

# **SETTLEMENT or SELLOUT ?** **AGENT ORANGE TRIAL** *page 4*



# **THE VETERAN**

**Vietnam Veterans Against the War**

**50¢**

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## **SUBSTANTIVE LEGISLATION INTRODUCED FOR DISABILITY FOR POST TRAUMATIC STRESS**

### **VVAW Member Helps Refugees, ... Arrested For Saving Lives**

On Friday, April 13, U.S. marshalls and members of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) anti-smuggling unit moved onto the ground of Casa Oscar Romero and arrested VVAW member Jack Elder. Elder, along with his wife Diane and their children was working at Casa Oscar Romero, a temporary shelter for Central Americans, named after the assassinated Salvadoran archbishop, since August 1983.

Released on a \$20,000 personal recognizance bond, Elder pleaded not guilty to three counts of transporting illegal aliens and expects to go to trial in early June. Since the arrest there has been mounting interest on a national level on the issues of sanctuary, refugee rights, and our foreign policy in Central America.

"We're motivated by a reverence for life in the face of a for-

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### **MEMORIAL DAY...page 7**



VVAW Sponsored memorial service in state capital rotunda, Madison, Wisconsin

Allen Ruid

This February, Representative Robert W. Kastenmeier, a Wisconsin Democrat, introduced the first substantive legislation relating to Vietnam War veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorders. H.R. 4711 would create a presumption of service connection in cases in which a Vietnam veteran suffering from PTSD applies to the VA for a service-connected disability. Simply put: the burden of proof in the extremely stressful PTSD claims proceedings would be shifted from the veteran to the VA unless the VA could adequately prove that a stressor other than Vietnam service (a plane crash, for instance) might be the actual cause of the veteran's PTSD.

Kastenmeier who has once again proven that he is a friend to all Vietnam vets has placed a high priority within his office on H.R. 4711. On March 6th, he sent a "Dear Colleague" letter to all members of the House of Representatives asking each member to join with him in co-sponsoring the legislation. Within 3 weeks, 29 members of Congress had already signed on, with more to come.

Kastenmeier pointed out that the VA acknowledges that at least 20% of Vietnam veterans have substantial war-related psychological difficulties impairing their lives. "This means that from 700,000 to 800,000 veterans, plus family members, are still suffering the effects of this tragic period in our history," Kastenmeier observed.

While acknowledging that legislation passed by Congress last year provided for a study of PTSD in Vietnam vets, Kastenmeier called it only a first step

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**Vietnam Veterans Against the War**

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# FRAGGIN'

Sp5 Willy(Ret.)



I know it's spring, and true sports' fans are listening for the crack of the bat and thinking about Doctor J, Magic and the Bird in the playoffs. No one's thinking about football except for the few perverts who follow the USFL. Nevertheless, I haven't yet had the chance to comment on this year's Super Bowl, and I'd like to do that now.

More specifically, I'd like to comment on the postgame interviews. That's where winning Raider coach Tom Flores stood in front of national TV and took a congratulatory phone call from Ronald Reagan. I guess the game got Ronnie excited. He probably flashed back to the time he played George Gipp in the "Knute Rockne Story." Or maybe he thought a phone call would be good politics during an election year.

Whatever the case, Reagan tells Coach Flores, "I have already had a call from Moscow. They think that Marcus Allen is a new secret weapon, and they insist that we dismantle it. Now, they've given me an idea about that team that I just saw of yours. If you turn them over to us, we'd put them in silos and we wouldn't have to build the MX missile." It would be nice if they didn't build the MX missile, but this whole little speech was so far out in left field that one wondered what it had to do with congratulating Tom Flores. I guess Reagan has missiles on his mind. To Flores everlasting credit, he stood there silently with a look on his face which seemed to say, "What the fuck is that idiot babbling about?"

What I want to know is why these guys always insist on comparing war to football and other games? I mean, I think there's some sort of psychology behind it that creates the image of war being just a game, and that makes it all right. They're crazy.

As for the game itself, it wasn't much. The Raiders rolled over the Redskins. It was like--well it was like the way that Patton rolled after the German Army on his way toward Berlin.

\* \* \* \* \*

Speaking of games that the Reagan Administration plays,

look at who they have been using to gather intelligence on foreign powers. If you haven't heard of Lyndon LaRouche and his cult called the National Democratic Policy Committee, you should have. This is another nut group, although these people are also dangerous in that they are fascist and well-organized. They definitely are nuts, though. For example, they're always talking about conspiracies involving organized Labor, the Rockefeller family, Kissinger and the Russians getting together to start a thermonuclear war. Another one of their theories is that the Queen of England is a major drug dealer.

So who did Norman Bailey of the president's National Security Council and members of the CIA get together with for an intelligence debriefing? Why it was Lyndon LaRouche's boys. They were supposed to supply intelligence on the economies of foreign countries and what their leaders are thinking.

I really don't think Reagan's in tune with the rest of the world. So don't be surprised if the next amphibious assault you see occurs against England. The Marines will land and storm Buckingham Palace, and right behind them will be members of the Drug Enforcement Agency. I wonder if Reagan used LaRouche for his intelligence advice when he planned his Lebanon invasion. That had to have been planned by someone who is nuts.

\* \* \* \* \*

With all the crazies running around in Washington, it makes you wonder who really is running the government. Can it really be the Reagan folks. I doubt it. Then who is?

Remember a movie that came out about fifteen years ago called "The President's Analyst"? It starred Jame Coburn as a guy who comes up against a Big Brother type of situation and finds that the real fascists behind the situation was the phone company. At the time I thought it was just a good escapist movie. Now, I've got a sneaking suspicion that the movie was right. It's the phone company behind everything.

I base my theory on a recent report coming out of NORAD --

you know, the command center for our nuclear arsenal located inside Cheyenne Mountain in Colorado. It seems that with the break-up of the Bell System, NORAD's phone bill went up 440%. The cost of one certain pick-up jack went from \$7.50 to \$445.00. The Air Force complained, but they had to pay.

Now the phones in question are those that link Cheyenne Mountain with the White House, the Pentagon, and to an alternate command site in Maryland where the President would be flown in case of an attack. Think about this: Can you imagine what power AT&T Information Systems has? If someone doesn't pay a bill, the U.S. nuclear arsenal would be frozen in place waiting for orders that can't come because the phone is disconnected. Or, if AT&T doesn't like the war we're fighting with the Russians, then zap! They cut off the phones.

That's incredible power. The movie was right. It's the phone company that runs things. We're all doomed. On second thought, maybe that's good. I'd rather have the phone company with its finger on the button than Ronald Reagan.

\*\* \*\* \*

This is an election year and I think the folks in Palo Alto County, Iowa are on to something. In the recent Democratic primary, a local radio station took a poll to determine the popularity of various candidates. The radio announcer would say the name of a candidate, and everyone who favored that candidate would flush their toilet at that time. They would then measure the drop in the water level at the local water tower and from the drop in water, determine who's most popular. This is ingenious. We could save a whole lot of money used for running elections. Just use flush toilets which most everyone has. And besides, the flushing of a toilet is more symbolic of the type of leadership we usually get.



## GRENADE OF THE MONTH

Let's give this month's grenade to William K. Coors, chairman of the Coors Brewery. Coors has been subject to a boycott of organized labor because of the company's anti-union practices.

I guess that Chairman Coors wasn't happy with just the unions as his avowed enemy. So, he went before a group of minority business owners and told them that, "One of the best things (slave traders) did for you is to drag your ancestors over here in chains." Then he got to the subject of economic problems of Black-governments in Africa; these problems existed, he said, because of the lack of the "intellectual capacity to succeed."

I wonder if he got his intelligence on the African countries from Lyndon LaRouche or the National Security Council.

## Mothers' Day March

For the second year in a row, members of Chicago VVAW spent their Mothers' Day at the Chicago area "Mothers March for Peace." A contingent of vets and families--including a couple of strollers--joined with the 5000 or so marchers from a variety of peace, anti-nuclear, environmental and community groups to march down Chicago's Michigan Avenue. Peace activists who have been marching for decades mixed with punk rockers for peace.

VVAW members from Chicago and from Milwaukee also served as camouflaged decorations around the stage. While stage security was not needed, vets were, as always, prepared to do what needed to be done, and were serving in this position at the fervent request of the membership of the coalition.

Speeches poured out from the stage, punctuated by various musical groups, all testifying to the central theme: Stop the Arms Race, Not the Human Race. Meanwhile, at booths surrounding the area, a variety of groups sold their wares and passed out literature for a collection of causes and events.

Despite an overwhelming party atmosphere, there was a serious purpose to the event. As stated by one mother, there with her children, when a reporter asked the mandatory, "What are you doing here?" "Where else would I be on Mother's Day," she responded. "Peace for my children is the greatest gift I could ask for."



## Fables, Half-truths, Prejudices and a Pleasant Smile

## REAGANSPEAK

Probably no one but the most raving and rabid right-winger still believes much of what Ronald Reagan says. There's a new profession made up of those who try to interpret and explain away some of Reagan's more obnoxious blunders, paid, no doubt, with the taxpayers' money to make the President sound at least like he's got good sense. Often, they do not succeed.

For example: "A tax shelter is only a shelter if you lose your investment." A tax shelter provides tax writeoffs in any case.

"The first man to propose a nuclear freeze was on February 21, 1981, in Moscow--Leonid Brezhnev." Senator Mark Hatfield proposed a nuclear freeze in 1979.

"Because Vietnam was not a declared war, the veterans are not even eligible for the GI Bill of Rights with respect to education or anything." Time and time again VVAW has said that the education benefits weren't big enough, and that the Bill is pitiful compared to the World War II version, but at least we got it, declared war or not.

There are enough of these bleeps and blunders (not mistakes in the usual sense) that a couple of writers, Mark Green and Gail MacColl have put together a book entitled Ronald Reagan's Reign of Error (1983: Pantheon Books) which is stuffed with examples of Reagan not knowing what he's talking about (the book is also where the examples above come from). They range from funny to just plain sad.

To some Americans it may be funny to have a President who is also a dolt; a number of our presidents were no one too bright and, for the most part, they muddled through all right. The country is still here and the Capitol remains standing. For the most part, they had some aides or cabinet members or other keepers who kept them from wandering too far off the path.

And it would be nice to be

able to dismiss Ronald Reagan's blundering statements with a laugh and a shrug, thinking that once again our chief executive has put mouth into gear without engaging the brain. The problem is that it's not so funny. And the reason it's not so funny is that Reagan creates his facts to back up whatever point he's trying to make. And that's not so funny because it could just

Reagan's history of Vietnam is also well tailored to fit with his concept of Vietnam as a "noble cause," a phrase which he spoke with such resounding thud several years ago. A 1978 radio speech provided the Reagan history of Vietnam which included the remarkable fact that North and South Vietnam had been separate countries for centuries. That, and much else in the radio

## "REDEPLOYMENTS" DOWN THROUGH History



get us all killed, which isn't funny at all.

