



# Exposing the True Costs of War and Militarism Since 1985

# VETERANS FOR PEACE

Organized locally. Recognized internationally.

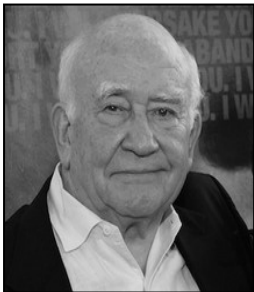
VFP ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS:

SPRING 2016

## IS PEACE POSSIBLE?

*Editor's Note: As a way to introduce you to some of the members of VFP's Advisory Board, we asked them to respond to one or more of the following questions: Why have you chosen to advise VFP? Do you honestly think that our overriding mission "to abolish war as an instrument of national policy" is achievable? Will we ever have a world of peace?*

*Below are excerpts from the responses of Ed Asner, Andrew Bacevich, Phyllis Bennis, Paul Chappell, Charlie Clements, Marjorie Cohn, Ann Jones, Kathy Kelly, Dave Krieger, Ray McGovern, David Swanson and Ann Wright. Full text from each statement can be found at our website: [veteransforpeace.org/index.php?CID=867](http://veteransforpeace.org/index.php?CID=867)*

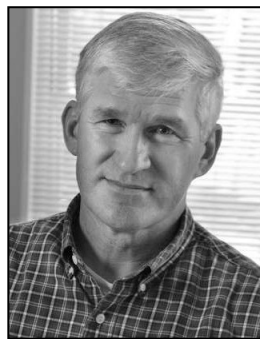


**Ed Asner**

I doubt my ability to advise VFP. My only hope is to learn from them and have my inner warlike being eventually subdued and controlled by the collected wisdom of VFP.

God knows how long it will take, but pounding the stupidity of war

into all our brains can only occur with long practice and ensuring that all parties are equally influenced. It takes at least two to tango and to make peace. Seeing how many war mongers exist in our mass makes me realize how inordinately long making a lasting peace can take. If we can achieve climate control (a big if), then peace is also achievable. War as a part of national policy can only be dismissed as greed and stupidity. Bottom line -- war is the chief means to divert, to distract. Expose that nefarious purpose and the rest should be easy...



**Andrew Bacevich**

As a Catholic who sees Original Sin — that is, the fallen nature of humankind -- everywhere in evi-

dence, I don't see world peace as plausible. There are some problems that only God can sort out. Until He chooses to do so, the best we can do is to reduce our collective propensity for war and violence. That's a worthy cause. Since that's a cause to which Veterans for Peace is committed, I see VFP as a movement that is worthy of support. I know that my own support doesn't amount to much, but I am glad to play whatever part I can.



**Phyllis Bennis**

Veterans for Peace – like our partner organizations IVAW, MFSSO and others – represents one of the

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the first *VFP Newsletter* for 2016. Doug Rawlings continues to put together an insightful and informative newsletter. This month is no exception: the newsletter is packed with news, information and comments from many members of our Advisory Board about why VFP is vital to the struggle for world peace. The struggle must include taking on those who attack Muslims and engage in all forms of bigotry, racism and discrimination. VFP continues to do its part with our first major project of 2016: **Veterans Challenge Islamophobia**. VFP Executive Director Michael McPhearson has more details about the program in this newsletter. Also check out our new Veterans Challenge Islamophobia website at [veteranschallengelislamophobia.org](http://veteranschallengelislamophobia.org)

**Reaching Out Internationally** In September, VFP's UN representative, Ellen Barfield, Board member Tarak Kauff, and I attended the United Nations High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace at the United Nations in New York. This forum allows UN member states, NGOs, media, international organizations and civil society to exchange ideas on ways to build and promote the Culture of Peace. VFP is considering upgrading to "Consultative" status at the UN which would provide us with opportunities to speak out on important issues. Thanks to Ellen Barfield for her continued representation of VFP at the UN.

**VFP UK & Ireland** In November, VFP members, Gene Marx, Tarak Kauff, Mike Hearington, Adrienne Knapp and I met in London for the VFP UK Annual Conference and to join our British VFP members for the Day of Remembrance march to the Cenotaph, a memorial unveiled in 1920 to honor military veterans of Britain's war. VFP UK, however, lays white poppies at the memorial to represent all who died in war, military and civilians. At the conference, we participated in a panel discussion on the wisdom of VFP acting as the fiscal sponsor for RENEW should it come to fruition. Although the UK chapter is opposed to the idea, the discussion was civil and



**Dr. Mikamo, her father, a survivor, Barry & Rhonda Ladendorf at Hiroshima Peace Park Memorial**

informative for all. After, we all recessed as comrades to a nearby pub. It was a visit that strengthened the bonds between us.

On to Dublin, Ireland where we were treated to a grand Irish time by VFP Ireland's founder, Edward Horgan, and members of the chapter. As we did in London, we laid a wreath of white poppies at the Remembrance War Memorial. We held a joint press conference covering a number of issues, and presented members of the Irish chapter with the chapter's VFP certificate. Good news coverage in *Irish Times* and other media.

**Hiroshima, Japan** Later in November, my wife and I continued the month of VFP international activities. In Hiroshima, Japan we met up with Akiko Mikamo, Ph.D., who spoke at the convention in San Diego. We were deeply moved by a tour of the Peace Museum by its deputy director Nori-uuki Masuda, and were honored to have met and shared tea with Yasuyoshi Komizo, Chairperson of the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation and former Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs. Dr. Mikamo, her father, a survivor of the bombing of Hiroshima, and I laid a wreath from VFP at the

## Barry Ladendorf

Peace Park Memorial. At the memorial and later at Hiroshima City Hall we held a press conference which garnered television and print media coverage. Of particular importance to the Japanese people and the Japanese reporters were my thoughts about our visit to the Peace Park and VFP's opposition to the use of nuclear weapons

**Seoul, South Korea** A few days later we touched down in Seoul, South Korea, where we were warmly greeted by enthusiastic, VFP banner-waving members of the South Korean Chapter of VFP. Many issues of importance were discussed that night where we were honored with a traditional Korean meal. I also participated in a ceremony re-signing the Memorandum of Understanding between VFP and the South Korean Chapter. During the ceremony we rededicated ourselves to the Mission Statement of VFP and agreed to work together to achieve a real end to the Korean War. Everywhere we went we were met by South Koreans full of hope that North and South Korea would one day be united and that the people of the world would help make that hope a reality.

**Conclusion** My travels as VFP President this fall left no doubt that no matter the country, culture, religion, or experience, military veterans who are members of VFP share a common bond that transcends any differences we may have for the greater cause of world peace. Veterans from around the world standing shoulder to shoulder in opposition to war, violence, and nuclear weapons can be a powerful force for world peace.

And so the Mission continues, thanks to you.



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# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We live in historic and trying times. There is social and political upheaval all around us. The United States continues to be the greatest purveyor of violence in the world both at home and abroad. National leaders are stoking domestic embers of fear and hate. They are using fear as the main rationale for much of U.S. foreign policy and to motivate voters.

According to Gallup, the top U.S. problem identified by people for 2015 was dissatisfaction with the government at 16%, edging out the economy at 13%. Fortunately for our work to resist war, the public only mentioned terrorism 5% of the time. But there were spikes of fear. Mentions of terrorism jumped to 8% following the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attacks in Paris. In mid-December, after the Paris attacks and San Bernardino shooting, terrorism ranked as the number one concern at 16%. This is important to note because rhetoric calling for more war and labeling Islam as the enemy rose during these periods. And the use of fear and scapegoating is a tried and true tactic to distract voters from the failings of government.

Not surprisingly, attacks against Muslims in the U.S. increased during those spikes in fear. In a December 13<sup>th</sup> NBC news article, the reporter wrote, "Muslims in America appear to have a bull's-eye on their backs." The article went on to say that there had been thirty-eight reported anti-Muslim attacks in the U.S. since the deadly November 13<sup>th</sup> terrorist attack in Paris, eighteen of them in the wake of the San Bernardino shootings.

The article cited California State University San Bernardino college professor Brian Levin. He is also a former New York City police officer. Levin told NBC news the hate crimes towards Muslims is good for ISIL.

"Among ISIS' most prominent goals is painting the west as being incompatible with the Muslim faith and hostile toward Muslims who live there and reject the caliphate," said Levin.

Why should this be of concern to Veterans For Peace? It is clear that after terrorist attacks, a segment of the U.S. population chooses to scapegoat their Muslim neighbors by harassing and attacking them. This kind of behavior plays directly into the hands of ISIL who wants Muslims to believe America is hostile to Islam. This alienation could leave more people vulnerable to ISIL's philosophies and lead to more attacks. A vicious cycle could ensue.

Instead of calming fears, many national leaders are pouring gas on an open flame, causing more fear. Environments of increased fear are ready made for war-mongers who call Islam our national enemy. They call for carpet bombing cities and banning Muslims from entering the U.S. VFP must be proactive in our resistance to war by attempting to diffuse the fear and act as a voice of reason when war-hawks use bigotry, fear and hatred as a means to forward their agendas.

To this end, Veterans For Peace, working closely with Iraq Veterans Against the War, is organizing a Veterans Challenge Islamophobia campaign. All veterans who agree that bigotry and religious intolerance must be challenged are welcome. Veterans do not have to join VFP or agree with VFP on other issues to participate.

VFP is organizing this campaign because Islamophobia here in the U.S. is a path for further demonization of Muslims in foreign lands as a prelude to call for U.S. troops to be sent to Iraq and Syria. The campaign is a proactive effort

## Michael McPhearson



to blunt the rise of hate and calls for more war.

