

**Right or Wrong?**

# VIETNAM

With what's going on in Vietnam today, was the anti-war movement right to support Vietnamese freedom fighters? What about Vietnam's present policies?

**Yesterday & Today ~ p.7**

**Vietnam Veterans' Week**

# STANDING UP & SPEAKING OUT

Carter declared Vietnam Veterans Week hoping to cover over some of the problems of vets, but on that Week, vets don't let him get away with it.

**p.12**



# THE VETERAN

**Vietnam Veterans Against the War**

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**VETS of ALL ERAS, CLOSE RANKS!**

**FALL 1979**

## **CUTS, BENEFITS LOST, PROBLEMS PUT OFF VETS HIT HARD IN 1979**

1979 has been a difficult year for Vietnam veterans. It's been a year when movies--"Coming Home," the "Deerhunter," and many others--and books and TV programs have attempted to deal with the situation of Vietnam vets. With Carter's proclaiming Vietnam Veterans Week, it's almost become respectable to be a Vietnam veteran; we no longer have to hide our backgrounds under the nearest table.

It's been a far cry from the situation in the past where vets have been ignored in the hope that Vietnam veterans--and the war which we fought--would somehow disappear. Whatever complaints Vietnam vets now have, being ignored is not one of them.

But we have to balance this attention with what has in fact been accomplished for vets during the year. On that score, the government has shut itself out at least from any programs that have been of any help to veterans.

Take Agent Orange, for instance. Vietnam vets, poisoned by this herbicide sprayed on all of us in Vietnam are sick, dying, having deformed children. The best the VA can do is say well, we'll put together a committee to study the problem.



On Memorial Day Carter hides his face during the ceremony at the beginning of Vietnam Vets Week; but he cannot hide his treatment of veterans.

And even that's a step forward from their complete refusal to recognize that a problem exists. (For more information, see the article on page 2.)

Just to show that Vietnam vets don't get preferential treatment in terms of getting screwed by the VA, there's the as yet unnumbered vets affected by radiation tests in the '50's when vets served as guinea pigs for the military (see the article on page 5). When these veterans and others with health problems confront the VA, they may well be met with another VA tactic to squeeze out from under doing its job--the destruction of our files (see article on page 4).

It's been a year of big talk and no action. The GI Bill was not raised one cent though the cost of survival has sky-rocketed. There's an article about that attack on vets on page 7 of this paper.

The year is summed up in Vietnam Veterans Week where the President proclaimed a week to honor Vietnam vets. With all his talk, Carter's record is attack, attack, attack (see article on page 8), but vets are responding and fighting back. The balloons are being punctured, and the politicians hot air is exposed for all to see.

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# VETS' NOTES

Cutting Thru Red Tape  
Making Sense of Regs

by Ron DeYoung, Chairman Protem of the Task Force on Agent Orange, and Vets Coordinator at Columbia College in Chicago. It first appeared in "The Stars and Stripes," and is reprinted here at the request of the author.)

## Chemical Time Bomb in Vietnam Veterans

# AGENT ORANGE

Eighteen months ago, an extremely agitated woman appeared in my office in Chicago. Her name was Maude DeVictor, and she was at that time a Veterans Benefits Counselor at the Chicago Regional VA Office. She told me of 27 cases of cancer among Vietnam veterans she had seen there. They all had one thing in common besides their cancers--all had served in areas of Vietnam defoliated by the now almost mythical Agent Orange. She went on to show me the research she had compiled--articles from scientific journals showing evidence of the herbicide 2,4,5-T's ability to cause skin problems, cancer, miscarriages, mutations, and birth defects; letters and notes of phone conversations with scientists and researchers who provided further statement documenting the contamination of this herbicide with dioxin (TCDD) that "most toxic of all man-made chemicals."

She further told me that she had written VA Central Office repeatedly about this and received no response, and that claims for service-connection for these men had not been granted.

We felt the veterans of the Vietnam War had the right to know if Agent Orange had indeed caused their problems, 5, 10, and even 15 years after their exposure. We asked Mr. Bill Kurtis of WBBM, CBS in Chicago, to have his investigative team research Agent Orange, and its dioxin contaminant. For six weeks they traveled the country, pulling in all the loose ends, weaving together the pattern of dioxin poisoning that had emerged in so very many widely scattered episodes--dead horses in Missouri, and the sick owners who had sprayed dioxin contaminated oil on their horse barn; dead rhesus monkeys in an experiment done by Dr. Allen in Wisconsin; deformed goats and ducks and sick people in Globe, Arizona; sick residents of the National Forest, where Agent Orange-like herbicides were still in use; and veterans of Vietnam from Chicago.

In all those episodes, common symptoms emerged; skin problems, hair loss, joint p



lems, headaches, nausea, fatigue, psychological changes, blood disorders, cancer, and birth defects.

This documentary, called "Agent Orange, Vietnam's Deadly Fog," aired on March 23, 1978 in Chicago. WBBM referred calls on Agent Orange to my office, and the ensuing weeks found me with an epidemic of calls from Viet Vets saying they too showed those problems. Hundreds of phone calls, from all over the Midwest poured in from vets talking of skin rashes persistent since Vietnam; severe headaches; joint pains and swelling, often mistakenly diagnosed as arthritis; nausea, and continued fevers; extreme and debilitating fatigue; and endless progression of sick days, days they had not been able to work, and an unending series of colds, flu, and other common ailments; mysterious stomach disorders, intestinal disorders, urinary disorders, kidney disorders, liver disorders, autoimmune responses, allergies, and blood disorders; and nervous system problems, typically numbness of the hands, arms, feet and legs; a collection of psychological changes, tempers, violent behavior, depression, anxiety, brooding, loss of memory, confusion, an inability to cope with the pressures of life, a loss of resiliency. And cancers and tumors in men 25 to 35 years old.

They also reported difficulty in conceiving children after their return from "Nam." Many of them reported a loss of interest in sex or impotence as well.

Some reported multiple miscarriages by their wives, often followed by the birth of a child with severe physical deformities, typically of the fingers and feet, heart murmurs, and cleft palate, as well as hyperactivity and learning disabilities of various sorts.

What was the VA response? "No firm evidence exists to incriminate these herbicides...." Men who were legitimately worried about their health and their children's health were brutally turned away, with the statement that their problem couldn't be from Agent Orange, that it was all in their heads.

The news media in various cities picked up the story. The Chicago pattern was repeated in St Louis, then New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver, Detroit. Each time the media carried the reported symptoms, calls from Vietnam vets poured in.

Hundreds of claims were filed, and promptly denied. "No firm evidence exists...." Months later, a tissue biopsy was instituted by the VA as the first step in determining whether these vets had been poisoned by dioxin.

The first VA Advisory Committee on Toxic Herbicides was established by the VA Central Office last year. It was so flagrantly in violation of the Federal Advisory Committee Act that it was abolished and this present committee formed, an action that took a year, and which, finally, we applaud.

Central Office promised to issue instructions to all medi-

cal facilities on how to test Agent Orange victims. Yet VA doctors are still asking vets today "What's Agent Orange?"

A document came to us which authorized the destruction of "certain tumor and cancer registry records" at the same time spokesmen of Central Office were assuring me that all medical records would be preserved and sent to the National Cancer Institute. And the Administrator denied any knowledge of the destruction of these records.

Veterans all over the country have called to tell us of the run-around, the ignorance, and the futility, the red tape, the insolence, and the outright malpractice of the VA healthcare system. The VA has lost all credibility with this country's veterans. It has broken faith with us by not telling us the whole truth. We get PR statements, carefully worded to avoid any conclusions or responsibility. Is it any wonder vets have not been beating down the VA's doors in their haste to get medical care? Everybody knows the horror stories--we've all seen to many of them.

Until the VA gives vets their legally mandated benefits of reasonable doubt, and aggressively researches the Agent Orange issue, vets will stay away. Until the VA gives vets their rightful first-class medical care--courteously, sympathetically, and with dignity befitting their status as the warriors of our society--vets will stay away.

The VA must take the lead in Agent Orange research. In the past VA doctors have won international awards for contributions to medicine. Is this over? The VA must act immediately, not in its own interest or in the government's interest, but in the interest of the vet.

Information must be gathered, not only from the manufacturers of these poisons, but from scientists and doctors and researchers without the vested interest of the petrochemical industry. The fox cannot watch the chickens. Information must be sought from vets themselves, from service and fraternal veterans organizations, from environ-

**Turn to p. 10**



# Stop It, Before It Stops YOU! THE DRAFT

The prospect of young men (and possibly women) being forced to reister for the draft is once again real. And registration is only a call-up from induction. What was, not long ago, just a bad memory of the bleak prospect for a teenager's future is now alive and well in Congress. More than six bills are being put forward to allow the government to force men to perform various kinds of "national service."

These draft bills offer some insight into the thinking of the military and government in preparing for a future war. Among the recent bills are:

H.R. 1901: Representative Montgomery calls for registration for service at the age of 18 and the induction of up to 200,000 men into the reserves annually.

H.R. 2078: Representative Wilson calls for the active induction of men into the military service.

H.R. 2500: Representative Nichols calls for national registration to begin on January 1, 1981, and places the selective service system under the Department of Defense.

H.R. 23: Representative Bennett would amend the privacy act to allow the selective service system to have access to "age and address information in the records of any school, any agency of the U.S. or any agen-

\* Sets up a system of "counselling" that requires 17-year-olds to be advised by counselors who may be reservist military recruiters.

\*Provides that induction will precede the establishment of hardship or dependency claims or psychiatric or medical problems.

\*Allows for persons who have completed civilian service in peace time to be drafted in case

President Ford also ended military induction and registration. A general understanding that getting killed for Texaco in an unjust war against the Vietnamese people developed. That same understanding continues today as people see no reason to die for Exxon by taking oil wells in the Middle East or to protect Somoza in Nicaragua. What the Congress and the military like to explain as "obligation to country" means much more than some abstract patriotism. It is intrinsically tied up with who runs this country and who profits from its wars.

While the powers that be say defend the country and try to conjure up a vision of citizens protecting their families from a rampaging horde of barbarians raping and pillaging, the reality is far different. Some working stiff's son having his head blown off so that Exxon can increase its profits isn't brought up. Neither is the fact that we are all being pillaged right here in the U.S. by a bunch of rich S.O.B.s who live off our sweat and blood. A look at oil company profits or the casualty rate of industrial accidents will prove this!

The question of the draft or military service always has, at its very heart, a couple of other questions: who profits from a war--who benefits from the pain and the crippling and the death which are all part of war. Although there was a draft in the Second World War, who would argue that the War was not in the interest of the great majority of people of the world. Americans responded by incredibly high rates of enlistment--there were even the cases of people faking medical records in order to get in, not the reverse as many of us remember from Vietnam. But what went on back in the early 1940's is not what's happening today or what happened during the Indochina War.

As veterans of that war many of us having been drafted into it, we see an obligation to join with the anti-draft movement. This is despite the fact that our own chances of being drafted again are slight. As VVAW said during anti-draft demonstrations this summer, "We were used in the Vietnam war; our blood went to grease the wheels of corporate profit-making machines and our bodies went to prop up a system designed for the benefit of the rich. We vow not to allow our brothers and our children to be used in the same way we were!"



cy or political subdivision of any state for the purpose of registration." In other words, automatic registration by computer has become a possibility. In addition to active duty, this bill would requires 3 years active service in the reserves.

