



Exposing the True Costs of War
and Militarism Since 1985

VETERANS FOR PEACE

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VFP Newsletter

veteransforpeace.org

Winter 2020-21

INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS HAS ENTERED INTO FORCE!

NUKES OUTLAWED!

The Treaty Explained

On January 22, 2021 the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) entered into force and became international law. With the entry into force of this groundbreaking treaty, nuclear weapons are now illegal under international law.

January 22nd, 2021 marked an historic milestone for this landmark treaty. Prior to its adoption, nuclear weapons were the only weapons of mass destruction not banned under international law, despite their catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Now, with the Treaty's entry into force on January 22nd, we can call nuclear weapons what they are: prohibited weapons of mass destruction, just like chemical weapons and biological weapons.

This is the first nuclear weapons treaty to call out the disproportionate impacts of nuclear weapons on Indigenous people and women and to address the need for survivors assistance and environmental remediation, and it provides a legal framework for lasting nuclear disarmament.

The U.S. is not yet a signatory to the Treaty, and instead of joining in support with the majority of countries in the world, it is doing its best to undermine it, so we have more work to do here

to follow the lead of countries in Latin America, Africa, and elsewhere that have helped negotiate this landmark treaty.

SOURCE: Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, <http://oregonpsr.org>



ICAN

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is a coalition of non-governmental organizations in one hundred countries promoting adherence to and implementation of the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Learn more at icanw.org

Veterans For Peace Statement

As veterans concerned about issues of war and peace, with one objective of our mission being "to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons," Veterans For Peace happily celebrates the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), the important new international peace initiative that entered into force on January 22, 2021. The "Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty," as it

is also known, was approved 122-1 by the UN General Assembly in July 2017, a clear expression of the will of the world's people.

The International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for its leadership in promoting this vital treaty, which prohibits the financing, development, possession, or transporting of nuclear weapons, as well as the use or threat to use nuclear weapons.

None of the nine nuclear-armed nations have yet signed onto the Treaty. These nuclear powers are in violation of the 50-year-old Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which requires them to negotiate in good faith to reduce and eventually eliminate all nuclear weapons. Instead, the U.S. and other nuclear powers are developing new generations of nuclear weapons, alarming many experts who believe the threat of nuclear war is greater than ever.

The U.S. is planning to spend \$494 billion over the next ten years, and over \$1.7 trillion in the next 30 years to "upgrade" its arsenal of nuclear weapons. Powerful and influential corporations will be making billions of dollars from the nuclear programs over the next decade, and will be contributing to the re-election campaigns of those

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Summer Issue

Submissions Deadline

: 10 June 2021 :

**Please keep Chapter Reports to
200 words.** Include VFP chapter
#/name, location, reporter name.
**Photos must be high resolution to
print at a decent size.** 1200 pixels
wide or more works well. Please
include a credit and a caption & try
to identify everyone in group shots.

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VFP Welcomes Our New Advisory Board Member Tom Morello!



We are happy to welcome our newest advisory board member, Tom Morello! Tom is a long time activist and outspoken political artist. He is best known as a musician with the landmark band, Rage Against the Machine and then with Audioslave; both bands have politics and activism as core parts of their music.

When Tom joined us on our live VFP Concert on December 1, 2020, he spoke a lot about how music and activism, intertwined, create a “sonic solidarity,” and that music can add to our sense of unity. Lyrics and music from all over the world have the ability to connect the world’s people by expressing frustrations and sentiments against militarism, racism, capitalism, etc., that are felt universally, and help people feel not so alone. We are so excited to have Tom joining our ranks!

“I’ve been inspired by Veterans For Peace for a long time and I really do believe that it is the most courageous soldier who is willing to stand up against an unjust war or any unjust aggression perpetuated by the military. It’s so important that veterans speak out and tell the truth of what is happening. In some ways, Veterans For Peace speak with the most authoritative voices in the country—because you were the state’s official agents of violence and you stand in sharp juxtaposition to the country’s glorification of the military by exposing injustice in military behavior and the unnecessary aggression of the U.S. military.