We call on all our members to support the campaign and spread the word. Please visit [www.veteranschallengeislamophobia.org](http://www.veteranschallengeislamophobia.org) for more information. We ask veterans to sign on to the campaign statement. This campaign provides us an opportunity to talk to people and groups about the best way to keep our nation safe. We should reach out to our Muslim brothers and sisters to let them know we stand with them.

The campaign is one of many efforts we have underway to confront war and militarism. The Golden Rule will soon set sail again to educate about the insanity of nuclear weapons. Our Vietnam Full Disclosure campaign continues to challenge the U.S. government's narrative of the war in Vietnam. The Korea Peace Campaign is gearing up to take on the war-hawks who continue to promote more war rather than diplomacy with North Korea. We are preparing for our action at Creech Air Force Base as part of our campaign against weaponized drones and we are organizing to make sure veterans' voices are heard in Congress for our annual VFP Lobby Days in May. Our members are active, our organization is vibrant and our voice is needed more than ever. Thank you for your work. Keep up the resistance to war, and wage peace!



# VETERANS CHALLENGE ISLAMOPHOBIA

Michael McPhearson

Veterans Challenge Islamophobia is a broad based call to all veterans to defend the values of religious freedom, equality and individual rights. These are the very same values embedded in our Constitution that many of us believed we were defending when serving in the military. And time is urgent.

The campaign is initiated and coordinated by Veterans For Peace; however, all veterans who agree that bigotry and religious intolerance must be challenged are welcome. Veterans do not have to join VFP or agree with VFP on other issues to participate.

Veterans For Peace is organizing this campaign because Islamophobia here in the U.S. is a path for further demonization of Muslims in foreign lands as a prelude to call for U.S. troops to be sent to Iraq and Syria. This is a proactive effort to blunt the rise of hate and petitions for more war.

To sign the veterans' statement, get updates and support the campaign visit [veteranschallengeislamophobia.org](http://veteranschallengeislamophobia.org)



## VFP Peace Keepers Taking Action

### Chapter 91, San Diego, CA

Recently we have begun to fear for the safety of our Muslim Friends. With the political rhetoric at a peak and shootings by radicals, Muslims are increasingly at risk from fear driven agitators. However, we at VFP have one good tool available to help quell such problems, and that is through Peace Keeper action.

In San Diego we at chapter 91 have fielded trained peace keepers at parades, demonstrations and for the local LBGT assemblies where tempers can run high, proudly wearing our VFP garb. This same approach can be used for our Muslim friends and it's easy to organize.

Start by creating a list of VFP volunteers with their phone numbers. Contact the local Mosque and/or friends that are of Muslim faith. Let them know that VFP volunteers are ready to stand in solidarity with them if they are threatened.

Keep in mind that we are not there to confront or displace the agitators, but to deescalate the situation. We have influence because we are Veterans, having served to protect all Americans rights.

Everyone on the call list should attend peace keeper training to be effective. Show our VFP colors, deescalate, and keep our fellow Muslim Americans safe.

## Veterans Standing with Muslims

### VFP Chapter 9, Boston, MA

Saturday, February 27

11 am —1 pm

Islamic Society of Boston  
Cultural Center  
(Largest Mosque in New England)  
100 Malcolm X Blvd. Roxbury, MA

“We as veterans, who have served this country, will gather together to declare that Muslims are not the enemy. Violence directed towards Muslims in this country is unacceptable and un-American. We call for this verbal and physical harassment to end immediately.”



(Continued from page 1)

key components of the broad-based, diverse anti-war movement we are all trying so desperately hard to build. The credibility of those who fight for peace after years of fighting wars is unchallengeable. The passion of those who recognize the futility of war after being forced or persuaded to fight endless wars is unmatched. So it make sense that those of us who come to the movement as fighters in the war against the wars, who never participated in the military side, should work as hard as we can with our veteran sisters and brothers to learn from each other and to work together to integrate veterans' skills and experience and credibility into the very center of that broader mobilization.

The abolition of war as a component of national policy is not something we will see in our lifetimes. But the goal is a real one, a necessary one, and in the longer term, a realistic one. Because wars will either escalate until a third truly global war destroys humanity as we know and live it and leaves the earth to produce a new human race some time in the future, or war will become so discredited that no political system can survive when based on militarism.

That's a long ways away. And as we build our short and medium and long-term strategies to get there, we have to keep our sights focused on at least two of the critical lessons of Dr. Martin Luther King: first that the interlocking evils we must fight are "the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism." And second, that peace is not just the absence of war, but the presence of justice. We can't separate out our work to oppose war from our work for justice – whether for racial justice and the Movement for Black Lives, or in defense of immigrant or LGBT rights, or in building US and international solidarity with those fighting for economic and climate justice.

We have a huge amount of work to do – I'm honored to be working with Veterans for Peace as we move forward together.



**Paul Chappell**

I have chosen to advise Veterans for Peace because in the twenty-first century, human survival does not depend on our ability to wage war, but our capacity to wage peace.... During an era when humanity has the technological ability to destroy itself, only waging peace has the strategic and pragmatic power to confront the root causes of our national and global problems....

The members of Veterans For Peace realize that humanity's greatest enemy today is not a particular group of people in a far-off country. Our greatest enemy is war itself. The members of Veterans For Peace are now serving as soldiers of peace who combat humanity's greatest enemy and uproot the underlying myths that sustain the war system. If humanity does not abolish war and free ourselves from the war mentality, we will destroy our fragile biosphere and drive ourselves to extinction. One reason I have hope is because I am confident that humanity can do what we have always done, which is protect our survival. Now more than ever, human survival depends on protecting the health of our delicate environment, recognizing our shared humanity, spreading the hidden truth of war, and applying the power of waging peace.



**Charlie Clements**

I have chosen to advise VFP because I believe veterans' voices are critical if we are to change the

war-dominant conversation and ethos that threatens the well-being of our nation and our planet.

Abolishing war as an instrument of national policy is like all human rights -- it is aspirational. We strive to bring about a gentler more just world not because it is necessarily achievable in our lifetime, but in part because not to do so would be to give in to forces and values alien to our truest selves.... And along the way, we find that we ourselves are changed, that we change others, and occasionally build a current that as Robert F Kennedy said "can sweep down the mightiest wall of oppression and resistance." It happened with women's suffrage though it took almost seventy years; it happened with the civil rights movement though it took almost twenty years; and it happened with the campaign to build landmines though it took seven years. These are still 'works in progress,' but they inspire us, sustain us, and help us to believe that breakthroughs in human consciousness do happen...but not without the selfless and determined work of activists who understand that our lives are our most daring statement. When I went to El Salvador in the midst of their civil war, I did not do so because I believed I would eventually play a role in the negotiations that ended the war, but because my presence as an American physician in the midst of a free-fire zone would send a different signal to the Salvadorans targeted by America-trained pilots, American-supplied aircraft, and American bombs. That war lasted twelve years and Americans who protested U.S. foreign policy in Central America, Americans who contributed funds for medical relief, Americans who joined organizations like CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador), and Americans who continued to pressure their members of Congress to stop supporting the death squads and military should all know and be proud that their efforts played a significant role in ending that brutal U.S.-driven war. It is very hard to maintain one's passion and commitment to peace

unless you believe like Martin Luther King, Jr. "that the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." It may not always do so in our lifetimes, but to believe otherwise is to live without hope.

Yes, we will someday have a world of peace and humankind will look back on this era as a time of barbarity between and within nations. I suspect it will not happen in our lifetimes, but we will pass the torch of peace to others who will carry it across the finish line. Once the world economy was dominated by slavery and the slave-trade and now we look back at that era and wonder how could people of goodwill, people who were practicing Christians, Jews, or Muslims, people who believed themselves to be benevolent merchants, farmers, factory owners, who loved their children, treat other human beings so brutally. It ended because a few idealists dared to speak out, dared to be ridiculed perhaps beaten, jailed, or even killed and slowly their acts of daring "sent forth tiny ripples of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mighty walls" of slavery. They didn't ask, will it happen in my lifetime? Rather, they asked 'Can I stand by and allow this to happen without protest in my lifetime?' and the answer was a resounding, 'No!'



**Marjorie Cohn**

I was delighted to be invited to join the VFP National Advisory Board. VFP is an extremely important organization that engages in critical work in opposition to US wars of aggression. Its members are intimately acquainted with the horrible effects of war, both on the veterans themselves, and on the people in countries with which the United States is at war. Many vets

suffer from PTSD. And the killing of civilians and devastation of their countries is both illegal and immoral. VFP's mission "to abolish war as an instrument of national policy" is consistent with the command of the United Nations Charter, which celebrates its 70<sup>th</sup> birthday this year.

The VFP mission is a tall order. It is in the interests of the corporate establishment, especially the weapons industry, to perpetuate war. Moreover, members of Congress are heavily beholden to these interests. Nevertheless, organizations like VFP and peoples' organizations and movements throughout the world are challenging the culture of war. The use of military force as a first, rather than a last, resort violates the UN Charter.... As the United States continues to perpetuate war, including Barack Obama's drone strikes in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen, VFP and people worldwide will continue to protest and hopefully, will prevail someday



**Ann Jones**

VFP asks me if world peace is achievable? My answer is, yes, of course it is. Nobody wants war, except profiteers and arrogant rulers – almost exclusively men, often short – who imagine themselves heroic. We're taught that war is inevitable, eternally embedded in our human nature. But the fact is that war is a human invention, and a fairly recent one at that in the long history of humans on earth – simply a kind of organized antisocial violence, like football, but grander in scale and without referees.