S. 109: Senators Byrd and Nunn require registration of "men only" 180 days after its enactment.

H.R. 2206: This bill, one of the most publicized, was put forward by Representative Paul McCloskey and is probably the most comprehensive and dangerous in Congress. Its sections include:

\* It is the "obligation of each citizen of the United States to perform some service to his country."

\* Provides for conscientious objection to service in peace time but only conscientious objection to "ALL WAR" in war time. (What happens to a C.O. after war is declared is up to the generals, we suppose.)

\*Eliminates the whole concept of Civilian Review Boards.

of war.

\* Allows for no benefits for alternative service while reinstating the GI Bill for military service volunteers.

These and more draft registration bills are already in front of Congress; they're now being sifted through as the politicians try to come up with some way to make the prospects of a future war more palatable to the American public. At the same time they have to proceed with some kind of program to beef up the "all-voluntary" military which is failing badly.

The end of the old draft and the inability of the military to attract sufficient recruits are a direct result of the U.S. involvement in Indochina. During the Vietnam War there were mass protests against induction, the burning of draft cards as a symbol of that system, and active resistance against the military. The draft, like the Vietnam War, became too hot for the politicians to handle and, with the U.S. pullout from Indochina,

## SELF INTEREST

### VA CHIEF TRADES OFF EXPANSION

Max Cleland was supposed to be the Vietnam veterans friend. He was supposed to turn the VA around to serve the needs of veterans, especially Vietnam vets. But, let's look at the facts.

The Senate recently passed a \$16.3 mil. Psychological Readjustment Act. It's ten years too late, but at least they did it. Normally, a bill like this takes about 18 months to come into being. This one only took 6 months. You see, Max knows he's leaving with smiling Jimmy Carter when he goes. But, Max wants to run for Senator in Talmidge's place! He might not have an overcoat full of \$100 dollar bills, but he sure is a political opportunist. He shoved through that Readjustment Act, so that it would look good when he ran for the Senate! What he hasn't told us is that, in order to get the bill through in record time, he gave away the VA facilities' building expansion fund (for making improvements) if it costs more than \$200,000. Now, any improvements that we force the VA to make will have to also go through Congress! Thanks a bunch, Max! We know you had your own best interests in mind

when you pulled this one!

## MIDWEST CONFERENCE AGAINST THE DRAFT

MIDWEST CONFERENCE AGAINST THE DRAFT  
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# **Vets' Records Gone Forever!**

## **VA DESTROYS FILES**

Late in July, the CBS affiliate in Chicago broke another scandal in the Veterans Administration. This was the same station that originally broke the Agent Orange story in March, 1978.

After a lengthy investigation the Chicago reporters determined that the VA has been and is continuing to destroy millions of veterans' records and files.

What's so interesting, you may ask? The VA has publically stated that they've been doing it for years--non-active files, they say. The twist comes with the information that many of the files belong to World War II, Korean and even Vietnam-era veterans who are still alive and who subsequently are unable to get benefits and/or medical treatment because their records have been fed to the shredder.

The VA, of course, denied everything, then admitted to the allegations, then clammed up and wouldn't comment further.

The investigation by reporters from the TV station's "Fact-Finder" unit is a story in itself. When the reporter went to D.C. to question Max Cleland, head of the VA, she was stalled and put off by VA officials. Cleland finally denied that records were destroyed. Returning to Chi-

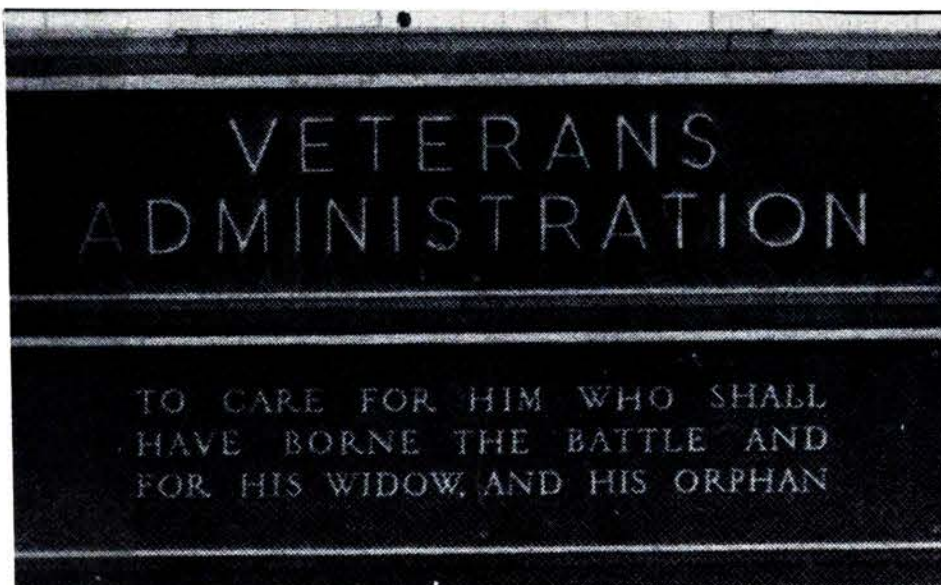
cago, reporters turned up documents that admitted that the VA was in fact destroying records--some 3 1/2 million in the last few years.

Cleland was on the spot and admitted that the records were indeed destroyed, but that the VA was stopping the practice. The reporters began to assemble their case only to find that almost all the Cleland tapes had been "accidentally" erased. Added to this was pressure from higher CBS echelons to let the investigation slide and die a "natural" death.

The reporters persisted, broke the story and then began to battle to keep the investigation going. They took their fight out to the vets themselves asking individual vets and vets groups, including VVAW, to spread the word and bring whatever pressure they could to keep the investigation open.

The VA, with a long history of records losses, fires as in the Army Records Center in St Louis, or local fires like the one which conveniently destroyed "Agent Orange" files in Chicago, has put a lid on public statements. No doubt they hope the whole thing will blow over.

Not likely! One way or another the investigation will go



on. We've been pointing this--and many other--abuses out for years. VVAW members and friends who've worked at the VA talk not only about the haphazard filing methods and purposely misplaced records, but also about hours spent feeding the shredding machines. VVAW will continue to expose these crimes against veterans by the very agency which is supposed to help. We will support the "Fact-Finders" in their attempt to keep their investigations going, or anyone else who takes up the fight to make it that much harder for the VA to attack the vets it's supposed to serve.

To date, the investigation remains open. A recent segment underlined one of the problems caused by records destruction: a World War II vet, only in the last couple of years beginning to feel the effects of exposure to radiation, is challenged by the VA to produce proof of disability; in the kind of Catch-22 situation the VA seems to enjoy, the vet is faced with having to produce records which were on file at the VA but which have been destroyed proving, to the satisfaction of the VA bureaucracy, that the vet cannot be disabled!

## **LSD VICTIM VET WINS \$1.7 MILLION**

When the VA and Defense Departments' backs are against a wall, they are able to come through. This is clear from the case of ex-Army Private James R. Thornwell who will get a total of \$1.7 million compensation as a result of his suit following illegal use of LSD by military investigators. It's only a matter of time before these institutions end up in the same position regarding vets with radiation poisoning and Agent Orange poisoning.

Thornwell's story--which the Army admits is true and which is not even being contested--adds a new page to the whole furor about mind control, human rights, and the Manchurian Candidate. The sinister machinations of Dr No had nothing whatever on the slimy sorts of maneuvers carried out in the interest of "justice" by Army Intelligence in the case of Private Thornwell.

Thornwell, accused of stealing classified documents, was arrested by the Army in 1961.

According to documents he got through the "Freedom of Information Act," the Army isolated him in a small cell, refused him food, water and even toilet facilities, threatened and beat him, and called him a homosexual along with other obscenities in order to extract a confession from him. Six weeks (!) into this interrogation, the Army injected him, without his knowledge, with LSD and, in an effort to simulate an interrogation by enemy powers, threatened to permanently extend his drug-induced state. Thornwell suffered, according to Army documents, "an extreme paranoid reaction." (In the language of the real world, try to imagine the bad trip which would result from acid under these circumstances!)

Again according to Army documents, the Army dropped the charges against Thornwell, apparently afraid that their interrogation methods would come out in an investigation.

While the Army seems to say they were only "simulating" the methods of a "foreign power," there should be no mistake about what was happening. Thornwell was hardly a unique case. His interrogation was one part of a secret Army program known as "Third Chance," designed to test LSD as a truth serum that might be used on POW's by America's enemies (that's what the Army says, anyhow!) The overall program included the administration of LSD to thousands of soldiers at the Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland, a fact which the Army admitted in 1975 (the government gave 3/4's of a million dollars to the widow of a civilian biochemist who was a suicide victim after having been fed acid in 1953; this was a part of the Edgewood program).

1953--long before the so-called drug culture was a dream in the mind of Timothy Leary. 1961--8 years later, and the program was still going on.

These military sleuths must have had a drug manufacturing operation which would have been the envy of the counter-culture or the Mafia.

The effects of the drug on Thornwell were brought out in the court suit, which originally demanded \$10 million compensation. Nightmares, headaches, depression, psychiatric disorders, inability to hold jobs, inability to deal with stress--and \$1.7 million is a small amount to pay a man for 18 years of his life.

We have no way of knowing what bizarre techniques Army Intelligence is using today--but think about what anyone would have thought had they been told about the use of LSD in 1953! Forget the nonsense about "simulating the techniques of a foreign power"--the whole episode makes perfectly clear who the immediate enemy is!



# VVAW Joins Anti-nuclear Movement

## NO NUKES NO WAY



GIs during radiation "experiments" in the 1950's.

## GIs AS GUINEA PIGS VETS and RADIATION

Twenty-one years after he was an experimental subject in nuclear tests called Smokey, Donald Coe of Tompkinsville, Ky, won his case before the Veterans Board of Appeals to have his leukemia declared "service connected." Coe was one of 300,000 GIs who were used by the military to test effects of radiation during nuclear tests in Nevada and in the Pacific between 1948 and 1958. About 40,000 of these GIs were part of the series of Smokey tests run in Nevada in the 1950's where troops ran maneuvers through the radiated area hours after the explosion.

After widespread publicity around Coe's case, and that of another nuclear guinea pig, the Defense Department put out a call for information. Some 2,400 of the vets who took part in these tests have by now informed the Defense Department that they contracted leukemia or other forms of cancer in the years following their use as guinea pigs. There are no figures available on how many died. Nor are there figures on how many just did not respond to the Defense Department publicity.

As in the case of Agent Orange, the Defense Department and the V.A. have held religiously to the position that there is no connection between the disease and the activities of the

GIs in the military. In fact, in an earlier case, that of Paul C. Cooper who was also part of the Smokey tests, the V.A. finally awarded him 100% disability but not for exposure to radiation. Cooper died shortly thereafter.

Squeezing every penny until it screams, the V.A., the Defense Department, and the class which pulls all their strings resist every attempt by veterans to get what is theirs, despite the evidence. Of course, when necessary to save a buck, they can come up with their own "evidence." Following an inquiry into Smokey, where twice the normal and expected number of cases of leukemia were discovered, a number of physicians testified that the figures were "statistically significant," a group of government doctors said that a connection didn't exist.

