



Exposing the True Costs of War and Militarism Since 1985

VETERANS FOR PEACE

Organized locally. Recognized Internationally.

VFP Newsletter

Summer 2018

Veterans For Peace Observe Memorial Day in Solemn Ceremonies Nationwide

VFP Chapters 74 and 93 joined forces to set up Arlington Michigan (below) in Grand Circus Park, Detroit, as a Memorial Day observance. The display garnered local TV coverage and lively foot traffic, thanks in part to a Detroit Tigers game nearby.



Rightassie Cheron, a third grader at Hyannis West Elementary, reads her poem, "Peace Is," at the 2018 Memorial Day ceremony in Cape Cod. Rightassie's poem won first place in the Cape Cod VFP Chapter's 23rd Annual "Voices of Peace" poetry contest.



After delivering some of the 78 Letters to The Wall collected by Doug Rawlings for this fourth annual VFP ritual in Washington, D.C., VFP member Nate Goldschlag takes time to read one of the letters, which are left unsealed for this purpose. VFP volunteers also helped keep watch 24/7 at Roger Ehrlich's nearby Swords to Plowshares Bellflower.



At noon on Memorial Day, after laying letters at The Wall, VFP members walked with these banners to the Korean War Veterans Memorial and held a special ceremony celebrating recent moves toward peace by North and South Korean leaders, and expressing hope for a lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. Links to more photos of D.C. events can be found under the Events tab at vietnamfulldisclosure.org.

ELLEN DAVIDSON

ELLEN DAVIDSON

Interesting Times, Indeed



“May you live in interesting times,” goes the saying. Well, none of us are likely to die from boredom. And while our challenges are great with an

openly racist and misogynistic megalomaniac in the White House and an opposition party focused on Russiagate, we must also recognize this as a time of great awakening, when many, many people are asking the right questions and strongly expressing their desires for a more peaceful, healthy, and equitable world for all.

With over 3,000 members and VFP chapters in over 100 U.S. cities, our purposeful work continues: educating about the true costs of war; restraining our government(s) from intervening, overtly and covertly, in the internal affairs of other nations; seeking justice for veterans and victims of war; pushing for the elimination of all nuclear weapons, and the abolition of war altogether. Our mantra, “Peace at Home, Peace Abroad,” connects struggles against war and militarism with struggles here at home.

VFP continues to speak out as costly U.S. wars continue to rage—in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya, Somalia, and Syria. We dare be hopeful at nascent efforts for peace in Korea, as we decry preparations for war against Iran, and protest the U.S. military support given to Saudi Arabia in a cruel campaign that is starving millions in Yemen, and work to expose the ongoing U.S. undermining of democratically elected governments in Venezuela and Nicaragua.

We cannot stand silently by as we watch poverty, fear, and violence escalate at home. Cruel deportation policies, institutionalized racism and the erosion of religious freedom, stark class divisions,

loss of a social safety net, privatization of everything... The list of grievances is both long and longstanding, but the blatant racism, sexism, and cruelty of the present administration has fueled so much indignation, it's no wonder the nation responded so vociferously to the cries of the Central American children separated from their parents at the border. Yes! We do care about the lives of others beyond our borders.

We call out the evils we see, at home and abroad: Abject greed is rapacious and relentless. Bipartisan policies aimed at maximizing investments with no regard for human life are immoral. War for profit is nothing but violent, organized crime at the highest level, seeking to exploit every corner of the globe and dominate all its peoples, for the sake of wealth. U.S. imperialism tolerates no regional strong man, no popular resistance, no sovereignty, and no socialism. It pursues regime change by any means possible, even if that means dancing with the devil.

Seeing so many spontaneous people's movements rising to meet the challenges of these times gives us hope! Standing Rock, Occupy (and now Occupy ICE!), Black Lives Matter, the Women's March, the #Me Too movement, Marching for Our Lives. Change is in the air!

Veterans For Peace is proud to be an endorsing partner of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival (PPC), which just concluded its first 40 days of education and action with a mass rally in Washington, D.C. on June 23. A good number of VFP members rallied or spoke or got themselves arrested during that kickoff period, and you can read more about that in other parts of this newsletter.

I am always amazed by the breadth and diversity of the actions taken by Veterans For Peace to make this world a better place. We march. We vigil. We fast. We sail. We take direct action and sometimes go to jail. We write poems. We write letters to the editor. We express ourselves on blogs and in books, in art, and film and radio projects. We publish

great newspapers. We speak in classrooms. We educate our Congressional representatives. We travel to different regions of the world to express solidarity with communities adversely impacted by U.S. policies.

VFP works in coalition with a great number of other peace and social justice groups, local, national, and international. Now an international organization, with chapters in England, Ireland, Okinawa, Japan, Viet Nam (U.S. expats), and Mexico (deported veterans), we are working toward holding a major international veterans peace conference within a couple years.

We are a sponsor of the First International Conference Against US/NATO Military Bases being held in Dublin, Ireland, November 16-18, and—that same weekend—many of our members will converge at the SOAW Encuentro at the Border in Tucson, Arizona, and Nogales, Arizona/Sonora, to make connections between U.S. political, military and economic policies in Latin America and the plight of migrants and refugees at our borders. Many of us have stood with Standing Rock and are still doing so. And VFP is at the helm of the historic Golden Rule peace boat, which will soon set sail for Hawaii and the Pacific Islands.

I am honored and humbled to serve as President of Veterans For Peace Board of Directors at this moment. I am grateful to be working with our great Executive Director, Michael McPhearsen, and with a fantastic national staff and board. I am also happy to be working with the wonderful Twin Cities Chapter in planning for the 2018 convention in St. Paul, Minnesota, August 22-26. I hope to see you there, as we renew our collective commitment to peace, projecting veterans' voices into the historical struggles of our times. Everyone in Veterans For Peace has an important role to play in building the new people's movements that these times require.

Peace at Home, Peace Abroad!

GERRY CONDON

BOARD PRESIDENT, VFP



How We Treat One Another

Along with the external work we do to promote world peace, Veterans For Peace admittedly has much internal work to do. We must, as they say, become the peace we wish to see. In recent years we have made progress in recruiting younger veterans, including women and veterans of color. Yet we remain an organization of predominantly white male Vietnam-era veterans, with attendant patterns of behavior. If we are to become a more diverse organization, we need to be sensitive to the concerns of our newer members. When our words or actions are perceived as sexist, ageist, or even racist, we may feel that is not right or fair. If we get defensive, however, we do not listen or learn. Hot-button responses only make the situation worse. Women, younger veterans, and people of color may begin to wonder if they are in the wrong organization.

Of course, sexism, ageism, and racism can afflict anyone. In general, we must *all* learn to treat one another with respect and in a spirit of nonviolence. The VFP Board of Directors has developed a Code of Conduct to help guide board members in these matters. We will be sharing it with VFP chapters, along with other resources for facilitating sometimes-difficult discussions about sexism, racism, and ageism. We believe such discussions will help us become stronger and more effective in carrying out our mission. Onward!

—Gerry Condon, Board President

How do you wish to receive your newsletter?

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If you prefer an electronic version be sent to your inbox, please send your name and email address to gail@veteransforpeace.org

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NEXT DEADLINE FOR CHAPTER REPORTS: DECEMBER 3, 2018

— Guidelines —

Keep it concise—under 200 words if at all possible. Submit your report in an email message, or as an attachment to a message, sent to the editor email address listed above.

Title your report with your chapter number and name, and don't forget to include the reporter's name at the bottom. For filenames, use CH followed by your chapter number, followed by underscore & your locale, e.g. CH001_Maine.

Photos with good contrast and high resolution print best. Please include a caption, and if sending a group shot, remember to identify everyone in the picture.

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Executive Director's Report

Thank You, VFP, for Your Service to Humanity

Recently, I spent time with Veterans For Peace members in Seattle, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Tijuana, Mexico. My experience on this trip was a stark reminder why I am in Veterans For Peace and the importance and urgency of our work.

In Seattle, I joined with chapter members to stand in solidarity with the undocumented immigrant community at the Families Belong Together rally, to demand that children not be separated from their parents, and those who have been, be reunited immediately. What a strange and outrageous demand to have to make. Basic decency dictates that this demand should be a common expectation held up by all. But not today, as hate and treating people with contempt and disdain has become commonplace.

The event was sponsored by many organizations, including the local Seattle VFP chapter. By the time I arrived at the rally outside the Federal Detention Center in Sea Tac, thousands had gathered. But our people were easy to find, as our flags flew high in the crowd. Our symbol of peace—a black helmet with a white dove carrying an olive branch—flew visible at many rallies across the country that day.

Days later, I traveled south and spent time with L.A. Chapter members during a modest gathering hosted by one of our indispensable associate members, Kathleen Hernandez, at her home in Topanga, California. It is always great to commune with veteran and associate members of VFP and meet awesome peace activists. We had a great meal and shared ideas and experiences as we schemed to bring about peace. I was pleasantly surprised to participate in the planting and dedication of a Peace Tree. It was an affirmation of our humanity and responsibility to tend and respect

Mother Earth. I was humbled to meet Colombian-born poet and writer, Antonieta Villamil, whose brother was disappeared, and sister murdered by Columbian gang members. She and VFP veteran member Mark Lipman shared with us powerful examples of their poetry.

The next day, I had the honor of joining chapter members for the Arlington West Memorial at Santa Monica Beach. Currently led by president Michael Lindley, the chapter has accomplished the incredible feat of setting up this memorial every Sunday for 13 years to remind people of the human cost of war. The memorial includes paying respect to all who have died in war. It is incredibly moving and was a crystal-clear reminder why I am a veteran for peace.

Spending time there, the most poignant moments, for me, came from watching and talking to people. The memorial organizers have set up a large

It is always great to commune with veteran and associate members of VFP and meet awesome peace activists.

dry-erase board inviting beach visitors to answer the question, "What would you do to promote peace in the world?" The board is set up near showers, so there is a line of people nearly always in front of it. All day long, people write different messages. One person wrote, "Thank you for destroying ISIS." This saddened me, reminding me how much fear controls what we think and do. The powers that be overwhelm us with messages of fear, constantly keeping an enemy before us to justify their wars. Saddam Hussein, the Taliban, Saddam again, the Shia insurgents in Iraq, the Sunni insurgents in Iraq, Gaddafi, and now ISIL. Who is next? Our greatest obstacles are fear, the belief that war is inevitable, and—like I once thought—that war is a necessary



Michael McPhearson
Executive Director, Veterans For Peace

evil. People will not try to bring about something they do not think is possible. We cannot discount these fears, because they are deep and legitimate. We must find ways to help people see that peace is possible.

I am happy to report, however, the spirit of peace is alive and well. I watched a young girl who must have been about 6 or 7 answer the question. She struggled a bit, because the ink in the marker was running out, so her writing was faint. Determined, she reached for another marker, which I handed to her. She finished and darkened the faint words. She wrote, "Hold Hands with one another." Her wisdom in this simple sentiment brought tears to my eyes.

I spoke to a young man who is planning to enter the military. He saw the tribute to the 21 veterans who die by suicide each day. He wanted to know more about VFP. When discussing why he was joining the military, he said, "It's really not about the money. I've done some bad things in my life. I was in a gang, that's why I have this stupid tattoo," pointing to his chest. "I want to do good things. If I'm going to fight, I might as well fight for something good."

We talked more about what it means to do good in life, and how much of what we do in the military is motivated by lies, sending poor people to fight poor people and to kill innocent civilians. There was much agreement. I gave him my card in case he ever needed anything or just to talk. I don't think I dissuaded him, but I know he has some things to think about.

Report continued on page 27...

FINDING WORK AFTER WAR

Our sons join the army to get work being shot at.

—Jim Harrison

For a long time there were simultaneous wars, so work was good. Now the wars are winding down and our poor are unemployed. They phone government hotlines then get disconnected. I know a stonemason disabled from battling his chisel. He says there will always be his kind of work—thousands of gravestones stockpiled in the quarries of Vermont. He says he's willing to teach, but worries some might inscribe their own names.

—H. C. PALMER

H. C. Palmer was a battalion surgeon in the American War in Viet Nam. He leads a writing program for veterans at the Writers Place in Kansas City. "Finding Work After War" is reprinted from *Feet of the Messenger* (BkMk Press, 2017).

Roger H. Detwiler, a Marine in Viet Nam, was severely injured when he was run over accidentally by an American tank. At least partly due to complications from his wartime injuries, he died Nov. 25, 2013.

THE CHILDREN, OH, THE CHILDREN

(a prose poem)

It didn't matter how we got there because there we were. The draft, which had loomed as real and as deadly as nature's greatest tempest, was a thing of the past, because...there we were. The newsreels, the John Wayne movies, all the subconscious motivations were behind us; because...there we were.

We were alone, so incredibly alone. This dark, depressed land, known to us as I Corps, was as far away from the light and the noise of home, as Pluto is from the sun.

The people, scavenging our garbage and junk at dawn. The children, those half-naked, incredibly small keepers of a people's humanity, were everywhere. These were not children, but unsmiling little victims of a violent life; the only they had ever known.

