service has denied tax deductions for contributions to a war veterans group which claimed it was organized to "sponsor and participate in acts of a patriotic nature." The IRS found that about half of the group's income was derived from the sale of liquor and that its "principal activities are limited to operating a bar to promote the recreation and association of its members." Will the real VFW please stand up? Or is it the American Legion?

* * * * *

General Omar Bradley was paid about \$400,000 for allowing actor Karl Malden to play Bradley in the movie "Patton." The soldiers of World War II who kicked the Nazi's ass all over France got nothing. But that's the way it is in this great country of ours. Hell, they even get you when you die.

A PFC's widow gets \$293 a month, but any officer's gets a whole lot more. However, for most of the higher level officers, there isn't much chance of leaving a widow. In Vietnam their average combat time was half that of enlisted men and officer casualties were much lower than any previous time in history. That's only justice, I suppose, because they need those officers to come back and run the V.A. for them.■

Workers: Rounds 1&2, Bosses: Round 3, Fight Still On P.O. CONTRACT SELLOUT

The new postal contract was laid on postal workers by the heavy hand of the government's arbitrator. It took the U.S. Postal Service, the federal mediator, and the top union officials over two months to engineer the forced settlement. The country's half million mail handlers, letter carriers and clerks were threatening to pull off an illegal strike nationwide, and had already voted down the lousy offer their union leaders tried to peddle to them. Conventions and leadership meetings had mandated direct action. Walkouts at the Bulk Facilities serving New York City and San Francisco had given a taste of the mail tie-up that was in the works, and 175 postal workers were fired for standing up to the sellout contract.

But, a group of misleaders named Andrews, Vacca, LaPenta, and Johnson took a dive. These presidents of the postal unions betrayed the mandates of their membership and agreed to binding arbitration. After two weeks of showcase negotiations, the arbitrator came down with his decision: he promptly took away key no lay-off protection in exchange for a little more money. To cover their sellout, two of the union presidents have set up phoney ratification elections, even though the mediator's decree is final, and they have no intention of leading a strike to change it. Andrews and Vacca hope that a "yes" vote on the contract will boost their slim chances for reelection to their union jobs during union elections in October.

The turning point came when the officials ignored union mandates to strike if the 15 days of renegotiation didn't produce a good contract. The "NO" vote on the earlier contract, and the threat of a strike had forced the U.S. Postal Service to reopen negotiations despite the statements of Postmaster General Bolger that he would never do it. But the scope of the renegotiations was restricted to only two issues--pay and the no lay-off clause; arbitration automatically followed after 15 days if a contract wasn't agreed on.

As a result, Harvard labor arbitrator James Healy took away what all the judges, stand-by federal troops and union sellouts combined couldn't touch. With the power of the U.S. government behind him, Healy attacked the very thing that unions had declared non-negotiable--the no lay-off clause. From now on,

new employees will not be protected against lay-offs until they have worked for six years. In the period from June 76 to June 77, 103,000 new postal employees were veterans, making use of vets preference; and one of the reasons so many vets saw the Postal Service as the place to work was the security offered by no lay-offs. But no longer!

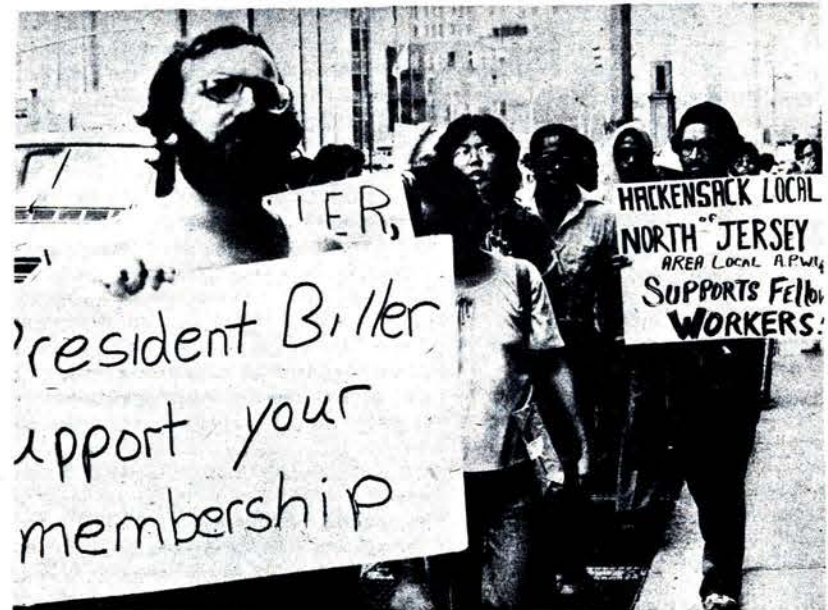
This new category of workers will be more insecure in their jobs. The Postal Service will try to use them as a wedge against the rest of the work force. In fact this is happening already with part-time and short-term postal workers who have few rights and different conditions from the regular workforce. An original contract demand from rank and file workers for an all regular workforce was set aside by the union sellouts early in the negotiations.