For instance: Toward the end of April, Reagan was preparing a proclamation for Law Day (the attempt by the U.S. government to make the people of the country forget May Day). "Without law," declared our President, "there can be no freedom, only chaos and disorder." A ringing statement to be sure, one worthy of a chief executive. Unfortunately, only the day before, Reagan & Company had announced that any decision by the World Court regarding the U.S. mining of the Nicaraguan harbors would be ignored.

We accept the rule of law so long as it goes our way. Or, perhaps, if we're caught in some grossly illegal and immoral act, then we declare the Might Makes Right and, superpower that we are, we are above the law. But the Reagan approach is not so refined. While legions of clerks and cabinet secretaries scurry around to find justifications for ignoring the World Court, for Reagan himself the solution is clear-cut: mining Nicaraguan harbors is a step forward in the fight to keep communism out of our hemisphere, and anything in that fight is justified. The World Court, or world opinion, or even the opinion of the American people is irrelevant, plain and simple.

address, was soundly booed off the stage of history as it richly deserved. But did Reagan learn from the experience? Not Ron. During an April (1984) press conference, with the eyes of America upon him, he wallowed through the same misinformation about Vietnam being two countries throughout its history.

So why is Central America not like Vietnam (one of the questions which should be on Reagan's mind)? Because, among other mistakes and errors, Vietnam was always two countries (in its long and rich history Vietnam has been in a number of situations, from a province of China to the ruling power over most of Southeast Asia; the "two countries" were a recent creation and a colonial invention; for the greater part of history, Vietnam has simply been one.) Supporting the U.S. activity in Vietnam is easier if the U.S. is just trying to maintain an historical reality. Once again, facts must fall into line behind wishes, and if you wish hard enough, well, there will always be a few facts to make up to fit perfectly.

One more example and I'll stop since the recital is pretty depressing: you may remember in Vietnam something we called "protective reaction" (the phrase was used when we had stopped "attacking" the enemy). What

it was was bombing the hell out of the hostiles before they could attack us, but we would not have to say we had attacked them. We knew what it really meant; probably the hostiles did too. But we had agreed to call it something else and we all carried on the fiction that we were no longer "attacking" the enemy.

Reagan, however, comes up with a phrase like "The Peacemaker," a laughable phrase for the MX-missile. But to Reagan it really is a "peacemaker." A club is an instrument of love: if you wave the club at someone long enough, they will be agreeable to whatever you want. The MX keeps "peace" in the world (or it will if Congress lets him build enough of them).

Reagan's words, phrases, ideas and facts all exist to serve his single-minded pursuit of the communist menace. He sees himself as St. Ronald keeping the good lady America free from the evil dragon of communism. If there are little things like death squads in El Salvador, or a leader of Lebanon supported by almost no one in the country--small facts like these can be conveniently overlooked when they conflict with something Reagan & Company wish to do in pursuit of their goal.

Reagan is not a stupid man, and those who work around him have reasonable IQ's. Unlike some before him, Reagan is not just a coniving dumbbell--he is, far worse, a true believer.

When we listen to a Reagan press conference or hear about one of his speeches, what we need to watch is not the little mistakes or misstatements of facts: we need to watch where these misstatements are pointing. Remember: Ron believes them. And he's going to act on them. Not for years have we had a President less likely to get us all killed by accident, but more likely to get us all killed because he believes in what he is doing. He will push the nuclear button with a prayer of thanksgiving on his lips as he can wipe out millions of commies. The fact that it will start the final war will be just another fact conveniently overlooked.

There is, of course, a solution: send Reagan back to his ranch as quickly as possible. Let him make all the pronouncements he wants, based on whatever facts he can concoct. Just don't give him the chance to act on his delusions.

Pete Zastrow  
VVAW National  
Office





# Everyone Wins! Except the Victims

## AGENT ORANGE 'SETTLED'

Monday, May 7, 1984, was said by the media (some of it, anyhow) to be the last victory in the battle that Vietnam vets have been waging around Agent Orange poisoning. But little do they realize how wrong they are! In fact the battle is just beginning.

The following is the text of what we supposedly "settled" on:

It is hereby stipulated and agreed that:

1. Defendants as a group will pay \$180 million, plus interest, to the class in a manner ordered by the court. Interest is to accrue at the prime rate from May 7, 1984. The intent of the parties is to have this settlement cover defendants as well as their subsidiaries and parents.

2. Defendants will advance out of this fund expenses on account of notice and settlement administration (but not to include attorneys' fees or attorneys' expenses).

3. No other distribution will be made from the settlement fund until after an order approving settlement has become final, including appeals.

4. The settlement fund will indemnify defendants for any final compensatory judgment only, excluding defendants' costs and fees rendered against them in "Agent Orange" suits by service persons in state court. The indemnification shall be for final judgments rendered against any of the defendants up to an aggregate of \$10 million on all such final judgments. The court may allow additional payments after January 1, 1990, if the payments to members of the class are assured.

5. The class definition is interpreted with specificity to include those service persons and other members of the class who have not yet manifested injury.

6. If plaintiffs pursue claims against the U.S. within one year, they may retain documents and any case or cases have been decided.

7. Plaintiffs and defendants reserve all rights and claims against the U.S. and any person not a party to this settlement. The settlement does not constitute an admission of liability by the defendants nor does it constitute an admission of liability by the plaintiffs.

if they feel that the number of opt-outs is substantial. This right must be exercised no later than 10 days before the public hearing on Rule 23(e).

10. Any class member who has opted out shall have the opportunity to opt back in within a reasonable time as determined by the court.

11. Any party may apply for disposition of the remaining funds on order of the court after 25 years.

12. This agreement is subject to Rule 23(e) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

13. Arrangements will be made from the fund to assist afterborns.

14. The court retains jurisdiction until the fund is completely disposed of.

One thing we've heard in the last week is that those of us who oppose this settlement don't understand what it means. Well, that's a bunch of mule muffins! We're not stupid -- we can read English, even if it is legalese.

There are two main things conspicuously absent from the words of the settlement. First, there is no provision that recognizes the link between exposure to dioxin-contaminated chemicals and human health problems. The omission is serious. If the court does not recognize a cause and effect relationship between our exposure and our health problems the VA may never recognize Agent Orange exposure as a service-connected disability. Can you imagine winning the suit and not being able to claim a disability? This is a victory? If this happened, no matter how much money went into the trust fund, there would never be enough to take care of every vet with exposure-related health problems, plus the children with birth defects, plus benefits for widows and orphans, plus research! This is what those who are trying to sell us the settlement would have us believe the money will go for. All these things? Never in a hundred and eighty million years.

There is an argument that orphans and the neglected children can sue the government, a legal question that is never heard. But the big deal is that the American people are paying for this settlement.

not the taxpayers who poisoned us -- we are the taxpayers. We should we have to pay, again, for corporation lies and cover-ups.

Omission # 2 is in provision eight -- no liability. It can't be more clear where the chemical companies are headed -- right into the next war with Ronald Reagan and the rest of his Hollywood cowboys. And where does that leave us? Well, the corporation's answer has always been that our exposure to Agent Orange was our own fault because we didn't apply it correctly. Does that sound familiar? It should. From the get it has been the GI's who screwed up everything, including losing the war. In fact we put up with their lies and contradictions in Vietnam and we've been getting dumped on ever since!

Provision # 9 also needs a note. The defendants have already deposited their \$180 million in the bank where it is already collecting interest. On May 9th they turned right around and sued the federal government for \$180 million. And that's what provision # 9 is about: we will now have to wait and see if the companies back out of their tidy little agreement 10 days before the public hearing.

While the chemical companies were off to sue the government so that the settlement would cost them nothing, they were not, of course, saying they had won a victory or having a public celebration. Just as revealing, however, was the chemical companies' stocks on the New York Stock Exchange where all the stocks went up. Investors were sure as hell that the companies had triumphed!

There is a point where we can still turn things around. Rule 23(e), mentioned several times in the settlement, means that the settlement has to be approved by the judge, Judge Jack Weinstein. He has the final say on whether the settlement goes into effect. And before he makes his decision, he will hold public hearings. We need to convince him, and the hearings are the last hope for this. We have neither the organization nor the money to hire a new set of attorneys, even to hire back Victor Yannacone, the attorney who got the case started in the first place. He was eliminated from the case

awhile back, presumably because he ran out of money and could no longer afford to pay to carry the case forward. Now it seems there was much more to his exclusion from the case; we may never find out exactly what happened.

The attorneys who made this settlement, supposedly on our behalf (and without telling anyone) were appointed by the judge. We did not hire them to represent us. Less than two months before the trial was to begin, they told a group of vets that they would, under no circumstance, accept a settlement. Many of them had become involved in the case through Yannacone, but in any case it seems clear that the judge is not going to permit us to change attorneys at this point.

This is another reason why the public hearing is so all-important. It is our chance to speak for ourselves, to try to convince the judge what we need. At this point the date of the hearing has not been set, but we are urging all vets to write Judge Weinstein. Send copies of medical bills, pictures of kids, medical records -- the kind of thing that will make him understand that the settlement is too small, that cause and effect must be there, and that the companies are liable for what they have done and then hidden away under the name of "trade secrets."

If you want to go to New York for public hearings, let us know -- we'll try to help with arrangements (call VVAW at the Milwaukee number -- 414-963-0398). The hearing can last from two days to a week, and Judge Weinstein has said that he will hear everyone who wants to speak to him concerning the settlement.

One thing is sure. The judge has already heard from leadership of most vets groups around the country. But the judge realizes that many vets belong to nothing. And the majority of vets are wondering what the settlement may mean to him and to his family. It would mean life or death to many. Let the judge hear from us now, before it's too late. The address is:

Judge Jack B. Weinstein  
Federal District Court  
225 Cadogan Plaza Bldg.  
Brooklyn, NY 11201



## Letter from Vet's Wife

**"WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?"**

The following letter was received by the VVAW National Office; we try to answer it. But the letter made us realize that the problems faced by the wives of Vietnam vets are something we have seldom tried to discuss in THE VETERAN.

We are printing the letter and the response here in hopes of getting your responses which we will use in the next issue of THE VETERAN. We will also be giving the letter to several wives of VVAW members for their responses; in short, while we

don't know exactly what will come of this, we do believe there is an important issue here which should be discussed. Let us know, please.

## THE VETERAN:

I am the wife of a Vietnam infantry veteran, soon to be ex-wife. My story is probably like many other wives; for 13 years I have loved, honored and cherished my husband through various medical problems associated with Agent Orange, post-traumatic stress, unemployment due to illness, and his never-ending distrust of the U.S. government to the point where anger, hatred and mistrust have taken over our lives. All along I kept asking, when does all this anger and hatred subside? Will it ever let up? Why is it getting worse all the time?