Their staring, dull little eyes, were like none we had ever known. These children, who had asked for nothing, yet needed so much. These children who ran for the scraps we unconsciously threw aside.

These faces, the plight of all children, everywhere, who by fate and terrible misfortune, are cast into hell; without ever feeling a single moment of heaven.

And it still goes on!

—ROGER H. DETWILER

VFP Project Update: The Golden Rule

By Helen Jaccard

VFP's *Golden Rule* team partnered with chapters in Southern California for a wonderful winter and spring! San Diego VFP Chapter 91 was particularly involved by providing crew, scheduling groups to go sailing, arranging speaking engagements, and supporting a big, successful fundraising party!

During our time in Southern California, we've taken hundreds of people sailing, including many sixth- through eighth-grade students. With more than 36 presentations, we figure we reached a thousand people with our message, including hundreds of school children.

VFP members sailed and motored their own boats alongside the *Golden Rule*, boosting a message of peace in

Update continued on page 23...



The Navy salutes the Golden Rule during Fleet Week, October 14, 2017, San Diego.

CHRIS STONE OF THE TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

Poor People's Campaign

“Throughout America’s history—from abolition, to women’s suffrage, to labor and civil rights—real social change has come when impacted people have joined hands with allies of good will to stand together against injustice. These movements did not simply stand against partisan foes. They stood for the deep moral center of our Constitutional and faith traditions. Those deep wells sustained poor and impacted people who knew in their bones both that power concedes nothing without a fight and that, in the end, love is the greatest power to sustain a fight for what is right.”

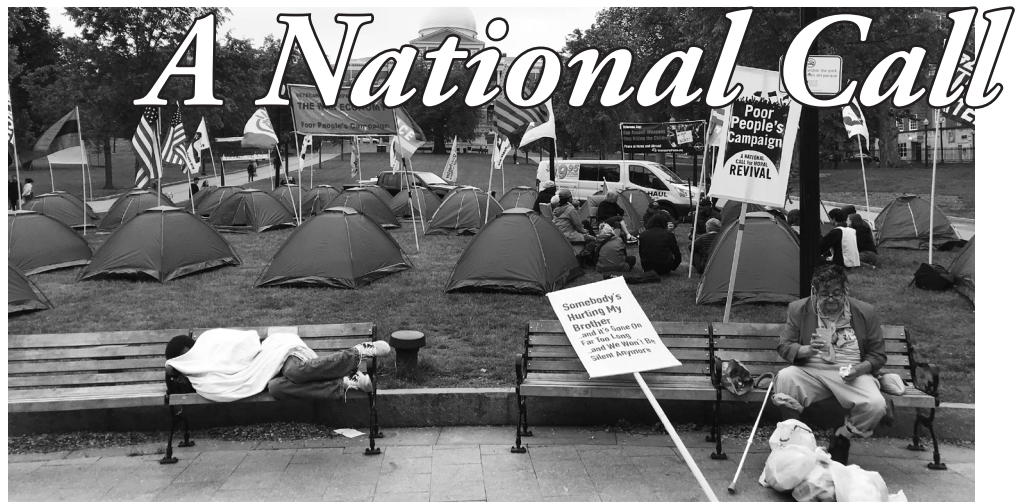
Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, Co-Chair of the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival

The Poor Peoples Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival

reignites the movement started in 1968 by Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who was commencing 40 days of action just before an assassin’s bullet snatched his life on April 4, 1968. Fifty years later, on Monday, May 14, 2018, the Poor People’s Campaign kicked off 40 days of action with a rally on the Mall in Washington, D.C. Coordinated events including rallies, educational forums, nonviolent trainings, and civil disobedience actions, continued across the nation through June 23.

The Institute for Policy Studies’ 2017 report, *“The Souls of Poor Folk: Auditing America 50 years after the Poor People’s Campaign challenged racism, poverty, the war economy/militarism, and our national morality,”* demonstrates that structural issues—systemic racism, poverty, the war economy and militarism, and ecological devastation—contribute more to poverty than individual failures. The report makes a clear case that the richest nation in the world has sufficient resources to protect the environment *and* ensure dignified lives for all its people.

Last year, the U.S. spent more than \$700 billion on the Pentagon and its



Taken the evening of Memorial Day, this photo captures the Boston Chapter’s Poor People’s encampment, with the State House up the hill visible in the background, and campers circled up for discussion amidst the tents, getting to stay overnight.

programs. More than \$300 billion of that went to weapons manufacturers and war profiteers. War steals from all of us. Remember those famous words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.” He recognized that we can’t solve problems until there is a radical redistribution of economic and political power. The Poor People’s Campaign sees this as the moral challenge for America, and is intent on achieving nothing less than the revolution of values called for by King.

Chicago Chapter 26 Deputy Coordinator Natasha Erskine is on the Illinois Poor People’s Campaign leadership team, and was instrumental in organizing a Memorial Day action in Springfield that featured veterans and families of veterans. Chicago VFP members spoke, helped with refreshments, escorted families to the governor’s office, and took part in blocking several intersections in Springfield. At the last intersection, blockers all took a knee while singing the National Anthem. Natasha also united VFP and PPC in organizing a Chicago conference, themed “Everybody’s Got the Right to Live,” with Chapter 26 member Dr. Dennis Kohen leading a discussion of Martin Luther King Jr.’s vision and how it ties into today’s needs.

Ellen Barfield, a veteran with the Phil Berrigan Memorial Chapter 105 in Baltimore, was asked early on to join the Maryland Poor People’s Campaign, and spoke at the Maryland kickoff event on Monday, February 5, at the Delegates Office Building in Annapolis. She also spoke at an evening rally at a church in Westminster, Maryland, on Tuesday, April 24, and at the War Economy rally on Tuesday, May 29, in Annapolis, where she was one of six arrested during that day’s civil disobedience action.

Calling themselves the Smedley D. Butler Brigade, the Boston chapter’s mantra, “War is a Racket: A Few Profit—the Many Pay,” would hardly permit anything but full-on engagement with the Poor People’s Campaign, especially during week three, when the focus was on the war economy.

Remembering the post-WWI Bonus March in D.C. and Tent Cities of the past, the Boston chapter purchased 40 identical tents and, on Memorial Day, set up an encampment on Boston Common replete with flags, banners, and a day-long program of music and speakers on all manner of war-related topics. Mid-afternoon, members marched to the Soldiers and Sailors Monument situated on the high ground of the common for a brief, solemn ceremony made more poignant by some 37,000-plus U.S. flags

for Moral Revival



Chicago VFP Deputy Coordinator Natasha Erskine led a contingent from Chicago to the Poor People's Campaign action in Washington, D.C., where the crowd appreciated the strong presence of the youth decrying gun violence in their own city.

planted on the lawn below, symbolizing Massachusetts' war dead. That evening, about 25 campers defied police orders to leave and, together with a few homeless folks, some of whom were veterans, stayed put. As Boston Chapter Coordinator Dan Luker said, "Who's going to arrest a bunch of vets sleeping here overnight on Memorial Day?"

The next day was a different story. After a spirited, early afternoon rally at the State House, campaigners marched to each of the offices of Massachusetts' House speaker, Senate president, and Governor, and presented a list of eight demands for cutting state spending on war. Also presented was a U.S. flag on which inscribed with names of dozens of recent victims of war, drugs, suicide, and police violence. The governor had made himself scarce, so 18 people sat down in front of his office to wait, and after the State House closed, the State Police began making arrests. The first to be taken away was Dan Luker, looking very smart in full camo and combat vet hat.

Poor People's Campaign actions in Minnesota were generally held Mondays on the steps of Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul. The third week's coordinated actions focused on militarism and the need to create a peace economy that values all of humanity. The main event was on Tuesday, May 29, the day after Memorial Day, and that afternoon,

Chapter 27 members entered the State Capitol building and hung VFP banners on the railing overlooking the rotunda, then met up with PPC activists to create a banner representing their collective vision of the world they would like to see.

At 5:00 p.m., a rally commenced where representatives of various local peace-oriented organizations spoke, including the anti-gun violence group, Students Demand Action. Chapter 27 was represented by its V.P., Mike McDonald. Shortly after the rally began, the banner created inside the Capitol was brought forward and laid in front of the podium. After the program, VFP member Barry Riesch got up and made an impassioned appeal to save the VA from privatization, then invited people to follow Mendota Mdewakanton tribe members in a march encircling the VA building, where a soft rain accompanied their Native American purification ceremony.

Chapter 102 members in Milwaukee chose the Wisconsin Poor People's Campaign as one of their three priority projects for 2018, and actively participated in the campaign's first 40 days of action. Mark Foreman volunteered to chair the state's PPC committee on militarism, emphasizing its negative impacts on human needs, and he spoke at meetings and rallies in Milwaukee and Madison as a representative of military veterans who support the cause. Two Milwaukee chap-

"I am convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin ... the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism and militarism are incapable of being conquered."

"A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,
from his Riverside Church
address of April 4, 1967

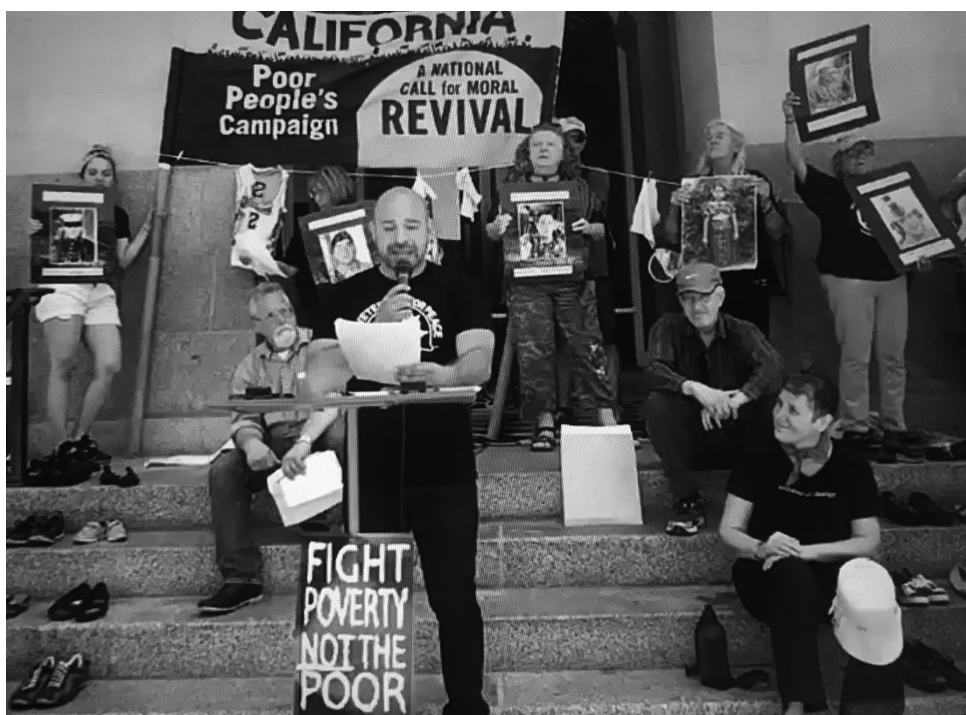
ter members also attended the massive June 23rd rally in Washington, D.C.

At the May 14th PPC Rally in Montpelier, Vermont, Richard Czaplinski, President of Will Miller Green Mountain VFP Chapter 57, brought attention to the distorted 2019 U.S. Budget, then read his poem, penned for the occasion:

WAR AND PEACE

The world can no longer afford war
The costs are too great
Veterans killed
Veterans wounded
Civilians killed
Civilians wounded
Communities destroyed
Land, forests, air and water polluted
or destroyed
Little or no money to care for
the wounded
No money to rebuild destroyed
communities
No money to restore the land, forests,
air and water
War makes us all, every one of us,
poor people
There is no alternative
We must foster peace every day
In every way
Learn to be at peace within yourself
Foster peace in your family
In your community
In your nation
In the world

PPC continued on page 8...



Veteran Antonio Palacios speaks in Sacramento about the madness and immorality of war.

Members of Los Angeles Veterans For Peace Chapter 7 traveled north to Sacramento, their state's capital, to take part in the California PPC's 40 days of action. One of the veterans in that contingent, Antonio Palacios, says he waited many years to give the speech he gave in Sacramento on Tuesday, May 29, in Week Three of the Poor People's Campaign: *Militarism and The War Economy*. Here is what Antonio said that day:

Hello. I am Antonio Palacios. I'm a member of Veterans For Peace and I am proud to stand with the Poor People's Campaign.

It was still my first year in the military, in 2002; I was working in the personnel department onboard the USS Trenton. We were on deployment in the Indian Ocean; part of the war in Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom. President Bush was already working to deemphasize Afghanistan to target Iraq.