Abandoning the no lay-off clause means that postal workers, already divided up into four different unions, will be in a weaker position to fight against job eliminations and speed-up in the future. The Postal Service calls it "flexibility, cost-cutting, and automation." In reality it is an attack on postal workers.

And it is even a step back from the contract which postal workers voted down earlier. Even with the cap lifted from the cost of living allowance, the new pay raise will stay under 22% over the next three years, well below the 39% and 37% won by coal miners and railroad workers earlier this year. Jimmy Carter's scheme to use postal workers as a spearhead in his attempt to drive down wages all over the country was at least a partial success.

Unchanged points in the original sellout include attacks on the grievance procedure allowing management even greater power to harass and fire. It did not deal with demands against forced overtime, sick leave policy, or unsafe conditions, all points that the rank and file had demanded. Amnesty for the 175 workers who were fired because of the walkouts in Richmond, California, and Jersey City, NJ, was never even brought to the bargaining table.

Across the country, from the huge bulk centers to neighborhood sorting rooms, rank and file postal workers are focusing their anger on the top union officials who caved in to the Postal Service. After a militant walkout on both coasts which



Angry postal workers stage a picket line in support of the fired bulk workers from the Jersey City Bulk Facility. President Biller (front sign) is head of the New York City Local of the APWU--tough talking, but falling flat on his face when it comes to real support for his membership who went out to fight for "No Contract, No Work."

forced one contract out of the Postal Service, after rank and file rejection of the first sellout contract, after the threat of a strike forced the Postal Service to back down and engage in renegotiations, the union misleaders finally managed to sellout. Working hand in glove with management, they threw away the power which the rank and file had built.

At the Denver Convention of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), angry opposition to union president Emmett Andrews erupted in a prolonged outburst against the contract. Andrews was unable to speak for almost an hour as delegates hooted him down. At the same convention, they gave a standing ovation to a delegation of fired strikers and set up a relief fund of \$50,000 to support these brothers and sisters, showing the rank and file support of the workers who took a stand for all postal workers.

Had he been able, Andrews no doubt would have done the same as the gangster leadership of the Mailhandlers Union which has not allocated one red cent for their 60 fired workers.

With a series of examples of how rank and file strength can win victories, postal workers now have the chance to voice their bitterness against the contract in one more vote. In protest against both the terms of the contract and the way it was dictated to postal workers, hundreds of thousands of NO VOTES will declare the anger of the rank and file.

The chance is also coming when postal workers get a shot at the union officials who engineered the sellouts. APWU head Andrews faces an election challenge from John Napurano, a candidate from Clifton, NJ. Joseph Vacca, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers is being challenged by Vincente Sombrotto, the head of the New York local. Even though neither challenger distinguished himself as a leader in the contract fight, both incumbents are likely to be knocked out for their betrayal of the membership.

Amnesty for the fired workers will be a key demand during the elections, with postal workers looking closely at how the candidates propose to win back the jobs of the 175 strikers. The fighting spirit demonstrated by these postal workers cannot be

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Bulk workers, later fired, manning a strike line back in July when the old contract ran out.

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Cambodia

along. With the pullout of U.S. forces, however, the real "bloodbath" was over.

With rumor left as their main weapon against Cambodia, the U.S. led off with the charge that the evacuation of Phnom Penh was a "death march."