He has gotten involved. He's a member of VVAW, he's joined every group he can find to end all the useless wars our government has gotten us into, he's even in therapy to help him deal with his medical and psychological problems. He seemed to be venting all his anger but there was no time left for his family. The more involved he gets, the angrier he becomes. I know that it takes people like my husband to get involved, and to do something constructive, but is there no time for love, children, wives and friends?

Understanding all of this anger, why his health is so bad, why our children are deformed, or wondering if our children's children are to be deformed, why all these tests are coming back from the health department with devastating results, why the chromosome damage and his immune system damage is so severe that he has been told he doesn't have very much more time left to live. Ten years at the most and that's probably a high estimate. At the same time he's being told by the VA that there is nothing they can do. They haven't even acknowledged that there is a problem with Agent Orange. Helpless is how you feel.

Our marriage is at a loss. There is nothing I can do anymore. I can't give him hope; he has no hope that he can or will get better. He feels he

has no more need for me as a wife. He is just waiting for his time to come. He is still working against all of the things he is against, for the future of our children, maybe, but there is no more hope for his future as he sees it.

What am I supposed to do? How can I or could I give him any hope? I couldn't. We've come to a standstill in our lives and there is nothing either one of us feel we can do. If nothing else I want the rest of his life to be happy. That is why when he wanted me to leave his life I did. Separation is what he wanted, indefinitely. So here I am writing THE VETERAN. Now what?

~ ~ ~

Dear Vet's Wife,

For hundreds of thousands of Vietnam vets our wives are our reasons to hope. Wives, along with our families, have often provided support when everything else had decayed. The number of wives wounded by Vietnam is large even though there were and are no medals. Sometimes the medal most wanted--nothing more than appreciation for putting up with all the pain a vet can cause--is never awarded.

We should make one thing clear immediately, even though we are a vet's newspaper and tend to take the vet's side on almost every issue. Some of us who went to Vietnam were jerks when we went over, and nothing in the Vietnam experience changed that. There are Vietnam vets who are simply worthless.

But that isn't the case with your husband who has the vital capacity to care. Caring can be misplaced or misdirected, but it is certainly a precious ability and one which could be the basis for hope.

Many of us when we got back from Vietnam wallowed around in various swamps, whether drugs or alcohol or mental problems or the kind of behavior that landed us in prisons or divorce courts. Those of us who joined VVAW back then and have stayed with it found that seeing the source of our problems helped to keep us sane. Seeing that we should not blame ourselves but should turn our frustration, anger, rage against the policies of the government and toward the building of a situation where Vietnam could not be repeated--this gave us something to hold on to. In the early years back in

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**'Ranch Hands' Revenge' Chemical Company Hit**

Ralph Weege

VVAW demo at chemical plant in Milwaukee

Sunday morning, May 6, 1984, was a bright sunny day, a perfect day for a Milwaukee Agent Orange demonstration to mark the start of the Agent Orange class action suit. We called it "Operation Ranch Hand's Revenge."

We are unlucky enough to have a Hercules chemical company plant that we could target. About 6 months before the announcement of the trial, this factory was discussed at a meeting and, at that time, we decided that a car convoy to the site followed by a rally would be just right.

On Sunday morning there were 43 people in 10 cars lined up on a neighborhood street. The action was regional in scope with people coming from the Quad Cities area of Iowa, from Chicago, from Madison and other cities in southeast Wisconsin. We had leafletted the block where the convoy started and the neighborhood the factory was in. And we had a car-top loudspeaker system so that along the route we could talk to the people.

I flashed back on May 6, 1968, my second day in the 'Nam. I was being sent north from Dong

Ha to Can Viet by swift boat. I figured, unlike by river convoy 16 years earlier, this convoy was the beginning of the end of a 5-year struggle. Little did we know how fast things could change by the next day.

The convoy went well and we arrived at the Hercules plant at high noon. After we unfurled the banner, we hit them with our first cadence:

Dow, Monsanto, Hercules,  
Diamond Shamrock if you  
please,  
Uniroyal, T.H.Ag,  
All you guys are a great  
big drag!

Sound off....

We looked good, felt good and the weaselly chemical company executive was at the plant gate smiling weakly.

We had good press coverage and picketed about 35 minutes. Before we left we held a rally at the north end of the plant. Just like clock work Maude DeVictor pulled up in a car from Chicago. We owe a lot of thanks to this brave sister who exposed Agent Orange in the first place.

We ended May 6th with a house party--a good day's work. Little did we know that May 7th would present us with a whole new battle to be fought and won.



# Memorial Day HONOR THE DEAD~~ FIGHT FOR THE LIVING

**HONOR THE DEAD--FIGHT LIKE HELL FOR THE LIVING.** This VVAW slogan comes closest to describing what makes VVAW tick. We are urging all chapters and/or individual members to participate; get out and do something on Memorial Day, May 28, 1984.

In the early days of VVAW we didn't play an active role in traditional Memorial Day events or in private gatherings. I guess the war raged on heavily and Memorial Day meant the glorification of war to us. Sometimes this was the case.

....I remember the death of PFC Seeman and another Marine whose name I've long forgotten. This Memorial Day we will remember them. The unnamed Marine was shot in the back of the head with a .45 caliber. The Gunny who did it was in charge of the interior guard that night. Because the Marine had a ten-pack of grass on him, his death went unpunished. PFC Seeman died unloading faulty cases of grenades. He was given this hazardous duty because he was suspected of marijuana use by some lifer. They were expendable, but I will not forget them....

Some opportunish politicians always use Memorial Day to air pronouncements about those "who gave their last full measure of devotion" to protect the country. While Ronald Reagan speaks at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, he prepares for war in Central America and cuts deep into the VA budget.

It is up to us as veterans to really remember what Memorial Day is all about. After the American Civil War, May 30th was set aside as a day to honor the men and women who died on both sides. Memorial Day was also created to pledge our efforts to peace so the nation could reunite and rebuild.

....I remember when Dr. Westphal started a Vietnam Veteran Memorial in Eagles Nest, New Mexico. His son, a Marine officer, and a 12-man squad were wiped out in an L-shaped ambush. Dr Westphal built this Memorial without traditional support because it was called a "Peace Memorial" (not a "War Memorial"), and was dedicated

to all who died in Vietnam--including the Vietnamese. Local rednecks tried to burn it down. VVAW in the Southwest did weeks of perimeter watch to see that it survived. Recently, the Disabled American Veterans has taken it over with the blessing of the family and will break ground this Memorial Day on a visitor's center. This Memorial's history will not be forgotten....

Nowadays, Memorial Day falls on the last Monday of May (May 28th, this year) so everyone can have a 3-day vacation

in downtown Chicago. Traditional vets groups have not, in the past, welcomed VVAW; at times VVAW has held the only Memorial Day ceremony in the city. But even when denied access to traditional ceremonies, Vietnam vets must speak about the need for No More Vietnams, for Testing, Treatment and Compensation for Victims of Agent Orange, and to say that we are fighting for the living to make sure that our brothers and sisters did not die in vain.

Other VVAW chapters, like

Cemetery. We were forced to lay our wreath outside the gate, but the message of peace and No More Vietnams was heard across the land. We remembered our fallen comrades plus the hundreds of thousands of walking wounded of mind and limb who fill our VA's and walk our streets.

Memorial Day is one more good day to remember the support that our VA brother and sister patients need; while the politicians heap praise on our comrades on Memorial Day, the other 364 days are spent finding ways to slice the VA budget. The Grace Commission and more recently a draft paper from the Congressional Budget Office have spoken once more about closing the VA hospital system. There's also talk of stopping hospitalization for non-service connected problems, even for those who have a service-connected disability. And these are only some of the proposed cuts. Once again we are under attack, only this time the sappers are the legions of Ronald Reagan.

On Memorial Day this year VVAW will think of Paul Reuter-sham, Edmund Juteau, "The Tiger" and the thousands of other vets who have died from their exposure to Agent Orange and the killer dioxin. We will not forget the children, whether it be our own children, some born dead or with birth defects, or the children of the Vietnamese. We will remember.

It has taken us 6 years to get to grial on the Agent Orange liability, and the compensation owed to us and our families. The battle is far from over, but at least the trial is set to begin on the 7th of May.

"....I remember the 11 men who died in that ambush--my men," says Rickey Ditch. "Since 1971 I'd had the same nightmare over and over. I come to a tree line and I make the wrong turn, right into a battalion of NVA. Everyone died, everyone except me. The last 12 years I've been locked up 7 years in VA's and state hospitals. I've attempted suicide over 50 times and still the dreams won't end. I'll never forget them...."

John Lindquist  
VVAW National  
Office



Allen Ruid  
VVAW sponsored memorial service in state capital rotunda Madison, Wis

to start their summer. It seems a lot of people don't care about the people who died in America's wars. They would prefer to forget the lessons of Vietnam, but we won't let them. This year you should plan ceremonies in your communities if nothing is planned, or participate in the traditional ceremony wherever it is held. Here are some examples of what will be happening:

The Chicago VVAW Chapter holds a ceremony every year at the eternal flame at Daley Plaza

Milwaukee, are involved in their local Memorial Day ceremonies. Since 1978 in Milwaukee, when President Jimmy Carter declared Vietnam Vets week, VVAW has been part of the ceremony at the VA cemetery, including the VVAW colors and laying a wreath along with other veterans' groups. VVAW's presence does not let them forget Vietnam and its lessons.

Back on May 30th, 1981, Vietnam vets and their families were locked out of Arlington

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## Summing Up the Facts GRENADA

After an all-night flight from a base in the States, U.S. Rangers hit the beach of a small tropical island most had never heard of. Backed by elements of all branches of the U.S. military and joined by a number of small and relatively powerless nations who gave local flavor and justification (of sorts) to the invasion, the Rangers went to work. In Washington, the Secretary of State told reporters that we could not allow another Iran hostage situation to develop. Three reasons given for the invasion: 1) to take power from an "unfriendly government"; 2) to station troops on the island until a government favorable to the U.S. was established; and 3) to facilitate the elections to set up such a government.

Grenada, 1983? Right? Wrong. Vieques, Puerto Rico, 1981. The operation, "Ocean Venture '81" described by the Grenadian government at the time as a dry run for the operation coded "Urgent Fury" that crashed ashore on Grenada on October 25, 1983. What is a real question is the justification used for the invasion--if that invasion was planned and practiced over two years earlier during "Ocean Venture I".