In the office that I worked in, a television played the Armed Forces Network, or AFN. You can think of it like most 24-hour cable news networks, but this one is produced by the military and also played old sitcoms where the commercials are military propaganda. One day,

sometime between the news and Seinfeld, AFN played a macabre music video montage of recent bombings in Afghanistan. Some of the clips were daytime shots, others infrared or night-vision. The action was set to music from the Barber of Seville. (singing) *La lala la lala LA La!* The punctuations in the music were timed with an explosion on video. They were fast clips of buildings or cars or shacks hit by rockets. I couldn't help but think of the people in those buildings and how those shacks were people's homes. One clip after the next. In one, I saw people. Two men in their last moments of life fleeing the targeted building.

That night I wrote an email home to my family expressing how horrified I was by what I had seen. I wondered if those men were also 21 years old like me. I wondered what they could have possibly done. I wondered how they got there.

I knew how I found myself there. I swore in to the Navy five weeks before 9/11. I joined because I was a good student and needed money to finish college. In spite of being gay in the seventh year of Don't Ask Don't Tell, I knew from constant advertising that the military would cover my degree. I only had to

hide who I was for four years.

Working in personnel, I got to learn about how a lot of us got there. The engineering petty officer who enlisted to get his sick mother health insurance. My supervisor, who joined because a judge said it was the military or prison. A junior sailor born in Nigeria joined hoping for a chance to stay in the U.S. Another sailor from a struggling Wisconsin town just needed a job.

The war economy is immoral. It robs our communities of basic needs. And then uses that need as economic coercion to enlist our bodies in imperial violence. In the wealthiest country to ever exist, no person should have to pledge allegiance to the military industrial complex just to receive something as basic as healthcare for their family or a college education.

So many of us were there because so much of what appears to be broken in our system works to drive poor people into it.

There I was, a brown person from a lower-middle-class family, part of an organization that would kill other poor brown people.

And then set it to music.

I'll never forget it. And that's why I have joined the Poor People's Campaign: To call for an end to U.S. military aggression currently targeting Iran and North Korea and providing a blank check to Israel and Saudi Arabia, and to demand re-allocation of resources from the military budget to education, healthcare, and green jobs.

Thank you!

This Poor People's Campaign Update would not be complete without a word from North Carolina Triangle Chapter 157. Associate member Vicki Ryder reported on the March 29th rally in Raleigh at which Bishop William Barber II gave a stirring speech, followed by a powerful speech by VFP member Ken Jones at the conclusion of the hour-long rally, and chapter president Doug Ryder got arrested in a sit-in with at

PPC continued on page 25...

Veterans For Peace Chapter Reports

#001 – Portland, ME

The Tom Sturtevant Chapter has been active these past few months:

- Supporting “Moms Demand Action” against gun violence. We proudly displayed the “Abolish Assault Weapons” VFP banner at the March 14th demonstration in Portland, and six of our members served as monitors during the march. Chapter V.P. Richard Clement met with state senator Sheena Bellows to discuss gun control legislation.

- Supporting VFP member Regis Tremblay as he ventured to Russia to attend the March for the WWII Immortal Regiment, and to meet with Russian peace activists and collect interviews for his new film, *Who Are These Russians?*

- Marching with Maine Peace Action in the Memorial Day parade.

- Preparing to table at the Brunswick Peace Fair and at the Common Ground Fair in the fall (60,000 attendees).

- Providing financial support to Betsy Ann Ross House of Hope, for female veterans and their children who are homeless or in need of help.

- Preparing to host the VFP My Lai traveling exhibit in September.

- Supporting Bruce Gagnon’s efforts to thwart LD1781, the Bath Iron Works tax exemption bill that gave away millions in state tax dollars to build General Dynamics battleships.

- Working with University of Maine veteran students and the Maine Conservation Voters to expand our outreach.

- Speaking in college and high school classrooms when invited.

Doug Rawlings

#009 – Eastern MA

The Smedley Butler Brigade has been very busy these past few months conducting standouts, seminars, and various other protest activities dealing with VA privatization, Middle East wars, and peace for Korea. But of late, our primary focus has been the Poor People’s Campaign and its potential for building a

broad-based, disciplined people’s movement that can counter the many travesties of the Trump regime.

Jeff Brummer

#016 – Washington, DC

Some chapter members went to several of the Poor People’s Campaign Monday rallies at the U.S. Capitol. We also helped with the Memorial Day weekend actions—the Swords to Plowshares Bell Tower, Letters to The Wall, and a remembrance ceremony at the Korean War Veterans Memorial.

A few chapter members were joined by a dozen other VFP members at the Poor People’s Campaign rally Saturday, June 23, in Washington, D.C.

Mike Marceau



The USS Liberty was attacked in international waters by Israeli Navy and Air Force boats and planes on June 8, 1967, during the Six Days War. In the combined air and sea attack, 34 crew members were killed, and 171 wounded. The attack on the USS Liberty remains controversial (and contentious) to this day. But on June 12, 2010, a memorial was dedicated to the USS Liberty in Rochester, NY, thanks to one of the USS Liberty crewmen, John Hrankowski of Rochester, who spent most of his life fighting to keep the attack on the USS Liberty in the news, and to remember the sacrifice of her crew. On May 26, 2018, VFP Chapter 23 participated in the USS Liberty Memorial Service conducted by VFW Thomas Healy Post 16. The memorial is located in Ontario Beach Park near the Genesee River.

#023 – Rochester, NY

On March 16, Chapter 23 sponsored a Memorial Commemoration on the 50th Anniversary of the My Lai Massacre at the Federal Building and Courthouse in Rochester with featured speaker Rev. Dr. Marvin A. McMickle, President of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School.

Thanks to Jack Spula, we had a small but visible presence at the 5,000-strong March For Our Lives rally and march in Rochester on March 24.

Spring Action 2018 drew active chapter participation. President Rev. James L. Swarts spoke at a press conference on VFP’s call for all nations to lay down weapons and “study war no more.”

On May 14, we hosted a public showing of the documentary *Lighter Than Orange*, followed by a panel discussion with Dr. Rebecca Drayer from the VA, Jerry McDermott from VVA, and Rev. Michael Stuart from VFP. Both Jerry and Michael discussed their disabilities as a result of exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam.

On May 26, chapter members joined with members of VFW Post 16, Greece, New York, for a memorial service at the USS Liberty Memorial in Rochester.

Chapter members were present at four Memorial Day events: a Peace Memorial Service; the Rochester Memorial Day Parade; services at the Rochester Vietnam Memorial; and Brighton Town Veterans Memorial.

James L. Swarts

#026 – Chicago, IL

Focusing on the Chapter theme, Education Not Militarization, Chicago Chapter 26 is active on many fronts—local, state, and national:

Our main project is the de-militarization of Chicago Public Schools—the most militarized in the nation, with 10,000 youth in some form of military

Chapter Reports continued on next page...

VFP Chapter Reports *continued*

Chapter 026, Chicago, IL, continued...
training. Via outreach, collaboration, and action, we are bringing the epidemic of militarization into the public eye. One tactic is to speak at school board meetings. Due to the efforts of chapter member Libby Frank, Chicago will be the site of a national conference on removing the military from schools. See one of our talks, edited and titled by chapter member Kevin Merwin, at: youtu.be/oP5VjNjrInA.

Chapter 26 Deputy Coordinator Natasha Erskine is on the Poor People's Campaign leadership team for Illinois. [Read more about this statewide educational effort on page 6.]

Our national outreach and education efforts are focused on the barbarity of war, as Chicago VFP member Mac MacDevitt continues to tour the nation with an interactive display of the massacre that occurred in the village of My Lai during the U.S. war against the people of Vietnam. For more information visit: <http://mylaimemorial.org>.

Chicago VFP maintains two websites, ChicagoVFP.org and EducationNotMilitarization.org. Follow us on Twitter and Facebook @DeMilitarizeCPS, and on Facebook @ChicagoVFP.

Arny Stieber

#027 – Twin Cities, MN

The Twin Cities Chapter has been extremely busy in the last couple of months. We co-sponsored a Walk for Hope and Peace in May, with Kyong Juhn, a Korean-American photographer who walked 330 miles from Rochester, New York, to Bemidji, Minnesota. She was commemorating the walk her mother took from North to South Korea back in 1953. We walked beside her and followed her with our "peace bus." She is one brave woman, and we were proud to be part of her journey.

We had a very solemn gathering at the Minnesota Vietnam Memorial on Memorial Day. Complete with Native American drumming, poetry, and per-



Chapter 27 members on a road trip with their mobile "Peace Center," accompanying photographer Kyong Juhn on her Walk for Hope and Peace, from Rochester, NY to Bemidji, MN. From L to R: Mary Frutiger, Barry Riesch, Craig Wood, Penny Gardner, Mike McDonald, Kyong Juhn, Dave Logsdon, and Steve McKeown.

sonal stories of lost loved ones, the day was empowering.

We are continuing to support members of our group in their court battles over protesting.

We teamed up with the Poor People's Campaign on May 29 at the State Capitol, to shine a light once again on this country's obsession with militarism.

We are very much looking forward to hosting the convention, August 22–26.

Mike McDonald

#034 – New York City

Chapter 34 members have been actively ensuring a VFP presence at major and minor rallies and demos throughout the city. Jerry Hassett and others are everywhere with VFP flags.

On April 4, we commemorated 50 years since the assassination of MLK by reading his speech, "Beyond Vietnam: Breaking the Silence," on the steps of the public library, and distributing flyers on the relevance of his words today.

On May 27, people respectfully watched our Memorial Day funeral procession wind its way around Battery Park, with bagpiper, flag-draped coffin, and mourners from VFP, VVAW, Granny

Peace Brigade, and War Resisters League. The procession was led by Dr. Thao, Director of the War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City. In March, chapter president Susan Schnall was the American speaker at the opening of the Waging Peace exhibit at that museum. Susan also was the opening plenary speaker at the Voices of Conscience conference at Notre Dame.

Chapter projects include: Stopping VA Privatization (Skip Delano in conjunction with the National Nurses Union); Move the Money, to demand open hearings by NYC Council to move resources from the Pentagon to health and education (Joe Jamison and Tom Gogan); and the Agent Orange Campaign.

On June 20, JJ Johnson of the Fort Hood Three shared his inspiring story of resistance to military orders to Vietnam in 1966, which resulted in a two-year prison sentence at Leavenworth.

Bob Keilbach

#035 – Spokane, WA

Chapter 35 participated in the Martin Luther King Jr. March and the Women's March through downtown Spokane.



Members of New York City Chapter 34 pause for a group shot.
Front (L to R): Tracy Gross, Susan Schnall, JJ Johnson, Georgia Wever, Jerry Hassetf.
Back: Per Odman, Skip Delano, Bob Carpenter, Bob Keilbach, Bob Carpenter.

With the Arab Cultural Society at Spokane Community College, we hosted Ramzy Baroud, author of *The Last Earth: A Palestinian Story*.

When the Chicago chapter's My Lai Exhibit came to Spokane's Downtown Public Library this spring, an interview of Mac MacDevitt and Tom Charles aired on KYRS Radio. A recording of our panel event, "The Vietnam Experience," features the voices of Mac, Rusty Nelson, and Mike Hastie, who displayed 35 photos from his March 2018 Vietnam visit.

Chapter 35's new office is in the Niche Coworking space on West Main Ave. We joined Greater Spokane Progress, 40 organizations promoting progressive goals/values. And, we are now an affiliate chapter of World Beyond War.

Four resolutions we are moving forward: creating Nuclear Free Zone for August 6 Hiroshima Commemoration; getting Truth in Recruitment materials to students; separating Armed Forces Torchlight Parade from Lilac Festival; and testing regional air quality for polluting elements.

Members are working with Sinixt Tribal Member Lou Stone in Kettle Falls to establish a new VFP chapter on the reservation.

Members attended the Report Back Rally from week three of the Poor People's Campaign, held at the Gathering Place next to City Hall.

Hollis Higgins

#041 – Cape Cod, MA

The Cape Cod Chapter's 23rd Annual "Voices of Peace" Poetry Contest concluded on April 28 with a reading of the 65 award-winning poems out of a total 698 submitted from 26 schools, with 54 teachers participating. As is tradition, one young poet marched with us in the Barnstable Memorial Day Parade and read her winning poem during the day's ceremonies (see photo on front page).

A draft proposal for our chapter's "Hidden Wounds" Memorial Project—to establish a tangible and permanent memorial to those vets who suffer from hidden wounds of PTS and who die by suicide—was released in January. An exciting project with potential for powerful public education and veteran advocacy, it has been shared with the local Veterans Service Office, representatives of several local veterans' service organizations, and a Barnstable Town Councilor. With an eye toward developing public awareness of the project heading into Armistice/

Veterans Day, we are now considering starting with a moveable memorial as we seek wider support for a permanent one.

Chapter 43 continues to support local suicide-prevention and gun-violence-reduction efforts. We press for on-schedule closing of the unsafe Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station despite Trump Administration obstruction. Finally, we are considering a town councilor's proposal for establishing a "Massachusetts Veterans Corps" that would help vets with entrepreneurial and business training and support.