And like American football, war is not practiced in most of the rest

of the world. It's too barbaric, and close to obsolete. None of the world's major nations has declared war upon another since World War II. Some highly developed nations haven't made war for centuries. Today's wars – setting aside for the moment the fallout of the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq – are mostly smoldering civil wars in small under-developed nations, pissing contests between little Big Men seeking power and control of resources. The damage these conflicts inflict on civilians is hideous and not to be minimized, but these are the work of individual power-hungry, money-grubbing, often sociopathic men.

Think about all the places on earth where there is no war. Though billions live in poverty, the vast majority of earth's inhabitants pass their lives in peace. They live without inflicting violence upon anyone or suffering the violence of others. They worry about the weather, and the water, and the health of their children.

If that sounds overly optimistic it is only because we live within the walls of the most aggressive nation in the world – the only one that practices preemptive war and coerces others to join its dubious coalitions against fabricated enemies. The only one that has made armaments and warfare the engine of its economy. Once a world leader, the United States now poses a danger to the whole planet because it regards itself as "exceptional," free to disregard international rules and conventions written by more peaceful nations, free to launch aggressive strikes at the whim of any macho "commander in chief" who needs a foreign war to divert citizens' attention from the fact that he (always "he") is doing nothing to better their lives or reverse the accelerating decline of the country.

American foreign policy written in bombs on the lands of less fortunate people – our "endless war" – makes the work of VFP extremely difficult and all the more vital. But VFP is on the right side of history. If I said No, the mission of VFP "to abolish war as an instrument of national policy" is not achievable, would you stop the work you're doing? I don't think so. Not on your life.



**Kathy Kelly**

Here in Kabul, I'm living with the Afghan Peace Volunteers, (APVs), young people who have many good reasons to dismiss the VFP mission as a preposterous proposal. Their life stories include earlier experiences of terror and panic as they fled attacks on their villages; of hunger and cold while living in refugee camps; of sorrow after watching enemies kill or torture their loved ones. They have learned, in their young lives, that warlords in search of control, wealth, revenge and security for their own families and tribes will inflict terrible suffering to achieve their goals. My young friends see the U.S. as yet another warlord.

The APVs could understandably have grown up desiring revenge and feeling deeply cynical about the potential for any group of people to abolish war. Yet the opposite has happened. They've embraced the VFP vision. "Blood does not wash away blood," they tell us. They refuse to engage in any military activity and urge us to tell parents in the U.S. that it's too dangerous for their sons and daughters to come to Afghanistan with the U.S. military. 'Keep them home!' they say. Every year, since 2010, I've watched these youngsters increase the numbers of people longing to abolish war. Their outreach beckons to people all around the world....

Over many years, I've watched Veterans for Peace engage in similar processes -- sharing resources, preferring service to dominance, forming communities dedicated to abolishing war, linking the communities together, and becoming prized organizers and teachers within the U.S. and internationally.

Can the VFP mission to abolish war as an instrument of national policy be achieved? I can't say. But I do believe this mission ranks as the most important effort being undertaken in the world today. Weapon manufacturers in the U.S., 'drenched in blood,' as Pope Francis described them, maintain a vice like grip on the military- industrial- media complex in the U.S., lessening chances to educate people about climate change and environmental catastrophes that constitute the greatest terrors we face.

Perhaps the acute need to direct resources into solving problems caused by over-consumption, greed, and social inequities will one day help people understand why the Rev. Rd. Martin Luther King described military systems as 'demonic suction cups.' Veterans for Peace play a crucial role in fostering this education and awareness. They stand alongside Dr. King in offering an authentic voice, one that can reach well beyond 'the choir,' guiding people toward a realistic assessment of the threats we face and the resources we have for problem solving. I feel encouraged when learning from the wisdom of VFP and APV members. Seeds are planted, and future generations may reap a surprising harvest.

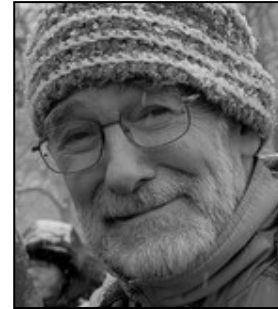


**David Krieger**

1. I've chosen to advise VFP because I admire the goals it seeks to achieve -- peace and a world free of nuclear weapons -- and the integrity of its members.

2. It won't be easy to abolish war as an instrument of national policy, but I believe it's possible. I also believe it's necessary, if humanity is going to survive the nuclear age.

3. A world of peace seems a long way off, but we can only achieve it if we commit ourselves to doing so and never give up. Anything worth achieving in this world requires perseverance, and peace is certainly worth achieving. It is more important than ever in the nuclear age. If we want peace, we must work for justice. Peace will not be possible in a world that is unjust.



**Ray McGovern**

**1). Why have you chosen to advise VFP?** Because it is one of very few organizations that has unique credibility out of our lived experience, together with the gravitas (in all senses of that word) to EDUCATE U.S. citizens about war. Wilfred Owen, and many of our comrades-in-arms, did not survive. We did. It is up to us to dispose of the notion of the "glory" of war, as Owen did so well almost a hundred years ago....

**2). Do you honestly think that our overriding mission "to abolish war as an instrument of national policy" is achievable?** Wrong question. Results are not unimportant, but they are secondary. The good is seen in the goodness, in the faithfulness of our action.

**3). Will we ever have a world of peace?** Not if we are too ardent for "success" now....or soon, or very soon. Our comrades are dead; we are here for the long haul.....for as long as it takes.





**David Swanson**

Will we ever have a world of peace? Like any possible future, that depends on what we do. One of the two biggest hurdles to achieving peace is the infantile belief that doing so isn't possible.

War is not in our genes. War has only been around for the most recent fraction of the existence of our species. We did not evolve with it. During this most recent 10,000 years, war has been sporadic. Some societies have not known war. Some have known it and then abandoned it. Quite a few nations have chosen to have no military. War is not "natural." A great deal of conditioning is needed to prepare most people to take part in war, and a great deal of mental suffering is common among those who have taken part. In contrast, not a single person is known to have suffered deep moral regret or post-traumatic stress disorder from war deprivation.

War is not a permanent part of our culture. Any feature of a society that necessitates war can be changed and is not itself inevitable. The military-industrial complex is not an eternal and invincible force. Environmental destructiveness and economic structures based on greed are not immutable. War is not created by crises beyond our control. War in human history up to this point has not correlated with population density or resource scarcity. The idea that climate change and resulting catastrophes will inevitably generate wars could be a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is not a prediction based on facts.

Human societies have been known to abolish institutions that

were widely considered permanent. These have included human sacrifice, blood feuds, dueling, slavery, the death penalty, and many others. In some societies some of these practices have been largely eradicated, but remain illicitly in the shadows and on the margins. Those exceptions don't tend to convince most people that complete eradication is impossible, only that it hasn't yet been achieved in that society.

Ending all war is an idea that has found great acceptance in various times and places. It was more popular in the United States, for example, in the 1920s and 1930s. In recent decades, the notion has been propagated that war is permanent. That notion is new, radical, and without basis in fact.

The second biggest hurdle is that some of the people doing the most to increase war believe they are trying to reduce it. You've heard of Plato's cave? This is Petraeus's cave. People in the cave are told they can stamp out noises with special hammers. When they hear a noise, they bang on the wall. That makes echoes, which they then rush to stamp out with more banging, and a vicious cycle escalates into more and more noise. The United States military and its funders and supporters have to be made to understand that their war-making doesn't reduce terrorism. It is terrorism. And its terrorism produces echoes.



**Ann Wright**

After I resigned from the U.S. Diplomatic Corps in March 2003 in opposition to President Bush's war on Iraq, I was walking on a Sunday afternoon in 2004 with a friend on the beach in Santa Barbara, Cali-

fornia. In the distance we spotted what looked like crosses in lines on the beach. We went over to them and asked the fellow at a tent beside the crosses what this was all about. Lane Anderson of the Santa Barbara chapter of Veterans for Peace said, "This is to commemorate the folly of war-the innocent lives lost of Iraqis, Americans. We are veterans and we oppose war."

I responded, "I was in the US Army/Army Reserves for 29 years and retired as a Colonel. I have resigned from my position as a US diplomat because of this war," and Lane responded, "Then you are one of us."

And I've gratefully been a part of Veterans for Peace ever since. As a member of the VFP advisory board, I am honored to be a part of an organization in which its members and associate members oppose the wars of choice our politicians have created and the militarization of our society that is epidemic through the domestic "wars" that address social justice issues through force rather than eliminating the root causes of them.

I am so proud that members of Veterans for Peace are involved in their local communities and are challenging the militarization of our schools, police and prisons. I am thrilled that Veterans for Peace is engaging internationally to demonstrate to the world that there are many veterans that oppose the war policies, the assassination policies, the war on whistleblowers and the illegal surveillance of everyone on this planet. I am proud that Veterans for Peace supports conscientious objectors and whistleblowers and provides assistance to those who run afoul of the system in so many ways.

Veterans for Peace is a unique organization with a fine history of challenging our government's propensity to use violence over non-violence. Keep up the great work Veterans for Peace!!





# CHAPTER REPORTS

Important reports from Boston, Chicago and Albuquerque chapters are in the Member Highlights box at [veteransforpeace.org](http://veteransforpeace.org)

## CHAPTER 1 - PORTLAND, ME

**Richard Clement**

In November, Regis Tremblay had another showing of his documentary *The Ghosts of Jeju* at a local theater. Regis has traveled widely with the film that shows the destruction of a local way of life to build yet another U.S. base, this time in S. Korea. Later in the month the documentary was shown in London, England.

Also in November Doug Rawlings ventured into semi-hostile waters as the featured speaker at a lunch and learn at Spectrum Generations. At least one older vet walked out on him!

Another "Christening" of an Aegis destroyer was met by protests at the local shipyard in Bath, Maine.