However, a Khymer resident of Phnom Penh, describing the conditions in Phnom Penh at the time, wrote, "At the time that our families were evacuated from the city, cholera was spreading rapidly, everywhere." The lack of drinking water presented real health hazards. Even the U.S. Inspector-General reported in March of 1975 that "the potential for spread of epidemics of cholera and typhus is widespread." The report concluded, "Unsanitary living conditions in Phnom Penh caused by crowding and influx of refugees into the city create a health hazard and present the danger of epidemics."

One Cambodian eyewitness later recalled, "The liberators distributed medicine, but it was insufficient because the number of people was too large." This was verified by testimony from refugees later interviewed in Thailand.

The filtration plant, the electric power plant, the national bank, the docks, lighthouse

and port of Phnom Penh--not one of these was operational when the city was liberated.

The combined threats of starvation and epidemic necessitated the evacuation of the city.

At the time the New York Times declared, "One-third to one-half of the population was forced to leave at gunpoint with no food, no water, shelter or medical care." But a number of accounts from foreign journalists and Cambodian refugees show that all these things were provided, as best as was possible, along the way. One American wrote, "I saw relay stations and rest stops along the road, where Khymer troops, mostly women and Buddhist monks, supplied food and water."

Father Jacques Engleman, a Benedictine Priest with two decades of experience in Cambodia, wrote, "There was enough food for everyone. At night Cambodians would stop to cook the rice and sleep." Engleman further reported that the priests who accompanied the evacuation "were not witness to any cruelties."

Jerome and Jacelyn Steinback, two teachers in Cambodia, witnessed the evacuation and saw entire blocks told "You must leave," continuously throughout the day, stated that "even at the last moment, there was no brutality, no anger."

The medical system had collapsed--liberation forces reopened the hospitals.

What occurred in Phnom Penh

and other cities, contrary to the "death march" slanders, was a strategy, carried out as well as possible under extremely difficult conditions, for dealing with the initial problems of post-war Kampuchea, and made necessary by the conditions caused by the U.S. war on that country.

Still the U.S. press raves about "ghost towns," but again witnesses have a different story. Documented sources, French and America, point out that only a few months after liberation, some 70 small and large factories were in operation. By March, 1976, Swedish Ambassador Kaj Bjoer reported 200,000 people in Phnom Penh, hardly a "ghost town."

Stories of massive starvation are still current today, no surprise given the amount of land destroyed by U.S. bombs and defoliants. By the summer of 1975, however, Newsweek reported in an interview with the Deputy Premier Ieng Sary, "There is enough to feed the people. It is not abundant, but enough." To date, through the planned land reforms, Kampuchea has moved to surplus crops according to international sources and recent American visitors. There's no doubt that for the handful of Cambodians who lived well off the U.S. in the past conditions are much harder today--in fact, many of these individuals are the sources for the horror stories which appear in the U.S. press. For the vast majority of the people of Kampuchea, however, conditions have improved.

So why does the U.S. ruling class and its media continue to attack Kampuchea? The concept of Democratic Kampuchea as a non-aligned, independent nation sticks in the craw of the U.S. which for so long tried to control old Cambodia. Emerging nations like Kampuchea, which has told the two superpowers, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. to take their economic aid (which comes with strings attached), their advisors and their troops and stuff them, present a genuine threat to the U.S. and Soviet plans to divide up the world while waiting to cut each other's throats.

Kampuchea, standing on its own legs, shows other struggling nations and movements that people all over the world don't have to follow the superpowers' program. As non-aligned, independent nations they can exert the type of international influence that the U.S. and Soviet Union can't deal with.

As veterans of the war in Indochina, we flew, rode and walked through Southeast Asia. We fought a war that many of us grew to realize was wrong--we fought on the wrong side. ■

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P.O.

betrayed--no union can permit its members to be punished for fighting for what's right. And pious words and good wishes from candidates for union leadership aren't going to be enough since there have been plenty of these already. Instead, union members will look at exactly what these candidates propose to do--are they setting up defense funds, providing lawyers, helping to jam the hearings (a tactic which the striking workers are using already without the support of the union leadership).