Disability hearings for Coe will come later; because he lost his spleen, it's likely that he'll get 100% disability, which would make him eligible for \$754 a month, plus allowances for his 7 children. Even so, the payments are small compensation for the effects of being a military guinea pig--and for having to fight for years in order to win the judgment. Coe's struggle has now opened the way for thousands of other vets to win the compensation they need to offset the effects of being used in the rich man's military,

There has been a lot of action on this issue lately. Partly because we have a court case with much notariety being waged from Madison--the Progressive magazine--but also because the big corporations are already starting to move in on people's land! Kerr-McGee, the corporation that was responsible for the death of Karen Silkwood, has begun to elbow its way in here in Wisconsin, on both private and Indian land. They also want to use the Indians as the miners, because there are long-term, adverse effects from mining uranium, and "it might as well be the Indians". Karen Silkwood was a woman, who was about to expose Kerr-McGee for its unsafe and corrupt operations, when her car was run off the road; she was killed and the incriminating evidence that she was carrying disappeared. VVAW joins in the demands: "NO MORE NUKES!" "MORATORIUM ON BUILDING NEW PLANTS!" "NO URANIUM MINING!"

The first demonstration that VVAW in Wisconsin participated in was at Haven, Wisconsin, where there are plans to build a new plant. We were asked to participate, but, it was the time of Vietnam Veterans Week, and we had planned the June 2 demo in Chicago. One of our members was part of the musical contribution, and so our presence was felt. When he announced he was from VVAW, the crowd of 600 or so gave him a warm ovation. We are still recognized for the role we played in the anti-war movement.

On June 16, the anti-nuke forces in Madison gathered, to kick off a tent city on the lawn of the Capitol Building. The tent city was to call attention to a Moratorium bill on new building that was pending before the legislature. But, just as we learned in the anti-war movement, we can't always trust our "elected" officials to do what's right, so we must constantly go after them, as well as the rich class that controls them. So, the tent city was also to build for a demonstration in the Black Hills on July 6. We recently had a Vietnam vet, Dennis Kroll, come forward to help build a VVAW chapter in Madison, so it was very positive when he was asked to speak.

The point about not relying on the system to correct itself was very loud and clear. The speeches were many, but all, without exception, laid the blame for our troubles on the system, and the rich who run it.

When it was our turn to speak Dennis tied in the veterans' role in the anti-nuclear movement clearly. As veterans, there was much exposure to nuclear wea-

pons, which are often built for the military by the same corporations that build the power plants. We also talked about the upcoming draft bill, and how that relates to preparations for another war, and possible "strategic" use of things like the neutron bomb in "conventional" warfare! We also talked about "OPERATION SMOKEY". Here are some excerpts from the speech:

"As early as the 1950's, American GIs were used as guinea pigs for "Operation Smokey", which was the use of tens of thousands of GIs during the first nuclear bomb tests. These tests were experimental, to determine the effects of radiation on humans.

"1500 feet from Ground Zero, observers watched the shock waves roll toward them across the desert floor. Equipped with thick, dark glasses as their primary means of protection, they were supposed to be the source for all kinds of data. In some tests, a company of soldiers was put into deep trenches 1,000 feet from the point of detonation. They were, plain and simple, guinea pigs! If they survived the explosions, that meant that nuclear devices had a tactical use, and that troops could be sent in shortly after from nearby....."

"Well, VVAW says that, if these companies want to declare an energy war on the people of the US, let's fight back! We have the power to build a movement among the people to stop nukes, both power plants and weapons."

On July 13, 14, and 15, there was a three-day "NUKE WATCH", which began with a concert and program at the stock pavillion. Pete Seeger played music, and there were many speakers--this time focusing mainly on the case of the suppression of an article in The Progressive magazine. The

article that has been suppressed has absolutely nothing in it that the American people should not have access to . . . it simply builds a very positive case AGAINST nuclear power, and thus threatens oil and utility company profits.

The base and focus of the work of VVAW is about and for the benefit of veterans and GIs, but we are not some special interest group that the government can buy off with a few crummy benefits. We are working for a better life for all, and we feel it is our responsibility to participate in this growing movement against the use of nuclear power and weapons. Nukes are a dangerous way for anyone to try to keep the world at bay, but especially in the hands of the system that exists now. WE WON'T FIGHT ANOTHER RICH MAN'S WAR!! NO NUKES!!



When most of us went off to Vietnam, we held many illusions. One that was quickly lost was that we were the good guys, fighting for freedom and democracy. We found that the Vietnamese people didn't like us and in fact fought against us. Our main concern became to get back to the world in one piece.

Another illusion was also held by GIs who didn't go to Vietnam and by the kids who entered the service after we did. We thought that when we came back, when we got out of the service, we would be taken care of. We were wrong: they used us when we were soldiers and they forgot us and ignored us when we became veterans.

We didn't get the parades but more important, since we can't eat a parade, we didn't get the things we needed and were promised. We found it difficult to get jobs, reflected by the large numbers of vets who were, and in many cases still are on unemployment lines. We found health care at VA hospitals was inadequate and sometimes downright criminal. And the VA is filled with so much red tape we can't even get half the benefits we're supposed to have. And finally, there's the GI Bill.

The GI Bill was first established just before the end of World War II. With 11 million vets about to come home with no jobs waiting for them, Congress hurried through the GI Bill. It paid for tuition, books, and money to live on; in many cases, housing was also provided (though this was separate from the GI Bill). The World War II vet could go to about 90% of the colleges in the country including prestige and expensive private colleges. While life was no bed of roses, the vet could get an education and still survive. But ever since then the GI Bill has been rolling downhill.

Since 1944, new bills and supplements to old bills have made the basic GI Bill no more than a shell of what it used to be, until today the GI Bill is a good 200% less (in terms of actual buying power) than it was in 1944. Today the typical veteran does not get enough to go to anything but a state supported school or city college. While the government boasts about the high rate of usage of the GI Bill--something like 72% of Vietnam-era vets have made use of the GI Bill--they never talk about the 60% who have used less than 13 months of the Bill. Three million vets have used less than 7 months, an eloquent testimony to the number of vets forced to drop out of school because the Bill isn't enough to live on and because VA screw-ups make even the small amount

# EXTEND & EXPAND THE G.I. BILL



Vets march for the GI Bill to be extended and expanded.

that vets are supposed to get erratic and un dependable. And a history of Congressional action on the GI Bill over the past several years shows more and more restrictions; most recently, a number of trade schools have been dropped from the eligibility lists, making fewer opportunities for vets.

In addition the time limits put on the Bill cut out a lot of vets. Many of us came back and had to go to work immediately or wait until our kids got older or just to get our own heads together. We couldn't get our college in within the ten-year limit even if we could afford it. On Memorial Day, 1976, over 3 million pre-Vietnam vets lost their eligibility for the GI Bill. This year, as more and more Vietnam and Vietnam-era vets have been out of the service over 10 years, another 900,000 lost their eligibility.

If we deserve the GI Bill (and we do), then we deserve it--not a piece of it, or a tattered shred. There should be no limit on the time we have to collect. We sacrificed two, three or four or more years of our lives and should not be forced to sacrifice our GI Bill either because it's too puny to pay the school bills or because there's a time limit on when we can use it.

For today's GIs, the question is different; based on a system of contributions while in the service, matched by government contributions once the GI gets out, the present version of the GI Bill means that the government can collect from the

GI on the promise to pay back later--if the rules don't change, if the GI doesn't change his mind after he gets out, if he doesn't get killed off in the next war before he can collect or if government red tape doesn't make it impossible for him to collect. Since few GIs who went into the service under this new system have yet emerged, we don't know what all the problems may be, but experience tells us there will be many--and all of them will work against the vet. It is clear that the vet who decides only after the service that he wants to go to school is screwed.

Many of the new draft bills now before Congress (see article on page 3) call for some kind of resumption of the GI Bill. But knowing the tendency of the government to wave a flag to cover up empty promises, we suspect that another illusion is about to be created.

Vets need something concrete; the last time the GI Bill was raised was three years ago. Inflation sure hasn't stopped in the last three years which simply means that the GI Bill is sinking every day. Vets need the Bill extended to cover any time that a vet wants to use it, and expanded to cover what the costs of an education now are. Vets don't need more games or more illusions!

## Decent Benefits for All Vets

## HOME LOANS TIED TO G.I. BILL

The Veterans Administration has initiated another fine program to "serve" veterans. This one will hold up VA home loans based on overpayments of education benefits. Basically it says that if you were overpaid GI Bill benefits--due to VA or your VA counselor's or school counselor's oversight, or due to the fact that you knew and spent the money figuring that the government owed you that much, or because you failed to complete some courses, or because you never received notification from the VA--any of these mean you can't get a VA home loan until arrangements are made to pay back the VA.

This brilliant idea came from Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin whom you may remember as the jogging hair-transplant and who originated the Proxmire Golden Fleece Award (which costs thousands of bucks) for his greater personal glory and to spread his name throughout the media.

Steaming at the ears, Proxmire "exposed" the huge overpayment to Vietnam-era vets by the VA as a massive waste of money. Viciously retaliating, he pushed through the ruling that vets who never paid back the VA shouldn't get home loans. The outstanding feature of this circus sideshow was that, at the time of the hearings, the VA had recorded 95% payment on overpaid education benefits, the highest pay-back percentage of any federal agency. The kicker on the loan stoppage was that vets previous to 1955 were exempt from the program, making the whole thing set up for selective enforcement against Vietnam-era vets!