Duke Ellis

#047 – Western PA

Chapter 47 has been steadily growing in membership. Within two years, we've gone from just a few members to seventeen. Our recent activities include: speaking events to inform the public about Veterans For Peace; a very successful fundraiser; rallying with the local AFGF union to protest VA privatization; and marching in the People's Pride Parade in Pittsburgh.

We are actively promoting and maintaining a campaign called "Stop Banking the Bomb," started by chapter member Paul Dordal to pressure PNC bank to stop loaning money to nuclear weapons manufacturers. Information about this campaign can be found at: www.stop-bankingthebomb.org.

Our members also have endorsed and participated with other activist groups in furthering the Deadly Exchange campaign started by Jewish Voice for Peace, which seeks to end the exchange of discriminatory and repressive tactics shared between our police, soldiers, and border agents, with those in Israel. To find more information about this campaign, go to: www.deadlyexchange.org.

As we continue growing our membership, we are excited to see what we can accomplish in the coming months.

Jessie Medvan

Chapter Reports continued on next page...

#062 – New Hampshire

The A. J. Muste Chapter participated (albeit reluctantly) in New Hampshire's biggest Memorial Day Parade, and received a positive response for the most part.

Chapter 62 participated in the New Hampshire Poor People's Campaign, where Will Thomas was one of eight arrested for civil disobedience and was tried along with the other seven on July 6, 2018, in Concord.

New Hampshire VFP has participated in many Interfaith Prayer Vigils for Migrant Justice. We do a Jericho Walk around the federal building in Manchester, where migrants must go to report at ICE offices. We have heard the stories of men and women who have been deported and separated from their children. Gut-wrenching.

We are happy to report that the Bishop of Manchester, New Hampshire, Catholic Diocese has agreed to instruct all of the parishes in the city to ring their church bells on November 11, 2018, to help reclaim Armistice Day. Moreover, the New Hampshire Council of Churches has agreed to encourage all of the state's churches to ring their bells and inform the laity of VFP's message.

Will Thomas

#063 – Albuquerque, NM

Donald Thompson, Veteran of WWII and Korea, founder of the Albuquerque Chapter, and former member of the National Board of Directors of Veterans For Peace, is at rest. In December his ashes were strewn in the Pacific from VFP's Golden Rule.

Our chapter has continued to table and spread the word of peace at Memorial Day, Earth Day, and other public events.

We have, and continue to have, demonstrations against privatization of the VA. We sent letters to our Congressional delegation protesting Israeli killing of unarmed Palestinians. We were able to



The New Hampshire Chapter's Will Thomas, a walking billboard for migrant justice.

get an appointment with a staff person in Senator Udall's office to present our position.

Several of our members have attended the Poor People's Campaign events in Santa Fe, and Monique Salhab delivered an eloquent address representing the VFP point of view.

Sally-Alice Thompson

#069 – San Francisco, CA

One hundred years ago, the largest parades in San Francisco were marching soldiers and sailors who'd served during The Great War. Those parades have been eclipsed in length and spectators by the annual Pride Parade. As a fundraiser, San Francisco VFP Chapter 69 manages the Pride Parade Grand Stand. This long row of bleachers lines Market Street by United Nations Plaza and costs forty dollars a fanny to enjoy. Chapter 69's job is not an easy one, but it's interesting and almost fun. We arrive early to set up rows of folding chairs, we manage the gate into the Grand Stand area, we monitor the special portable toilets for Grand Stand patrons, and we sell water, sunglasses, sunscreen, and trinkets. The parade be-

gins with Dikes On Bikes. Hundreds of motorcycles roll up Market Street with a deafening rumble followed by over two hundred contingents including Wells Fargo, Walt Disney, Twitter, Safeway, PayPal, Mormons for Equality, IKEA, Google, Everyone Loves a Corgi, Buddhist Church of San Francisco, Apple, Airbnb, 7-Eleven, and local politicians in vintage convertibles. Who wouldn't want to watch a four-hour parade like that? My take-away from the day is, most of us look better with clothes on.

Denny Riley

#071 – Sonoma Co., CA

Chapter 71 participated in the national Anti-War March and Rally in Oakland, on April 15, with other S.F. Bay Area VFP Chapters and a variety of other peace and justice organizations. VFP Board President Gerry Condon delivered a powerful speech to a crowd of several hundred. It was inspiring to experience the profound sense of solidarity that permeated this widely diverse group.

Our primary focus has been on the "No VA Privatization" movement, largely due to the herculean efforts of Buzz Davis. We meet at the VA Outpatient Clinic in Santa Rosa to distribute flyers designed by Suzanne Gordon, author of *The Battle for Veterans' Healthcare*. Responses from both VA patients and staff have been very positive, but there is disappointingly little interest from the other local veterans groups, even though they say they are against VA privatization.

Chapter co-founder Fred Ptucha, a member of Climbers for Peace (CFP), leaves June 29 for a Peace Climb of Damavand, an 18,600 ft. volcano in Iran considered sacred to the Persian people. Members of CFP will join with the Iranian Mountaineering Federation to inspire people to work in harmony towards world peace. The hope is to reduce the tensions between America and Iran and help to avoid another tragic war in the Middle East.

Bill Simon

#087 – Sacramento, CA

Chapter 87 has been supporting the Poor People's Campaign here in California's Capitol. Many of our members have attended the various weekly events, especially the week that focused on the military, when one of our members was among those arrested for civil disobedience actions.

We continue our long-standing, weekly Peace Vigil near the state Capitol, reminding commuters that the wars are not over and that the military budget is killing us. One of our members is very active with the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) and their "green hat" legal observers' effort, in which NLG members attend rallies and protests to monitor police actions and let attendees know their rights.

We continue to support Palestinian rights rallies and Black Lives Matter events, flying VFP banners whenever we can.

John C. Reiger

#090 – Broome Co., NY



On Mother's Day weekend, Chapter 90 held a community gathering at Christ Episcopal Church, turning away from the commercial holiday to

honor the true meaning of Mother's Day—World Peace. Julia Ward Howe's 1870 Declaration was wonderfully brought back to life by Binghamton actor Judy McMahon, and a lively discussion followed.

The second reading, by Jim Clune, was Mark Twain's War Prayer. Always a mind-turner, the prayer produced a discussion about the ready willingness of religious leaders to dash their moral code when war calls.



The traveling My Lai Exhibit received a warm welcome from San Diegans in March, including many members of Chapter 91. Pictured, L to R: Back row—Helen Jaccard (Golden Rule), Gary Butterfield, Betty Butterfield, Dave Patterson; Front row—Anne Barron, Stan Levin, Jack Doxey, Mac MacDeviitt (Chicago Chapter member, My Lai exhibit artist), Ed Fox.

On June 1, Jack Gilroy led a workshop at Roberson Museum in Binghamton, in concert with a display of original propaganda posters from the Great War. In the brightly light exhibit hall, attendees discussed propaganda—then and now. WWI propaganda music was played to set the tone for the discussion: Following the anti-war song, "I Didn't Raise my Boy to be a Soldier," came pro-war tunes such as "Pack Up your troubles in an old kit bag and smile, smile, smile," and "Over There" (the Yanks are coming), which—to illustrate the powerful influence of music to urge young men to kill—starts off, "Johnny, get your gun, get your gun, get your gun." We are grateful to the Roberson Museum for the opportunity to discuss the use of disinformation, exaggerations, and outright lies to promote economic-military goals.

Jack Gilroy

#091 – San Diego, CA

Chapter 91 has had a very active 2018 so far. The year started with member Stan Levin, a Korean War veteran, being honored in the *San Diego Union-Tribune*—a large, front-page article under "Making A Difference"—for his work giving out sleeping bags to homeless in San Diego.

Chapter members and friends walked

in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade, and later in two separate March For Our Lives demonstrations in support of the students at Parkland, Florida.

The chapter hosted a four-day My Mai Remembrance event on the 50th anniversary of the massacre, which was well attended and got good TV coverage. We thank Chicago VFP for bringing their great exhibit to San Diego.

The chapter set up "Hometown Arlington West" on Memorial Day, and has been speaking to local churches and political clubs about VFP and encouraging folks to join us.

In June, chapter members traveled to Tijuana in support of the new VFP chapter there, and enjoyed BBQ and camaraderie with the deported veterans.

As summer begins, we are starting our third season educating the public on the many downsides of the annual September Miramar Air Show here, asking the public to stay home, and may be purchasing billboard space on local freeways.

Gilbert E. Field

#092 – Seattle, WA

We held a rally at the VA Hospital to protest privatization, organized with AFGE. We received a lot of honks from motorists in response to our "Save Our Chapter Reports continued on next page..."



Chapter 92 members at Rep. Pramila Jayapal's 7th District Office on May Day, 2018.
 Left to right: Keith Orchard, Dan Gilman, Mike Dedrick, Albert Penta, Allen Tlusty,
 Ed Brighton, Rep. Jayapal, Will Alleckson, Kim Loftness, & Charles Davis
 Photo: Raman Khanna, Constituent Services & Outreach Coordinator for Rep. Jayapal

Chapter 092, Seattle, WA, continued...

VA” banner.

Rep. Pramila Jayapal graciously met with us on May Day, before the march. She consistently demonstrates she is as progressive with foreign policy issues as with domestic issues, and is outspoken against this war economy. Furthermore, she co-sponsored Rep. Ted Lieu’s bill, which prohibits the president from ordering a first use of nuclear weapons unless Congress declares war. She appreciates our support of her positions in this region close to Bangor Trident Base.

Our contingent of ten flew VFP flags in Olympia for Washington Poor People’s Campaign. A series of speakers included Chapter 92 President Dan Gilman, who spoke against the wasteful and unjust U.S. war economy. He spoke about how we cannot be silent, as Martin Luther King, Jr. said in his Beyond Vietnam speech, when it comes to U.S. wars and militarism. With this campaign we have a great opportunity to get out our message about war and militarism and how they are related to the other two evils he spoke about, racism and poverty.

Kim Loftness

#093 – South Central MI

Chapter members joined with Detroit Metro VFP Chapter 74 to set up and staff Arlington Michigan in Grand Circus Park, Detroit, as a Memorial Day observance. The display garnered local TV coverage and lively foot traffic, thanks in part to a Detroit Tigers game nearby.

In its first recent truth-in-recruiting effort, the chapter tabled at the city-wide College Night, March 22, in Ann Arbor, where military recruiters had tables alongside dozens of colleges. Response was favorable from families and school personnel. Chapter 93 plans to extend this effort to nearby Ypsilanti, where the “poverty draft” is likely a bigger factor in student decisions.

Our chapter tabled at the annual Earth Day festival in Ann Arbor, inviting children to color the flowers on the classic “War is Not Healthy for Children

and Other Living Things” graphic while chapter members chatted with parents.

In July, Chapter 93 will have a booth at the annual Ann Arbor Art Fairs, which draw thousands to the area. In October, we will host the traveling display commemorating the 50th anniversary of the My Lai Massacre, and present the annual John Lennon Concert to benefit our Peace Scholarship program.

Lynn Gilbert

#097 – Kansas City, MO

The week-long annual Unitarian Universalist (UU) General Assembly (GA) was held in Kansas City in late June; with over 4,000 attendees from the U.S. and abroad. As a faith community, UUs tend to be fairly liberal and active in many forms of social justice, but many were not familiar with the work of VFP. Veterans For Peace had a booth at the UUGA Exhibit Hall arranged and staffed by Ed Vail, a UU and VFP member at large, Kansas City Chapter President Sara Campbell, and various other members of the chapter.

Many of the booth’s steady stream of visitors sat down and had in-depth conversations with our members. Virtually all visitors, if they were not veterans, had relatives or friends who were. They



Sara Campbell and Ed Vail listen to stories of fellow veterans attending the UU General Assembly in Kansas City.

learned about the wide range of VFP's work, from educating about the true costs of war to helping vets heal moral injuries. Printed materials on offer from both National and the KC Chapter enabled visitors to get a good sense of the scope of VFP activities, and to connect with VFP chapters in their own locale.

The Kansas City Chapter plans to have a Reclaim Armistice Day table at the National WWI Memorial in Kansas City on November 11th.

Sara Campbell

#101 – South Bay / Peninsula, CA

In March, Chapter 101 members spoke at “Social Justice Day: The Challenge of Peace,” at Sacred Heart Prep in Atherton.

Addressing several classes, members explained how VFP works toward a goal of a peaceful world.

Also in March, chapters members displayed the “Save our VA” banner at the San Jose, California, Vietnam War memorial immediately after an observance ceremony to honor San Jose residents who died in the Vietnam War. As our members moved through the crowd passing out literature to those present, explaining the pending effort to privatize the VA, most veterans we spoke to supported the concept of saving the VA from privatization.

In April, VFP 101 members Doug Nelson and Harry Adams read original poetry at the King Library in San Jose. Part of National Poetry Month, the reading included poetry by both civilians and former soldiers in commemoration of the 43rd Anniversary of the Fall of Saigon.



Chapter 101 members Doug Nelson, Brady Williams, and Harry Adams serve dinner on Memorial Day at Grace Baptist Overnight Shelter in downtown San Jose, California.