As evidence built that the "Ocean Venture 81" operation targeting Amber and the Ambers, a thinly disguised version of Grenada and the Grenadines, was practice for the actual invasion, Prime Minister Maurice Bishop went public to the world with his evidence. Both privately and through the media the U.S. government made light of these accusations and pulled the plug on any further stories, with the exception of a continual barrage of crap from then-Secretary of State Alexander Haig comparing Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada as "one in the same."

In October, 1983, a lone driver burst through the so-called security at the Marine compound in Beirut and killed 260 Marines as they slept. The nation was in shock. The U.S. needed a victory and needed one fast. Reagan & Co went to the files. "Let's do Grenada--it should be easy enough and we already practised it."

The invasion of Grenada was eased tremendously by the overthrow of the Bishop government and the killing of Maurice Bishop and as many as 150 of



Ranger guards destroyed mental hospital.



Victims of U.S. invasion

his supporters by the Hudson Austin Revolutionary Military Council on October 19th. Immediately, the huge Grenadian militia was disarmed. Many Grenadians say that had the Prime Minister been alive, they would have been willing to fight to defend the island, but that they would not lay down their lives for the Austin regime. The details surrounding the death of Bishop, an immensely popular man in Grenada, and the disarming of the population are at best murky, but the events were absolutely crucial to the success of the invasion. Given what is known of the plans for the invasion dating back to 1981, these are questions that will probably never be answered about the involvement of the U.S. in Bishop's death and other events leading to the invasion.

On the morning of October 25th, 7,000 U.S. troops--Rangers, Airborne, Marines and others--stormed ashore to secure the island in what was to be a "two-or-three" day mop-up of Grenada. Seven hundred Cuban construction workers magically became several thousand Cuban troops, then became less troops, then became construction workers again and prisoners of war. The puny Grenadan Army became formidable enemy troops, pinning down large U.S. units with sniper fire. The American forces contributed by shooting each other, calling artillery and airstrikes on themselves (and on Grenadan civilians). An entire U.S. Navy Seal team drowned when they were dropped too far out at sea. Many U.S. troops wandered lost due to pathetic intelligence and tourist maps provided to them. The "two or three" day mop-up stretched into weeks, then

months, with U.S. military still occupying the island. Some highlights of the U.S. action there included the mutilation of corpses and mass graves for Grenadians and Cubans killed (recorded by NBC on first TV coverage of war). Explanations that surfaced were, "Well, the Iranians did that to U.S. bodies after the rescue attempt." Only the workings of some sick military mind could find the relationship in that statement. The British press, however, had not lost sight of Grenada: continual reports of prisoners held in boxes and small cages, continuing executions, and small outbreaks of fighting are still surfacing.

The major role in winning the American people went to the U.S. media; their criticism of the Pentagon censorship was held in principle only.

"Ocean Venture 81" was never mentioned by the mainstream media; instead, they gave us new equipment pictures and faked U.S. footage of the invasion filmed on a nearby island unopposed with a faked soundtrack of gunfire, since cows don't shoot.

So-called secret documents showing an immediate Cuban takeover (which Reagan told the American people about) never materialized. The roller coaster figures of "the enemy numbers" were repeated by the media--again with no comment.

The actual history of the airport being built, the U.S., British, and Canadian contractors involved, its actual size in relation to other airports in the Caribbean never came to light. The "hostage" students at St George's Medical School, who were never in dan-

ger though held up as the key reason for U.S. troops to invade, were forgotten after a few tearful reunions.

Finally, the "huge" weapons stockpiles for the "Cuban soldiers"--what soldiers? The weapons turned out to be smaller stockpiles than reported, and when inspected by the media, turned out to be seriously outdated--some going back to the last century.

Tony Cavin, a reporter for Pacifica Radio News, stated, "The press may argue it had no access, no choice; the fact of the matter is that the denial of access was accompanied by relatively uncritical repetition of claims of the world's most powerful government attempting to justify the unleashing of its military might against a tiny island in the face of world condemnation."

Cavin further stated, "U.S. officers involved made clear their distrust of the press. As they see it, it was the press that betrayed the military trust in Vietnam by sending home the version of the war that turned the American people against it." In war, truth is indeed, the first casualty.

Hailed as a great U.S. military victory, it is in truth the only "military victory" in over 2 decades. The importance is shown by the 8,500+ medals given out to the military which, at its height, only numbered 7000 troops in Grenada.

Currently, the government of Grenada is tightly controlled by the U.S. Fewer "democratic" institutions exist today than at any time in recent Grenadan history. Thousands upon thousands of dollars are being pumped into Grenada for "economic development." And the Grenadan people are as poor as ever. The airport, once described as a size which could only be used for Cuban military adventures, is nearing completion, larger than before to facilitate "economic development" (which is what the Bishop government had claimed in the first place). Happily re-installed are the well-off American students at the medical school; not quite sharp enough to get into American med schools, they are rich enough to attend one in Grenada.

In the boiling caldron that is Central America there is one footnote of interest. Beginning in early May 1984 U.S. military, CIA, and Salvadoran and Honduran forces began "Ocean Venture 84" apparently aimed at Nicaragua.

Bill Davis  
VVAW National  
Office



There is a group of people who, if you compare their statistics with the rest of society, have social problems out of proportion to their numbers. There is high unemployment, marital problems, alcohol and drug abuse, suicides. Other groups--minorities such as Blacks, Chicanos and American Indians--have also faced these problems, and they have faced up to them and organized themselves to deal with such problems.

This group, Vietnam veterans, has also been involved in organizing efforts to deal with the problems of Vietnam vets. We have identified the causes of many of the individual problems. The scientific community has called it post traumatic stress disorder (ptsd). What this is, simply, is the stress that hits Vietnam veterans years after Vietnam, but because of the experience of Vietnam.

Leaders of disadvantaged groups often have found themselves persecuted because their efforts to change things have angered powerful people. The same is true of Vietnam veterans. The case in point occurred in Alabama during 1981 and 1982.

Grady Gibson was his name. In the fall of 1981 he walked into the Vets' Center in Birmingham, Alabama. He got to see counselor Tom Ashby. What he told Ashby was that he suffered from marital problems, lingering war guilt, periods of confusion and headaches from wounds suffered in Vietnam--headaches he said could only be eased by cocaine. What he didn't tell Ashby that day was that he worked for the Alabama Bureau of Investigation and had gone to the Vet's Center at the instigation of the FBI.

Later testimony would show that Gibson was at least the third agent sent into the Birmingham Vet's Center. Vet Centers around the country have been known as places where vets can go and actually get help for ptsd and other problems in a place that is comfortable for them. They are also places that make the power-that-be uncomfortable. Newspapers in Alabama have railed against them as a waste of money. The Reagan Administration has tried to cut them from the budget. The VA (which administers the program) has failed to put all the money appropriated for the Centers into the Vet Centers.

And so it was that Grady Gibson infiltrated the Birmingham Vet Center. He ingratiated himself to the veterans there. He became friends with Ashby

and others. He began to work with them in a non-profit organization, the Alabama Veterans Services. He accepted responsibilities in the veteran's movement. And he also partied with the vets. He snorted cocaine like a pig in slop. And, of course, he encouraged others to use the stuff and often asked the others to help him purchase the coke.

Others caught in the web being woven by Gibson were Don Reed, David Curry and John Matthews. Reed was director of the Birmingham Veteran's Center. Curry was a professor at the University of South Alabama who was going to take a leave of absence in order to become the team leader of the Gulf Coast Vet Center in Mobile, Alabama which was to open in February, 1982. John Matthews was a volunteer at the Birmingham Vet Center, a board member of Alabama Veterans Services, and was to become a counselor at the new Vet Center in Mobile.

The new Vet Center in Mobile was to have its grand opening on February 17, 1982. On that day the VA announced that seven counselors would be suspended because they were being investigated for misconduct. A couple of months later, indictments were brought against Reed, Curry and Ashby.

John Matthews, a member of the DAV, was receiving a 10% service-connected psychological disability. Under intense questioning, he had a mental collapse and was hospitalized. The VA then fired him and cancelled his insurance. Currently John, a holder of two master's degrees, is selling vacuum cleaners and fighting an employment grievance against the VA.

Don Reed was a highly decorated helicopter pilot in Vietnam. Twice he was shot down north of the DMZ on rescue missions, and once he was an MIA for a short period of time. Back home he became involved in the anti-war movement and veteran's causes. He was one of the chief lobbyists to help defeat Reagan's attempted cutbacks in the Vet Centers.

Reed was indicted on six charges for conspiring to sell drugs and unlawful possession

# HUNTING FOR VIETNAM VETS~H&I'S RAILROAD IN AL



Dave Curry

of drugs. A court psychiatrist ruled that because of ptsd he was incapable of forming the intent to commit conspiracy. Therefore, the charges of conspiracy were dropped, and he pleaded guilty of possession. He was given probation. However, this was not the end of the government's vendetta against Brother Reed. He is now serving a jail sentence for a mixture of minor charges resulting from information given to two friends, one of whom turned out to be an FBI informant and the other an FBI agent. Reed pleaded guilty and is serving three years at the federal prison in Maxwell, GA.

Tom Ashby and Dave Curry were tried and convicted on two counts: distribution of cocaine and conspiracy to distribute co-

caine. In addition, Curry was found guilty of the use of the telephone to facilitate the distribution of cocaine.

Dave Curry is a long-time activist. As an officer in Military Intelligence in Vietnam, he turned against the war when he witnessed MI's involvement in the Phoenix Program, the spying on Black American soldiers, and the use of MI to promote President Thieu's re-election. Back home he organized for VVAW and many other social causes. The fact that he had done extensive supportive work in civil rights cases did not serve him well in his own trial before a prejudiced judge and jury.

Tom Ashby served in an artillery unit in the First Air Cav. After the army he became invol-



Dave Curry after confrontation with DC police in VVAW Demonstration in 1974



# S AT THE VET CENTERS LABAMA

ved in VVAW and the anti-war movement. He also was heavily involved in veterans' programs. He worked as a counselor at the Vet Center and, along with Don Reed, helped found Alabama Veterans Services.

Dave Curry was sentenced to 34 years in federal prison. He then spent 90 days in the federal prison in Tallahassee during which time a psychological evaluation was to be made. It was recommended that he be given a five-year prison term. He appealed his case to a U.S. District Court. The court rejected the appeal. A David Curry Defense Committee has been formed in Chicago where he now resides. The committee is attempting to raise money for the exorbitant fees necessary to make an appeal to the Supreme Court, and the committee is also involved in trying to give the case widespread publicity.

Tom Ashby was sentenced to thirty years. Very shortly--if not by the time you read this--Ashby will begin his 90-day evaluation stint in federal prison. What his final sentence will be is yet to be determined.