Ch. 1 witness on Armistice Day

Militarization of the Seas was successful in raising awareness all along its route. Another walk is being planned for next October with the theme of Stop the War\$ on Mother Earth.

Elders for Future Generations, Mothers Against Gun Violence and chapter 001 members converged on the office of Senator King to have a discussion on gun violence. Hopefully our combined presence will have an impact on the Senator's stance on this issue.

We said a tearful goodbye to long time member Tim Blanchette who succumbed to his battle with cancer. Tim Blanchette, presente!

## CHAPTER 14 - GAINESVILLE, FL

**Doug Bernal**

The end of 2015 was met with both joyful and somber moments for Chapter 14. VFP 14 held its 29th annual Winter Solstice. Winners of the Peace Poetry Contest read their poems, and the over 300 attendees were treated to over one dozen musical performers and groups.

Chapter 14 was also proud to honor Michael Cliff by displaying the flag he had intended to deliver to the Chapter's president, Scott Camil. Michael was conducting his March Across America when he was tragically taken from this world when he was struck by a car last October. Veterans for Peace Chapter 14 sends their condolences to Michael's surviving family, friends and fellow activists.

## CHAPTER 19 - RIVERSIDE, CA

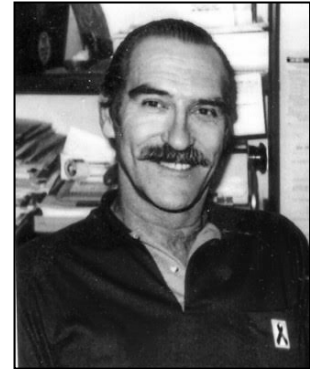
**Tom Swann**

On November 12 VFP helped dedicate our fifth Peace Pole. This one is at Desert Hot Springs High School. The Peace Pole says "May Peace Prevail On Earth" in six languages plus Braille. Mr. Kai Lyles of the high school organized the ceremony. Desert Hot Springs Mayor Adam Sanchez attended the ceremony. World War II and Korean War veteran Hal Kufeldt sponsored this Peace Pole. Hal could not attend the ceremony and Richard Finn read his inspiring remarks at the ceremony.

The Palm Springs Unified School District initially rejected the proposal to dedicate a Peace Pole. VFP members were persistent and we met with the school district superintendent. After this meeting the Peace Pole was approved.

We also marched in the Palm Springs Veteran's Day parade with a banner that said, "Support The Troops. Bring Them

Home." For the most part the crowd response was tremendous. This year we remembered late VFP Member of the Year Darel Propst. Darel was always the official photographer for VFP events. VFP has been in the parade every year except 2010 since 2005.



Darel Propst

## CHAPTER 23 - ROCHESTER, NY

**Lew Montemaggi**

Chapter 23 is continuing to monitor the Rochester City School District's plans to establish JROTC programs and a stand-alone "military" HS. A City School Board member attended our July meeting to alert us of the intentions of several RCS Board members. We are investigating the funding sources and faculty for these programs. Re-establishing a counter recruitment program is another Chapter goal, along with a "peace essay" scholarship for H.S. students.

We again marched in the annual Labor Day Parade organized by area unions and their supporters. In October some of our members participated in the local portion of a two week anti-drone walk from Hancock AFB in Syracuse to the Niagara Falls Naval Air Station. Eight of us attended a local town's Vets' Day ceremony in an effort to demilitarize the event. Chapter 23 also co-sponsored and attended the annual Human Rights Day dinner program on December 10th. In 2016, we will continue our efforts to coalesce with other area organizations working for peace at home and abroad.

## CHAPTER 25 - MADISON, WI

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### Fran Wiedenhoeft

Greetings from Clarence Kailin Chapter 25. We have many highlights from the past few months and many to look forward to.

In September we cosponsored the Veggies for Vets event, run by the veteran owned Peacefully Organic Produce farm. Funds raised provided veteran families with organic produce shares. The same weekend we participated in the Willy Street Fair and the Fighting Bob Fest, both excellent opportunities for outreach and fundraising. In December we had a successful book event with Doug Bradley and Craig Werner, the authors of *We Gotta Get Out of This Place, Soundtrack of the Vietnam War*.

We now offer seven scholarships in local public high schools based on essays related to peace. In addition, we are helping Eva Hagenhofer with the establishment of a Peace Art Scholarship contest for local high school youth in honor of her husband David McLimans, a veteran and regional artist.

We are in the planning stages for our yearly Memorial Day event to help the public celebrate peace. Our annual Memorial Mile of grave markers in remembrance of American military killed in Iraq and Afghanistan and in honor of the true cost of war will take place at the same time.

Chapter member and WWII veteran Lincoln Grahlf's has been tireless in the pursuit of Atomic Veteran's resolutions related to a medal for Atomic Veterans, and for July 16th as a recognition day.

## CHAPTER 27 - MINNEAPOLIS, MN

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### Mary McNellis

On February 13th Barry Riesch will present a program at Mayday Books in Minneapolis about his recent experience on Jeju island. It's a long flight from the midwest to Korea and Barry, ever the trooper, made it despite getting medical attention for a blood clot in his leg!

Chapter 27 is on the move! We are moving our office to a space with five other "progressive" groups at a considerable savings to the chapter. We also received the go-

ahead from the estate of deceased VFP'er Harold Nielsen (who generously bequeathed us \$20,000) to purchase a bus/RV to convert to a mobile "Peace Activities Center"! The hope is to bring our message to the people and grow our brand, including in out-state Minnesota! We hope to be interactive and informative, and of course there'll be a bell in there someplace. We might even drive into Wisconsin and Iowa (if they'll have us).

## CHAPTER 32 - MIAMI, FL

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### Patrick McCann

"U.S. out of the Middle East, The people of the world want peace, peace, peace, AND housing, AND jobs AND education!"

Chapter 032 (South Florida) marched for the 11th consecutive year in the Martin Luther King, Jr. parade in Liberty City, Miami. Members and supporters marched down NW 54th Ave., chanting, distributing hundreds of flyers, and even providing entertainment for the children in the form of monster soap bubbles. The flyers included Martin's quote about the US being the biggest purveyor of violence in the world (a statement even more true today!).

This was our best year yet, both in terms of size and diversity. Almost half of the two dozen plus members of the contingent were Black and Latin veterans and supporters, including 4 veterans from the Liberty City area, Miami's largest African-American community. It was great to see these veterans acknowledging, and being acknowledged by acquaintances in the crowd. We were buoyed in spirit by the perennially wonderful response we received from people lining the march, and look towards next year, when we'll try to step up our vocal presence, moving from bullhorn to sound system. Long live the spirit and vision of Martin Luther King!

## CHAPTER 34 - NEW YORK, NY

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### Bob Keilbach

Chapter 34 President Bill Gilson recently passed; we dedicated our January meeting to his contributions to the struggle for peace and

social justice. Bill is remembered for his knowledge, energy and compassion, dealing with so many issues, and development of coalitions with allies in the peace and social justice community. Bill was a Life Member of VFP; he coordinated Peace contingents in the Armistice Day Parade, Campaign to Free Chelsea Manning, Labor Day, Gay Pride, Justice for Danny Chen, Memorial Day and St. Pat's for All parades, counter-recruitment and against drones. Our Peace contingent in NYC Armistice Day Parade had over 70 participants including many young vets and supporters, and a very warm reception from the crowd.

Monthly meetings have guest speakers regarding peace and social justice issues, recently including: VA Health Care; Project Renew; and the development of Nal-palm B. Holiday Party with Peace Action Manhattan had 85 attendees, a great VAVA program, and entertainment. VAVA (Vietnamese Association of Victims of Agent Orange) is responsible for overseeing Agent Orange/Dioxin clean-up, and supporting those who care for its victims.

We participate in a monthly Peace Vigil, and the No-Separate Justice Vigil at Metropolitan Correctional Center.



Ch. 34 celebrates with VAVA

## CHAPTER 35 - SPOKANE, WA

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### Hollis Higgins

Our book, *Vet Lit; How We Remember War*, just listed on Amazon. We video recorded our "Live At Aunties" reading of *Vet Lit* Dec. 11th. Our Journey productions, Cold Shot Label, released our May 24th Memorial Day CD of readings from *Vet Lit*, professionally arranged

Music by Bobby Kirl. Mike Ladich was honored at Forzas on December 5th, highlighting his friendship and his 93rd birthday. Thirteen attended.

In November, Tom, Ray, Jerry, & Jay, marched in the Auburn, WA Veterans Parade on the 7th. Our Full Disclosure letter was hand-delivered to The U.S. Institute of Peace, Washington D.C., by V.P. Jerry. We co-sponsored the "Global Climate Rally" at Riverfront Park on the 29th. "Lying Is The Most Powerful Weapon In War," a photo-essay by Mike Hastie, was at the Community Building Lobby thru November.

For the SOA protest/demonstration at Fort Benning, GA, and Stewart Detention Center, George Taylor represented Chapter 35, November 21-22nd. Our half-page *Spokesman-Review* ad ran on Veterans Day supporting the VFP national campaign, "FULL DISCLOSURE; Toward an Honest Commemoration of the American War in Viet Nam," poster graphics donated by Leslie Dwyer. See you all in Berkeley!

## **CHAPTER 41 - CAPE COD, MA**

### **Duke Ellis**

In October members joined the local Suicide Prevention Coalition in a regional walk organized by affiliates of the America Foundation for Suicide Prevention. A member of Chapter 041 will be attending Coalition meetings to lend our support to prevention efforts. We now know that veterans have among the highest rates of suicide, especially vets over 50 years of age.