“So just a huge thanks to Veterans For Peace for having the courage to stand up as veterans for truth, justice, and a more decent and humane planet. I’m so grateful to be on the Advisory Board and to support Veterans For Peace in any way I can!”

On the Biden Transition

by Garrett Reppenhagen, VFP Executive Director

I joined Military Families Speak Out, Gold Star Families For Peace and other Veterans For Peace members before the holidays to meet with some of then-President-elect Joe Biden's transition team. After some hard work by MFSO, we were able to set up a video meeting. Our goal was to build a relationship, get some inside knowledge on the transition, and make clear the shared position of our combined groups: "Troops out now!"

Our team knew full well the chances were slim of actually making an impact on policy by having a short meeting with folks who still were not guaranteed positions in the incoming administration. We understand how compromised centrist democrats already are and their interest in reinforcing the status quo. We hold no illusions about the history of the individual leaders or the president-elect.

However, these meetings are useful in many ways. The obvious is, there is an outside chance we could provide the political cover for politicians who want to make the right decisions; they could share our stories as anecdotal talking points to support some shift in war policies that have been unmoved in so many years. We live in different times, and as circumstances change nationally and globally it provides new context that all former policy decisions can be weighed against. Economy, climate and social stability all contribute to a unique situation presently, potentially offering new directions for people who appeared stubborn on the same issues previously.

Another advantage of holding these meetings is that these conversations are organizing opportunities that can be used to build power and drive accountability actions for the peace movement. As we try to challenge militarism and grow another mass movement that opposes aggressive foreign policy, we need markers that provide a narrative. Sometimes getting the answer we don't want to hear provides the reason to escalate tactics. Engaging in these conversations keeps us on a moral



high ground to the outside observer. Of course we could claim we have tried to sway the minds of the government, political party, and even these same players before now without seeing the desired response, or even respect paid to our position, but why not make sure we check the box and eliminate anyone who might say we didn't follow proper channels to make an honest attempt?

Veterans For Peace will never resemble an inside-D.C. think tank full of policy wonks. Our role is more of a watchdog organization that calls out the injustices, harmful decisions, and shameful acts our country engages in. We mobilize as activists and prepare to make personal sacrifices to educate the public and shame our institutions, while elaborating a realistic vision for positive change.

We know that in a lot of ways the whole system is rigged against regular people. We are not deluding ourselves about the new Biden administration and the 117th Congress, but we can acknowledge that the last administration was incredibly dangerous on so many fronts. We will not just accept the marginal victories or half attempts to right the wrongs of this nation. Life everywhere is too precious and current circumstances too dangerous to allow any leader to not commit fully to reversing climate destruction, eliminating the threat of nuclear war, and championing peace.

The USS Bowfin A campaign for honest telling of war history

HAWAII—Chapter 113 is working with VFP ROCK (Okinawa Ch. 1003) on a campaign concerning the *USS Bowfin*, a World War II submarine on display at Pearl Harbor. The *Bowfin* torpedoed and sunk the civilian cargo/passenger ship, *Tsushima Maru*, sailing between Okinawa and mainland Japan in 1944, which carried over 1,500 civilian passengers—children, teachers and parents. There

were 826 children onboard; 767 children died in the torpedoing; only 59 survived.

As one might anticipate, the educational displays at the *USS Bowfin* exhibit in Pearl Harbor make no mention of this history. We are trying to get the foundation in charge of the *Bowfin* to display an honest telling of the history of the submarine that includes recognition of the tragic human costs of war.

The *Tsushima-maru* Memorial Museum in Naha, Okinawa, memorializes those killed. Our two chapters will make a donation on behalf of VFP to the museum: http://tsushimamaru.or.jp/?page_id=85

RELATED ARTICLES BY HAWAII' CHAPTER MEMBERS:

Pete Doktor's essay about the tragedy, "The *Tsushima Maru* Disaster: No Accident or Irony—Our Ignorance Breeds Recurrence," was published in 2019 at *The Hawaiian Independent*. Link: <https://bit.ly/3jumHLb>

"A Brief History of Military Poisoning of Hawai'i," co-authored by Ann Wright, can be found on *Popular Resistance* at <https://popularresistance.org/a-brief-history-of-us-military-poisoning-of-hawaii/>.