The question to ask is why did all of this happen? Think about it. The state and federal government spent a lot of money and man hours to investigate, prosecute and convict three veterans on minor charges. If you smoke a joint, you are violating the law by possessing a drug; if you pass that joint to a friend, you are now violating the law against distributing the drug--the offense for which Ashby and Curry were convicted. At one time or another, the case involved the Alabama Bureau of Investigation, the FBI, the Inspector General of the VA, the Secret Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the local U.S. Attorney's office. At least five undercover agents and informers were involved. No profits were made at any time for the sale of drugs.

The severity of the sentence--five years for Curry--is way out of line with similar cases throughout the country. Former American League batting champion Willie Wilson will be playing center field for the Kansas City Royals by the end of May and earning his six-figure salary. He and

three teammates were convicted for attempting to possess cocaine. All served 90-day sentences and are ready to resume the pursuit of their livelihood.

Again, why? One theory is that an assistant U.S. District Attorney was trying to make a name for himself. Another theory is that the government spent so much time and money investigating that they had to get some conviction to justify all their effort. Another theory is that it's part of a real, but ill-defined plan by the Reagan Administration to gut programs for Vietnam vets. Or maybe it's a right wing attempt to destroy what is viewed as the potential political threat of organized Vietnam vets. The power structure in Alabama was certainly



From left to right, Reed, Matthews and Ashby

lined up against these vets: from the judge to the prosecutors to the local newspapers, one of which, the Mobile Press Register, editorialized, "Our suspicions that the costly counseling program for Vietnam veterans was just another nonessential drain on the federal treasury were pretty much confirmed recently when authorities started looking into the Alabama operations of Vietnam Veterans Outreach Centers. The probe is based on evidence indicating that a lot of the 'counseling' consisted of drinking, 'rapping' and smoking marijuana."

It may be that all these factors played a part. Whatever the reasons, this case has to be viewed as an attack on three caring individuals, an attack on the whole Vet Center program, and an attack on the whole concept that PTSD is real and that there is a means to treat PTSD. When the investigation was first made public Don Reed told the newspapers, "It's no secret

that some people in the government and VA don't feel the Vietnam vet deserves or needs the centers. The thing stinks of politics.... These centers were supposed to be safe-houses where a vet could talk about My Lai's, drug problems or anything else without being afraid the government would punish him.... If you look at the clientele we deal with, you see us around people who have all sorts of ways been involved with drugs since Vietnam.... but we're not there to be moral with them. We're there to help them."

Along with the physical problems of Agent Orange and the economic problems of 571,000 unemployed, the greatest danger to Vietnam vets is PTSD. Experience tells us that the way to deal with that stress is by helping each other. That sometimes means relying on the government to deliver the means by which we can help ourselves. Vet Centers came into existence because vets demanded them as the just due from the government which sent us to Vietnam in the first place. Now these centers are under attack from an uncaring government.

Isreal Lewis III was a participant at counseling sessions at the Birmingham Vet Center. In response to the previously mentioned editorial he wrote a letter which concluded, "We are a brotherhood and will come to the aid of the other. All of us are not bums, dope addicts, derelicts, screwballs and misfits. Most of us are articulate, intelligent, fair minded and fearless, in spite of emotional shortcomings. I answered the call because I believed that my government was honest, fearless, open and caring. It has disappointed me as an Afro-American and a Vietnam veteran."

Unfortunately, Don Reed will serve out his full term until parole is granted. The cases of Curry and Ashby are important to win. They are important because of the individuals involved. More important, their persecution is an attack on our veterans' counselors, an attack on the whole Vet Center program, and an attack on the efforts being made to deal with the problems on post traumatic stress from Vietnam.

Concerned individuals and organizations will help with financial contributions and/or publicity around the case may reach the David Curry Defense Committee by contacting the VVAW National Office, P.O. Box 25592, Chicago, IL 60625.

## In Alabama You Can Not Be Black and 'All That You Can Be!' In Army

Rhetoric aside race is still a problem in the military. Discrimination is easier to hide in active duty units than it is in the reserve and national guard.

Recently the Alabama Army and Air Guard has been hit with a class-action complaint charging that "the policy and practice... of selecting less qualified white applicants over more qualified Black applicants" is widespread. The complaint was filed on behalf of 82 Black full-time employees as well as all Black applicants for full time positions. The full time positions include civil service jobs as well as those held by full time officers. The positions are filled by Guardsmen or Reservists serving on active duty.

Blacks account for 26% of the population of Alabama, but fill 6% of the Air Force and 3% of the Army Guard full time positions.

Among the charges of discrimination are:

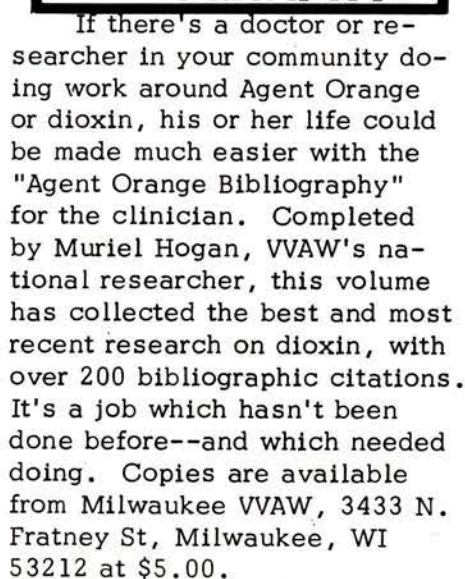
1. The Guard selects less qualified whites over more qualified Blacks.
2. The Guard pre-selects white applicants.
3. The Guard refuses to extend technical training opportunities to Blacks.
4. Guard Equal Employment Opportunity Officers do not carry out EEO rules.

This is only the latest episode in a series of discrimination cases filed against the Alabama Guard. Among them was a SSG who received \$3000 plus attorney's fees in 1982 after filing a suit charging discrimination in promotion and training. In 1983 another Guardsman received an out-of-court settlement because of the failure of the Guard to promote him on the basis of race; when he complained about discrimination he was harassed--and this, too, figured in the settlement.

Most recently, a Guard company commander was reprimanded for urging that a recruiter stress enlisting white males over Blacks or women.



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A new, 76-page "Agent Orange Dossier" has just come off the presses in Milwaukee. A collection of material which is not brought together anywhere else, the "Dossier" provides a wealth of information which both answers many questions about Agent Orange and will give the reader a lot more questions to think about. The "Dossier" costs \$4; send for your copy from Milwaukee VVAW (address above) or the VVAW National Office, P.O.Box 25592, Chicago, IL 60625; rates for 5 or more copies can be discussed.

## Chicago 12 00029

8. Policies, programs and positions of VVAW nationally will, as much as possible, be decided at national meetings. If that is not possible, such decisions will be made by the National Steering Committee or, in emergencies, by the National Office.

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## El Salvador-Nicaragua A Tale of Two Elections

Now that the much touted "free" election in El Salvador is over, it's worthwhile to put it in some kind of perspective.

First, there is no doubt but that a lot of people lined up to vote. Initially, the U.S. media tried to paint a picture of freedom-loving peasants braving fierce guerilla intimidation in order to cast their ballot. The facts, however, seem to point in another direction. In El Salvador it is illegal not to vote. Everyone also must carry an internal passport which is stamped when a person votes. Guerillas told people not to vote; the military and the government and the death squads told people to vote or else. It came down to who were the people more afraid of?

It shouldn't come as much of a surprise that the people are more scared of the death squads. In a country where some 20,000 people are killed each year, the government and the death squads account for about 18,000 of that number. Even murderers and rapists of American nuns are released by

the central government, a fact not lost on the people of El Salvador. If the military can kill and rape American nuns and still get a quarter of a billion dollars in aid from the U.S. How much is the life of a peasant worth?

It also seems like the CIA spent somewhere around 1½ million dollars to defeat the leader of the death squads, Major D'Aubuisson. It's not because D'Aubuisson is a murderer and thug that bothers Reagan & Co--hell, they helped pay, train and supply these same death squads. It was the bad publicity generated. With the victory of Duarte (well publicized as the "good guy" in the election) Congress approved big bucks to El Salvador without any human rights or anti-death squad legislation attached. If Duarte's hands are so clean, why should there be any problem with such additions to the legislation? In fact if, as he says, Duarte were planning to clean up El Salvador, restrictions might have helped to use as a club to hunt down the death squads. But no; there will be nothing frighten-

ing to the military--even a fascist military--and no budget cuts for El Salvador.

While the U.S. press focused on the "free" election in El Salvador, the same press has conveniently ignored and overlooked the upcoming elections in Nicaragua.

President Reagan used the fact that Nicaragua had not organized elections to attack the legitimacy of the Sandinista regime. Now, elections are planned to take place a couple of days before our own elections in November; they will probably be as democratic as any in the hemisphere. And, of course, now Reagan and Congress ignore them.

Nicaraguan elections guarantee the minority parties equal access to media, and give them legal status. State-run television and radio, as well as private media, must set aside equal time daily for every party (there are seven including the Sandinista movement); the time can be used on a daily basis or accumulated to be used in one lump time block. This gives the

**Turn to page 12**

## from page 1 Stress Bill

since the final results of the study are not due until 1988. He stated that the study approach would not only postpone for four more years key decisions on how to deal with PTSD, but that veterans would continue to suffer the effects of PTSD with only sporadic compensation.

Blasting the VA, Kastenmeier said, "Recent reports that as much as \$40 million may have been diverted by the VA from the Vets Center program to other VA programs calls into question the dedication of the Reagan Administration to the Operation Outreach program--a program the administration has tried to abolish and seems to be trying to weaken through withholding funds. Such action may make H.R. 4711 all the more urgent."

H.R. 4711 is one of the most significant pieces of Vietnam veteran legislation introduced to date. VVAW members can play a crucial role in helping to move this bill along. H.R. 4711 needs co-sponsors--a lot of them, and the more the better. Listed below are the names of members of Congress who now are co-sponsors; if your Representative isn't on the list, contact him or her to urge them to co-sponsor H.R. 4711. And if the name is there, write and say thanks. Rep. Kastenmeier can't do it alone, but together we can do it with him and with other Vietnam vets and supporters.

Co-sponsors: Gus Hawkins (D-CA), Ed Markey (D-MA), Jim Howard (D-NJ), Won Pat (D-Guam), Lyle Williams (R-OH), Parrin Mitchell (D-MD), Major Owens (D-NY), Howard Berman (D-CA), Charlie Rangel (D-NY), Dan Glickman (D-KS), Ed Towns (D-NY), Katie Hall (D-IN), Dick Ottinger (D-NY), Ted Weiss (D-NY), Bruce Vento (D-MN), Gary Studds (D-MA), Barbara Mikulsky (D-MD), Ed Madigan (R-IL), Pete Stark (D-CA), Jim Moody (D-WI), Steve Neal (D-NC), Dennis Eckhardt (D-OH), Michael DeWine (R-OH), Lewis Stokes (D-OH), Bernard Dwyer (D-NJ), Jim Jeffords (R-VT), Gary Ackerman (D-NY), Edward Feighan (D-OH), Hamilton Fish (R-NY).