In late January we participated in a Mental Health Symposium organized by the local Veterans Outreach Center. This workshop for local mental health and social service providers as well as some school, police and corrections leaders, focused on the special needs of veterans suffering from the 'hidden wounds' of war- PTSD, TBI and the various PTS-related problems as well as the secondary-PTS experienced by family..

This is our chapter's third cooperative effort with the Outreach Center and we believe that these actions will serve veterans who desperately need help with PTS issues (as Jeffrey Lucey did) by ed-

ucating civilian service providers about how to connect with and treat the vets who come to them for help. At the same time we believe that we can educate the public about the true costs of war and the need for non-violent war prevention efforts of all kinds.

## **CHAPTER 43 - MID-MISSOURI**

### **John Betz**

The Veterans For Peace Charlie Atkins Chapter 43 in Columbia, MO now has a website (vfp-charlieatkins.weebly.com). In addition to taking part in the annual Salute to Veterans parade on Memorial Day each year, the chapter holds its own ceremony in the afternoon as an alternative to the traditional ceremony at the county courthouse. Speakers at the afternoon ceremony include chapter members as well as others from the peace community and local universities. Our Memorial Day events are advertised and open to the public.

The Chapter works with and supports events sponsored by the University of Missouri's Peace Study Program and the local Peaceworks. Chapter president John Betz hosts an afternoon talkshow, *The Skeptical Eye*, on community radio station KOPN 89.5 and invites guests throughout the year who discuss issues of importance to Veterans For Peace. Programs in the past year have included interviews about nuclear disarmament with local peace activist Bill Wickersham, journalist Robert Mann (author of *A Grand Delusion: America's Descent Into Vietnam*) and VFP's Doug Rawlings, who talked with John about the history and mission of our organization as well as his thoughts and feelings about his military service during the Vietnam era. Interviews are available on the Charlie Atkins Chapter's website.

## **CHAPTER 54 - SANTA BARBARA, CA**

### **Ron Dexter**

Chapter 54 is into its second year of our graphic Costs Of Wars display in Santa Barbara, birth-place of Arlington West. The response from the American public has been heartening in their

awareness of the terrific waste of tax dollars on unnecessary military weapon systems. In many cases these systems are only deemed necessary by members of Congress who benefit with jobs in their districts and campaign contribution from defense contractors.

We also display a long row of tombstones for the Iraq and Afghan civilian deaths and a field of images representing war refugees. We have had little negative static from Americans about these issues.

We had a disappointing campaign to recruit former Chapter members who helped set-up Arlington West. Some of us feel that people have just given up. Maybe we need another war to re-activate people.

We handed out a quarter millions pieces of information at Arlington West over 10 years and there were over 20 clones of Arlington West. We are hoping for a revival of interest in war and peace. These costs are affecting everyday life in America because of the bloated military budgets and cuts in healthcare, education, infrastructure repair and the arts.

## **CHAPTER 62 - NEW HAMPSHIRE**

### **Will Thomas**

NH VFP was one of the NH MLK Coalition members that helped sponsor the 34th annual Martin Luther King Community Celebration in Manchester, NH on January 18, 2016. That event lasted from 2 to 5 pm. Following that event, several members of NH VFP decided to hold a vigil outside a hotel in Manchester that was a corporate-sponsored "Keeping the Dream Alive" dinner.

## **CHAPTER 69 - SAN FRANCISCO, CA**

### **Denny Riley**

Berkeley, California is the place to be in August when the 2016 VFP National Convention is held on the Clark Kerr campus of UC Berkeley. Plenty of housing is available at this park-like school in the heart of a very exciting city. The convention will run from Thursday August 11 to Monday August 15, a different arrangement than most years so please take note. Chapter 69 and the members of all the Northern

California chapters look forward to seeing you.

## CHAPTER 71 - SONOMA CNTY, CA

**Bill Simon**

We participated in a 10-K Veteran Suicide Awareness walk in Santa Rosa. We also took our veteran suicide awareness display (a huge banner stating 22 suicides every day) and 22 white X's (some with red blood stains and flowers) back on the road. Chapter 71 had an Armistice Day celebration/dinner compliments of a local restaurant. We were well received and it appears that this will be an annual event.



Ch. 71 display at Vet Suicide Awareness Walk.

## CHAPTER 72 - PORTLAND, OR

**Becky Luening**

VFP72 participated in the End 25 Years of Killing: US Out of Iraq rally and march on January 15 as part of the Portland Peaceful Response Coalition.

Congratulations to Dan Shea on his election to the VFP Board. Dan just returned from the highly successful VFP delegation to Jeju Island and Okinawa, and Portlanders look forward to his in-person report-back in March.

VFP72 is collaborating with IVAW and local venue Artichoke Music on a March 20 release party for the tribute album, *Soldier's Heart, Warrior's Soul: Remembering Jacob David George*, a benefit for VFP and IVAW.

Mal Chaddock represents VFP72 in an ad hoc coalition preparing for a visit from the Golden Rule during Portland's Rose Festival/Fleet Week this coming June. Marion Ward

leads the effort to get more chapter veterans to the VFP convention, and is appreciative of the lower-cost lodging (inclusive of all meals!) available this year at UC Berkeley. Marion related her adventure attending the climate talks in Paris at the January chapter meeting.

Mike Hastie recently exhibited his antiwar photo essays in both Portland and Spokane, and was interviewed on cable access TV. He has been speaking about the reality of war to both university and high school students.

## CHAPTER 75 - PHOENIX, AZ

**Aaron Davis**

It was a busy November for the WSCVFP in Phoenix. November 11, we were again in the Phoenix Veterans Day parade. We had a great idea. If we have Santa Claus (Dennis Stout), they couldn't throw us out. Our theme was once again 22 veteran suicides a day.

November 18, we again visited Juan Enriquez's English classes at Marcos de Niza High School. November 21, we held our annual dinner and awards at the local Golden Corral. Our guest speaker was former Israeli Defense Forces soldier for peace (1967 war), Jon Sebba.

## CHAPTER 87 - SACRAMENTO, CA

**John Reiger**

On Martin Luther King Day, Chapter Chair Bob Krzewinski and Vice Chair Bill Shea presented "Martin Luther King as Peace Activist" as part of the day's celebrations at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti. Response from students and community was positive.



Poor People's March 2016

## CHAPTER 89 - NASHVILLE, TN

**Harvey Bennett**

Our contingent at the 2015 Nashville Veterans Day Parade stood out from the military, ROTC and similar uniformed ranks as we proudly carried our VFP banner and flag sporting our VFP merch/attire and friendly smiles. As usual, we were greeted warmly with applause and waves from the crowd.

VFP associate member Bill Northrup gave a presentation on his recent trip to Vietnam sponsored by the Vietnam VFP chapter. Joey King and Harvey Bennett represented our chapter at the School of Americas Watch Vigil in Columbus, GA, joining fellow VFPers from far and wide. We also met with Nashville area members of Workers' Dignity.

This January we began Veterans For Peace Radio Hour on WRFN-LP, the local Pacifica affiliate. So far we have done programs on (1) The Alternatives To Violence Project, (2) a tribute to Martin Luther King featuring the groundbreaking Riverside Church anti-war speech of April 1967 and (3) Veteran Suicide Crisis. Please live-stream us at [radiofree-nashville.org](http://radiofree-nashville.org) on Thursdays at 1:00 pm CST. We would love to hear from other chapters that have radio programs to share ideas and past programs. Contact Jim at [jrwohlgemuth@juno.com](mailto:jrwohlgemuth@juno.com) or Harvey at [benethe2@gmail.com](mailto:benethe2@gmail.com)

## CHAPTER 90 - BROOME CNTY, NY

**Larry Evans**

Jack Gilroy, is a founding member of the Stu Naismith Chapter 90. A long time peace activist and former high school Participation in Government teacher, Jack's "speaking truth to power" has led him to one southern jail and three federal prisons for crossing the line at Ft Benning US Army School of the Americans. He has also served the longest sentence of anyone convicted of nonviolent trespass at the drone assassination base at Hancock Air Base, and is a prolific author.

Gilroy wrote *The Predator: A Play about War and Peace*, which has been used around the country

to explore issues related to drone warfare and the general militarization of the United States. The two-act play centers around a college student who begins asking questions about American use of military force in the world and how she should respond. Other characters are the student's mother, who is a drone pilot for the Air Force, a United States Senator, and an antiwar activist. The play has been performed in numerous universities, churches and small theaters. The play's script can be accessed at <http://teachpeacenow.com/> and it can be used by any Chapter that wishes to present *The Predator* in their own community.

## CHAPTER 91 - SAN DIEGO, CA

**Gil Field**

On Veterans Day, the San Diego Veterans For Peace participated in the San Diego Veterans Day Parade, and set up our Hometown Arlington West Memorial all day in front of the USS Midway Museum downtown. On December 12th, we celebrated the life of veteran and activist Michael Clift at a very moving memorial service at the Veterans Museum in San Diego. January 17th found our chapter walking in the Martin Luther King Day Parade along the waterfront here, as we marveled at the high number of police and military groups in the parade for such a respected peacemaker.

Our "Compassion Campaign" to provide sleeping bag sets to the poorest of our homeless brothers/sisters downtown had a very successful Christmas fund-raising season, and we offer our model to other chapters interested in providing aid to their homeless communities.

Chapter members look forward to participating in the anti-drone demonstrations outside Creech AFB in March. We are beginning a multi-year publicity and education program to change the hearts and minds of San Diegans about the annual Miramar Air Show here, and we look forward to being at Earth Day in Balboa Park in April.

On July 29 Chapter 92 supported Ground Zero's (Poulsbo, WA) welcome/protest of the Seafair Navy Ships to Elliot Bay at pier 62/63 at 1pm on downtown Seattle's waterfront.