Chapter 99 members say ‘NO’ to VA Privatization. Left to right: Gerald Harbinson, Bob Houde, Bruce Macdonald.

In May, with the Woman’s International League for Peace and Freedom, we co-sponsored a Poor People’s Campaign dinner, at which our members helped provide and serve food to homeless veterans and civilians. The event started with a song of unity by The Raging Grannies and ended with a bountiful meal.

Phil Pflager

#099 – Asheville / Western North Carolina

With the goal of raising public awareness about VFP and our purpose, we began 2018 with a January retreat focused on developing ideas and plans for actions and projects, scheduling them throughout the year. In May, the chapter held a well-attended public ceremony based on Julia Ward Howe’s Mother’s Day Proclamation for Peace, first officially read in 1870. In observance of Memorial Day, we marched for the first time in the annual Brevard, North Carolina, parade on Saturday, and on Monday we held our traditional wreath-laying ceremony at the Western North Carolina Veterans Memorial. In addition to these events, a “Save Our VA” standout held at Charles George VA Medical Center resulted in media coverage and an increase in our membership.

So far this year, our chapter has been represented in a number of events: Poor People’s Campaign rally in Raleigh; March For Our Lives rally and march in Asheville; and Hunger for Nuclear Disarmament fast at the Naval Submarine Base in Kings Bay, Ga., among others.

For the most current and complete coverage of our chapter events, activities, and published materials, we invite you to visit us on Facebook, at Veterans For Peace Chapter 099, and/or at our website: vfp099.org.

Gerry Werhan

#102 – Milwaukee, WI

The Milwaukee Chapter has formed working groups on each of our three priority programs for 2018—the Poor People’s Campaign, combatting Islamophobia, and abolishing nuclear weapons and the threat of nuclear war. We are planning an Armistice Day observance that includes speakers on each of those issues.

We have seen a resurgence of interest this year, with some new members and increased meeting attendance, and continue outreach to build on that enthusiasm. In June, we staffed literature tables at a community festival and a renewable energy fair that drew 13,000 visitors. We are working with student veterans at University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee to build a presence there and perhaps start a new VFP chapter.

An April benefit concert with folk musician-activist Tom Neilson drew a *Chapter Reports continued on next page...*

Chapter 102, Milwaukee, cont'd...

good crowd, raised money, and gave us some public exposure. We have already chosen a date for his return next spring.

We are cooperating with the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition to coordinate anti-Islamophobia efforts.

Paul Moriarity, an Army veteran who served in Bosnia, was elected chapter president, a post he had held several years ago. Mark Foreman stepped down as president but remains as treasurer.

Bill Christofferson

#104 – Evansville, IN

As a result of our December fundraiser, "Lennon Night," an annual benefit for VFP's Iraq Water Project, we sent \$2,127 to IWP in January. We thank Larry Miller, our chapter co-founder, for spearheading this music/poetry event once again, allowing us to continue our commitment to re-establishing potable water in Iraq.

Chapter members participated locally in an anti-gun violence vigil in February. On March 24, a number of our members braved the wet, cold, windy day to march against gun violence.

Our First Annual Peace on Earth Day spaghetti dinner/auction fundraiser on April 20 was a huge success, raising almost \$3,400 that will allow our chapter



Ch. 104 members braved the elements to participate in the March For Our Lives, March 24 on the Riverfront.

to bring in special programs and speakers this year. Plus, we donated \$100 to National, with a challenge to other chapters to do the same. If each does, this could provide a nice boost to our hardworking, underfunded national staff.

On May 9, we had our usual spring cookout at the Evansville VA clinic, with another cookout the following day at the Owensboro, Kentucky, clinic. Free food was provided the clinic staff plus patients and their families, as our thank-you for their service.

Caroline Nellis

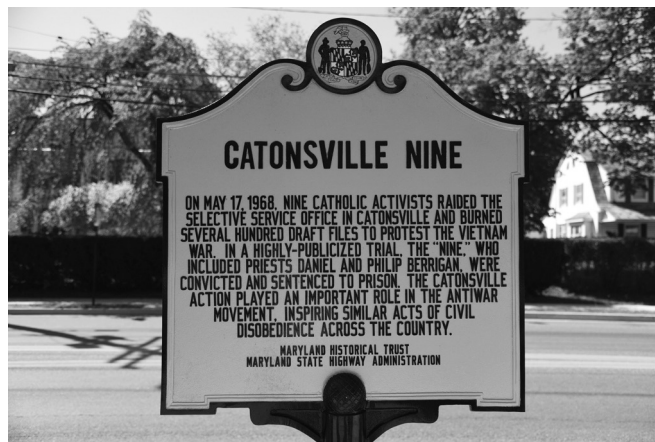
#105 – Baltimore, MD

Baltimore Phil Berrigan Memorial VFP, with a whole slew of other local schools, arts organizations, churches, and peace groups, coordinated a great series of events through May 2018 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the May 17, 1968, Catonsville 9 Vietnam-era draft-file burning action by chapter namesake Phil Berrigan and eight other Catholic activists whose radical actions were inspired by personal life experiences and guided by a gospel of love.

Amy Goodman keyed the symposium, and Col Ann Wright, Kathy Kelly, and surviving Catonsville 9 actionist Marjorie Melville spoke, among others. Vigils, marches, plays, church services, art exhibits, film showings, civil resistance, even unveiling of an official Maryland Historical Marker marked a very exciting month. Check the website catonsville9.org for photos and historical info.

The Baltimore Chapter is at a low ebb, having lost Vietnam-era veteran and underground GI news publisher Jim Baldrige to lung cancer in December 2017. But several new members came along in the Catonsville effort, so we hope to re-energize in the fall.

Ellen Barfield



The Baltimore Chapter sent in photos of the dedication ceremony for the Catonsville Nine Historical Marker erected in Catonsville, Maryland, on May 5, 2018. The Nine used homemade napalm in their May 17, 1968 draft-file burning action.



VFP Chapter 106 President Ron Unger shines a light cannon on the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center during the 2018 NRA National Convention in Dallas, Texas.

#106 – Dallas, TX

Since last reporting, Chapter 106 hosted: “An Evening with Coleen Rowley: America’s Perpetual State of War”; the 2018 Gaza Freedom Flotilla Fundraiser with Col. Ann Wright, with music by David Rovics, which raised several thousand dollars for the flotilla; and an exhibition of the Drones Quilt Project at the Oak Cliff Unitarian Universalist Church.

In addition, we co-hosted: “Dallas: Divest from the War Machine”; “Denton Divestment Day”; “Dallas: Tell BlackRock to Stop Making a Killing on Killing”; a protest of Rev. Robert Jeffress’ hateful rhetoric; and demonstrations at Chase’s and ExxonMobil’s annual shareholder meetings. With support from the Backbone Campaign, we projected in lights, “NRA Enables Domestic Terrorists” over the NRA National Convention banner on the Dallas Convention Center, an action that garnered local and national press.

We attended “Fighting to Protect Our Precious Resources” with retired USAF Colonel Kim Olson; demonstrated for peace in Palestine, Korea, Syria, and Iran; and donated a family food basket for Society of Native Nations’ potluck and mini powwow.

Leslie Harris was a delegate on VFP’s

incredibly memorable “Vietnam 50th Anniversary Commemoration Peace Tour” and reported back to the local community.

Chapter members visited Senator Cornyn’s office twice to discuss U.S. global reach, endless wars, and specifically North Korea and Yemen.

Leslie Harris

#112 – Ventura Co., CA

Veteran Michael Cervantes is assisting Truth in Recruitment of Santa Barbara County. He continues to be invited to the Oxnard Union High School District’s career fair, at which all branches of

the military are present.

The chapter has had a wealth of public tabling opportunities including at the MLK Jr. march and rally, the Women’s Day event in January, the March for Our Lives rally in March, a junior college two-day festival on diversity of culture, Earth Day, and the Juneteenth Festival. We are getting those *Peace In Our Times* newspapers into the hands of many passersby. On June 5, Native American veteran Joe Asebedo presented public commentary to the city council in Thousand Oaks on their local handling of the immigration issue.

Chapter members attended Oscar Lopez Rivera’s Cal State University Channel Islands talk about his life and his support for the citizens of Puerto Rico.

Member Cindy Piester arranged a screening of the film *Age of Consequences* at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Ventura, in conjunction with the monthly meeting of Citizens for Peaceful Resolutions (CPR). The film demonstrates the military’s knowledge of how climate change factors can affect relationships between nations.

Eighth grade students from Oxnard took a resolution to the Oxnard City Council requesting the City of Oxnard become a nuclear free zone. Before their presentation, the students’ teacher had invited Chapter 112 and CPR to speak in her classroom.

Michael Cervantes

Chapter Reports continued on next page...



Ventura County Chapter members attended Oscar Lopez Rivera’s Cal State University Channel Islands talk about his life and his support for the citizens of Puerto Rico.

#114 – Sheboygan, WI

Greetings from the Badger State's east coast. We missed a few issues, so I'll go back to December 2017. At the end of each year, our chapter donates 20 percent of our treasury to worthy projects. This past year we supported the VFP Agent Orange clean-up in Vietnam, as well as their land mine removal effort, shout out to Chapter 69! We also funded Vets Journey Home (vet retreats for PTSD), and Kathy Kelly's Duvet Project, providing warm sleeping bags for children in Afghan refugee camps.

In March 2018, we hosted our 14th annual Concert for Peace and Justice to a full house. This is the longest running event of its kind in the Midwest, combining entertainment with FYI spots addressing current issues.

We got involved once again with the Global Project for Peace. Our resident artist, Bob Fleming, sent original pieces to Morocco and Arizona. Fourteen of us marched in the Memorial Day parade, including our favorite WWII vet, Marge Behlen, riding in a Model A Ford. Our signage focused on PTSD-related suicides, which we consider uncounted casualties of war.

Finally, we look forward to meeting our brothers and sisters at the August VFP convention in St. Paul.

Tom Contrestan

#115 – Red Wing, MN

While we have been absent from this newsletter for a while, we have kept busy with our mission. We just presented the fourth annual Kellogg-Briand Scholarship award to a senior high school student, a competition in which participants answered the question, "How do we become a more peaceful people?"

We hosted Sami Rasouli, an Iraqi-American with the Muslim Peacemaker Team, who gave us an important message of reconciliation. He invited any of us to come to his city, Najaf, Iraq, as guests, and said the Iraqi people are very



MIKE HASTIE

After the My Lai commemoration, VFP Peace Tour participants walk to the home of Pham Thanh Cong for tea and conversation. At front, L to R: Chapter 160 tour leader Chuck Searcy, Pham Thanh Cong, Vietnamese Army film crew interpreter Ngung Nguyen, Susan Schnell, and Susan's daughter Nina Schnell. Mr. Cong was 11 years old when his three sisters and mother were killed by a grenade thrown into their hooch during the 1968 My Lai Massacre.

welcoming to American visitors who want to learn about their culture and make new friends.

We are presently preparing for the 16th annual Peacestock to be held July 14 in Red Wing, Minnesota, an event we coordinate along with Twin Cities Chapter 27. This year's theme is "American Empire: Who Benefits, Who Suffers." Our speakers are Medea Benjamin from Code Pink and Chris Mato Nunpa, a Native American scholar/professor. More information at: peacestockvfp.org.

William Habedank

#160 – Hanoi, Viet Nam

This year's Peace Tour of Vietnam, hosted by VFP Chapter 160 for the eighth consecutive year, was in some ways the most memorable. Our group of 40 participants observed some notable 50th anniversary events: the Tet Offensive of 1968, the siege of Khe Sanh, the My Lai Massacre. On March 16, we joined with Vietnamese villagers to commemorate the slaying of 504 unarmed children, women, and old men at My

Son. Mr. Pham Thanh Cong, a survivor whose entire family was killed that day, graciously invited us into his home.

The forgiveness conveyed by Mr. Cong, and his invitation to join him in a deep commitment to peace, was a powerful moment. A letter signed by some 600 VFP members to the people of Vietnam expressed our sorrow and our responsibility for what happened that terrible day.

Our VFP tour group visited projects which help mitigate the suffering caused by UXO and Agent Orange, and at the end of the tour our group donated \$40,000 split among six of those projects.

In Ho Chi Minh City, an informative exhibit of photos and text depicting GI anti-war resistance was capped by a candid dialogue between VFP tour members and Vietnamese veterans. A number of VFP members have expressed interest in another tour, so we will be informally polling convention attendees in St. Paul to see if there is enough interest to organize one more.

A very nice Vietnamese-produced video features interviews of some of our

tour group members, and may be viewed at <https://youtu.be/gc3MPKXEKBC>

Chuck Searcy

#161 – Iowa City, IA

We have been busy, but thus far have been unable to derail war's steamroller.