A no vote on the contract and making amnesty the key issue in union elections are two steps in the continuing struggle of postal workers. Even though their victories along the path of the contract struggle were sold out, the key lies in organizing to make sure it doesn't happen again and continuing the fight. ■

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WARS

their liberation from whatever country or system that holds them in slavery. The peoples of Indochina rose up against U.S. imperialism, VVAW supported it. And when the people of Nicaragua rise up against their dictatorial ruler, we support that. We believe in the interests of the majority--that the majority should in fact rule (not only in name) and that there are wars which are just. Had the Vietnamese not been "violent" and thrown out the U.S. by force of arms, they would still be ruled by the U.S. puppets.

Throughout the anti-war movement, VVAW worked closely with a number of groups and individuals who believed in non-violence. We had a common interest in peace in Indochina, an end to the terror and bloodshed that the U.S. was sowing in that area of the world. Even then, however, when we were attacked by the police, we fought back; when the Nazis or the KKK plowed into our ranks, we sent them crawling away bloody. When there is no other way to achieve liberation, whether in Indochina, Tupelo, Mississippi, or in the U.S. as a whole, except to fight for it, we believe in using whatever means are necessary. As a VVAW member during African Liberation Day 1978 said it, "We're only sorry that we can't send the guns to go with these fatigues in support of your struggle." ■

IN MEMORY OF ALBERT BARNITZ BYRNE, M.D.

We of VVAW never had the opportunity to know Dr. Byrne except through an occasional letter and his consistent, generous contributions to the organization. Our last letter came back marked "deceased"; we regret the loss of this man whose support we had come to value, and send our sympathy to his family and friends.

We quote from one of his letters to VVAW:

"I am a veteran of WWI (the 5th U.S. Cavalry) and the Spanish so-called Civil War. I volunteered for the Second W.W. but was rejected. I volunteered to go with an American Unit to the Spanish Civil War, on the Republican side. I was administrator of a hospital when I asked to be sent to the front and was transferred to the Spanish Republican Army. I was through the Teruel campaign and operated 6 days and nights without rest or food. The valor of the Spanish medics fighting for a cause was unbelievable. I contracted tuberculosis there. After return to the U.S.A., I entered the medical service of the U.S. Indian Service and became chief medical officer for the Hopi reservation and District 4 of the Navajo.

I believe in the organization of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. That war was a disgrace to our country and an international crime, and those who saw it for what it was were the outstanding soldiers of our day."

Faithfully,
Albert B. Byrne
Sabinal, Texas

We of VVAW thank Dr. Byrne for his faithful support of our efforts, but more than that, we are grateful for his life of dedicated struggle for the people. Greater praise than that we cannot offer.

EDITORIAL

VVAW has existed for more than 10 years. During that time it has waged struggle--sometimes fierce struggle--against this rotten system we live under. We've fought against the war, for a decent life for vets, and united with others also struggling for a brighter future. During that time we have come under attack for our just stands from the government, the FBI, the police and the courts. But at the same time we have built a good name for the organization with veterans and with the American people. We weathered the storms of trials, jail terms and slander because of this and because of what we stood for.

Recently a group of vets belonging to the Revolutionary Communist Party tried to take over VVAW through underhanded attacks on leadership and on the democratic process of VVAW. Failing to accomplish their aim, they called up all their own cadre, took a "vote" and declared themselves the "Real VVAW." They set up a postoffice box and printed an issue of The Veteran.

Acting just like the "Com-mies" in some grade-B 1950 anti-communist movie, these would-be VVAW phonies try to set up a front group hoping to pimp off the name of VVAW. They could not build a true vets organization. Like a thief in the night they hope that by printing up some leaflets and using the name and emblem of VVAW, they can trick vets into following them. They can't -- not any more than they can stand up and fight for, or represent, the real interests of veterans or the American people.

It's possible that these people can cause a little confusion. However, what the cops, the courts, the FBI and the whole system that stands in back of them couldn't do, these punks certainly won't be able to accomplish. Despite their attempts, VVAW will continue to march down the same path: struggling against the system that used us once and then threw us away!