--Marv Freedman  
Madison VVAW

### New York Film Festival the secret agent

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**The Secret Agent** is the first comprehensive look at dioxin, the contaminant of the herbicide 2,4,5-T, a main ingredient of the defoliant code-named Agent Orange during the Viet Nam War. In all, more than 11 million gallons of Agent Orange were sprayed over the crops, the jungles and the villages of South Viet Nam. And while this film focuses on the tragic legacy of the American spray program, the scope of the dioxin problem--and of the film itself--is much larger.

Using rare archival and striking war footage in support of interviews with veterans, scientists, attorneys, and representatives of the U.S. Air Force, Veterans Administration and Dow Chemical Company, **The Secret Agent** documents the extraordinary history of chemical warfare and agricultural herbicides... the damage to our environment... and the plight of people exposed to Agent Orange during the Viet Nam War.

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### Info Wanted

New Hampshire writer would like to interview anyone involved in Operation Phoenix. If interested, call or write Doug Valentine, 118 Public Street, Manchester, NH 03103; phone: (603) 669-7193.



From page 1

## Texas BUST

foreign policy that destroys innocent lives in Central America," says Elder. "The hour is late. It's time to strip away the myths and lies that Reagan uses to mask the real issues. If my trial and possible jail sentence (a maximum of 15 years) make more people aware of the U.S. role in sponsoring official terrorism in Central America, maybe U.S. involvement in a land war there can be averted," he continues.

The stage for what Elder hopes will become a major debate on Central American foreign policy was set modestly enough back in mid-March. Elder had driven three Salvadoran refugees from Casa Romero to a bus station in nearby Harlingen, Texas. The Salvadorans, all feeling from La Union, one of the most war-filled parts of El Salvador, were later picked up by the Border Patrol and detained because they had no papers authorizing their entry into the U.S. Ques-

## From page 11 ELECTIONS

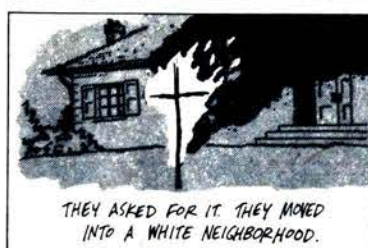
smaller right-wing parties an equal ability to reach the population regardless of actual party membership or influence. These parties are even allowed to accept financial aid from outside the country for elections.

Originally a party only needed 5000 signatures to qualify, and then had to poll 3% of the vote to remain legal. At the request of the small parties, this requirement was dropped. Now, their ideas have equal access with those of the much larger Sandinista party. Compare this system to the requirements in the U.S. and the very real democratic nature of the Nicaraguan regime comes through. Compare this to the death squad "elections" in El Salvador, and the U.S. sponsored joke is seen as the propaganda it was.

The Nicaraguan ambassador to the U.S. took notice of the fact that it took the U.S. 9 years after the American Revolution to hold an election--and that was without having to fight off foreign attacks and interference. Nicaragua took only 5 years to organize these elections even with the CIA running amok. The question now is what excuse will Reagan use for interference no that the legitimacy of the Sandinista government and the democratic nature of its elections are becoming apparent.

--Barry Romo

VVAW National  
Office



From the Philadelphia Inquirer.

tioned by the Border Patrol, they identified Jack Elder

Casa Romero, founded in December, 1982, has served over one thousand refugees from Central America. The Casa provides food, shelter and orientation to the refugees who are now arriving at the rate of 150 per month. The refugees cross the Rio Grande and walk to the Casa or are referred there by local churches, residents of the border area, or by cab drivers. They often arrive broke, exhausted, hungry and discouraged. Once at Casa Romero they can rest, but they must still clear a final hurdle--making it safely out of southern Texas

The existence of huge numbers of refugees from El Salvador is embarrassing to the Reagan Administration. Not only does this human torrent underscore the fact that our southern border is practically an "open" border, it shows that while Americans sit back and swallow the "elections=democracy" equation, Salvadorans are leaving their country in record numbers. They flee a country wracked for a century by injustices wrought by pirate capitalism. During the 1970's the government and the right-wing death squads turned the streets red with the blood of demonstrators every time the people asked for justice. The '80's have become the decade of the armed struggle and now, midway through 1984, it appears that the forces of national liberation are destined to defeat the U.S.-trained and armed military. Salvadoran army morale is eroded daily--the army is drafting 13 and 14-year-old boys; it provides minimal training; its officers are corrupt; and it is fighting rebels, "los muchachos," whose strength lies in the cooperation they receive from the civilian population.

If some of this Salvadoran reality, and our government's response to it, seem familiar, it's because we're about to make the same mistakes we made in Vietnam. Because we really don't

believe that self-determination is for everyone, because war is profitable, because we refuse to learn about the futility of opposing wars of national liberation, because we have a large number of young people who have a romanticized notion of war, and because most eachers and church people and other natural leaders prefer to be silent rather than outraged over the atrocities committed daily in our name in Central America, we face the prospect of blundering into another land war by summer's end.

There will be thousands of women and kids blasted apart by our bombs guilded by our technology, all in the name of anti-communism. U.S.-trained "Hunter Patrols" will roam the hills at night listening for the murmur of a child or the cry of a baby in order to slaughter yet another group of "subversives."

The lives of these terrified, starving children and those of their desperate, long-suffering parents are the real stakes in the confrontation shaping up between refugee workers like Jack Elder and the U.S. government. If both international and U.S. law sanction refugee assistance efforts like those ongoing at Casa Oscar Romero, and yet the government indicts, arrests, and threatens with imprisonment those working with refugees, we might ask who the real criminals are. It shouldn't surprise us to learn that the same power brokers who dragged us into Vietnam are even now calculating acceptable American casualty figures in the upcoming Central American "conflict."

"Vietnam--Never Again" should be more than just a slogan. The time has come to join forces and denounce our foreign policy in Central America, and to resist the implementation of more war (the essence of the Kissinger Report) in the region. Nearly ten years after the end of the Vietnam conflict we find ourselves at the edge of another storm. It is our duty to read the signs of the times and

use our credibility to help avoid another Vietnam: more KIA's, MIA's. POW's. wasted lives, obscene profits, empty promotions, and a country--our own--nearly rendered in two.

VVAW San Antonio

From page 5

## VET'S Wife

the world, those of us who were most successful often brought our wives along with us so that the struggle was a shared struggle. Many vets who were a part of VVAW in its early days used that experience to rejoin the system and work for change in a vast variety of ways--many vets centers today are operated by one-time Vietnam vet activist members of VVAW.

But there were dangers on the way; for some only the hate remained, not the hope and not the building. For some the size of the battle was too great and they retired. But, it seems to me for those who care--who care enough to be concerned about children--there is something to hold.

Though your letter makes it sound as if you have tried all the various remedies available, if you have not gone through marriage counselling, it can't hurt. Through the Vets Center outreach program, there are good psychological experts available (these vary, of course, from place to place--some are excellent), though of course the VA and the Reagan Administration are trying to cut back on them.

All the problems and the stresses are fearfully compounded by the physical problems of Agent Orange exposure. Perhaps there will be a medical solution someday; given the speed with which research is going now, that day is far in the future. I know of no hope except to do all that's possible to prevent such things from happening again.

I find it impossible to imagine a situation where indefinite separation from family would make a situation better, but I have not walked in my brother's shoes. If that is what he wants, you have little choice. You can know that you have done what you could do, and hope that his ability to care will, in whatever time is left, expand to include those who make caring worthwhile.



# CHAMPION RESISTER MUHAMMAD ALI

"I ain't got nothing against them Vietcongs; they never did nothin' to me or to my family. Why should I want to go fight them?"

These are the words of a much beloved and respected sports figure, particularly in the Third World, both at home and abroad, Muhammad Ali. It is unlikely that Ali knew that he was repeating sentiments over 100 years old, particularly since he had been unable to pass the general intelligence examination of the Army in 1964 and was then classified 1-Y. This reflects the inequities of American education; Ali's own experiences had enabled him to clearly make the link between questions of militarism abroad and injustices at home.

Muhammad Ali was born Cassius Clay in 1942 in Louisville, Kentucky, to Odessa and Marcus Clay. His father was a successful signpainter, and the family lived in a lower-middle class neighborhood.

It is no exaggeration to say that Muhammad Ali is a person whose name and face are as familiar as those of anyone in the world. As Cassius Clay he "floated like a butterfly and stung like a bee" all the way to the world heavyweight boxing title. His calling the rounds in which he would (and did) fell his opponents, while bragging about how pretty he was, made him unique, colorful and controversial.

Such actions, in a society where much effort and expense have gone into proving Ali's genotype to be inferior and ugly necessarily made him a villain in the eyes of the press. The press represented those same interests which were profiting by keeping Ali and all who looked like him --people of color--in the lowest economic strata in this country.

Simultaneously, his style made Ali a hero in the eyes of the children and people who related to his history of oppression, his looks and--most importantly--his pride in being a man who, despite all odds (or perhaps because of them) had become a champion needing to apologize to no one for who he was.

In 1964, Cassius Clay announced that he had joined the Nation of Islam (better known as the Black Muslims, a group seen by most whites and middle-class persons as a threat to "ra-

cial harmony"). He would now be known as Muhammad Ali. Soon afterwards he was reclassified 1-A by Selective Service and was ordered to report for induction into the U.S. Army in 1967.

In America in 1967 there was open confrontation over the continued denial of basic human rights to Black people--a denial that persisted despite the passage of civil rights legislation in 1964 and 1965 which acknowledged this mistreatment. Enlistment in the military, while touted as an act of patriotism, was actually being forced on young men of color as an alternative to jail, unemployment, or worse. The income gap between whites and blacks was pretty much as it is today, and the gap was even wider in other areas: quality jobs, education, housing, health care, etc.

Having been classified unacceptable for military service in 1964, Muhammad received his induction notice in 1967 with great surprise. With the war raging in Vietnam, thousands of young men--mostly poor and disproportionately of color--were being drafted each month. As a celebrated athlete, it was speculated, Ali could have given boxing exhibitions at military bases around the world, "just like Joe Louis." What Ali knew, and speculators did not, was that he and Joe Louis were two different people with different views of the world. Unlike Louis Ali was protesting against the way he and his people were being treated in a system that put profit before need.

Dr Martin Luther King, Jr in his famous Riverside Church speech "After Vietnam," said: "We are faking Black young men who have been crippled by our society and sending them 8,000 miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they have not found in Southwest Georgia and East Harlem." Dr King's Americanism was called into question. Yet, he was merely following a long line of other Black Americans.