## CHAPTER 92 - SEATTLE, WA

**Keith Orchard**

On Saturday Nov. 7 Chapter 92 marched in the Auburn, WA annual Veterans Day Parade along with members from other VFP chapters in the state. We also had an information booth with VFP and anti-war literature. Afterward we had our 3rd Annual Armistice Day Luncheon at St. Matthew Episcopal Church. On Nov. 11 we had an Armistice Day Bell Ringing Commemoration at St. James Cathedral in Seattle at 11:00 A.M. On Nov. 12 Chapter President Dan Gilman and three other chapter members visited Frank Kellogg Middle School to present a banner from Chapter 27 honoring Frank Kellogg for signing the Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawing war.

On December 29 chapter President Dan Gilman sent a letter on behalf of the chapter to Seattle area Mosques expressing fellowship and support in the face of anti-Islamic sentiment in American society.

On Jan. 18 the chapter honored Martin Luther King by marching and leafleting at Seattle's Annual Martin Luther King Day parade at Garfield High School.



Ch. 92 in Veterans Day parade.

## CHAPTER 93 - SO. CENTRAL MI

**Lynne D. Gilbert**

On October 8, the Chapter celebrated the 75th anniversary of the birth of John Lennon with its eighth annual benefit concert in Ann Arbor.

Proceeds of over \$1,700 are earmarked for scholarships for students enrolled in a peace-related

program of study at any college in Michigan, and for winners of the annual essay contest for area high school students on the subject of Martin Luther King, Jr., as a peace activist.

The Chapter has donated \$1,000 in support of the Peace Studies Program at Wayne State University in Detroit. Members will visit Wayne State and Michigan State, which also has a peace studies program, to promote scholarship applications.

Teaming up with the Detroit chapter, our chapter will take part in the Arlington, Michigan, display on Veterans Day in Detroit.

## CHAPTER 99 - ASHEVILLE, NC

**Chris Berg**

The chapter sent out travelers this past quarter: to Guantanamo, Cuba (the Cuban town, not the US Base), where associate member Cindy Heil joined a Code Pink delegation; and to the Fort Benning gate and the Stewart private prison for those faced with deportation proceedings, where four of our members rallied with the School of the Americas Watch demonstrators. Ms. Heil, a DoD civilian retiree, also tabled with Ken Ashe at the Mental Health outreach fair at the Oteen, NC Veterans Administration hospital complex. Bruce Roth and Don McKeating tabled at Asheville High School with information about alternatives to military enlistment. The decade-old LP-FM radio show *Veterans Voices* has been suspended due to differences with new station management.

## CHAPTER 101 - SAN JOSE, CA

**Doug Nelson**

On November 11, 2015 we rang our bell for the Armistice Day observance in front of San Jose City Hall. We spoke and entertained with musicians and a dancer.

In the wake of the Donald Trump phenomenon, we joined people of the Muslim faith at the Muslim Community Association in nearby Cupertino. Our presence was graciously acknowledged and appreciated.

Phil and Doug attended a planning meeting for the local counter-recruiting effort, sponsored by the Society of Friends.

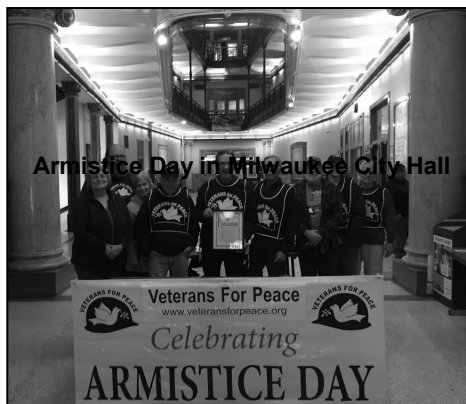
On January 11, we co-sponsored a showing of *Road To Guantanamo*, a film documenting the story of three British citizens detained, after being captured by the Northern Alliance, at Guantanamo for nearly three years, without being charged and without legal representation.

On January 13, our chapter co-sponsored a showing of the Drones Quilt Project at a local library. The exhibit will run February and March at local libraries, where we will put in appearances.

## CHAPTER 102 - MILWAUKEE, WI

### Bill Christofferson

November 11 was celebrated as Armistice Day in Milwaukee this year, as proclaimed by Mayor Tom Barrett at the invitation of VFP Chapter 102. At 11 a.m., the giant, 22,500-pound bell atop City Hall's tower rang 11 times – with VFP members pulling the rope -- to commemorate that World War I, the “war to end all wars” ended on the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918. “On the original Armistice Day, the world came together in realization that war is so horrible we must end it now,” Mark Foreman, president of Chapter 102, said. Veterans for Peace members staffed an information table in the City Hall rotunda with information about how much the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have cost Milwaukee taxpayers.



Chapter 102 has been working in recent months as part of a coalition with Milwaukee 350 to raise

awareness of climate change and environmental threats, including the danger of oil tanker “bomb” trains passing through the city, and has participated in marches and protest actions with the group. Members are also working on a public service video about veteran suicides.

## CHAPTER 104 - EVANSVILLE, IN

### Caroline Nellis

The inaugural Gary E. May Peace Scholarship had 20 applicants by its Oct. 15th deadline. A public award reception honoring Bailey Schnur, winner of that \$1,000 unrestricted scholarship, was held Nov. 22nd. Bailey's reading of her essay, “Lessons of History,” was moving. Altogether, over \$2,500 was raised for the scholarship program (including a gift by Wayne Plut, the man who applied the tourniquet to Gary's wounds in Vietnam). The extra funds will be applied toward making this scholarship an annual event.

For our annual Nov. 11th, Armistice Day event, members brought peace-related readings to share at the Four Freedoms Monument at the Evansville riverfront. John Michael O'Leary sang.

John Lennon Night on Dec. 8th resulted in the best gate receipts ever and was well attended, with an estimated audience of 100 – 150. Larry Miller provided a good line-up of musicians.

A holiday gathering and election of officers for 2016 was held at Gary May's home in December. The proposed slate of Lynn Kinrade for president, Ken Back for treasurer, and John Michael O'Leary for secretary passed unanimously. Chapter members were shown the nice plaque we won for the Veterans Award at the 129th Labor Day Parade.

## CHAPTER 105 - BALTIMORE, MD

### Jim Baldrige

Once again the Chapter had a permitted contingent in Baltimore's annual Martin Luther King Day Parade on 18 January. It was windy and bitter-cold, so attendance by spectators and contingents both were down. But as always, VFP

was well represented and enthusiastically welcomed by thousands who line both sides of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. In addition to veteran members marching alongside my flag-bedecked truck, Women In Black had their own contingent, as did Healthcare Is A Human Right.

The Chapter's annual Catonsville Nine commemoration will take place on or about 17 May, the 48th anniversary of the draft record burning during the height of the American war in Vietnam.

We have shared VFP materials and conversations from our table at the Waverly Farmer's Market in Baltimore on many Saturdays over the past two years and look forward to resuming this spring. We compose position papers and use national statements and brochures in our displays. Due to changes in our membership, we are seeking a new meeting place, and will report to our full membership and allies when a decision is made.

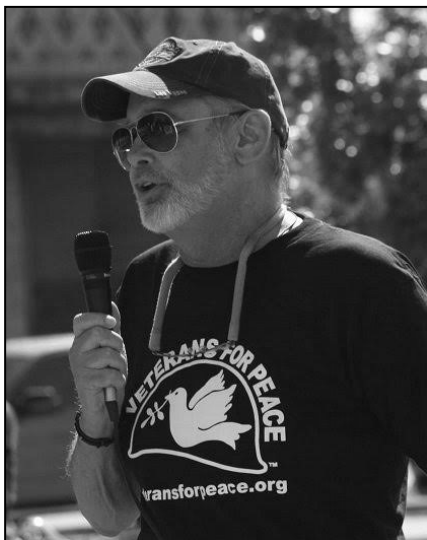
## CHAPTER 106 - DALLAS, TX

### Leslie Harris

With heavy hearts, Chapter 106 members continue our work, in memory of our chapter president, Tom Madden, who passed away on Christmas Day after being hit head-on by a drunk driver. Tom was a Vietnam combat veteran who recently survived a double lung transplant. In search of something meaningful to do with his new life, Tom was overjoyed to find VFP, which he praised as the only veterans organization that worked not only to heal the wounds of war, but to stop the wars that caused them.

On New Year's Eve, we met for activities that Tom had helped plan. Our chapter meeting turned into a celebration of Tom's life, followed by a demonstration in front of the Bush Library with a big banner, reading: MISSION ACCOMPLISHED: WORLD IN CHAOS! We also hosted, “Songs & Stories of Social Significance,” a program addressing the relationship of the effects of the TPP and war, and the need to form a local coalition to fight the TPP. The program was followed by a concert by singer/songwriter, David Rovics, and a display of “TPP = BETRAYAL” in lights. The evening was dedicated to

our beloved friend, colleague and all-around stand-up guy. RIP, Tom.



Tom Madden

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## CHAPTER 113 - HAWAII

### Ann Wright

Aloha from Chapter 113 in Hawaii. Chapter members participated in the January 11 vigil at the University of Hawaii to Close Guantanamo and the annual January 18 Martin Luther King parade in Honolulu.

VFP member Ann Wright was on the national VFP delegation to Jeju Island, South Korea and Okinawa on the issue of closing US military bases. She also spoke at the 4th International Conference on the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases held in Guantanamo, Cuba-250 participants from 15 countries. Ann was a participant on the Women Cross the DMZ delegation to both North and South Korea. She was a boat leader on the 2015 Gaza Freedom Flotilla. She was in El Salvador and Chile with School of the Americas Watch to discuss with the governments of both countries their stopping sending military personnel to the School of the Americas/WHINSEC.