Response to Letters: As VVAW Sees It JUST AND UNJUST WARS

Dear Friends,

VVAW has a long history of working side by side with pacifists and non-violent organizations. Throughout that time we have come to have a deep and lasting respect for the depth and courage of the convictions of those who advocate non-violent resistance. We believe there are many issues--such as Agent Orange and the wider question of defoliants now being used to poison the atmosphere--on which we will continue to work together in the future. And we look forward to sharing future struggles with you.

The sincere disagreements put forward by the writers of these letters forces us to respond as best we can; we believe we must continue to do what we think is right.

As we see the essence of the questions in these letters, it comes down to this: How can you, veterans of Vietnam, intimately involved in the brutality, the horrors, the barbarism and the agony of war, and having seen its results, now advocate and support those who believe that violence is a solution to their problems?

And the essence of our answer goes back to what we learned on the battlefields of Vietnam. There was a distinct and definite difference between us, the military of the U.S., killing, burning and bombing, and the Indochinese who were doing all they could to kill us and, in many cases, did kill or wound our friends and comrades. Frankly stated, they were right; we were wrong. We were fighting an unjust war; they were fighting a just war.

The most famous single statement from Dewey Canyon III when VVAW members threw their medals, won in the Indochina War, on the steps of the Capitol, was: "We don't want to fight, but if we have to fight again, it will be to take these steps!"

VVAW did not only fight to get the U.S. out of Indochina; we also did all we could to support the Indochinese, who were certainly not "pacifist."

And they were not pacifists because they saw their countries being raped and exploited by U.S. imperialism, and could see that they had to resist. Their resistance, like that of many American GI's who were also in a world full of imperialist violence, was violent--the people



VVAW members presenting "Fatigues for Freedom Fighters to PAC representative on African Liberation Day in Chicago, 1978

of Hanoi, for instance, did their damndest to shoot down U.S. planes flying over their city to bomb the inhabitants. And they should have!

Those of us who did the bidding of the U.S. government in Indochina saw--and sometimes participated--in all the bloody brutality which is part of war. We helped to burn the villages; we slaughtered civilians so that the body counts could be higher; we flew the helicopters which, for sport, would try to shoot old men off their sampans in the rivers. We knew the heart-stopping terror of being under fire, and the heart-wrenching pain of having friends hit. Some of us still wake up at night to the sounds of friends dying.

With that, with having stared straight into the ugly face of war, we support and will, to the best of our abilities, fight shoulder to shoulder with those struggling and fighting for their freedom.

We have talked at length with the Brothers and the Sisters of the Pan Africanist Congress. Their courage and dedication in fighting the vicious system that tyrannizes their country is without question. But even more important than that is their vision for the future, their vision of a country where the majority is freed from the yoke of a racist government--with its millions of U.S. corporate dollars as strong

support--where children can grow up with a true voice in their own future and that of their land. We are proud and grateful that uniforms which we wore in the service of U.S. imperialism will now be worn by those who fight a just war.

From all we know of the government of South Africa, who have sat with their claws gripping the Black majority of that country for years, they will not passively surrender their power or their military rule. That government will fall, eventually; but it will not fall all by itself. It will fall as a result of the struggle--yes, the violent struggle of the people of that country.

Like the letter writers, we of VVAW would much prefer to live in a world without violence. But we have learned the difference between wars that are just and wars that are unjust. Wars which increase exploitation, which deny freedom to a people, which are designed to put profits in the pockets of a small exploiting class, are, plain and simple, unjust wars--that is, not in the interests of the majority of the people. The U.S. role in Indochina is a prime example of this kind of war; so is the presence of the U.S.S.R. in Ethiopia.

In glaring opposition to these wars are those of liberation where a people are fighting for their own independence, for

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LETTERS TO VVAW

THE VETERAN welcomes letters, comments and criticisms. Please write. Also, send along any poetry, drawings, photos or stories you would like to see in the paper.

**P.O. Box 20184
Chicago, ILL. 60620
[312] 651-1583**

From a Bay Area VVAW Member:

"I am not a Vietnam Veteran"

There were talks, at our National Meeting, about some members of VVAW who felt somehow uneasy being in the organization without having been in Vietnam or seen combat there. Vietnam Veterans Against the War: the name is pretty clear and many a time lots of us have thought about changing the name to something more appropriate under which veterans of all eras could unite.