Yemen has been heavy on our minds. In March, a bunch of us visited with local Congressman Dave Loebsack and urged him to support and sign onto House Congressional Resolution No. 81, which mandates an end to unauthorized U.S. military involvement in Yemen. He subsequently did sign that resolution. A similar bunch met with a staffer of Senator Joni Ernst. No positive response, but she has said she wants Yemen to be debated in the Senate. We'll see.

We organized an all-day, community serial reading of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Riverside and Memphis speeches on April 4.

We tabled at a large Earth Day event, and participated in a large Gay Pride parade. June 15-17, at the Coralville Public Library, we hosted the My Lai Memorial Exhibit created by Mac MacDevitt, which was excellent and very well received, provoking many conversations, tears, and stunned silence.

We lead a Peace Rally every Friday in front of Old Capitol, and we look forward to greeting 15,000-plus bike riders on July 28, as they go from Iowa City to the Mississippi River on the last leg of The Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa.

Ed Flaherty

#162 – East Bay, CA

Chapter 162 members continue to support our regular activities: The Crosses of Lafayette twice yearly vigils; our monthly First Friday street fairs; and a continuing presence at the Berkeley City Council to monitor the militarization of local police.

Several of our members were involved in planning and participated in a half-

day conference, "Stop the War Machine, Save the Planet!" held on March 17 in the East Bay town of Orinda, California.

A number of our members were involved in supporting the Conscientious Objectors Day in Berkeley as well as the Poor People's Campaign in Sacramento.

East Bay Chapter 162 is proud to congratulate two of our members who are now sitting on the National VFP Board: Maurice Martin and Marti Guy Downing.

Note: If you want a VFP license plate frame, please send \$10 w/ address to: Cathe Norman, 113 Rantoul Cir., San Leandro, CA 94577; ph. 925-858-9153.

Cathe Norman

#168 – Louisville, KY

Chapter 168 is proud to report that our local Veterans For Peace Radio Hour is now on the air at Forward Radio, 106.5 FM in Louisville. Hosted by volunteers from VFP 168, Radio Hour features commentary, analysis, and interviews in line with our mission to foster peace and bring an end to destructive militarism. So far we have recorded four episodes and two have been broadcast: Patrick King's inaugural episode, "Who We Are," and Harold Trainer hosting "Costs of War." These episodes are available for download via soundcloud.com/wfmp-forward-radio—look for the Veterans For Peace Playlist. We are eager to talk with other chapters interested in producing content for local radio about sharing content. We are grateful for support from the Zinn Fund Grant for our Radio Hour project.

We continue to hold our regular third Sunday vigil. I am sad to report the passing of VFP member and WWII veteran Tom Moffett, a fixture in the fight for peace and justice in Louisville.

Steven Gardiner

#1003 – Ryukyu/Okinawa Ch. Kokusai (ROCK)

VFP-ROCK has been pretty busy. In December 2017 we hosted a delegation of VFP members focusing mainly on participating in the sit-in at Henoko. As usual, they were enthusiastically welcomed by the Okinawan sit-inners.

In 2018, we drafted a formal letter, based on research by Makishi Yoshikazu, pointing out that the absence of clear zones at either end of the Futenma Base airstrip is in violation of U.S. military safety standards. We sent this to eleven U.S. government officials, beginning with Secretary of Defense Mattis. A revised version was published in the March 30, 2018 issue of *The Diplomat*.

Following this, we wrote another letter pointing out that the new Marine



Several members of Chapter 168, shown here with a couple of supporters, tabled on May 19 at the Mighty Kindness Hoot in Louisville, KY, and on Memorial Day at Slugger Field, where the local minor league baseball team, the Louisville Bats, plays—reaching two different crowds with their message.

base being built at Henoko will also be surrounded by buildings that violate U.S. military safety standards for height, and sent it to the same address list. We sent both letters to GAO, for which we received signed acknowledgements.

Three VFP members, Tarak Kauff, Dud Hendricks, and Bruce Gagnon, came to Okinawa to join the "500-persons-a-day" sit-in action in the week beginning April 23. That week, we were able again to visit U.S. Consul General Joel Ehrendreich, who has been friendly toward VFP.

C. Douglas Lummis

“Now Therefore, I, Calvin Coolidge, President of the United States of America, ... do invite the people of the United States to observe the day in schools and churches, or other suitable places, with appropriate ceremonies expressive of our gratitude for peace and our desire for the continuance of friendly relations with all other peoples.”

Armistice Day proclamation of Nov. 3, 1926

It seems most appropriate that VFP Chapter 11 (the George Mizo Chapter in Santa Cruz, California), would be ahead of the curve in planning and celebrating the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day, which falls on 11/11/2018. (As chapter member Rico Baker points out, “2018 is also an 11 number.”)

“We heard about the ‘Reclaim Armistice Day’ project from the national office,” explains Rico, “and decided last minute to bring flags and posters to the Santa Cruz Clock Tower on 11/11/2017. We got some good feedback from cars honking, and folks showed up to tell stories about being veterans and why the idea of Armistice is so powerful. We rang bells and had a good time. When we realized that 2018 was going to be the 100th anniversary, we started to think of preparing something big. Wouldn’t it be great if we could do something meaningful here for Peace, we thought, especially since we did not like the idea of a Trump Veterans Day parade. We came up with the idea of holding an event each month on the 11th leading up to November.”

The momentum has been building since, with the first monthly event held on February 11, 2018 (they’ve missed

CORRECTION: We regret that the name of Alice Kurima Newberry, who participated in the last VFP Delegation to Okinawa, was inadvertently omitted in Ch. 1003 ROCK’s chapter report, which appeared on the last page of our Winter 2018 newsletter.

only one), and now there is a Facebook page, Armistice 100 Santa Cruz, for a rolling event called “Armistice Year.”

Though relatively small, the monthly gatherings at the Town Clock have been quite powerful. On March 11, 2018, Stacey Falls, a chemistry teacher at Santa Cruz High School, joined the Armistice 100 event after the school shooting in Parkland, Florida, and brought with her two of the students who had organized walkouts in response. Stacey spoke passionately about the fear her students live with and the requirement now for regular active-shooter drills at her school. She described overturning large tables

to blockade the door and searching for chemicals that might be thrown in defense, in case someone with a weapon entered her classroom. “I never imagined that I would be holding active-shooter drills when I became a school teacher,” she cried. On June 11, Medea Benjamin spoke at the Town Clock after Chapter 11 sponsored her to come and talk about her new book on Iran two days earlier. At the talk, which turned out to be a major event, the city’s mayor welcomed Medea to Santa Cruz with a special proclamation. David Swanson is now confirmed for October 12–13, ensuring another big-name peace event in the lead-up to November.

It is certain that Armistice 100 is happening in Santa Cruz, and someone contributed \$5,000 to a working fund to keep things moving forward, but details for Sunday, November 11 are still in flux. One thing *is* set: Saturday evening, November 10, there is to be a multi-faith event with choirs and speakers focusing on Armistice Day and Peace.

Planners have reserved the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium (seating capacity 1500-plus) for 11/11/2018, creating an opening for the possibility of producing an event with a major headliner. They have also reserved use of the Veterans Memorial Building for the day, creating an opening for day-long event programming. As far as the public celebration on the morning of November 11, organizers are still weighing the pros and cons of either a parade or a large gathering in front of the Veterans Memorial Building and Memorial Plaza (which contains a large eagle sculpture and plaque with the names of veterans killed in WW1).



Medea Benjamin of CodePink speaks at the Clock Tower in Santa Cruz, June 11, 2018, at one of the “Armistice Year” events organized by VFP Chapter 11 to build momentum for Armistice Day’s 100th Anniversary.

Several local speakers and musicians are already committed, and planners are waiting to hear back from bigger names outside the area. “We envision Santa Cruz [serving as] a potential West Coast [center for] Armistice Day/Veterans Day events...and inviting many VFP Chapters to participate,” says Rico. “Santa Cruz can have quite nice weather in November, so it might be attractive for a major event.”

Big dreams take many hands to pull off. If you are interested in what the Santa Cruz chapter is up to, around Armistice 100, and would like to jump in as a volunteer or as a collaborator, get in touch with Rico Baker & Claire Joy at redrockrico@gmail.com; 831-818-2196.

—Becky Luening

Celebrate Armistice Day on November 11th

by Madeleine Mysko

November. Veterans Day. I'm a veteran who can feel its approach in her bones. The smell of autumn in the air, the leaves turning—once again I'm overwhelmed by complicated feelings, so hard to explain. This year it's been especially trying, because I'm also bearing up under the weight of the PBS series on the war in Vietnam. Meanwhile the

Maybe we do need a place ... where we can sit on a bench in the shade of old trees, year after year of ongoing war, and consider what we know about the costs.

public arena is a minefield of viciousness over how we properly demonstrate our patriotism. It makes my hands shake to see it—how we can't even get through a football game without tearing each other apart.

Last week, right after the calendar turned to November, I walked to the memorials on the grounds of the Baltimore County Courthouse—the gleaming black Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and beyond it the newer, earthen-colored memorial dedicated to veterans who served in Operations Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom. I go there often. I write in my notebook there and sometimes take photos—in the morning and at dusk, on gray days and snowy days, in the dappled light of a gorgeous Memorial Day.

As I turned the corner on the courthouse lawn and approached the memorials, I was upset by something new on the path: Close to my feet, standing small but erect above the fallen leaves, a line of crisp American flags. I was upset, but I took a photo anyway, getting down on one knee to achieve the best angle. There were people walking by—it was lunch hour, a pretty day. All of a sudden I wanted to accost those innocent, unsuspecting people. "Armistice Day!" I want-

ed to yell at them. "Flags! Couldn't we just for once put the patriotism away?"

Few people care that the 11th day of the 11th month wasn't always called Veterans Day, that it used to be Armistice Day. Few people see the irony.

Once upon a time—99 years ago in fact—a devastating world war came to an end. To celebrate the peace, our nation set aside one sacred day each year, a day to join all nations in recalling the moment when at last the arms were laid down. Eleven bells would toll solemnly at the 11th hour, and nobody would march in patriotic parades displaying military might. But time went by, and then, after a second devastating world war, our nation gave up on Armistice Day. The 11th day of November became Veterans Day instead. It was as though we no longer believed in that blessed moment of peace when all the arms would be laid down. We dedicated ourselves to honoring those brave men and women who still carry the arms for us, the ones we keep sending off to wars we don't fully understand and haven't the courage or the political will to end.

Of course I didn't yell at anyone that day at the memorial. I got a grip and began my ritual of reading the dedication and the names of the dead. It took some time; on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Baltimore County, there are 148 names.

I used to have a quarrel with the wording on the memorial: "Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Dedicated to the Citizens of Baltimore County who served their Nation in Southeast Asia, 1957-1975." I used to think it wasn't right to dedicate this place to all of us veterans, just because we served. It seemed to me a memorial belonged to the dead. But lately I've had a change of heart. Veterans like me, whose service included seeing with our own eyes the suffering and death of others—maybe we do need a place dedicated to us. There we can sit on the bench in the shade of old trees, year after year of ongoing war, and consider what we know about the costs.



JAY WENK, PRESENTE!
In the above photo, Jay Wenk has just been handed the VFP Poet Laureate torch by Doug Rawlings at the 2017 convention in Chicago. We were saddened to hear of Jay's passing on May 29, 2018. He was 91. Below is a poem he shared via email on November 11, 2017.

GROWING PAINS

When I was a boy, I didn't ponder,
I absorbed what others put on my plate.
As Boy Scouts, uniformed, decorated, we
marched, saluted, sang, bugled and
drummed.
Unarmed, excepting sheath knives, on the
way to slaughter.

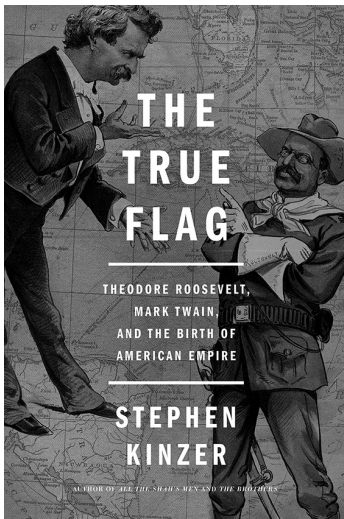
Patriotism/militarism was, for me and my
buddies, one word,
Indivisible, ordained, as in the pledge.
We had been fed an expurgated slice of
Death.

When my war was done,
I escaped that unity of lies,
discovered there is no respite from the
double word,
only standing up against it, outraged,
to find Peace within.

—JAY WENK
November 11, 2017

Maybe we even need this special day, the 11th of November. But if it were up to me, I'd ask a favor of the nation: Please return to us the name—and the blessed spirit — of Armistice.

Madeleine Mysko is a novelist, contributing editor to the American Journal of Nursing, and a member of the Baltimore chapter of Veterans For Peace; she served in the Army Nurse Corps at the Brooke Army Medical Center during the Vietnam War.



The True Flag: Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain, and the Birth of American Empire by Stephen Kinzer (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2017).