—Ann Wright, VFP Chapter 113, Hawai'i

Organizing for Peace and Social Justice in 2021

Dear Veterans For Peace,

Another year has passed, full of trials, but also triumphs. Reflecting on the experiences of 2020 and the difficult transition we witnessed going into 2021, I can think of several lessons we have learned, or are still learning, from the challenges we have faced, alone and together, this past year.

First and foremost, many Americans have gained a better understanding of the deep racism that underpins our society and continues to exist. More of us are finding the courage to look at our own white privilege (and other privileges) and see that there is much work to be done to dismantle systems that uphold and benefit from white supremacy.

Second, the pandemic has brought increased awareness of the need for universal healthcare, paid sick leave, and more support for our healthcare system overall. Financial hardships caused by COVID-19 have revealed and accelerated wide gaps in our economic system and started conversations about the need for a universal basic income.

Third, I have noticed that members of Veterans For Peace continue to be open to learning and re-examining their ideas of what peace and social justice might look like. Personally, I have learned from 14+ years of activism to challenge myself to listen, talk through, and be willing to change my mind about what I have decided is the right thing to do. I am really happy to see Veterans For Peace going through this same process as an organization, and I am committed to ensuring we have the space and resources to support this growth.

For example—and I can only speak from my own experience—when members brought up concerns in the past about members mistreating each other, they were often dismissed. Now we are having more open conversations about the importance of being kind to one another and holding each other accountable.

When women voiced feelings in the

past about being marginalized within the organization, their concerns were dismissed. Now we are consciously making space to discuss the concerns of women, especially women veterans and women in the military.

When BIPOC members previously brought up the need to talk about the impacts of colonization and the need to decolonize the peace movement, they were attacked, ridiculed and silenced. Now we are consciously making space for these and other important discussions.

In the past, women and BIPOC members were invited into leadership positions to make VFP look good, only to be tokenized. Now we are being thoughtful about ensuring that no member is used for their appearance, and that all members are seen and heard and authentically valued.

Make no mistake, I am not saying that VFP is now perfect, or that we don't have a lot of work to do—on ourselves as members, and also as an organization. But I see space opening up for us to have honest conversations that I don't think existed before. I recall when Michael McPhearson and others first brought up the idea of *Peace at Home*, *Peace Abroad*, and the backlash that ensued from those who felt our racist, white supremacist, sexist, and otherwise abusive domestic policies had nothing to do with our racist, white supremacist, sexist, and otherwise abusive foreign policies. Now, not only do our members support us in making these connections, but we are also making more space as an organization to discuss these issues and take action around them.

There is still a lot of work to be done, and no one ever said it would be easy,

but always remember that there is power in unity. We do not have to win over every single person, just about 10% of the population, for change to happen. For certain, change is coming. Let's join forces to make sure it's change for the greater good.

Adrienne Kinne, VFP President



VFP Board President Adrienne Kinne gets ready to ring in the New Year (2019)

ONGOING VFP EVENTS

Find more VFP events on page 24 and online at veteransforpeace.org

- **VFP Open Mic Nights** every Friday evening. Submission Guidelines: <https://www.veteransforpeace.org/our-work/vfp-open-mic>
- **#StandDownLive** every Wednesday on VFP's Facebook Live and YouTube: 5 pm (E), 4 pm (C), 2 pm (P).
- **VFP Book Group "Be the Change"** meets every other Sunday afternoon. Sign up at <https://veteransforpeace.salsalabs.org/vfpbookclub>

WELCOME TO VETERANS FOR PEACE



Presenting Our 2021 VFP Board of Directors

Congratulations to re-elected and newly elected board members Michael Dempsey, Ken Mayers, Paul Cox, and Susan Schnall.

Terms Expiring 2021

- Miles Megaciph, Treasurer
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Terms Expiring 2023

- Michael Dempsey, Secretary
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Veterans For Peace will hold our convention online again this year. We had an amazing experience last year and it was our highest attended convention yet!