I don't personally think that the name should be changed at this time. It was decided at our Conference in Milwaukee that for various good reasons we should for now keep our name. It's a name of proud history. From our everyday work in the organization, we learned that VVAW is in fact an organization for veterans of all eras, completely dedicated to the struggle against the attacks that everyday are coming down on us, attacks coming from a system that used us to protect its interests around the world, and then threw us back in the streets to join the thousands of unemployed in their everyday

struggle to survive.

Many times while joining the brothers in some action, I was approached by someone who asked, "What war are you against?" "The war is over." "How can you talk about war if you never fought one?" From my experience I've noticed that many times such individuals who challenged me this way are trying to make fun of us or make us feel like some kind of walking fraud. Those individuals are often reactionaries trying to be funny, not realizing what fools they are making of themselves.

Honest people, also, often ask us about our name and the contradictions that it seems to have. But our past and present work helps to clear any doubt about who we are and what we are doing. We must be prepared to meet this challenge and to educate those who for too long have been kept in ignorance about the lies and affronts that we are now facing.

To all of you brothers who, like me, did not serve in 'Nam, I say that we more than others can understand the horrors of war. We had our share of abuse. In the service we had to fight racism, V.D., drug addiction, alcoholism, ever-present harassment by the brass, unsafe working conditions. Everyday while in the service we had to fight to keep ourselves together in order not to lose our self-respect. Every bit of resistance we showed in the military is now one of the reasons why we joined VVAW and why VVAW exists. The system that kept us down then,

and that sent our brothers to die, is the same that now is trying to drive us to starvation. Therefore I hope that you, as I, are proud and happy to be members of an organization that will not take it and shut up, but stand up and fight for what is ours.

"Can not support" VVAW African Campaign

(The two letters were in response to a VVAW mailing ask for support; the mailing included a brochure about "Fatigues for Freedom Fighters," a VVAW campaign to provide fatigues and boots for a company of the soldiers of the Pan Africanist Congress in their struggle against the racist government of South Africa.)

.....

Dear Friends,

I am an aggressive pacifist and cannot support any project to achieve justice by killing people-- even if most are sinful, evil, misguided so & so's.

There are a number of instances in history where a measure of justice has been achieved non-violently. I'm sending a dollar in token, inspired by the throwing away of medals incident.

.....
Dear Vietnam Veterans,

I read your latest letter about Defoliant Agent Orange and sat down to write you another check. I've supported VVAW since I first heard about it, perhaps when you threw your medals on

the steps of the Capitol in your efforts to end the war, fighting, and killing in Vietnam. I sent extra support when Nixon and his agents had your leaders arrested at the convention, and have continued ever since.

After writing out the check yesterday, I read at breakfast this morning your appeal for Southern African Fatigues (VVAW's "Fatigues for Freedom Fighters" campaign) to outfit a company of freedom fighters who would shoot, kill, and seek and destroy as you were trained to do, and some of you did, in Vietnam. I thought you had learned from that experience that fighting and killing are wrong when carried out with physical weapons. That was the position I came to after my service in the Navy in WW II.

It seems to me there are enough U.S. problems to keep you busy, and we need you here at home: your attack on Agent Orange; to cut back the 54% of the U.S. budget spent on the military while civilian needs pile up; to end political oppression such as the political prisoners Ambassador Young referred to (Ben Chaves and the Wilmington 10, etc); help in employment for veterans, etc. I share your abhorrence of Apartheid, but not your belief that killing and helping to kill makes right your objection to the whites they're killing. Please remove my name from your mailing list.

Sincerely, but regret fully,
VVAW Responds on page 14

VETS' NOTES Cutting Thru Red Tape Making Sense of Regs

Keeping an Eye on Our Congressmen: A proposed 5.5% hike in GI Bill payments has disappeared from the legislative agenda. For the last two years there have been raises in the GI Bill and some vets had come to expect--even believe--that Congress was trying to give us a little something so we would fall only a little further behind inflation each year. But not this year.