In 1841 Black abolitionist Thomas Van Rensselaer wrote: "Let it be understood from one end of the country to another that we will never again take up arms in defense of this country unless all of the institutions are thrown open to us on equal terms." Likewise Frederick Douglass, A. Philip Randolph,

Paul Robeson, W.E.B. Dubois, and Malcolm X all denounced U.S. military and foreign policies, exposing racial and economic exploitation and other forms of injustice.

Ali felt that, because he was a minister of the Black Muslim faith, he would go to jail as did Elijah Muhammad, its founder, and Wallace D. Muhammad, his son and successor. To Ali, the U.S. war in Vietnam was wrong and he wanted no part of it, even as a sideline observer.

"What can America give me for turning down my religion?" he asked. "I've got to stand up for Islam. How can I lose my faith in Allah and in Elijah Muhammad?"

When Ali failed to report for induction on the appointed day, the ranks of "public opinion" as reported by a hostile press immediately closed against the heavyweight champion. He was indicted by a federal grand jury and several states, including NY, ruled that they no longer considered him heavyweight champion. The New York Boxing Commission took the lead by not granting him a license to fight in that state. Since Madison Square Gardens was considered one of the most important boxing arenas in the world, that effectively prevented Ali from continuing his reign.

Ali was also refused a passport to leave the U.S., probably the most severe punishment he received. Not only was he unable to earn his living the best way he knew how, but Ali was also unable to continue his visits to Muslim nations.

While his case was being appealed in the courts, Ali was in limbo. Boxing authorities were among the strongest critics of Muhammad for his stand on the military. On the other side, Angelo Dundee, who had spent his lifetime in the sport, saw dark days ahead for boxing without Ali as a feature attraction.



"Muhammad could go to jail, Dundee said, 'and still be champ in most fans' eyes.'" Forcing patriotic guilt on disenfranchised Black folks only helps to sharpen the contradiction between oppressed and oppressor.

Taking his case to the streets Ali became a regular speaker at Muslim temples and a popular attraction on college campuses throughout the U.S.--always with the threat of imprisonment. The war in Vietnam was beginning to be an embarrassment, and sentiment was beginning to turn heavily against U.S. involvement there. Overnight, Ali became an important spokesperson for the view that the war was wrong for Black and white youth. He also reminded his audience, "Ali will return; my ghost will haunt boxing arenas. People will watch fights and say, 'Ali could whip both those guys with one hand.' When I'm gone, they'll carry boxing to the graveyard."

Ali sued the New York State Athletic Commission for violating his constitutional right to earn a living by depriving him of a license to fight. Countering the Commission's claim that it was denying Ali license because he was a convicted felon, Ali's lawyer pointed to a list of approximately 100 convicted felons who had been granted boxing licenses by the Commission in the preceding 10 years!

Moreover, the Commission often had "granted licenses with knowledge that the applicant had a criminal charge pending against him." And many felons licensed by the Commission had been convicted of "military-related offenses, such as desertion...and had received dishonorable or undesirable discharges."

Although it did not affect the Commission, the tide of public opinion was turning in Ali's favor. The Supreme Court held, in June, 1970, that a Muslim

**Turn to page 14**



## EDITORIAL

# Crime and Punishment

Thinking about the plight of Jews during the Second World War, one inevitably asks, "How could it have happened?" "Why didn't anyone do anything?"

Observing the plight of political refugees from El Salvador one gets an inkling. The death squads in El Salvador are as ruthless and bold as any predator in Nazi Germany. Killing, torturing and kidnapping are their stock in trade. Their victims' crimes range from teaching "The Sermon on the Mount" (these anti-communist goons claim that teaching anyone that "the meek shall inherit the earth" is socialist) to organizing trade unions. They work with impunity, able to kill and rape American nuns, assassinate American AID workers, and murder a Catholic bishop during mass. Eighteen thousand people a year are killed by

these authoritarian friends of the Reagan Administration, with Congress voting them more money every year.

Not all Americans are silent or inactive, Jack Elder among them. Jack, a member of VVAW, served in Vietnam with the Special Forces, seeing firsthand the agony visited on hapless peasants in that country. Returning home he worked in the Peace Corps and with a variety of social agencies trying to rescue people from war and suffering. His arrest and coming trial by the U.S. government raises questions for all of us. Most of us would like to believe we would shelter and hide Jews from the Gestapo, had that choice come to us; Jack did that for the victims marked by Salvadoran hit men. His actions and selflessness, and that of his family, speak for themselves. Our own actions will have to speak still for the rest of us. It is imperative that we support the people on trial for aiding refugees, and that we bring every possible pres-

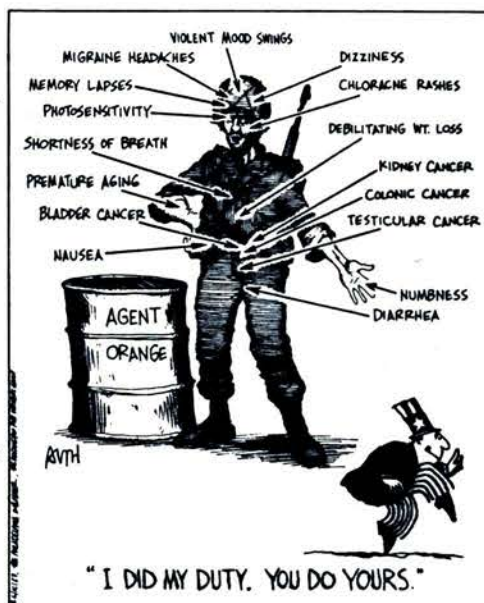
sure to stop our government from supporting the fascists in El Salvador. It's a moral question and it has both a precedent and a answer.

made no attempt to leave the country, did not violate parole or break any laws.

Dave's crime is that he cared about Vietnam vets. That's why the police went after him in the first place. That's how they trapped him and then convicted him. With Dave's experience in the military, he should have known better. Rather than help others he should have tried to help himself.

Remember good old Sergeant-Major Woolridge. He ran the PX Clubs in Vietnam. He made millions on the black market, was made the first SGT MAJOR of the Army and convicted of misappropriation of funds. For cheating GI's he was sentenced to do social work with Boy Scouts. (Hope they didn't trust him with the Jamboree funds). Of course we remember Nixon for subverting the Constitution: he has to suffer on a government pension and peddle his memoirs for millions.

Curry's case is not over yet. There is still plenty to do--please help!



Even though Dave's case is still being appealed all the way to the Supreme Court, the judge ordered him to surrender to federal marshalls. Curry

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## The AMBUSH

ed or captured.

The cannon and the mortars started firing, firing at the perimeter. And Cody could hear small arms fire from the perimeter. He knew it was under attack. He could hear the .50's firing from the APC's and the cracks from the AK 47's.

The cannon and mortars fired several rounds each, then the gooks started packing up to leave. The NVA with the aiming stake walked back to where the mortarmen were, and they were gone. Cody couldn't believe the platoon hadn't been

spotted.

Cody listened to the firing back at the perimeter. And then it stopped. He was back on the radio telling the CO what had happened. And the CO was telling him that a ground attack had been beaten back, but they weren't sure yet if it was over.

Cody and his men lay quiet and felt relieved. They were still alive and hadn't been captured.

More gooks! Cody couldn't believe his eyes. They were coming from the direction of the perimeter and walking in one of the drainage ditches. The ditch came within 15 yards of

Cody and his men. Two or three hundred NVA's walking single file in the ditch. Cody knew now that his platoon would be killed or captured.

Time stood still. One by one the NVA filed past. Cody's heart pounded. For several minutes the NVA walked by. And then they were gone, disappearing into the jungle.

(When Cody and his men returned to base the next day they found out what had happened. The map he had in his pocket showed the perimeter which was to be attacked by 2 NVA regiments, each from an opposite direction. But Cody had

ambushed and killed one regimental commander and his entire staff, and that regiment never showed up for the attack. When the 2nd regiment did attack they were overwhelmed by the firepower of the Cav unit (which wasn't supposed to be there) and retreated.)

Cody was again on the radio; the battalion CO wanted him to direct artillery and air support on the retreating NVA. And he did. But he knew it was no use and he didn't care; he and his men were alive. And soon it would be morning.

David H. Stroup

from page 13

## ALI

could be an opponent of war and recognized Ali's right to be a conscientious objector.

Atlant, Georgia, was first to reinstate Ali by issuing him a license. Then a New York judge ruled that Muhammad's suspension in that state was "arbitrary and unreasonable," and forced the Commission to grant him a license. The walls came tumbling down.

After having been forced to sit on the sidelines for 3 1/2 years, Ali regained his crown in a famous early-morning fight in Kinshasa, Zaire, by stopping George Forman in 8 rounds. Ali now officially held the title of world champion, a title he had worn for years in the eyes of many, even when he was prevented from fighting.

No heavyweight champion in history has ever been as visible as Muhammad Ali. Hailed wherever he goes by heads of state, he has fought in more parts of the world than any champion.

Ali spoke to the Harvard University class of 1975, holding 1200 students and their guests spellbound for 30 minutes. In his speech, "The Intoxication of Life," he said: "It's not the action that makes a thing right or wrong, but its purpose. My purpose is to help people, and I can do it through boxing."

A lot has been forgotten since that dreadful period, but the greatness remains: the contributions made by Ali and others who dared to say that the war in Vietnam was wrong. Now, U.S. policies still preclude world peace and deprive people at

home of decent employment and basic human services. Let us learn the lessons, get organized and continue Ali's struggle for peace, justice and freedom.

Today, here's what people face: in 1984, 62 cents out of every tax dollar will be spent by the military. The current \$1.8 trillion military buildup will cost more than \$20,000 per household over the next 5 years. Once again, this "Pentagon tax" falls most heavily on the poor, people of color, women and children.

From 1981-1984 Congress cut more than \$50 billion from domestic assistance programs for workers and the unemployed, people of color, children, elderly and those with special needs. During the same period, military spending increased by more than \$100 billion.

In spite of broad public sup-

port for reduced nuclear weapons spending, our government has consistently funded new nuclear systems like the infamous MX missile. They have spent more to produce and deploy new nuclear weapons than during any past presidential administration.

Increasingly, our military forces are being put to use. Reagan has won Congressional permission to deploy U.S. troops in Lebanon, El Salvador, Honduras and Grenada.

And America's domestic and national security objectives must be redefined. Our government's present priorities only lead to unmet human needs at home and an over militarized and aggressive U.S. foreign policy, inevitably resulting in conflicts and instability.

--Rick Tingling-Clemmons  
VVAW, Washington &  
CARD National Office



# VETS' NOTES

## Cutting Thru Red Tape Making Sense of Regs

Dr Donald Curtis, the VA's head of medicine, resigned at the end of April for "personal reasons." A replacement will be named by the head of the VA and must be approved by the Veterans Affairs Committees of the House and Senate.