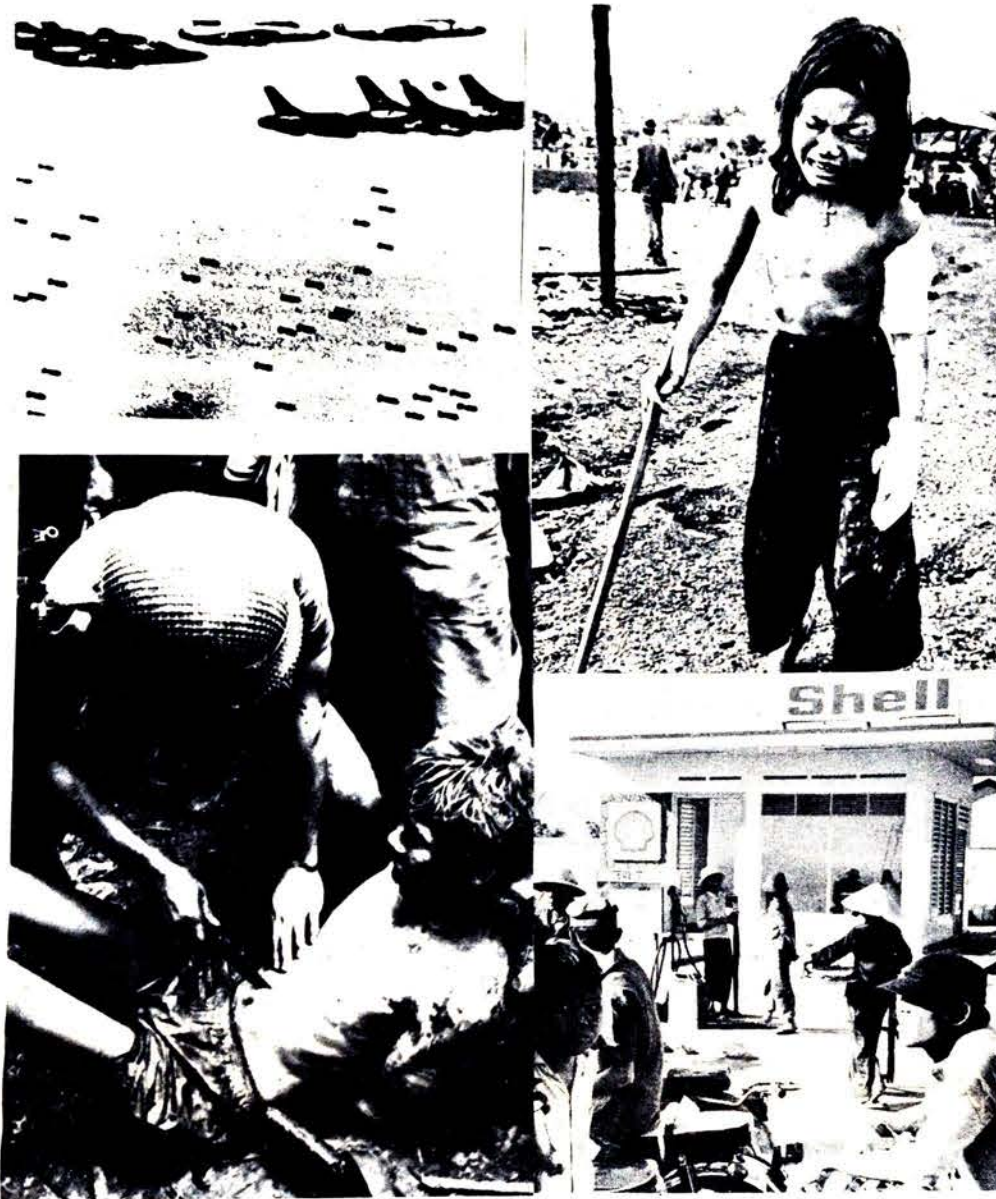
The VA has been pressured into informing all GI Bill recipients of this program by mail. The VA also has assured everyone that those who want to clear their debts should 1) go back to school or, 2) ask for a waiver or, 3) make arrangements for paying back the money.

So, if your home loan recently fell through and your family is finding it hard to adjust to motel life, check with the VA; you may be the recipient of one more of the "Golden Shaft" awards!



# The View from 1979

## VIETNAM: RIGHT OR WRONG



Vets saw the truth about U.S. involvement--bombing and killing, torture and children--so the rich could get richer.

There is much talk and writing nowadays concerning the situation inside Vietnam and with Vietnam's foreign policy. Militarists and politicians are claiming they were right about the nature of Vietnam and that the anti-war movement was wrong. From there they go on to explain why we "lost in Vietnam."

The facts about Vietnam and U.S. involvement are apparent even from government and military publications. We were there for the political reason of defeating a guerilla movement. We were going to show the world that what the French, the Japanese and the Nazis were not able to do, we would accomplish. We'd show that military, technological and industrial might could take on all comers and win. The best a colonial people could expect was to reach some accommodation with U.S. imperialism and get a few crumbs with the lion's share going to some American corporation. Economically, Vietnam had oil, rubber, tin and rice as Texaco, Exxon, Shell and Michelin can attest. Of course the press secretary for the Pent-

agon or the President didn't say this at the time. Instead there was talk of an independent Vietnam (which apparently meant independent of the Vietnamese people)--a separate country in the South even though Vietnam (North and South) had been one country for thousands of years split up (most recently) by U.S. intrigues in the 1950's.

Veterans saw the reality of this aggression first hand as the triggermen for the gangsters in Congress and on Wall Street. Destroying the country and killing the people to "save them" did not make sense. And there wasn't much sense in the fact that the only people who seemed to want us in Vietnam were the corrupt Saigon generals, the pimps, drug pushers and prostitutes. At the same time we could see that the well-trained and equipped American troops armed with technological miracles and massive bombings could not defeat the NLF or North Vietnamese on the battlefield--and we couldn't win the hearts and minds of the people.

The U.S. lost that war and that was a good thing. We were in the wrong. We were

the aggressors, the torturers, the thieves--there is no doubt we were the "bad guys."

Today, however, the Vietnamese leaders don't have a lot to be proud of. They took the victories of the Vietnamese people and sold them for 30 pieces of silver. Disregarding Ho Chi Minh's dictum that "Nothing is more precious than freedom and independence," they have invaded Kampuchea (formerly Cambodia), installed a puppet regime, stationed more than 100,000 troops there and are robbing that country's resources in a replay of the U.S. invasion of Cambodia. They have sold out their ports and resources to the USSR. Soviet troops and ships are now at Cam Ranh Bay, and the Vietnamese economy is at the tender mercy of COMECOM, a Soviet controlled economic pact.

While seeing themselves as the conquerors of Indochina, they also act as frontmen for Soviet interests. This included provocations against China, claiming territory on the border and islands populated by Chinese fishermen. Internally, they have persecuted the Chinese minority in a fashion reminiscent of the Nazi attacks on the Jews, and forcing hundreds of thousands to flee the country. They even attack the heroes of wars against the French and the U.S. on the basis of their nationality.

The Vietnamese rulers are not being let off the hook. Just as world opinion condemned the U.S. involvement, the Vietnamese attack on Kampuchea has been condemned. The Vietnamese puppet government in Cambodia was not seated by the UN while the legitimate government retains its seat. Industrial countries like Sweden have cut off aid. The Peoples Republic of China countered with an attack on Vietnamese-held territory, then pulled back as they said they would do at the outset.

In Cambodia the Vietnamese are restricted to the cities while the Khmer Rouge control the countryside. Units of puppet troops have even defected to the Khmer guerillas taking their officers along. Vietnamese troops have even begun to desert to Thailand. All of this is very similar to what happened to the last aggressor in Indochina--and points to a similar fate awaiting these new aggressors.

Against this backdrop we find the hundreds of thousands of refugees--the "boat people"--

fleeing from Vietnam. These are not the same people who jumped the Vietnamese ship as the U.S. was being forced out back in 1975. At the pullout we collected the scum of Vietnam--the generals with their suitcases full of gold, the torturers and assassins running from their just trials, the drug pushers and the pimps (remember reading about brothels set up at the time?)

The new group is different. They have been forced out by persecution of the Vietnamese government; they are the Chinese national minority, many Buddhists, draft-age youth who don't want to fight in Kampuchea. Even a member of the Central Committee, Secretary to the Vietnamese National Assembly, and long-time comrade in arms of Ho Chi Minh defected to China, accusing Vietnamese leaders of subservience to the USSR and condemning Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea.

China has already accepted a quarter of a million refugees as permanent residents and has said she will accept more. Not only should the U.S. pressure other countries to take in the refugees, but the U.S. should take more also. When Soviet Jews manage to escape from the USSR, they are welcomed here with open arms; the Vietnamese fleeing persecution differ only in that they come in ragged boats instead of airliners.

Some Americans attack the influx of Vietnamese because, they say, "They'll take jobs from Americans." The charge is a smokescreen. If the U.S. took in 250,000 Vietnamese (as China has), of which perhaps 100,000 would be potentially employable, we're talking about .1% of the U.S. workforce--and that's not much. We all know that there's work that needs to be done. And if the question is money, how about a special profits tax on the corporations (and the rich who run them) which piled up profits off our sweat and blood during the Vietnam war?

During the Indochina War, VVAW stood 100% behind the Vietnamese and their leaders as they fought for liberation. It is not a change today to oppose them; yesterday, they were right and today they are wrong. Yesterday they were leading their people into liberation and today they're leading them into servitude. Our support must be based on the situation as it exists and on what we can see as just.



# SMILES;BROKEN PROMISES;MORE SMILES;CUTS.

## CARTER AGAINST VETS

After only two and a half years of Jimmy Carter, people are longing for Jerry Ford; even though he did nothing but hit his head a lot, at least there was only a high rate of inflation (instead of skyrocketing inflation), and gas was only 60¢ a gallon! In fact, people are longing for almost anyone--Mickey Mouse could give Jimmy Carter a run for his money, and John Travolta would probably win!

And veterans have our own issues where Carter, with grand promises and splendid flourishes, has fallen flat on his face, and the result has been a continuation of a series of abuses of veterans.

Just because we're vets doesn't necessarily mean that we're stupid. We realize that when the country's economy is going straight to hell in a handcart, when gas--if available--is too expensive to afford, when crime rates jump ahead, while the ability to read jumps behind--we don't believe, under these circumstances, that the President should devote his primary attention to the problems of veterans. Many of us wouldn't really care a hell of a lot if he just ignored vets. But that's not what's happening. While he tries to pacify vets on one hand, appointing a Vietnam vet as head of the VA, or building a Vietnam veterans monument at Arlington National Cemetery, or declaring Vietnam Veterans Week, his other hand is creeping into the VA budget, gutting essential programs and proving the lie of all his fine public statements.

Among the gems to come out of the Carter Administration or Congress in the past six months are:

\*850,000 Vietnam era vets lose their GI Bill eligibility in 1979; the 10 year delimiting date, despite Carter's promises to improve the situation, has been lifted for only 953 of those vets!

\*Because a number of vets haven't repaid VA school loans or GI Bill overpayments, the VA asked the White House to withhold tax refunds for the effected veterans: this was in addition to hiring private collection agencies.

\*In keeping with Carter's budget cutting, a House committee has recommended a 1500-bed cut in the VA hospitals. In Chicago, this has already meant that disabled-vets have



been shuttled out of the VA into nursing homes, which are even less equipped than the VA to deal with the particular problems that veterans face.

\*Cut off dental care for vets, which is now authorized for the first year after discharge.

\*Insist that Blue Cross or similar type plans reimburse the VA for care given to vets covered by such plans.

\*Given the budget cuts, one Congressman pointed out that any care for non-service-connected disabilities would be eliminated. Given the refusal of the VA to even admit to service-connected disabilities (the cases of Agent Orange, radiation poisoning, or PVS are the most vivid examples of the VA refusing to care for the victims of military service), this concept is especially deadly for thousands of veterans. For unemployed vets, which number in the hundreds of thousands, or for underemployed vets--agricultural workers, for example--whose jobs provide little or no medical benefits, this would mean the end of any potential for treatment.

\*With great fanfare, the VA has talked about how it will now deal with Vietnam veterans with drug-related problems--psychological readjustment will move forward, they say, with 20 VA drug treatment centers approved for 1979. In fact, the VA has spent less than one per cent of what has been spent on hospitalizing Vietnam vets for psychological problems, many because counselling was denied to them. Nixon, in 1973, had more drug and alcohol treatment centers than are proposed by the current VA budget!

Vietnam vets are understandably suspicious of politicians on all levels of government. After all, they're the people who sent us off to fight

for their purposes in the first place. Even so, many of us were impressed by Carter's seeming concern for veterans and especially for Vietnam veterans. Hell, he wore his American Legion beanie, he talked good, he said good things about vets; one of his first acts as President was a partial amnesty for Vietnam war resisters, (though later evidence has demonstrated that even this was more appearance than reality).

But, instead of something new and different, it was the same old nonsense--lots of fine sounding talk and no action--except for "action" that attacked Vietnam vets. At its barest level, vets are good for votes--there are 29 million of us, plus our families, and that adds up to a potent voting force. At the same time, programs like the GI Bill, vets benefits, and VA healthcare don't make much money for anyone. The result is what we're seeing with Carter: fine talk and nothing concrete.