According to a staff member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, the plan to raise benefits, and another larger scale plan which would have inserted a cost-of-living escalator into the GI Bill have both

been dropped because Congress instead wants to work on pension reform for older vets. "The older veterans have the political clout in Congress," the staff member said. As a result pension costs may well increase \$10 billion over the next five years.

But don't give up hope--Congress is thinking about us Vietnam vets. The House Veterans Affairs Committee is going to hold hearings on GI Bill overpayments and the poor repayment record of Vietnam-era vets on V.A. education loans.

Vietnam veterans certainly have nothing against an in-

crease in pensions for older veterans--they need to keep up with inflation probably even more than most of us do. But there's no reason why it has to be an either/or proposition. If they need a place to get the money from, one clue might be in a recently published table which gives expected retirement salaries, based on life expectancy figures, for lifers. If you put in 30 years and retire as an O-10 (that's a bunch of stars), you can expect to get \$898,805 before you drop dead!

V.A. Education Loans: V.A. educational loans aren't a bad deal if you're in school on the GI Bill. Depending on how bad the V.A. wants to see its loan

fund used, even the paperwork isn't bad. Go to a V.A. rep at your school or write to the V.A. and ask for a loan form. That form will require that you detail your income and projected expenses. Based on your figures, the V.A. will determine how much of a loan you will get.

To qualify you have to be enrolled in school on the GI Bill. You can get up to \$2500 (recently raised) for a nine-month period. The loan, with its 7% interest, is due 90 days after the vet finally leaves school. There's no clear way to judge when the V.A. will decide to push the program--if you've got a decent vet rep, he or she can clue you in.

Recollections of Vietnam

THE DELTA FOX STRIKES AGAIN

The episode above is one of a series of recollections from Vietnam and the military. VVAW hopes to print a book of such recollections--the "war stories" which often go a long ways toward showing what that rich man's war was all about. We invite veterans to contribute their recollections

The yellow Ford tractor bounced on the pierced steel planking that made up the runway at Vung-Tau Army Airfield. Hundreds and hundreds of yards of this rusty, OD green shit, like some giant tinkertoy for planes to land on. Here and there it was pock-marked from rockets or mortar rounds that had landed on it. The brass would run out the Vietnamese laborers to fill in the holes, with marshmallow fluff I think, because every time it rained it washed out the holes. We would laugh and say the laborers didn't care--"What the hell, they're the ones firin' this place up at night anyway."

I was pissed. It had to be about 100° and out on the PSP it was hot, really hot. Yentas had sent me out to get a hydraulic unit and pull it into one of the hanger shops. Christ, all the birds were out flying and wouldn't be in til late afternoon or evening and the damn thing could wait. Hell no! Not Yentas, the scrawny S.O.B. was the same rank as me--buck sergeant--but he had time in grade and would put on this show of authority for the other EM's in the shop. I could be sitting in the shade, shooting the shit with the other guys but he laid this on me, knowing I wouldn't push it on the other EM's. I guess I'm not the NCO caliber asshole type.

I hitched up the hydraulic mule to the tractor and pulled it towards the hanger. I saw the Army Otter land and bounce down the runway. The dude pulled the little green plane that looked like the Spirit of St Louis, into one of our (the Air Force--popularly known as the Blue Screw) slots. I gave a shit. What the hell--all our birds were out anyway.

As I pulled into the hanger this lifer E-8 sticks his head out of the air-conditioned office upstairs and says, "Come up here, airman."

"Sergeant," I yelled.

"Okay, Sergeant, Come ul here."

"Jesus Christ," I thought, "What now?" Shuffling up the stairs, I pushed open the control room door. "Goddam is it

nice in here," I thought. "Air conditioned and all." I hoped these fat mf'ers would get pneumonia running in and out.

"Step over here, boy," (Screw you!); "How the hell am I supposed to know you're an NCO," the lifer said. "You ain't got no sleeves for your chevrons." (Maybe I could get 'em tatooed on my arm!) "You ain't got no name tag or Air Force tag either, Sergeant; are you in the Air Force?" ("Sometimes I wonder too," I thought as I stared at an intensely interesting trash can in the corner.) "Where's your hat, Sergeant?" (If it was up your ass, you'd know)

"Ah, I think it's in the tractor," I said.