VFP member Pete Doktor is a leader in Hawaii on U.S. military base closings in Okinawa. VFP associate member Kyle Kajihiro spent 3 months on Okinawa on a research fellowship on militarization in Asia and the Pacific. VFP members have provided testimony to the Honolulu City Council on a resolution for the US to stop the construction of a US Marine Base in the pristine waters off Henoko, Okinawa.

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## CHAPTER 114 - SHEBOYGAN, WI

### Tom Contrestan

In September, our 92 year old WWII vet, Marge Behlam, was the only female vet, and only VFP on the Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. She proudly wore her VFP garrison cap all around town. We marked Armistice Day for the fourth year. For the past year we've been developing of our "Peace Park" on the banks of Lake Michigan. We sponsored luncheons in December and January which were attended by the mayor, people from the Parks Department, architects, clergy and interested citizens. We agreed to work on fund raising, legal issues and an athletic vision statement.

As the New Year began, we created a circle of eleven snow people holding hands around the Peace Pole (check out the video at "Jan 9th Snowman Island" on YouTube). This got a lot of positive PR in print, social media and people stopping to take pictures. As I write this, we are putting together our 12th annual Peace and Justice Concert at a local Coffee shop. This year's concert will be raising funds for the Peace Park Project.

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## CHAPTER 127 - PEACEHOUSE, MN

### Wayne Wittman

VFP Chapter 127 has continued to meet monthly to pursue VFP convention 2009 resolution calling for a new truth commission to explore questions that continue to exist concerning the tragedy of the 9-11-2001 in New York with the collapse of the Trade Centers. The initial Commission has been described as a "Commission designed to fail" and a new Commission is being promoted by the Architects and Engineers for 9-11 truth. Our program has consisted of our support of AE 9-11 Truth program.

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## CHAPTER 133 - W. MONTANA

### John Snively

The Western Montana Veterans for Peace Chapter 133 observed Armistice Day as a day dedicated to perpetuating peace

through good will and mutual understanding between nations at the eleventh hour by the Montana State Vietnam War Memorial in Missoula's Rose Peace Park. A diverse array of Missoula's community attended, including VFP spouses, students, several Women in Black and other citizens. Chapter members partner with the Women in Black in a peaceful demonstration every Friday against the ongoing war and violence that our country participates in worldwide.

Our observance included the reading of the VFP Statement of Purpose, sharing memories of fallen and struggling veteran friends and relatives and reading of poetry, including the iconic World War I poem *Dulce Et Decorum Est*, by Wilfred Owen and *A Prayer From War*, by Mikel Stevenson. This and other poems were contributed by Barry L. Reese from *Lingering Memories* and the Spokane Veterans for Peace publication *How We Remember War*.

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## CHAPTER 136 - CENTRAL FLORIDA

### Phil Restino

We want to first remember our brother Sean Holmes who died of cancer on 29 December 2015. Sean was a U.S. Marine and a Gulf War Veteran. He was 44.

The Col. Bob Bowman Memorial Chapter began 2016 by launching our Questioning the U.S. War on Terror Project, which involves hosting public forums featuring outside speakers who have done considerable research concerning our government's justification for the 9/11 Wars; that being its official theory explaining the conspiracy and naming the conspirators behind the attacks of 9/11/01 without the benefit of a criminal investigation.

January saw us bring the "Solving 9/11 Ends the War" presentation by investigative journalist and author Christopher Bollyn to public audiences in St. Augustine, Daytona Beach, and Cocoa Beach. Go to [www.bollyn.com](http://www.bollyn.com) for more on Bollyn's 2016 American Tour. For video of the Central Florida presentations, see the We Are Change Orlando channel on YouTube.

Members of VFP should be reminded of the resolution calling for a

new investigation into the attacks of 9/11/01 passed by VFP's membership at the 2009 national convention. The official 9/11 Lie continues to this day to serve as the sole, one and only reason given to justify the ongoing 9/11 Wars.



Sean Holmes & Phil Restino

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## CHAPTER 149—MEMPHIS, TN

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George Grider

Last fall saw Chapter 149 busy with both healing and celebrating. In October, we linked up with the local chapter of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) to host a forum promoting PTSD awareness. Held at the First Congregational Church of Memphis, the event was titled "Victory Over PTSD," a bit of hyperbole perhaps, given the light turnout. This despite heavy leafleting and distribution of public service announcements. Leaving us to wonder if this was a momentary glitch, or a growing discomfort regarding this painful topic.

Armistice Day, November 11, brought a turnaround. Six Memphis churches answered our call to "Chime Out for Peace." Bells chimed at the designated hour, 11:00 a.m. The event was co-sponsored by the First Congregational Church. VFP chapter coordinator George Grider described how his grandfather was killed flying an airplane in the First World War, and wondered how his loss affected his own family, and how the loss of 230 other Memphians may even today damage the community at large. Senior Pastor Cheryl Cornish offered a prayer for the 8,000 American MIA's in Korea. Choir member Mitch Ellenburg sang the traditional song "In Flanders Fields." Above the din of our own bell, one could imagine chimings heard all over town.

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## CHAPTER 152 - LEHIGH VALL., PA

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Victor Madeson

This year the Left Forum is scheduled for May 20–22, at John Jay College of City University of New York ([leftforum.org](http://leftforum.org)). The 2016 conference theme is: *Rage, Rebellion, Revolution: Organizing our Power*. We hope that VFP chapters in the NYC area would attend, maybe in connection with a panel, or for mid-year planning and exchange of materials.

A national Thomas Paine Actor project was mentioned vaguely patterned on Howard Zinn's *Marx in Soho* stage play. It would aim towards having one actor per Congressional District prepared to help portray Thomas Paine, so that several could work together to do it for local schools. This could provide an agenda for the workshop or be included in a broader panel discussion. The actors and our group can particularly focus on "What Would Thomas Paine Do?" using the springboard of YouTube video >[www.youtube.com/watch?v=itvtwoVCTxM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itvtwoVCTxM)< "Why Thomas Paine's Common Sense Is Important" (Drs. Hedges, West, Wolf) in 2014 and our TPF panel at Left Forum 2012, "Thomas Paine: Contemporary Debates, Controversies and Relevance (Dr. Chiu, Dr. Regan, DeDora).

NOVEMBER: The Swords to

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## CHAPTER 157 - NC TRIANGLE

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John Heuer

Plowshares Memorial Bell Tower made its 2nd annual appearance at the NC Capital in observance of Veterans Day/Armistice Day. Roger Ehrlich expanded his exhibit to include displays of "Letters to the Wall". ([vietnamfulldisclosure.com](http://vietnamfulldisclosure.com).)

John Heuer joined Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein in a symposium at Guilford College, Greensboro. "Is Another World Possible: Beyond War, Sickness and Environmental Catastrophe" was sponsored by Guilford, AFSC, and Hands Up/Black Lives Matter organizer, Tony Ndege.

DECEMBER: Troubadour Tom Neilson brought his music to Carrboro for a VFP fundraiser. Chapter

member Machai St. Rain opened with some great songs of her own. Sam Winstead, 90-year-old WWII vet who led his 4th consecutive bicycle Ride for Peace in May, got a new hip. Four weeks later, he drove 40 miles to attend our meeting and plan for the 2016 ride. Stay tuned!

JANUARY: Machai and John travelled to the Ft. Bragg courthouse for the pretrial hearing for Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, and expressed their solidarity with Bowe and his family.

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## CHAPTER 160 - VIETNAM

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Suel Jones

Chapter 160 welcomes its new board member, Bill Creighton, a long time contributor to aiding Vietnam. Chapter 160 and Chapter 69, where Bill has been chapter President, have had a close connection through the Agent Orange issue. And we want to thank Don Blackburn for his work in Nha Trang with housing for Agent Orange victims. Don says he will remain an active chapter member.

The next (and possibly last) VFP Vietnam Peace Tour has 12 fully paid participants for this coming March. This is the only fund-raiser for Chapter 160 for the year. Anyone wanting to make additional donations can send them to VFP Chapter 69, 401 Van Ness Rm 101, San Francisco, CA 94102. All donations go to aid victims of Agent Orange, unexploded ordnance, those affected by the legacies of war.

Originally we decided five tours would be the most we would do. Now because of the success and the great interest shown, we will make a decision on the tours on a year-to-year basis. Everyone interested in seeing the tours continue, please contact us as future participants. We need your help in spreading the word and recruiting people for every tour.

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## CHAPTERS 161 - IOWA CITY, IA

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John Jadryev

Our gratitude goes to the Zinn Grant Committee and the VFP Executive Committee for funding to reimburse expenses of the McGovern/Rowley speaking tour, 9/24/9/30. Our chapter contributed



to the fund raising efforts of University of Iowa student, Thien-trang Pham, who visited rehabilitation centres for Agent Orange victims and their families in Dinh Quan, Vietnam this last summer. She returned to report her experiences at our October chapter meeting. During October, along with other Iowa Chapters in Cedar Rapids and Des Moines, we hosted talks by Larry Wilkerson (on the influence of Pentagon contractors on foreign policy) and Alison Wier (on the media misrepresentation of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict) in October. On November 10 we conducted a school visitation at North Liberty Junior High School at five Global studies classes, where we enjoyed lively Q & A sessions with about 150 students, ages 12 to 14 years. Our November 11 Armistice Day observance was conducted at 11 am at the entrance of the Old Capital building in Iowa City. We held a luncheon and open mike discussion afterwards. We took donations for Jeffrey Sterling's defense fund at this event.