While there are plenty of examples of how the government is throwing away its veterans, the issue of Agent Orange sets right on the line. Vets have no way of knowing how many of us have been affected by Agent Orange poisoning, though it's clear that some of us were. The story of Agent Orange victims was made public in March, 1978. For thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of veterans, the revelation explained what was happening or had happened to them.

And what did Carter's VA do about the problem? For the first few days, it tried to react--until the VA chiefs got together and projected what it would mean to have to test, treat and compensate for what could be as many as 2.9 million vets. As soon as the reaction was out of the hands of VA workers, as soon as an official policy was set, it was clear that

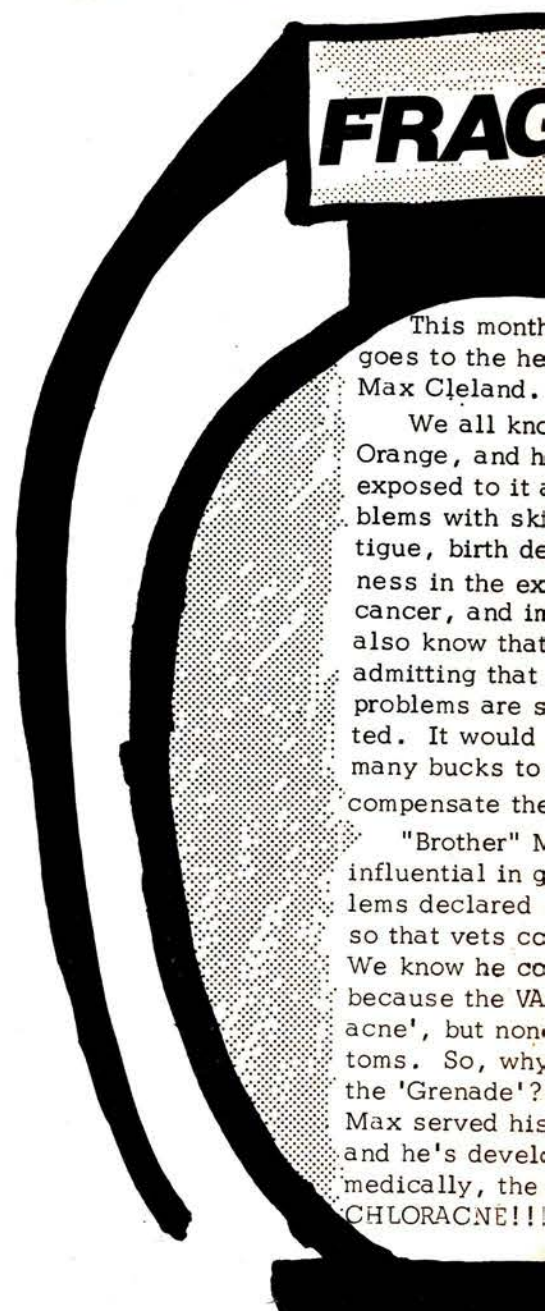
vets were about to get screwed again. First, the VA decided there was no effects from Agent Orange. It wanted vets to "prove" exposure, almost impossible, except for the handful of vets that actually handled the defoliant. As word about the defoliant got out, through the efforts of groups like VVAW or Agent Orange International, certainly not by any efforts by the VA--then, where there was enough stink, the VA was forced to do something to cover its ass.

It sent Maude DeVictor, a Chicago VA worker who first came up with the information about Agent Orange victims, to the Siberia of home loans, where she wouldn't cause any more trouble. It allowed that vets with chloracne, a fierce skin rash likely to come from direct contact with the defoliant, and usually of short duration, might be a symptom; but completely refused to accept

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**TS....**

the many other effects of the exposure to the defoliant, claiming that scientific surveys had only concentrated on animals, not humans. When vets sued, it established the 'Advisory Committee on Health Related Effects of Herbicides', including Dow Chemical Company scientists, whose salaries are paid by the company which makes Agent Orange and says it's totally safe. A six year program of investigation has been envisioned (probably hoping that the vets most affected by Agent Orange will be dead by then).

While we don't much like it, we expect politicians to lie to us in order to get elected. That's how the system works. Carter's track record on lies hasn't been much better or worse than anyone else's. The difference has been the big lie--the one that he's out there pitching for Vietnam veterans, doing all he can--and he is; if you only count his words, and don't look at how he's jamming it to Vietnam vets in particular, and to vets of all eras, every chance he gets!

## Of The Month

### RAGGIN

this month's 'Grenade' to the head of the VA, Cleland.

We all know about Agent Orange, and how the people exposed to it are having problems with skin rashes, facial birth defects, numbness in the extremities, sterility, and impotence. We know that the VA is not doing anything that most of these problems are service-connected. It would cost them too many bucks to test, treat and compensate the victims.

"Brother" Max could be very influential in getting these prob-lem-declared service-connected vets could get treatment. Now he could be influential, since the VA recognizes 'chloracne', but none of the other symptoms. So, why does Cleland get 'Grenade'? Because "brother" Max served his time in Vietnam, and he's developed an itch... Well, the term for it is CHLORACNE!!!!

# Vietnam Amputee Made To Pay VFW EXTORTS \$3,000 FOR JOB

Robert E. Taylor was a member of the 101st Airborne Division after enlisting in the Army in April, 1966. He was a crew chief of a mortar team south of Hue, when an enemy mortar round struck him in the leg. The device failed to detonate, but Taylor's left leg was so badly damaged, it had to be amputated.

He returned home, and in 1970 was offered a job by the VFW as a hospital contact officer, counseling veterans who were recuperating from injuries or illness. The big hang-up was that this veteran had to pay the VFW \$3,028 for the job!!!

Robert Taylor, then only 21 years old, and very anxious about returning to society as an amputee, reluctantly agreed to pay the money. During the life of a 21 month grant awarded by the VA, he sent the state VFW in Springfield, Illinois personal checks, usually in the amount of \$151 per month.

Most of his checks went to the VFW account in Springfield; one monthly payment, however, went to the personal account of one of the two VFW officials who arranged the payments, Patrick De Mauro, the Illinois State Service Officer of the VFW!

This money that Robert received and then sent to the VFW, was from a federal program designed to supplement the incomes of those vets who were entering the job market at the "trainee" level.

After six months in that capacity, Taylor said, De Mauro offered him a chance to begin training for a different job--VFW National Service Officer, a position relatively comparable to a benefits counselor within the VA. De Mauro then encouraged Taylor to apply for the VA grant.

But, while De Mauro was telling the VA that the VFW would be paying Taylor at a "trainee" level, he was letting Taylor think he was being paid at a higher "journeyman" level. De Mauro told Taylor that, for "bookkeeping purposes" it was necessary for the VFW to pay him at the journeyman level. Consequently,



Robert Taylor whose benefits' check went into the account of the VFW.

De Mauro told Taylor, the VFW salary, combined with the \$181 grant from the VA, would make his salary exceed that of the other VFW service officers. Taylor said De Mauro then "suggested" that he return part of the money to the VFW.

"He told me, 'Why don't you keep \$30 for gas and other expenses, and send the rest to us?'" Taylor said. "I was upset about it, but I went along."

The payments began in December, 1970, and ended in June, 1972. "About six months after I began paying them", Taylor said, "I began to realize it was not right and said something to De Mauro that indicated I was unhappy about it. My wife was pregnant, and we really needed the money."

"He replied that they expected the payments to be made each month and left me with the impression that my job depended on it."

At first, De Mauro insisted that Taylor was paying the VFW the difference between the training salary he should have been getting and the journeyman's salary he actually was receiving.

"We were, in effect, reimbursing ourselves for the

salary we paid him", he said. "What's the difference whether the VA pays him or we pay him? He's getting his money."

A week later, however, the VFW had to admit that Taylor wasn't getting his money!! The current Quartermaster of the state VFW, Helmut Frank, said, "We have found some errors. Taylor was being paid what was considered a training salary."

Defending the deceased Glassford, the accountant at the time that Taylor was ripped off, Frank said the reason for the errors was "known only by a dead man", who enjoyed relative autonomy during his 19 years as keeper of the VFW accounts.

A top official of the VA which began an investigation of the "arrangement" after learning about the case, said, "It appears Taylor was coerced into agreeing to this" and "it appears the VFW misrepresented to us what the terms of the agreement were".

"Basically, we were awarding money for a training program that, in fact, was not a training program", he said.

Commenting on the unusual payments, Donald Ramsey, Director of the Chicago Regional Office of the VA said, "It was something that should not have been done, and it doesn't look good for the VFW."

VVAW wonders how many more Robert E. Taylors the VFW has "helped"!

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



# VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR



Fifteen VVAW members seize the Statue of Liberty in December, 1971, to protest the bombing of Haiphong Harbor; in June, 1976, we did it again to protest GI Bill cutoffs.

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 experienced 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--such as striking coal miners or postal workers, and we support the liberation struggles in Southern Africa.

Our experience has also shown 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 instance.

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 and we welcome all who want to build a real veterans' movement which will fight for the needs of vets! ■

**National Office  
VVAW  
P.O. Box 20184  
Chicago, ILL. 60620  
or call  
(312) 651-1583**



## Cont. from p. 2 AGENT ORANGE

mental groups and individual citizens. The word must be put out to all Vietnam veterans, "You may have been poisoned--come in and get checked"--and we must have programs in place to do the testing, extremely subtle testing, checking more than just blood, chest, and urine. And then we must provide treatment--and none of us even know where to begin.

And what of the children? Current claims by veterans that Agent Orange has deformed their children get "administratively disallowed" in that cold bureaucratic exactness of language so favored by Washington. These men want to know if their own

government has crippled their children. They want to know if they can safely have more children. They need answers soon.

Because Vietnam vets need these answers now, and because the VA has lost credibility, many of us of whom the Agent Orange questions were asked, veterans groups and citizens groups from all over the country have joined together to look for these answers, answers that can be believed.

On July 15 and 16 in New York we organized the National Veteran's Task Force on Agent Orange to seek out those answers, and help vets affected. This group is presently composed of representatives from the National As-

sociation of Concerned Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America, Vietnam Veterans for Self-Reliance, Vetline/Hotline, Agent Orange Victims International, Concerned American Veterans Against Toxins, The National Association of Black Veterans and others. We extend an invitation to other veteran groups to join us.

We are gathering information on Agent Orange from veterans and researchers all over the country, and will respond with the best answers we can, as we go. These answers will not protect the chemical industry. These answers will not protect the government. These answers will not protect the military or the VA. They will protect the vet.

When we met on June 1st, Secretary Joseph Califano of the Dept of Health, Education and Welfare asked the Assistant Surgeon General, Dr James Dickson to analyze our collected case

histories, looking for patterns of illness. The Secretary also agreed to have Dr Dickson meet with scientists, researchers, and doctors who have information on dioxin poisoning. Sec. Califano has pledged his department's aggressive action to find answers to the questions of Agent Orange. We take him at his word and only hope this second VA herbicide committee will be as aggressive in the interests of Vietnam veterans.

The eyes of the nation are on this committee. EPA figures state that 78 million pounds of 2,4,5-T contaminated with dioxin was sprayed in the U.S. while 35 million pounds was sprayed in Vietnam. Whether they know it or not, the outcome of this committee is important to every citizen of this country. To the spectre of Three Mile Island is now added Agent Orange.