The VA hospital system is a sprawling entity with a budget larger than many country's. Half of the nation's doctors received some kind of training at VA facilities. Under Curtis some of the criticism of the VA hospital system has lessened.

While there has yet been no clear connection between the resignation and various attacks presently directed at the VA budget and future, Curtis

has been among those beginning to talk about the situation of the VA years down the line when more and more veterans grow older. With the increasing cost of private healthcare, VA experts see a flood of older patients at the VA as World War II vets grow older and less healthy.

The response from the Reagan Administration and its various functionaries has been to propose an end to treatment of non-service connected disabilities and, through the Grace Commission, a proposal to end the VA hospital system altogether. The approaches are typical of an Administration which seems to hope that the poor--whether old or young, Black or white--

will disappear and let the rich and powerful continue on their way, no longer to be bothered by those who don't mean anything anyhow!

### VA NEGLECT SUICIDES

According to a VA Circular, uncovered by a reporter for the Army Times, a total of 58 patients at VA hospitals jumped from unsecured windows and roofs in the 18 months between January 1982 and July, 1983. This happened despite several VA directives, in 1976 and in 1981, to medical facilities telling them to close off windows and roofs to prevent patients from falling or jumping.

OSHA, in the fall of 1983, strongly criticized the VA overall for its program of fire prevention and safety efforts. Top management seemed to care little, according to OSHA. Perhaps like many bureaucracies, the VA is waiting for a major tragedy before it begins to clean up its act.

In at least one VA hospital, effort was made to secure windows only after an employee committed suicide by jumping through an open bathroom window.

While the VA does not give a figure for the number of suicide attempts which were successful, a spokesman did say the figure is around 80%.

## LETTERS TO VVAW

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

Dear VVAW,

I am writing to you to try and get some information on Agent Orange. I used to be an active member when the fight against Nixon and the Vietnam War was on. I demonstrated at the May Day and other marches in Washington, and at Florida against Nixon and the Republican National Convention.

I tried calling a toll-free number for dioxin exposure, was kept waiting and then told that the New York State Commission on this matter was no longer at this number and they could not give me any further information, then quickly and rudely hung up on me. That attitude brought back some memories. I hope that kind of attitude is changing for us Vietnam vets because I have been exposed to Agent Orange while serving with the 101st Airborne in Vietnam from May 1968 to May 1969.

I need to know more about Agent Orange because things have been happening to me since the 1970's. I had one cyst removed from the left side of my face. I have another on my right side and one on my left buttock. Also bad circulation. But now I am fighting for my life with cancer. Lymphoma

on the left side of my head and ear area and right side of body between the bladder and colon. Now it has moved to my spine. Needless to say I cannot get around well at all.

I made an appointment at the Syracuse, NY VA Hospital for April 5, 1984. I don't expect a government organization to admit to the problems caused by Agent Orange to vets.

But I will continue to fight for my life and also the compensation due to the vets who were used and now neglected. Any help in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Anthony Fiore  
Utica, NY

Dear VVAW:

Would you please send me a copy of the Fall 1983 edition of THE VETERAN, if you have one. Also send information on how to subscribe and how much it costs, etc.

I want to congratulate you on your fine publication. I spent the last 2 weeks helping at Casa Romero, taking care of refugees in San Benito, and found the VETERAN in a stack of literature on Central America. I'm interested in the Fall, '83 edition because of the article by Jack Elder (who runs Casa Romero) and also because it has some information about an Agent Orange Foundation here in Oklahoma and my husband has several of the symptoms of Agent Orange poisoning....

Garber, OK



Dear Judge Weinstein;

Loyalty forces me to reject the settlement in favor of my day in court.

The fact that there are wrongs which are blood wrongs, is a wisdom which is ancient but not antique. But the \$180 million won't hurt them; their insurance will pick it up and the chemical companies will go on with business as usual. The way to hurt them is to expose them in open court, to show they acted in bad faith all along.

And please remember a few years ago less than twenty railroad workers were exposed and received over \$50 million and continuing healthcare.

John Zutz  
Milwaukee, WI

Dear Judge Weinstein,

I as an American citizen urge you not to approve the Agent Orange settlement. While neither myself nor anyone in my family is affected financially by the outcome, I have invested time and money in the suit in support of the veterans. The question here is much more far-reaching than that. A country where justice can't be allowed to interfere with corporate profits? I urge you to send this case to trial. Don't let it be swept under the rug. If some 12,000 Vietnam veterans representing some 2.5 million vets can't have their day in court please tell me what rights I as an individual have.

Ralph Wesce  
West Alice, WI

KNOW THE ENEMY  
and know yourself;  
in 100 battles  
you will never  
be imperiled.

sun tzu

**RECON**

Quarterly newsletter on anti-military affairs: draft counseling, U.S. troops abroad, chemical warfare, military-industrial complex, direct action against the Pentagon, and books for organizers. Subscribe for \$10 to RECON, P.O. Box 14602, Phila., PA 19134.



# RECOLLECTIONS

VVAW invites contributions to "Recollections"--stories or poems describing the military or Vietnam.

LT Cody's platoon left the battalion perimeter about dusk. Even though they had a pretty good distance to go to reach their ambush site, the terrain was mostly open and they could move quickly. They would reach their ambush in a few minutes--just before dark.

As they wound through the openings in the concertina wire surrounding the camp they looked like any other squad or platoon going on ambush. Each man wore a soft hat, a minimum of web gear, and carried a relatively small amount of ammunition for his weapon along with a few grenades. And he had a claymore and a poncho liner--the claymore to use if the ambush was triggered and the poncho-liner to let each man get a warm, mosquito-free night's sleep before returning in the morning.

Cody thought how secure the perimeter looked. It was surrounded by several strands of concertina wire; each bunker had 2 layers of sandbags for overhead cover. In addition, the battalion had hooked up with a Cav unit during the day and they were spending the night. Their vehicles--several APC's and tanks--had been placed around the perimeter between the bunkers. Cody thought about the Cav's awesome firepower; each APC had a .50 caliber and 2 M-60 machineguns mounted on it. All the NVA in the world couldn't get into this perimeter. He also thought about how much trouble the 1st Infantry Division went to in order to build a perimeter: move out to the boonies; dig bunkers; fly out sandbags for overhead cover; put up concertina wire; then stay 2 or 3 days, tear the whole thing down, go someplace else and do the whole thing over again.

Cody thought all of this was a little silly for this operation. They were in a "safe" area only about 4 or 5 clicks from the battalion basecamp at Lai Khe. Lai Khe itself was a "safe" area. His own men called the area R&R. The company had been in area for about a month, just before Tet. And while they had found tons and tons of rice, contact with the VC had been limited to sporadic contact with local yokels sauntering down trails.

In addition to being "safe," the area was "nice" to work. There were only small patches

## THE AMBUSH

of jungle. Most of the area was wide open like a prairie. Nearby was an old rubber plantation, long ago abandoned. The one unusual thing was that the open areas had a checkerboard pattern of trenches, 3 or 4 feet deep every hundred yards or so. Apparently it was some type of drainage system used long ago.

Cody and his men moved quickly over the open areas for several hundred yards. They

inside a canteen. He still couldn't see anything but he knew there was a gook walking down the trail. He could hear the water splashing.

Panic struck him. What should he do? Suppose he blew his claymore and the rest of his platoon was asleep and didn't respond. Suppose he blew his claymore and a million NVA overran his platoon while they slept. Cody thought: what should he



Dave Stroup (author) and Cody

then entered a small patch of jungle and continued for about 50 or 75 yards when they came upon a trail. This was their ambush site.

The platoon quickly placed their claymores long the trail about a yard or so inside the jungle. Then they positioned themselves several yards behind the claymores. Soon it was dark.

Cody lay with his claymore detonator in his hand staring into the darkness. It was totally black. He couldn't see anything. He couldn't see the trail he was supposed to ambush. He couldn't see anything except blackness. Occasionally his mind wandered. He thought about his wife, California, surfing. God, how he used to surf! That was before the Army got him. But then his mind would return to the ambush and the darkness. He lay like this for a couple of hours.

Suddenly he thought he heard something. He listened again. He did hear something--he thought. What the hell was it? He listened. Then he knew what it was: water splashing

do?

Then he said to himself, "Fuck it! I'm springing the ambush." He squeezed the detonator and his claymore exploded. And then, almost as if by magic, 25 more claymores went off just a fraction of a second later. And then the entire platoon was firing into the "kill zone" on the trail. Then everything stopped as suddenly as it had begun, again as if by magic. Cody couldn't believe how well his platoon was reacting.

Everything was quiet. Cody listened. He couldn't hear any sounds coming from the "kill zone." Again he listened. No, not a sound. He signalled to the man next to him to come with him; they were going to check the trail. Their hearts pounding, they moved forward.

When they reached the trail there were dead NVA laying all around--6 or 7 of them. There were no survivors, and apparently no one had gotten away. Quickly they searched the bodies. All the NVA carried pistols. One had a large piece of paper folded like a map. Cody took it and put it in his pocket. They headed back

to the platoon.

Soon the platoon was on their feet headed out of the jungle in single file, almost running. They came to the open area, moving quickly. Cody was on the radio telling the company commander what had happened and that the platoon was moving to an alternative site. After about 100 yards Cody stopped his men. They knelt down. He quickly covered himself with his poncho liner and struck a match. He looked at the paper he had taken from the dead NVA. It was a map but he couldn't tell what or where it was. He got the men moving again, another 200 yards.

When they came to an area with a few shrubs and bushes Cody told them to take cover as best they could. The area was pretty much open but it would have to do. He radioed the position to his company commander.

Cody and his men lay perfectly still. They were still nervous but glad to be at an alternative site, away from a place where the enemy knew they were. The night was clear and the moon was shining. For a couple of hours they stayed like this.

Then Cody noticed movement to his front. Four or 5 gooks had just come out of the jungle pulling a cart of some kind. They came to about 50 yards away from the platoon and stopped. Then Cody saw that it wasn't a cart but a cannon--a 105 or something. And they were setting it up to fire. Again Cody was on the radio, this time whispering.

Then he saw more movement. Another group of gooks had emerged from the jungle, headed right for his platoon's position. There were about 10 of them and they were carrying two mortar tubes. "God," he thought, "They're going to walk right over us." He started having visions of being taken prisoner or he and his men being killed. He wasn't sure how much ammo they had left.

Suddenly the mortarmen stopped 25 yards away and set up their tubes. Cody was whispering all of this to the CO over the radio but then he had to stop even whispering: an NVA with an aiming stake walked to within 5 yards of Cody and stood there holding the stake. Now Cody knew they'd either be kill-

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