## CHAPTER 168 - LOUISVILLE, KY

### Carol Rawert-Trainer

We welcome new members Joshua DeSpain (Iraq War vet), Janet Wilborn and Ariane Spitaels, longtime supporters and now Associate Members. Tom Parsons, a VFP member from Lexington joined our chapter. Others have voiced interest.

In November we proudly marched with our new banner in the Louisville Veterans Day Parade. Members Peter Berres & Tom Parsons represented us at the SOA Watch in Ft. Benning.

At a quarterly potluck/business meeting in January we voted to donate \$100 to FORWARD Radio, a local progressive radio station sponsored by Fellowship of Reconciliation. Member John Wilborn will head up/coordinate a monthly VFP radio program. And we took up a collection of \$110 for a local veteran in need who called us for help. We voted to continue monthly peace/anti-war vigils coordinated by Harold Trainer. Joshua, our youngest member said it was an honor to give a ride to our eldest WWII veteran Tom Moffett. It was an honor to have them both join us.

## CHAPTER 172 - PRESCOTT, AZ

### Dennis Duvall

On February 11 we will host activist Roy Bourgeois at a dinner before he appears at a Louisville speaking event "Following Conscience for Justice & Equality."

Members continue to submit and publish letters to the *Courier Journal* & other media.

Our Chapter began the New Year by bringing public attention to the bombing of the Doctors Without Borders hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, by U.S. warplanes. Unfurling the VFP banner "Bombing a Hospital is a War Crime!", our info-action exposes the U.S. military as also providing GPS-guided smart bombs and targeting information to the Saudi-led bombing of the Shi'ite Houthis in Yemen that has left 6,000 people dead. U.S. drones are providing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance to the Saudis who have bombed three Doctors Without Borders hospitals in Yemen.

Prescott VFP is also co-sponsoring a Tom Neilson concert with Move To Amend and the Sierra Club on February 29, and hosting the celebrated nuclear abolitionist, Sister Megan Rice of Transform Now Plowshares, for a speaking engagement on March 16. Sister Megan, affectionately nicknamed "The Terrorist Nun," was charged with sabotage for a nonviolent divine obedience action at the Y-12 H-bomb factory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, on July 28, 2012. Released from prison last year, Sister Megan is on a speaking tour for a world free of nuclear weapons.

## CHAPTER 175 - JANESVILLE, WI

### Norman Aulabaugh

Peace and racial justice organizations in the Janesville – Beloit area of South Central Wisconsin host a celebration commemorating Dr. King's birthday. The event is well attended and drew about 300 participants this year. The program featured presentations by local organizations and dignitaries but the highlight was perfor-

mances and presentations by students from the Beloit and Janesville School Systems which included singing, music, dancing and oral presentations centered on the life and work of Dr. King.

VFP chapter 175 staffed an information table at the event. Everyone is familiar with King's "I Have a Dream" speech, but few are aware of King's "Beyond Vietnam – a Time to Break Silence" speech delivered April 4, 1967 at the Riverside Church in New York City. Chapter 175 distributed a well-received handout bringing attention to King's "Beyond Vietnam" speech. The handout pointed out how King's words from 49 years ago are made relevant today by substituting Iraq or Afghanistan for Vietnam.

In 1967, King declared his conscience left him no choice, silence was betrayal, and he had to speak out against the war in Vietnam. Veterans For Peace is still speaking the same message today. War is not the answer.



### Members respond to *'Thank you for your service.'*

Thank you, but part of my service was assisting in the brutalization of the Vietnamese people and for that I am not proud. Thank me for my service as a firefighter where I did save lives, not take them.

Ken Dalton

I have done more service for my country and planet in the 45 years after I came home than I could ever have hoped to do in Vietnam.

Bill Homans

My service began when I started opposing war.

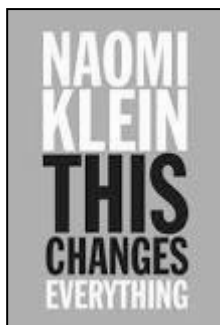
Patrick McCann

I didn't serve. I was used.

Suel Jones

# REVIEW: THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING

Doug Rawlings



## ***This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate***

**Naomi Klein**

**Simon & Schuster**

**2014**

Last issue we reviewed Alice Lynd's monograph on conscientious objection and moral injury in order to promote it as a useful tool for our work to abolish war. In the same vein, I'd like to share some thoughts about Naomi Klein's 2014 work *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*.

When I read it, I did so with an eye to using it as a resource to counter those whack jobs who claim that climate change is some kind of "liberal conspiracy" cooked up to take away our right to own guns (up here in rural Maine, that kind of leap in illogic is not so unusual) to those who are sympathetic but have bought into the cynical notion spun out by corporate media that there is no hope. That we ought to just live our lives out as best we can right now and screw the future. Both kinds of "reasoning" feed into the extractivist, neo-liberal corporate playbook that wants us to deny the power of social movements and accept the neo-liberals' extreme privatization game plan. No way will I accept that kind of future, not for my grandkids nor for the rest of the world dodging the flailing tail of our dying empire.

Trust me, this book is more than just an eye-opener; it is a handy "encyclopedia" to have with you as

a VFP member when you do your work "... to increase public awareness of the costs of war." Consider her phrase "sacrifice zones." As the name implies, these are people, tracts of land, climate systems that are deemed so unimportant that we can destroy them in order to protect our way of life. So my first question (and usually my last as I am escorted out the door) becomes -- "So who is living in the sacrifice zones?" Huh? "You know, what indigenous tribe will be wiped out? What rainforest demolished? What watershed despoiled?" Of course those who have been sheltered from ever encountering these zones smirk, but as Klein so prophetically points out, the "freight train" of climate change is hurtling down the track and will soon be in a neighborhood near you. We ignore this crisis at our peril.

Or after listening to some commentary on the recent Paris climate change talks, I can refer directly back to Klein as she so deftly points out the fallacies of relying on the mystical thinking that geo-engineering employs or of sitting back and sighing in relief as billionaires Gates and Branson tell us that their money will save us all. Bam! This is where Klein swings the heaviest hammer in her tool kit -- fools! It is the very system--capitalism with its monstrous cost-efficiency analyses "balancing" profits on the backs of dying people-- that has exacerbated the climate crisis.

So, okay, she is really good at pointing clearly to the dire present and frightening future we all face on this planet if the fossil fuel industry continues to have its way with us. But what can we do? This is where she demonstrates her tough intelligence (she is no mere academic sitting in an office conjuring up playful fantasies) born out of her willingness to confront cli-

mate crisis deniers combined with her deep empathetic spirit. She first turns to the work of Indigenous Peoples who have been at the forefront of the battle to protect their homelands as not just moral inspirations but also as clever tacticians. Then she "goes personal" and shares her journey as a woman grappling with fertility issues, turning her experiences into a profound discussion of "mother earth" and our obligation to protect life cycles not as some kind of overlord stewards but as members in an intricate web of interdependency.

I think Veterans For Peace working with environmentalists as well as anti-racist activists is the wave of the future. But also let's not forget that the U.S. Military is the largest single consumer of petroleum in the world. How can we ignore the bizarre circular reasoning that underlies much of our military exploits -- we use oil-guzzling equipment to protect oil pipelines that provide oil to the oil-guzzling machines we have created to protect our pipelines. Really?

I encourage you to add Naomi Klein's voice to your peaceful, non-violent arsenal as you step out to stop this military madness that is insinuating itself into all life on this planet. She is that rare individual who combines an activist spirit with sound research and a compelling voice. So when the next crisis hits us between the eyes, she encourages us not to wallow in despair at the unfairness of it all, but, rather, to harness the energy generated from that moment to "actually build the world that will keep us safe." We in VFP can be in the vanguard of that movement.



## Father's Photo in Vietnam

I wake suddenly  
Age 12 in the Viet Cong  
Jungle of my father's memory

I am tracking my way  
Back to camp  
Rifle at my side  
Underfoot the root  
Of story mangled thick

Above is canopy  
Vine and lush  
Barely audible through night  
I am in search of his rescue

His Vietnam  
A Marine  
Somewhere in this war  
Then back home  
The suburbs

The enemy hidden  
Still  
Agent Orange  
Taking the bones  
The lungs

I have been deployed  
All my life  
In search of this man  
Lost in active duty  
Standing beside him  
Hand on shoulder  
Feet in the paddy fields  
Calling his name

All that there is  
Is the passing  
His passing  
The sun  
The earth  
My father  
This photo  
Black and white

Rebecca Villineau

## A Copy of You

The last Monday of May,  
The day when I think of you  
The same night I always do  
I want to say "Hey dude  
Nice to see..."

You know how it goes  
My mind speaks only for poetry  
But my tongue, my pen, my mind is forced into prose  
I've had my share of highs and lows  
Hooded eyes with rings where it shows  
My crows and ravens all in tow  
Leading me to disdain  
From the blow to my brain  
That shattered me like a hit from a train  
"My cousin lies dead in vain"  
The thought of you lying on a cold Baghdad street.

The stain that remains  
Drives me insane  
I mean — its plain in its simplest strain  
My thoughts are contained  
Bleeding through a ruptured membrane

Because the truth is  
You didn't die on that street  
You died on your damn bed  
Cold  
Empty  
Like the bottles of pills and whiskey  
Dead  
I walked into your room on Mother's Day  
Cold  
Empty  
My hands found your shoulder  
Your head rolled  
Empty

You didn't even bother to close your eyes  
Why would you

You may not have died on that street  
But you never came back

John Pender

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## Show Up and Be Heard!



## VFP Lobby Days Washington, DC May 23-25

### Learn together

### Lobby together

Save the date. Details to follow.

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