## Privilege or Right

# VETERANS' PREFERENCE

On June 5th, the U.S. Supreme Court voted 7-2 to uphold a Massachusetts veterans' preference law which applies to State civil service jobs. Although the case applied to a specific state law, veterans around the country watched the case closely. If the court had struck down vets' preference in this case, there would have been a series of cases which could well have ended vets' preference altogether.

The Massachusetts law was challenged by Helen Feeney, supported by the National Organization of Women (NOW) on the basis that, because the majority of veterans are male, vets' preference therefore discriminates against women. Ms Feeney sued after she was consistently passed over for supervisory jobs even though she had high examination scores. The state law she finally challenged gave veterans an absolute preference so that vets with scores even much lower than Ms Feeney's were receiving promotions ahead of her. She won her case in a lower federal court. It was this lower court decision that was overturned by the Supreme Court which said that the law did not unconstitutionally discriminate against women.

Only three states--Massachusetts, New Jersey and Pennsylvania--have systems of absolute veterans' preference where a vet with a lower test score will still go ahead of a non-vet with a higher score. Other states and the federal government give vets a hiring preference--added points on hiring examinations (for the federal government it is 5 points for veterans and 10 points for disabled vets).

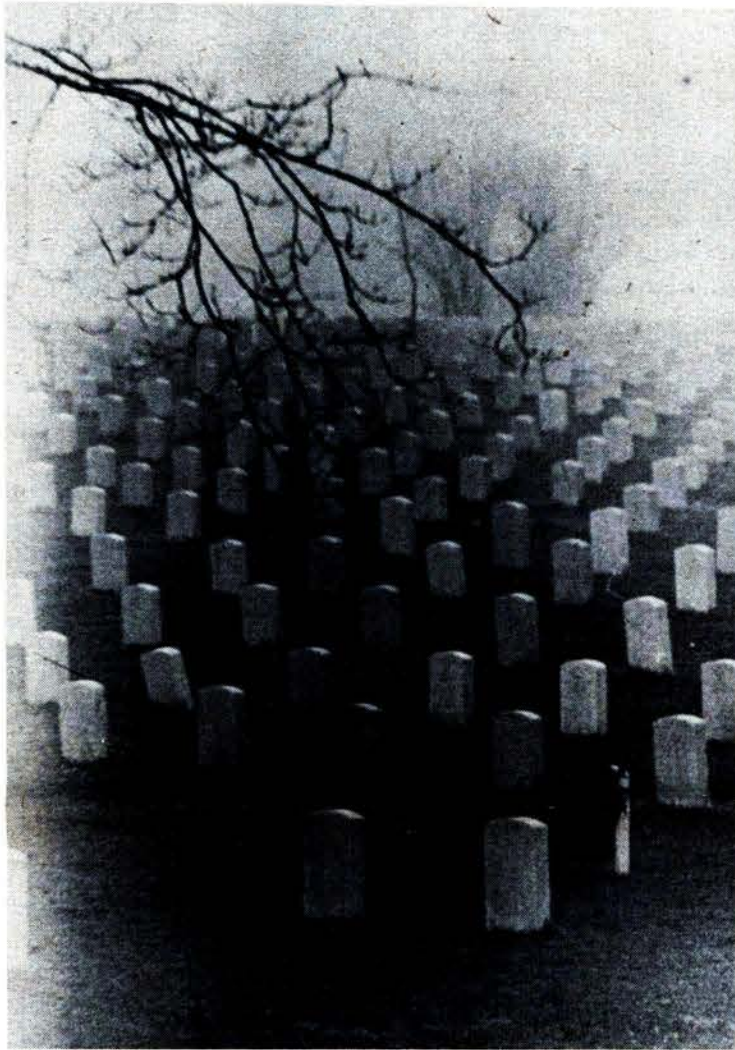
At a time of Bakke decisions where minorities took a beating from the Supreme Court, and the recent Weber decision where affirmative action was upheld, the question of veterans' preference is not simple. There's more to it than simply saying that vets need jobs (which is

true) and that we're veterans so therefore vets' preference is a great thing!

Despite the Massachusetts court case, veterans' preference has proved to be a tremendous aid to minorities, especially after the Vietnam war. Simply, some 22% of the GIs in Vietnam were Black; another 10% were

of the jobs have gone to women--and that in a situation where vets' preference is a factor.

For vets in general, the system of vets' preference is crucial. Employment, despite the recruiting pitch about job training in the military, has been one of the great problems vets have faced and are still facing today.



**ONE PLACE VETS GET PREFERENCE !**

members of other minorities. To provide a hiring preference gives them that much of an advantage, especially in many federal and state hiring programs where, as in the U.S. Postoffice, hiring is done based entirely on test scores where the preference makes a difference. A personnel director who might not otherwise hire minorities has no choice. In fact, in federal service over the past 5 years, 47%

Vets' preference doesn't solve the problem, but sure makes getting some kinds of jobs a little easier. And vets' preference has a legacy of struggle behind it--a struggle to get it in the first place (as a way to equalize the situation of veterans who spent years in the military while non-vets of the same age were getting skills and seniority), and a consistent struggle to keep it. And we've got no intention of seeing it taken away: we fought for it, we earned it, we plan to keep it.

Many women and women's organizations have lived a similar history, and not just the 178,000 women Vietnam vets either. Equal pay for equal work, though a struggle which is not yet won, has certainly come closer to reality because women have fought for it. Equal opportunity still lies ahead. And the E.R.A. or the fight for the right to control their own bodies and have abortion on demand are battles which continue.

But neither these vital fights

nor the battles equally crucial to veterans are going to move ahead if we allow them to be separated and then pitted against each other. Veterans must have equal opportunity--and so must women. And the way we're going to achieve both goals is to fight together--not against each other. That bunch of thieves who runs this country loves to see us fighting among ourselves because that takes the heat off them. When Black fights white, when Latino fights both of them, or when women fight vets, the only winner is the bosses who are perfectly happy to toss an occasional crumb out to one group or another to keep the pot boiling.

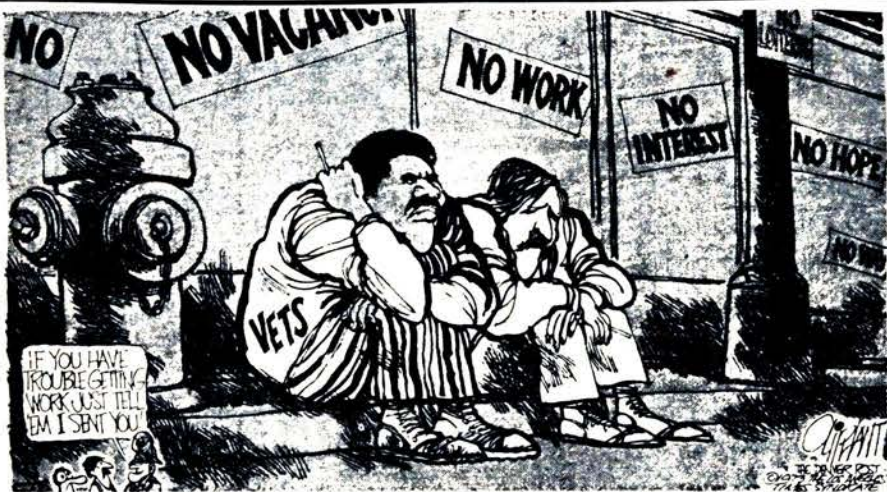
The Massachusetts law that Ms Feeney and NOW were challenging is not the solution. According to that law, supervisors choose from the top three applicants for any job and, under the absolute preference dictated by the law, all three top applicants are automatically veterans. It means that non-vets, no matter how qualified, cannot hope to get jobs ahead of veterans.

Neither is the solution to get rid of a useful preference--one which in fact accomplishes at least some of the things that women's groups favor--because one version of that law is wrong.

Vets' preference is not an attack on women; it shouldn't be used that way. Women are not enemies of vets--and vets are not women's enemies. There are abuses of the preference system, especially the military men who retire after 20 years, get their ex-officers pension and collect gravy jobs with their preference.

But there is a solution: for all of us to get together and fight the system that tries to squeeze the last nickel--and last drop of blood--out of all of us. That means veterans joining with women's groups to fight for equal opportunity for women as well as equal pay for equal work. But it also means that women's groups join with vets to fight for treatment for Agent Orange (which affects wives and children as well as the vets themselves) or decent VA healthcare (which involves hundreds of thousands of VA workers as well as veterans).

Vets have been used by the system for its aims; once used, we've been tossed aside. We've got much in common with others whom the system is trying to screw every way it can. One of the biggest things we've got in common is the need--and the drive--to fight against the way that the system uses us all.



WELCOME HOME, YOUR PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS ARE PROUD OF YOU



# VVAW Hits Vets' Problems & War VIETNAM VET'S WEEK

Vietnam Veterans Week, May 28th through June 3rd, proclaimed with much fanfare and trumpets by President Carter, has now come and gone. If you look in your pocket and find there's not another buck there, if you're still looking for a job, if you're bad discharge hasn't suddenly been upgraded, if your Agent Orange symptoms haven't gone away, or if your GI Bill payments still won't cover the food and rent bills, well don't be too surprised. Even with his mystical laying on of hands our President could not cure the problems of the Vietnam vet, even if he had any interest in doing so. And even though a lot of good people worked hard to make Vietnam Vets Week work in various parts of the country, the problems that vets face need much more than a "week" or even a Presidential Proclamation that all is fine.

Carter's original Proclamation declared that of Vietnam vets, "the majority have successfully rejoined the mainstream of American life." Given galloping inflation and imminent recession, that mainstream isn't all that great a place to be right now, but even so it beats the hell out of the backwaters that hundreds of thousands of Vietnam vets are stagnating in. A Proclamation doesn't change that situation one bit, though there are certainly things a President might do which could improve the situation of veterans.

"To those who still bear the wounds, both physical and psychic, from all our wars, we acknowledge our continuing responsibility," the Presidential Proclamation states. Acknowledgement is cheap; it's doing something about it that costs the bucks. A recent report from the Disabled American Veterans in California pinpoints some of the problems there which have been the direct result of Carter's (the same one who issues Proclamations) cuts in VA hospital funds. Vets with less than 50% disabilities are being given appointments at the end of 79 or sometimes in 1980. Some are being referred to private healthcare facilities which they must pay for. Though there is no "waiting list" (because the VA won't use that term) there are numerous vets in "pre-hospital care," which means on the waiting list to get in. Many patients don't even have their own bed; others wear soiled and torn clothing; nurses must singlehandedly watch one whole ward and sometimes more as

well as take care of duties off the ward. The result is that doctors are hard to recruit and many doctors and nurses are leaving the VA for other facilities. There's more, but this is a piece of what must be meant by "acknowledging our continuing responsibility."

In fact, pick almost any area of vets' problems and you will find the solution is the same: talk big, make a Proclamation, and cutback where it counts in the real world. In fact, Vietnam Veterans Week turned out to be a chance for presidents and other politicians to make their concerned statements and then go right back to business as usual.