"You're supposed to be covered at all times, Sergeant."

"Yeah, Sarge," I groaned.

"Have you been drinking, Sergeant?" (Does a bear shit in the woods?) I was pretty disgusted by this point, so, spitting into his garbage can, I leaned over his desk about three feet over the pudgy little asshole, "Well, Sarge, What did you want me for?"

He got the message.

Getting a little flushed, he stuttered, "Well, uh, well, uh (Get the shit out of your mouth), Sergeant, ah..." "Davis," I added firmly.

"Well, ah, Sergeant Davis we're going to give you an important mission." (Oh, shit, I thought) "You see, Sergeant, we have an Army plane taking up one of our parking spaces. And we want you to carry this written order out to him to move it, into the Army area."

Yentas, I'm going to kick your ass--you got me into this shit.

"And what if he won't go," I said, taking the note.

"Use your authority to order him to move."

"Yeah, right."

I took the note and climbed into the tractor, trying to make it do a "wheely" going out of the hanger. "Christ," I thought, "these Army warrant officers are crazy! What if he gets pissed and pulls a piece on me.... Well, I got a .45 under the seat.... Naw, I'd get into all kinds of shit, and maybe dead

too....What bullshit!" I stomp the gas pedal and roared across the PSP.

It was the Otter I saw earlier. As I pulled up next to it, I saw the pilot was gone. On the nose, right behind the prop were the words, painted in big letters, "The Delta Fox." "Oh Christ," I thought, "I really got one now." My suspicions were confirmed when the dude strolled around one of the hangers, and across the runway, sucking on a can of beer, with a case of cold ones under his arm.

He had on the OD green Army flight suit and flight glasses, but all similarity to military reality broke down there. His boots were obviously custom-made, a brown Sam Browne belt with shoulder strap, an English Webley pistol, topped off with a leather flying cap, goggles, a white silk scarf and a huge, black handle-bar mustache.

I was right! An Army warrant officer, a crazy Army warrant officer. What the hell war is he in? And what am I doing here? Oh, man. He's probably got a leather flying jacket in the cockpit too.

As he got closer, I could see he was about my age and obviously stoned out of his mind.

"Uhhh, Hi there," I said.

"Hey man, what's going on," he responded.

"Well, I was sorta told to come out here and, ah, tell you you gotta move your plane."

"I gotta what?" he said.

Oh shit, here we go, I thought. "Ah, the NCOIC said you gotta move it."

"Yeah, well you know what I say about that, don't you?"

I said no, but I had a pretty good idea.

"Well, you tell 'em to go fuck himself," said the Delta Fox.

"Aw, man, I can't go in there and say that--I'm already in enough trouble with those lifers."

He popped open the door to the Otter and set the beer inside "Shit, observing the war's hot work; I just stopped by to pick up a cool one, you know?"

Judging from the number of patches on the plane, it was hot work, in more ways than one.

"Here, you want a beer?"

"Yeah, thanks." I pulled the church key out of my pocket and opened the beer, a rusty

Black Label. "Well, anyway here's the note they sent."

As I guzzled the beer, he read the note and smiled, "Here, take them this message from me." He wrote briefly on the side of the plane, using the same paper they'd sent.

He folded it once and handed it to me. "OK GI, can do?"

"No sweat, GI."

I climbed into the tractor as he popped another can and leaned on the fuselage drinking it.

The note read: "Fuck You--The Delta Fox."

When I handed it to the lifer and he read it, I thought he was going to have a cardiac arrest--and I would have to watch. His eyes bulged, veins stood out, and he turned 5 shades of red. Gasping, he bolted into an adjoining office, yelling "Lieutenant, Lieutenant!" After a few seconds he puffed out with the scummy brown bar in tow, down the stairs, into a jeep, and roared out of the hanger.

Man, I had to see this. I ran and climbed in the tractor and fired out of the hanger myself. As the jeep got near the Otter, the Delta Fox fired it up and taxied onto the runway. As he passed the jeep, he opened the side door and flipped the bird.

Rolling past me he waved. I gave him the peace sign. Never saw him again.

I drove off and had a cold one to the Delta Fox. ■

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