Review by Craig Etchison

Two questions I've been mulling over in recent years are these: When did the United States become a military thug on the world stage? And who was responsible, especially

given the tradition of avoiding foreign entanglements articulated by George Washington? The answers are found in a splendid new book by Stephen Kinzer, in which he delves deeply into a brief period of U.S. history at the end of the 19th century.

In Kinzer's account, the U.S. move toward militarism and empire begins principally with the Spanish-American War (1898) and the struggles for independence of Spain's island colonies, Cuba and the Philippines. We had used our military before then, against the Mexicans, French, and Native Americans, to establish the borders of the lower 48, but would we launch ourselves onto the world stage and grab colonies as the Europeans had? The Spanish-American War provoked a substantial debate among prominent Americans: Should we embrace an imperialistic policy or should mind out own business and let other countries decide their own fates?

Anti-imperialist Senator George F. Hoar addressed the U.S. Senate. "You have no right at the cannon's mouth to impose on an unwilling people your Declaration of Independence and your constitution and your notions of freedom and notions of what is good." Another vocal critic was Mark Twain, who had traveled the globe and seen the results of Eurocentric imperialism. As Kinzer explains, "He saw his own country rushing to repeat the follies he believed had corrupted Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Russia, and the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires. That way, he warned, lay war, oligarchy, militarism, and the suppression of freedom at home and abroad." The assertion that the U.S. would only use imperialism for good was renounced by Representative David Henderson, a leading Republican, who pointed out, "no international law makes the United States the regulator of the wrongs of the earth."

A principal spokesperson for imperialism and militarism, Theodore Roosevelt had some absurd views of what it meant to be a real man, such as killing others in military actions. Unfortunately, Teddy's brief war experience didn't give him anything like a true understanding of what war means, not just for soldiers, but even more so for civilians.

Much of the wisdom of those who spoke against our

becoming an imperial power at the end of the 19th century, could have applied in 2003 before we marched off to the Iraq debacle. In what is thought to be the first major anti-imperialism speech in U.S. history, Charles Eliot Norton said, "America has been compelled against the will of all her wisest and best to enter into a path of darkness and peril. Against their will she has been forced to turn back from the way of civilization to the way of barbarism, to renounce for the time her own ideals."

Others saw war and imperialism as a cancer on democracy. William G. Sumner, a Yale professor, wrote in 1899, "The great foe of democracy now and in the near future is plutocracy.... In that war, militarism, expansion, and imperialism will all favor plutocracy.... Therefore expansion and imperialism are a grand onslaught on democracy."

In spite of many who wished to prevent an imperialistic adventure—and the Senate vote was close—off to Cuba and off to the Philippines we went, and the result for those civilian populations was brutal, especially in the Philippines, where torture, including waterboarding, was used extensively. Twain's comment: "To make them confess—what? Truth? Or lies? How can one know which it is they are telling? For under unendurable pain a man confesses anything that is required of him, true or false, and his evidence is worthless." The war in the Philippines was the first time our soldiers, under orders, systematically brutalized civilians. It would not, sadly, be the last.

In 1901, explorer George Kennan exposed what was happening in the Philippines. "We have established a penal colony; we have burned native villages near which there has been an ambush or an attack by insurgent guerillas; we kill the wounded; we resort to torture as a means of obtaining information." As in recent history, some felt compelled to defend the military. *Harper's* argued, "Having the devil to fight, [the army] has sometimes used fire. Having semi-civilized men to fight, it has in some instances used semi-civilized methods. That ... will be inevitable as long as soldiers are men." So much for our laws and our supposed adherence to basic human decency.

Twain directly addressed the economic offshoot of U.S. militarism: "The government was irrevocably in the hands of the prodigiously rich and their hangers-on ... There was no principle but commercialism, no patriotism but of the pocket."

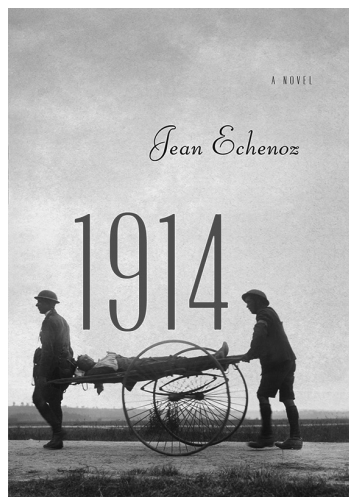
Kinzer expands on the thought that history has vindicated those anti-imperialists who predicted an aggressive foreign policy would have pernicious effects at home, listing many of the ways in which the Military-Industrial Complex has its hands around democracy's throat. Charles Ames was right when he warned that militarism would lead to 'trampling on the principles of free government.'"

At the end of Kinzer's book is a brief assessment of where decisions made in the late 1890s have gotten us. "From Iran and Guatemala to Iraq and Afghanistan," he says, "intervention has devastated societies and produced violent anti-American passion." He concludes that "History's great counsel to the United States is that it should more carefully weigh the

long-term effects of its foreign interventions.”

I can only hope that Kinzer’s treatise will open some eyes, perhaps encourage more people to think about the road we’re presently racing down. I’d like to think there’s still hope of taking the next exit and beginning to engage the world in a far different way. A vision of peaceful coexistence on a planet where diplomacy rules acknowledges a simple but profound truth—we are all human.

Craig Etchison served with the First Cav in Vietnam and is a member of VFP. He is a professor emeritus and has published a collection of short stories about his Vietnam experiences, Vietnam Snapshots. Among his young adult novels is Journey into Darkness, the story of a teenage girl caught up in war. In retirement he continues to write, paint, and garden



1914: A Novel by Jean Echenoz. Published in French as *14* (2012); Translated from the French by Linda Coverdale (New York: The New Press, 2014).

Review by Doug Rawlings

I am something of a “niche reader” when it comes to war fiction; I seek out literature that helps clarify the true costs of war. As a veteran of the American war in Viet Nam, I like to use Tim O’Brien’s

classic caveat to identify the best of the genre:

A true war story is never moral. It does not instruct, nor encourage virtue, nor suggest models of proper human behavior.... If a story seems moral, do not believe it.... As a first rule of thumb, ... you can tell a true war story by its absolute and uncompromising allegiance to obscenity and evil. (Tim O’Brien, *The Things They Carried*)

French novelist Jean Echenoz’s *1914* is fascinating, enlightening, and deeply, deeply saddening. For me, this slim book does for WWI what *The Iliad* does for the Ancient Greek Wars, what the short stories of Ambrose Bierce do for the American Civil War, and what Tim O’Brien’s stories do for “my war.” Echenoz’s laconic, almost dreamy, tone, combined with minute details of life, death, and mutilation in the trenches, is pitch perfect.

The novel revolves around a handful of characters, even though, as one astute reviewer commented, the war itself, perhaps, is the main character we follow in its macabre development. In a very short space of time, we are led from the domestic scene of young men marching to promises of honor and

Book Review continued on page 26...



The Golden Rule sails near the Golden Gate.

Golden Rule Update ...cont’d from page 5

stark contrast with the parade of war ships during **Fleet Weeks in Los Angeles and San Diego**. Some joined us on the ship during the San Diego Fleet Week protest while others handed out fliers ashore as we sailed by. The *Golden Rule* also went to Ensenada to take several Deported Veterans sailing, and they very much appreciated our solidarity!

We’re delighted with a new documentary titled *Making Waves: Rebirth of the Golden Rule*, a Caneyhead Production by James Knight and Wendy Rogan. Filmed during San Diego Fleet Week, the 10-minute version is embedded on the *Golden Rule* website, vfgoldenrule.org. The 25-minute version can be seen at vimeo.com/250517563 (password vfgprp18).

The Golden Rule will soon embark on the exciting next phase of her historic voyage. We are preparing to sail across the Pacific, to Hawaii, in November, and then on to the Marshall Islands, Guam, Okinawa, Korea, and Japan. With indigenous peace activists in all those countries, we will highlight the growing dangers of nuclear war and the militarization of the Pacific Island nations.

In preparation for her trip, the *Golden Rule* is receiving many upgrades, especially of communication and safety equipment. In July and August, final outfitting takes place in Humboldt Bay, the peace boat’s home port since she was rebuilt there from 2010 to 2015. In September, we sail back down the coast to San Diego, stopping along the way for Bon Voyage parties in San Francisco, Berkeley, Santa Cruz, Marina del Rey, and San Pedro. Each stop will be an opportunity to raise money for the trip and to continue to talk with people about the importance of the U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Final crew training, provisioning, and sea trials, as well as a grand farewell, before launching on the epic voyage around the Pacific, are slated for late October!

The important work of this VFP peace boat is made possible by the ongoing support from many members and chapters. **Thank you for keeping the wind in the sails of the Golden Rule!** For more information, please visit vfgoldenrule.org.

Q&A: How did you become a veteran for peace?



Mike Kerber marches in a local Veterans Day parade, uninvited.

Mike Kerber

NORMAL, ILLINOIS • VFP MEMBER SINCE 2003

When the Iraq War started, the memories of the uselessness of the Viet Nam War came back to me, and I needed to have some way to protest that war and every other one we seem to get into.

While serving in the artillery in Viet Nam (1969–70), I saw what war does to soldiers and civilians just so a politician can win an election. We can all be proud of our VFP.

Ray Kessler

MT. VERNON, INDIANA • VFP MEMBER SINCE 2014

I enlisted in the Air Force in 1969 after receiving a draft notice. Already a pacifist I struggled with my conscience for some time, especially after the Kent State massacre in May 1970. I was discharged as a conscientious objector in February 1972. I soon quit a job with General Electric because they were supplying thermoplastics for fighter jets. Found a job I could live with myself retiring four years ago.



Medea Benjamin and Ray Kessler in Washington D.C. at the 2017 Memorial Day demonstration with VFP and Code Pink.

Larry Johnson

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA • VFP MEMBER SINCE 2003

I grew up a committed member of my “Kill a Commie for Christ” church. Then I discovered Mennonite-type theology; pretty much identical to mine, except for their refusal to kill in war, a position in line with early Christians. I researched that historical fact, figuring early Christians more closely followed the real teachings of Jesus, and my personal study served as the basis for my C.O. statement: “If I get drafted, I’ll be a medic, but not carry a weapon.” Which is what happened. When I got out, I did a lot of peace-and-justice storytelling, but didn’t think of myself as a veteran, because I felt my actual service was benign.

For about ten years I was attracted each October to the VFP table at the annual teachers convention in Minnesota, but didn’t join until we invaded Iraq based on falsehood. Muttering, “Haven’t we learned anything?” I filled out the VFP membership form that had been buried on my desk, and that has made all the difference.

I served as President of Chapter 27 for five years (2009–13), and now organize World Storytelling Day each year, mainly from the perspective of “We were there. We know how horrible war is, and we demand the World find a way to end it.” In November 2016, I published a book titled *Sixty-One*, a collection of 61 stories calling for

Stories continued on next page...



Larry Johnson, on the 70-mile “Beating Weapons into Windmills Walk” during his 70th year, a sequel to the 61-mile hike he took at age 61.

What’s your story?

In your own words—around 200—describe how you came to VFP; tell us something about your military history or your personal evolution of consciousness. Include a high-res image of yourself—from the distant or recent past (or both). Send to: editor@veteransforpeace.org. We encourage submissions from members of all stripes, so please don’t be shy!

less war, therefore fewer veterans, and no more arguing about veteran care, especially mental health and exposure to chemical toxins. My original conscientious objection was pretty naive—just, “I won’t kill.” It has evolved into, “I’m conscientiously committed to an end to all injustice, using strategic force, but not killing.”

William Schleppegrell



Bill Schleppegrell, who will be 95 this year, has enjoyed almost 34 years of retirement, after a 36-year teaching career.

HIBBING, MINNESOTA
VFP MEMBER SINCE 2008

I was only 19 when I enlisted in the service a year after Pearl Harbor, and I must admit I was really gung-ho to fight those Germans! On my seventeenth dive-bombing mission as a P-47 Thunderbolt fighter pilot, I was shot down over Germany and spent the remainder of the war in Stalag I prison camp.

After the war, I returned to the University of Minnesota, but changed my major to German. *Why?*

I just had to answer the big question—Who *are* those people? And so I began to learn their language and study their culture, and eventually became a German language teacher. During the time between the prison camp and my career as a high school teacher, my whole attitude changed—I realized that those people are no different than us! I brought many groups of high school and college students to Germany, so they could learn firsthand how terrible war is and the destruction it brings to families, homes, and infrastructure. And I came to realize I could play a big part in developing a positive feeling for peace and a hatred for war just by talking about my experiences!

I joined most of the service organizations, but found the values I was looking for in Veterans For Peace. I’ve taken part in VFP parades in Grand Rapids and Hibbing. I have tried to be an example to young people and to my peers, and to promote what Thomas Mann so eloquently wrote, “War is a coward’s escape from the problems of peace!”



VFP continues to thrive— thanks, in part, to generous, thoughtful people who, in the past, remembered us with charitable gifts in their wills.

You can easily do this, too.