No doubt that's what was planned from the beginning. Give the vets a parade or a Proclamation and maybe they'll forget that they're dying of Agent Orange poisoning or rotting in a scummy VA hospital. The plan didn't work. Because, in many places, Vietnam Veterans Week turned out to be a good thing because vets themselves saw a potential in the idea and worked to make it a reality.

Vets have long seen that to get some of the problems of Vietnam and Vietnam-era vets solved we must first make the American public aware of what these problems are and where they come from. Vietnam Vets Week provided an opportunity to do that in many places.

Once vets themselves got involved in planning and organizing Vietnam Veterans Week activities, their character often changed. VVAW chapters, particularly in the Midwest, took part in these activities and did all we could to make sure that behind the facade of pompous pronouncements there would be some substance. What follows is a report from VVAW in Chicago, and, with somewhat different details, could be repeated for other Midwest VVAW Chapters in Milwaukee and Minneapolis.

The Chicago VVAW Chapter's participation in Vietnam Vets Week marked some notable changes from the past struggles of Vietnam and Vietnam-era veterans.

When plans for Vietnam Vets Week became public, VVAW began to plan activities since there seemed to be nothing else happening in Chicago. In the course of planning, we joined with other Vietnam and Vietnam era vets, both individuals and groups, who represented a wide spectrum of the places that Vietnam vets are coming from.



VVAW speaker in front of Vets History display in Chicago's Daley Center



Maude DeVictor, VA worker who exposed Agent Orange, with VVAW at Memorial Day program.

Our initial apprehension about established vets groups fell away as we united on point after point: that the program on Memorial Day (the beginning of Vietnam Vets Week) would not promote war or glorify Vietnam, that recruiters were banned from the entire program and grounds, and that no phoney jobs programs would be set up or give their pitch.

The City of Chicago supported the plans of the veterans coalition and placed no restrictions on the coalition, probably for the first time in the history of Chicago VVAW. The VA took no part other than to transport patients to the program from the local VA hospital. The "major" vets organizations--the American Legion and VFW--were significantly absent from the entire process.

The Memorial Day Program, "A Day in the Park" for Vietnam vets went off well. In spite of the media's attempts to downplay the event, it was probably the largest gathering of vets in Chicago. VVAW met and spoke with hundreds of Vietnam-era vets we had never met before. Our speaker on the official program, which was interspersed

with music, was Barry Romo from the VVAW National Office. Hitting hard on the war, on the re-institution of the draft, and on abuses that veterans are facing everyday, Romo stated that "A day in the park is nice, but is not going very far to deal with the 'used once and thrown away' attitude that vets are faced with. We don't need only a 'day' when we have to fight every day!"

But Chicago VVAW felt it was not enough just to open Vietnam Vets Week and then leave the balance of the week in the hands of federal press releases. We ended the week with the struggle of Vietnam vets in mind.

Setting up a large pictorial display, filled with the combined materials from Chicago and Milwaukee VVAW, vets and VVAW members from Chicago, Wisconsin and Michigan gathered in Daley Plaza in Chicago on June 2nd to illustrate the past, present and future struggles of veterans. VVAW speakers hit on the misconceptions being peddled to the American public about the Vietnam War,

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## 'RESPECTABILITY' VS RESPONSIBILITY

In the past year, VVAW has participated in numerous coalitions around everything from the struggle for the effects of Agent Orange on vets and coverage by the VA for these problems, to anti-draft and anti-nuclear demonstrations. One of the newest has been the work by VVAW around Vietnam Veterans Week, with city and VA officials concerning Memorial Day activities.

In the past, VVAW has always been kept out; forced by the powers that be to stand in opposition to official events sponsored by the American Legion or VFW, putting forward the desperate situation of vets and the true reasons for war, as opposed to the sugar-coated words about a thankful nation's debt to the vets and their great patriotism. At times, we were arrested for daring to speak, even attacked by police to shut us up. At every turn, some aging official would speak about how 60 year old WWII vets represented Vietnam vets, while we stood there with as many Vietnam vets as their whole ceremony, including the cops!

This year was different. VVAW, throughout the midwest

was part of the Memorial Day activities - officially. We gave speeches at VA cemeteries, and official activities. We even marched in their parades. What happened? Had VVAW changed its position on the war? Had we discovered that vets had a decent life after all? Or, had the system changed, seen the error of Vietnam and future wars, and given in to the just demands of the vets movement? To be frank, hell NO, to all of the above! So, what happened? Why the change?

To begin with, Vietnam vets are beginning to move; be they local groups fighting around the issue of Agent Orange, or one-shot coalitions, bringing out the plight of Vietnam vets on Vietnam Veterans Week. No longer can a WWI or II vet get out there and claim to represent Vietnam vets; people want to hear from Vietnam vets themselves. This was especially true this year with the proclamation of Vietnam Vets Week. How could the VA or city hold events without Vietnam vets, or excluding Vietnam vets organizations? That would be too much for the public to stomach, let a-

lone vets themselves. The officialdom that welcomed VVAW did not do so because they had changed, but because the necessity of the situation forced them to do so. Neither did VVAW change its line, or trade (or rather sell out) the interests of vets for a chance at respectability, a three-minute speech as officialdom.

Some quarters thought we should do this. In fact, some vets decided that it was more important to get a key to the city given to them than to shout out that vets were getting a raw deal! Some decided that a chance at standing on the stage with generals and admirals was more important than standing with the memory of our dead brothers who gave their lives for the profits of the corporations in Vietnam. It seems that some of these vets were willing to forget a whole, proud history of Vietnam veterans in struggle, who sacrificed and eventually gained the respect of the American people by opposing the carnage of the imperialist war in southeast Asia. We suppose that responsibility gave way to "respectability".

There was also a small tendency to see participating in any activity with city or VA officials or "official" vets groups as incorrect. These people were afraid that we would be swallowed up by the system or co-opted. But, again, the proof was in the pudding, and we intend to use every vehicle to speak out about vets problems, war, and the system that they stem from.

VVAW worked in coalitions, official and otherwise, participated in events, official and otherwise, but, we always remembered that our responsibilities to vets and their families was to put the truth - the whole truth - out there. Although we did participate officially, and hope to do so in the future, we will not forget the past; and you can be damn sure we won't let the VA or government forget either! In fact, our putting out the truth enabled us to bring out more Vietnam vets than most all the other vets groups combined--more combat vets, more black vets (the ones hit the hardest) and more vets from all eras who have joined us since then to become active for a better life.

Continued from page 12

## Vietnam Veterans Week



Part of the crowd of over 2000 vets, which included over 200 vets from the VA hospital during Memorial Day in Chicago.

the poor medical treatment (especially the neglect of Agent Orange victims), high unemployment among vets, and the particular problems of vets in

prison.

The high point of the afternoon was the open microphone which gave vet after vet the opportunity to speak of their own anger and experiences. In addition to many vets, the program attracted many passersby who listened to the program and scanned the displays. Several thousand leaflets detailing the way the Vietnam war is continuing for Vietnam vets were distributed to the public.

Vietnam Veterans Week in Chicago was a success--for Vietnam vets. The planning and carrying out of activities was taken out of the hands of the "traditional" vets organizations that have made vet's activities in Chicago in the past a plug for war--old and new.

In Milwaukee, Memorial Day events were different than they had been in the past. It used to be that VVAW had to stand off to the side of the "official" ceremony and speak out about the real abuses vets faced, or else hold our own ceremony afterwards.

This year, however, VVAW gave a speech at the official ceremony. The VA demanded to see a copy of our speech beforehand. We let them see it, and they had the the audacity to give us back a "corrected" version. In their version all mention of the WAR, of Agent Orange and of the abuses vets face were gone, and words of praise from Carter's proclamation were substituted.

VVAW refused to go along with this nonsense and threatened to go to the press and other vets to expose this censorship. The VA quickly backed down.

After VVAW speaker John Lindquist gave the speech, mothers of vets who had died in Vietnam came over to congratulate him. Saying that it was about time VVAW was allowed to participate in the event, the mothers thanked him for saying what they had felt all along.

From there, VVAW went to the American Legion sponsored march and for the first time were allowed to march in the

parade. Our presence changed the whole event. The parade was set up to push "patriotism" but that was changed as banners and chants made it clear that these vets were against wars for profits and demanded testing for Agent Orange and NO new draft.

People all along the way stood and cheered. Vets joined the contingent from the sidelines, and even the parade officials had to admit that the VVAW section got a longer and louder applause than any other contingent.

Vietnam-era veterans got to flex their muscles for a change and the results were significant. We were able to learn from and contribute to a growing unrest among younger vets. We were able to break through the harassment and hostility of the City; we were further able to break through barriers we set up among ourselves--among smaller vets groups--to organize and push forward what will become a growing vets movement in the U.S. today.



# FRAGGIN'

Sp 5 Willy(Ret.)



All of us, at one time or another, have heard stories about the country of Argentina. That's where at the WWII Nazis went to hole up after they got beat, and the countries of the world sent out posses looking for the "Angel of Death", and his fellow creatures.

It was nasty for that bad old Argentina to give them sanctuary. These kind of people go to other places, too. For example, we've got this guy named Loan living in Virginia. He's the guy who supplied the heroin for us when we were in the Nam, as well as sending it back here for use in the streets of New York, Chicago, and our other big cities.

Then, there's this guy, Ky, who used to be Loan's boss, and got rich off of Loan's heroin trade, while he supervised the murder of thousands of Vietnamese, who "may" have been collaborating with the VC. Ky lives in California.

We almost got the Shah of Iran, too. He's the guy who must have set a world's record for the number of political prisoners held in jail and tortured. He probably would have lived in a commune with Nixon and Bebe Rebozo in some California desert spa, if there weren't so many Iranians with long memories living in this country.

We didn't get the Shah, but we did get another big prize. . . Anastasio Somoza. The dictator from Nicaragua has moved to Florida. He's the guy who took all his country's wealth and poured it into his own companies, while millions of Nicaraguans lived in starvation, and victims of a devastating earthquake got zero relief.

The words on the Statue of Liberty say, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free.." The reality is that the State Department sends out ads saying, "Give me your dictators, your oppressors, all those who guarded Uncle Sam against the people rising up in the poor countries."

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Our friends in the VFW seem to have a problem. They can't get many younger men - Vietnam veterans - to join. They can't, because, generally, they are full of bullshit, and we have had enough of that. First, these patriots in beanies (piss-cutters) with their tired old politics wanted us to go out there and win the war, and all the time we knew that war was useless and we shouldn't have been there in the first place. When we got home, they couldn't deal with us because we were "losers", "unpatriotic", "drug addicts", "crazed", etc.

Take, for example, the VFW Post in Maywood, Illinois. Back in 1969, the Post got the Village Board's commitment to build a flagpole as a memorial for two local men who died in Vietnam. They forgot all about it . . . . .

Until now. Ten years later, they want to revive the project! According to the Post Commander, he hopes the memorial will spur younger vets interest in the VFW . . . "it might arouse some of the younger guys to come and join us." Is a flagpole supposed to cover up everything the VFW stands for?

What about the case of Robert Taylor? (See page 9) Is this an organization for veterans? The VFW has supported the policies of the rich, sending us off to Vietnam and other places. Could it be they need us to prop up the idea of a renewed draft bill? Or, is it simply that they have learned so well from their rich buddies how to shaft their "own" people???!?

**FRAGGIN' (Continued Page 8)**

## David Sibeko PAC LEADER ASSASSINATED

The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), the struggling people of Azania (South Africa) and people around the world suffered a great loss with the assassination of David Sibeko, a founding member of PAC. A press release from the PAC stated:

"The PAC announces with deep sorrow and regret the death of Comrade David Maphumzana Sibeko; Director of Foreign Affairs and the member of the Presidential Council. Comrade Sibeko, aged 40, a founding member of the P.A.C. was assassinated in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, on June 12, 1979.

"We hold the white racist regime responsible for the murder of Comrade David Maphumzana Sibeko. He was a man of obvious talent and ability. Who knows what heights he would have attained had he been a free citizen of a normal society? More importantly, on an objective analysis of the assassination of Comrade Sibeko, it is clear that the only beneficiaries of this dastardly act are the Pretoria fascists and their imperialist backers...."

David Sibeko was born in Sophiatown, Johannesburg, Azania (South Africa) on August 26, 1938. He completed his high school education in Johannesburg after which he worked with DRUM and POST, a leading Azanian magazine and newspaper, from 1956 to 1964 as a journalist. He was a founding member of the PAC, and in 1963 he became Regional Chairman and a member of the National Executive Committee. During that time he was also charged on two counts under the oppressive Sabotage Act and accused of plotting to overthrow the state by killing whites and bombing government targets. . . . In 1969 he became the Chief Representative of the PAC Mission to Eu-



David Sibeko accepts Fatigues for Freedom Fighters.

rope and the Americas, serving in this post until 1975 when he came to the United States to serve as the PAC Representative to the United Nations. He was the first Azanian to address the Security Council at its headquarters in New York in November, 1974.

As Vietnam Veterans Against the War learned more about the struggle for freedom in Azania (much of it from Comrade Sibeko and his wife Elizabeth) we came to respect this strong fighter for his people. As our first campaign to collect Fatigues for Freedom Fighters came to a close in 1977, we were honored to present the fatigues to Comrade Sibeko as a representative of his people.

When VVAW heard of his murder, we sent the following telegram:

OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY. DAVID SIBEKO WAS A REVOLUTIONARY COMRADE, FRIEND, AND INSPIRATION. WE SHALL MISS HIM, BUT WILL DO ALL WE CAN TO SEE THAT THE STRUGGLE HE HELPED TO LEAD WILL GO FORWARD.

In response, the PAC sent the following:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania and the family of the late comrade, David M. Sibeko, express gratitude for your act of remembering us at this time of profound grief caused by the untimely loss of our beloved and respected comrade, husband, father and leader. It is soothing to know that we have friends to reinforce our determination to defeat grief and our enemies to continue with Comrade Sibeko's good work. His spirit shall live in our future efforts. Your message of condolence is highly valued.

Sincerely,

Vusi Make, Chairman of the  
Presidential Council and  
Member of the Central Committee





## EDITORIAL

# SCAB GROUP USES VVAW'S NAME



The real VVAW has a proud history of fighting for the real needs of vets; the name came from taking a correct stand, then fighting for it, not preaching about it like some Rev Ike or Moonie.

A second "VVAW" is creeping about the country. Sponsored, funded and fondled by the group which calls itself the Revolutionary Communist Party, this phoney VVAW bears small resemblance to the real organization. Some of its members are actually Vietnam vets; a few were once in VVAW; and they insist on misusing VVAW's

name and insignia. There, the resemblance ends.

While VVAW was hard at work laying the groundwork for cooperation with other groups around Vietnam Veterans Week, and doing the often tedious chore of bringing the problems of Agent Orange poisoning to the attention of veterans, this bunch of fanatics was religiously pitching rocks at the cars of movie stars going to the Academy Awards to

protest the 'Deerhunter'. As a result, 13 of them were arrested so they could follow in the footsteps of their party chairman, who got himself busted earlier, providing them with a cause. A leaflet written by this group of weirdos wants people to give money to defend the "Academy Awards 13"!

Few people have ever heard of the RCP. They've attempted to steal the name of VVAW, which has a long and proud history--and which has a name known to many. Their use for VVAW has been demonstrated for years. Take a veteran with the credibility he has as a vet, and the added credibility which comes from speaking for the oldest of Vietnam veterans' organizations, put him in front of a crowd to speak on the general question of "war" and you have the practical experience to boost whatever airy theory of world events that the RCP is pushing at that moment.

VVAW has a different approach. Of course veterans should talk about "war", not as an adjunct of someone's ravings, but because we've had the experience and, in the real world, there's likely to be another war--and we don't want to see our kids or anyone else's kids pulled, pushed or seduced into the same situation we were once in. But a veterans' organization like VVAW has much more work to do; in fact, we see our organization as doing far more than speaking. Issues like Agent Orange, VA healthcare, jobs for vets, the pitiful excuse for a GI Bill--these and many other issues effect veterans daily. If veterans had not organized around Agent Orange, there would not even be the slight motion that is now going on. In fact, if vets had not organized and fought for all the benefits we have now, we would have none! If we don't continue to organize and fight, we'll lose what little we do have.

That's what we see VVAW as being all about; not to preach, but to act in the interests of vets. And that means joining with other vets groups, or non-vets groups, to get things done. VVAW has never tried to be exclusive in its membership: while it's true that few Nixon supporters ever joined VVAW, that was because of the positions we took and the issues we took on, not because, as the RCP's scab version of the organization would have it, they are not "politically advanced" enough!

We of VVAW welcome vets--and friends--of whatever era.

Our positions are in THE VETERAN; we are not a hidden front group for anyone--we're simply what we say we are, an organization of mostly Vietnam and Vietnam-era vets organizing to get the things we need and deserve, and to fight against the way veterans are used once and thrown away.

In fact, these scab "VVAW" people are doing the work of the police, FBI and red squad by spreading confusion about the true nature of VVAW. During Vietnam Vets Week, this group of scabs came to an event in Chicago to try to pimp off the work already done by the chapter there. While the chapter had done good work uniting with other vets groups, and helped in keeping all military recruiters away, keeping phoney job agents away, and keeping speakers from the military who would support war from participating; this group came in, saying that the event was "PUSHING WAR"! These RCPers confused people. Not because they were putting forward a political position, but because what they were saying was pure horse pucky. How the hell war gets "pushed" with only anti-war speakers, and no military recruiters is beyond us, but such is the thinking of muddled heads.

They have also used VVAW's name to raise funds for the RCP, push RCP demonstrations, and even gone to coalitions demanding speakers; and then putting forward some RCP hack to preach who isn't even a veteran!

We don't intend to let this kind of political sabotage continue. These shells of human beings are comparable to cultists, like the Moonies; or even worse--like Nazis! They use the real problems of veterans to promote their leader . . .

They have no rights at all to the internationally respected name of Vietnam Veterans Against the War! We intend to use every means available to put these perverted prima donnas on the shelf where they belong--way in the back of the shelf! At the same time, however, we will not let these bums sidetrack us from the much more important task of fighting for a better life for veterans.

**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**

## **FUNDS NEEDED**

# **SUPPORT VVAW**

It takes money to run an organization. Printing costs, mailings, telephone bills, etc, all mount up and VVAW doesn't have a Santa Claus sitting in the chimney waiting to fill our stockings with the green. We rely on contributions from our friends and supporters and we rely on our local chapters to pay for the materials we need to build our struggle.

Right now, we are embarking on a national fundraising drive to help pay off our debts and more importantly to help print a series of pamphlets dealing with such topics as the move towards world war, bad discharges and amnesty, and a history of the veteran's movement from Shays Rebellion to the present.

If every reader of this paper sent in at least a dollar we would be well on our way to realize our plans. For those who send in \$5 or \$10 we would send you a subscription to THE VETERAN. \$15 or more would include a subscription and a copy of Winning Hearts And Minds--a collection of poems written by Vietnam veterans. We would also like to build up our sustainers list. \$5 or more each month would give you a sub, WHAM, and any pamphlets that we print.

VVAW IS A TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATION. We would gladly accept donations from you that you could write off on next year's income tax.



# RECOLLECTIONS

**"We Weren't Even There In '68, You Know?!?!"**

## CAMBODIA COVER UP



I was on my way to the dispensary at Camp Torres one morning to pick up my regular supply of valium before the eight "Green Hornet" helicopters lifted off for Ducco, a Special Forces firebase located within a mile of the Cambodian border about 60 kilometers south of Plieku.

Recon Team 'Plane' was to be infiltrated that day forty kilometers across the line into Cambodia, just about the same time that LBJ swore up and down that there was no US involvement in Cambodia whatsoever. At any rate, we knew the area well, as we had been there

many times before, and we knew that this area was heavily concentrated with North Vietnamese Regulars. There was another SF LRRP team within ten kilometers of where RT 'Plane' was to be "set in".

We left Ban Me Thout early and landed at Ducco an hour later, refueled, and went to the briefing tent. EM were only allowed in the briefing for the first ten minutes or so and I left after five minutes to prepare the McGuire Rigs and rope ladders on my Bird. A half an hour later, we were on our way to "set 'em in". The infiltration was uneventful, and we returned to Ducco to set 'strip alert' for emergency extraction, in case it should be a "hot one".

Several days went by, when the Prix-25 started squawking like hell. The other team that had been set in before RT 'Plane' had been compromised, and all eight Green Hornet helicopters were airborne within minutes to recover the team that had made contact. They were successfully extracted, thanks to the sharp eyes and reflexes of the door-gunners on that slick. The eight Green Hornets were just pulling into formation to return to Ducco when the radio Squawked again. RT 'Plane' had been compromised and was backed up against a river bank by a company of NVA. We immediately turned back, low on fuel and ammo, to attempt the extraction of RT 'Plane'. We circled the approximate area of the team and finally spotted the foot-square day-glow marker panel directly on the river bank in an LZ that looked impossible to get into. With the team spotted, the gunbirds went down and hosed the area with minigun fire and rockets while our slick prepared to descend for the extraction. The radio squawked "come on down", and we fell like a rock toward the day-glow panel. Just as we were ready to pull into the undersized LZ, the radio squawked again. It was RT 'Plane'; they were not at the LZ, as they had been cut off and were 50 yards up river. We gunners talked the pilot



back out of that LZ and took off up river to the new LZ location, only to find it smaller than the first one. We had to blaze our way out of the first one and knew that the second one was going to be twice as bad. It was. We gunners began firing our way into the LZ while giving the pilot directions and keeping him away from the big trees that would surely have brought us down. We entered the LZ, clipping small trees all the way in, when my M-60 jammed. The team scrambled aboard, as I frantically tried to clear the chamber of a bent round. We began backing out of the LZ, still trying to clear my gun, and at the same time, giving the pilot directions to keep the tail rotor out of the trees. The fuckin' radio squawked again. One of the gunbirds was hit by heavy weapons fire and was down on the other side of the river. Another slick went in to pull 'em out, and finally, after what seemed like hours, we were on our way back to Ducco. All of us arrived safely.

Several months later, the pilot of our helicopter was on his way home, with a medal of honor, while the rest of us expendable door-gunners remained in Vietnam/Cambodia to witness more glory-seeking officers win high awards at the expense of the door-gunners who made it possible for them to pull off their heroic acts. However, we did gain more than they, as we were more and more enlightened to the truth of what was happening as we vowed among ourselves to expose US involvement in Cambodia, when in fact, we weren't even there in '68, ya know?!?!?

## NOW AVAILABLE


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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