For more information, contact:
VFP Executive Director Michael McPearson
314-725-6005 + vfp@veteransforpeace.org

Jessie Medvan

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA •
VFP MEMBER SINCE 2013

My journey to peace began during my deployment with the Army National Guard in 2004. Stationed in Camp Cooke in Taji, Iraq, my job was to provide communications to 1st Cav from Texas and 39th artillery from Arkansas.

It was clear to me from the start that the civilian population did not want us there. While on our journey to Taji, we met a man who told us to leave because we were making things worse. I was very humbled by the Iraqis that I worked with. Despite the fact that their infrastructure was wrecked by our war, they would come to work on our camp to dispose of trash and sewage and to perform manual labor.

While deployed, I read books such as *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini. These were sent to me by family and proved to be instrumental in my coming to grips with what we had done to the people of Iraq, as these were stories that humanized people from the Middle East.

It was a long, slow, and grueling process to unpack how I felt about being part of an occupying Army and providing communications that undoubtedly led to innocent deaths. When I joined VFP Chapter 47 in 2013, it was a great chance for me to really begin a healing process and to be able to work toward peace within myself and for the world.



Jessie Medvan is an active member of VFP Chapter 47.

Poor People’s Campaign ...from page 8

least a dozen others. “Here in North Carolina,” she wrote, “we are buoyed by the knowledge that so many other VFPers were standing in solidarity as we cried out against the war economy and the ceaseless wars of terror supported in our name and with our tax dollars. As we sang today: ‘It’s gone on far too long, and we won’t be silent any more!’”

Chapter 157 members attended three additional rallies in Raleigh as well as PPC’s June 23rd Mass Mobilization in D.C., where Vicki got to march for a while beside VFP Executive Director Michael McPhearson. Her report signals inner strength and steady perseverance, not just for herself but for the PPC: “As Rev. Barber continues to remind us, we’ve really just begun. The Poor People’s Campaign will continue its fight against systemic poverty and racism, the war economy, environmental devastation, and this country’s distorted moral narrative until we set it right once and for all.

“Siempre en la lucha!”

Loose Ends

1914: A Novel ...book review cont'd from page 23

glory in exchange for a very short time in the field, into the trenches, where the realities of war take hold. Artillery attacks, mustard gas, rats, heat, despair and anger—no one is spared.

Upper-class Charles is swooped out of the infantry and placed into a plane to photograph the war from a privileged and, everyone thinks, protected space. Here we find recent technologies of warfare delightfully merging. Until "...a bullet travel[ling] 40 feet through the air at 3,280 feet per second at an altitude of 2,300 feet...enter[s] the left eye of Nobles [the pilot]...as Charles, gaping over Alfred's slumped shoulder, sees the ground on which he will crash approaching at tip-top speed...."

Charles' working-class brother, Anthime, at first seems to be worse off. As an infantryman, he slogs through the sickening brutality and inhumanity of the trenches to find himself one day emerging alive from an artillery attack using 105mm percussion-fuse shells that haphazardly claims the lives of all those around him:

[S]ilence seemed intent on returning when a tardy piece of shrapnel showed up...an iron fragment shaped like a polished Neolithic ax, smoking hot, the size of a man's hand, fully as sharp as a large shard of glass. Without even a glance at the others, as if it were settling a personal score, it sped directly toward Anthime as he was getting to his feet and, willy-nilly, lopped off his right arm clean as a whistle, just below the shoulder.

Echenoz's use of such trite, cliched language to capture a life-changing event is masterful. No God present in these trenches. Everything is a matter of chance. (Welcome to one of war's most hidden secrets.) Anthime's "good wound" lets him be sent home to be coddled and admired—and to be riddled by nightmares for the rest of his life.

At the novel's start, Anthime arrives at the barracks in the company of three fishing and cafe comrades: Padioleau (a butcher's boy), Bossis (a knacker), and Arcnel (a saddler). Bossis loses his life in the same assault that claims Anthime's arm, and Padioleau returns from the front a blind man. But it is Arcnel's fate that captures the absurdity and classism of all war. As the one in four remaining in the war, having escaped maiming or death (a "choice" in some cases), he "...found a third solution [for getting out], without truly choosing it, actually...." In a classic account of battlefield PTSD, Arcnel merely sets off on a meandering walk away from his unit, and finds himself moving toward life, only to be met by the dreaded gendarmes whose task it is "to make sure [soldiers] would get themselves killed properly." Lacking the wherewithal to effectively plead his case, Arcnel finds freedom by firing squad.

Back at home, Charles' lover, Blanche, watches the war from afar, but is not untouched by it. First of all, she has to live with the fact that it was she who suggested to an influential

doctor that Charles be given a "safer" assignment utilizing his photography and his interest in aviation. Under the cover of wartime, she manages to hide the shame of bearing Charles's illegitimate daughter after his death. Later, she and her family—owners of the shoe factory that profits by using cheaper materials on soldiers' boots as the war grinds on—takes care of Anthime after he returns a wounded hero. The novel closes with an offhand description of a night in Paris during which Anthime suddenly wakes up, crosses the corridor to Blanche's room, where "she wasn't sleeping either.... And the following autumn, during the very battle at Mons that turned out to be the last one, a male infant was born who was given the name Charles." At last, a male heir to continue the lineage of family—and of war.

Translator Linda Coverdale helps readers' understanding of the main "character"—the war itself—with fourteen "Translator's Notes," in which she defines terms used by the troops and offers insightful commentary, such as:

"The Battle of the Somme (July 1—November 18, 1916), one of the biggest and bloodiest battles of the war, was also one of the most deadly confrontations in history, with a butcher's bill of more than a million casualties." Butcher's bill, indeed. And:

"In the end, almost half the French infantry at the Western Front may have taken part in insubordination at some point, encouraged at times by the stunning example of the Russian Revolution, news of which was spread by socialist newspapers and the infantry rumor mills."

Before the book's end, we are convinced that both the cause and result of this war is, by all reasonable accounts, a devastating collapse of Western Civilization. And another truth is realized—that it was the spirit of the fatigued soldier that brought the war to an end. Mutinies in the ranks forebode disaster for the ruling classes and their subservient generals. And they knew it.

Near the end of the story, passing by the Gare de l'Est station in Paris less than a year before war's end, Anthime stops where drunken soldiers are gathered, "some of them singing seditious songs off-key." Recognizing "The Internationale" (a standard anthem of the socialist movement since the late nineteenth century), Anthime "stood perfectly still and his face showed no expression as he raised his right fist in solidarity, but no one saw him do it" (his phantom limb being invisible).

Perhaps we will yet see the so-called "War on Terror" troops mount their rebellion. Perhaps. That is always the thought that comes to my mind after reading a subversive "war novel"—maybe, just maybe, fictionalized history can be a prelude to the future. Jean Echenoz's superb tale is well worth reading for many reasons, a handy book to have at the ready when a reference point is needed. Read this book, we can tell the young soldiers of today, and see how history repeats itself, with you in the driver's seat. Come join us so we can work together to change the story.

Executive Director's Report: "Thank you for your service" ...cont'd from page 4

This was another reminder of what we are up against. Not only the economic draft, but the need for people to find meaning in life, feel good about what they are doing, and about themselves. People want to do good, they want to do the right thing, and our society teaches us that the military, above all else, is the place to find honor and self-sacrifice. The



Arlington West at Santa Monica Beach

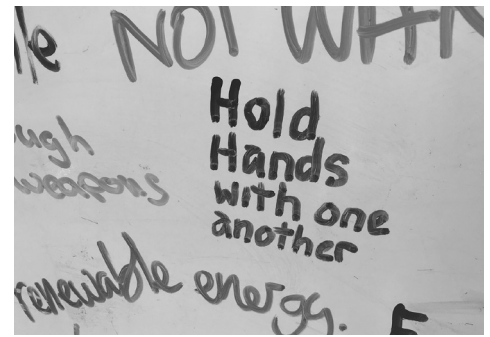
lure of being a hero, making your family and community proud, is a powerful force that is not easily countered with alternatives to military service, because there is no alternative to societal adulation. Quoting Dr. King, we need a "revolution in values" before we can hope to have young men and women refuse to fight in wars.

Next, I headed to San Diego. The Hugh Thompson Memorial Chapter 91 in San Diego is doing incredible work and growing their chapter. They have a two-prong approach. Their Compassion Campaign—originally motivated by the plight of homeless veterans—is an outreach effort to help displaced people sleeping on the streets of San Diego. As of May, they have given out 3,400 sleeping bags! This kind of campaign shows that we care and work for peace by directly helping people. Yet we demand accountability and systemic change. The chapter has also embarked on a five-year plan to change public understanding of what the local Miramar Air Show is actually all about. One of their goals, as stated on their website, is "to steer the public to resist attending ... in sufficient numbers to make the show not

worth the time, effort, risk and expense." [Learn more at www.sdvfp.org.] This type of action campaign is complimented by the direct services work. Walking the talk is always more effective than simply talking.

I went to San Diego primarily to visit VFP 182, the Baja, Mexico, Chapter founded mainly by deported U.S. veterans. This is the second time I have visited with our deported U.S. veteran members in Mexico. Led by Hector Lopez and Robert Vivar, I am inspired by the chapter's initiative and organizing. They are providing real-time help to people. A veteran who had just been deported arrived while I was there. I cannot imagine being forced out of my country to a place I know nothing about. How lost he must feel. However, the Veterans For Peace family is there to help with the transition and to fight with him for his right to return home.

The absurdity of the deported veterans is a stark example of our nation's distorted moral narrative. A narrative that justifies bombing and killing innocent people in the name of peace. A narrative that allows constant praise of veterans for our service, while at the same time



throwing us away to the streets, to deportation, or to a personal, deep despair that too many times ends in suicide. A narrative that claims pride in being a nation of immigrants, while at the same time attempting to extinguish the light guiding today's tired, poor and huddled masses to our nation's borders and shores. A narrative that claims to believe in liberty and equality yet elects a racist, misogynist narcissist president.

Veterans For Peace chapters and members are doing awesome and important work. Thank you for your service to humanity! You are working to end the scourge of war before it ends us. You know that war is a choice and that most who participate are manipulated into believing it is a necessary evil. I am grateful to you for making the choice to struggle for peace. I am honored to be in your company as a member of Veterans For Peace. —Michael T. McPhearson



Michael McPhearson (second from left) and members of San Diego Chapter 91 pose with deported veterans during a recent visit to VFP Chapter 182 in Tijuana, Baja, Mexico.



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Will we see you in St. Paul?

Planning for the August 22-26, 2018, VFP National Convention in St. Paul, Minnesota has been challenging at times, but our conference calls have enjoyed great participation, lively discussion, and fortunately, some hearty laughs.

The convention will be held at the InterContinental St. Paul Riverfront, a union hotel that was selected for its location and because it is owned and operated by the native Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, designated in their language as *Misi-zaagan'igani Anishinaabeg*.

Many, many excellent workshops, plenaries, and mini-plenaries are in store. Consolidating topics and presenters in a cogent manner has taken a lot of careful thought, and planners are feeling very good about the overall program as it continues to be defined and refined. Caucus meetings for VFP women and possible others are also on the program.

As of this writing, confirmed speakers include Christine Ahn, founder and international coordinator of Women Cross DMZ, who will be the keynote speaker at the banquet, and David Swanson, of World Beyond War, who will be a featured presenter, with local peace activists, for a closing plenary panel on the Kellogg-Briand Pact.

The traditional Wednesday evening Poetry Salon is being coordinated by John Spitzberg. Film screenings are also in the works. There will be two off-site special events:

- Thursday evening, a two-hour riverboat cruise on the Mississippi includes tasty finger food and music. Tickets are available via the registration page for an additional \$25/person).
- Friday evening, we are planning a public Poor People's Campaign event on the Intersection of Systemic Racism,

Poverty, War Economy and Ecological Devastation, featuring local speakers affected by these issues. That event will also feature music.

Thanks to John Jadryev, the morning yoga sessions have leaders from the Veteran's Yoga Project. And a local Zen Buddhist monk will lead the morning meditation sessions.

Many volunteers are still needed to make the convention run smoothly, and a comprehensive list of volunteer roles is being compiled and will be available soon. Make your interest in volunteering known in advance—we need you!

Please feel free to contact any of the members of Chapter 27's convention planning committee with questions: Penny Gardner: pennymae1948@gmail.com
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Members of the Will Miller Green Mountain VFP Chapter 57 in Vermont marched with this special new banner in two Memorial Day parades—in Middlebury and Vergennes—and two July 4th parades—in Montpelier and Warren—and will march with it again on Labor Day in Northfield. The 50-foot-long banner utilizes different colors and proportional lengths to represent the distorted 2019 U.S. budget:

ORANGE = 43.5 ft. (\$686 billion for War and Defense, up 13% from 2017)
YELLOW = 4.8 ft. (\$76 billion for Veterans Affairs, the human costs of war, up 12% from 2017);
BLUE = 1.7 ft. (\$26 billion for Dept. of State, for diplomacy and peace, down 26% from 2017);
INVISIBLE = 0 ft. (\$0 for Restoration of the Environment and Communities damaged by war and defense).