Many of us miss being able to greet each other in person, but we also know that each and every one of us wants to make sure all of our members are safe and healthy. It is not clear when Covid concerns will have abated enough to give us the confidence to plan an in-person gathering, so we decided to forge ahead with another virtual event.

SAVE THE DATE

The 2021 Veterans For Peace Convention will take place Thursday



through Sunday, August 12–15, so be sure to save those dates in your calendars!

The Convention Committee is busy at work, talking through potential themes, logos, plenary speakers and everything that goes into creating a great experience for our members. Building on the success we had in 2020, the 2021 convention will include plenty of opportunities for connecting via social events and

discussion rooms. We appreciate all the time folks took in filling out our evaluation form from last year's convention. Your comments are guiding us in planning a great convention experience for everyone.

WATCH FOR UPDATES

In the coming months, we will share convention details as they unfold, including opportunities for learning how to access and navigate the convention-hosting platform. We will do our best to make sure that everyone who wants to participate will be able to, by providing the technological support needed.

Stay tuned for more details!
2021 Online Convention Committee

SAVE OUR VA National Campaign Update

Contact: Jeff Roy (royjeff48@gmail.com)

With the start of a new year (and gladly leaving 2020 behind), the SAVE OUR VA (SOVA) National Campaign continues its work to protect, fully fund, staff, improve, and expand the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). To accomplish this, the Campaign must broaden and deepen its national network of VFP Chapter Committees and individuals who will act to protect and support VHA—the best healthcare system available for veterans.

In practical terms, this means:

- Reactivating or forming local Chapter SOVA Committees that can implement local actions. These actions include public informational picketing to demonstrate support for VA healthcare and VA union workers and hosting Zoom Town Hall webinars on the issues showcasing speakers from the Veterans Healthcare Policy Institute;
- Encouraging VFP Chapter Committees to establish and deepen relationships with their Members of Congress (MOCs) and become sources of perspective on VHA legislation;
- Encouraging VFP members to join the SOVA National Alert List and respond to monthly alerts by sending sample letters to their MOC regarding legislation;
- Encouraging SOVA Chapter activists to submit “letters to the editor” to local media;
- Recruiting members of local Chapters to join one of five National SOVA Subcommittees: Outreach, Lobbying/Legislation, Education/Media, Events, and Fundraising.

The value of the VHA to veterans and the general public is well illustrated by its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. VHA facilities quickly stopped elective procedures in preparation for the pandemic. They immediately limited access to federal VA nursing homes and have had fewer COVID infections and deaths than private facilities. Telehealth services expanded 1,653% between February and November, protecting patients and staff from exposure—a practice Medicare adopted. The VA pioneered tele-ICUs, so staff could advise areas lacking resources/expertise. Data shows fewer racial and economic disparities in COVID infections and deaths, likely related to better chronic care prior to the pandemic. The VA set aside ICU beds to serve the general community and provided staff to other facilities. In light of all these factors and much more, SOVA supports a strong VA that can serve as a model for health care in the U.S.

—SAVE OUR VA National Campaign Steering Committee



December 2020—SAVE OUR VA and American Fed. of Government Employees (AFGE) union members protest outside Minneapolis VA.

SIGN UP FOR SOVA ALERTS:

<http://bit.ly/SOVASignUp!>

DONATE: Help fund the volunteer work of the SAVE OUR VA National Campaign, at <http://bit.ly/DonateSOVA>. We thank you for your concern, activism and support!



June 5, 2019, Manhattan VA Hospital, New York City—One of many protests across the country where Veterans For Peace have joined forces with nurses and other VA employees to protest and draw attention to the privatization of the VA. Photo: Bonnie Castillo, NNU.

Korea Peace Campaign

Contact: Ann Wright (kpc@veteransforpeace.org)

Veterans For Peace join others in calling for the Suspension of U.S.–ROK Combined Military Exercises

Veterans For Peace U.S. and a handful of our chapters are among 110 U.S. organizations that signed onto this call, along with 197 South Korean organizations, and 79 International Organizations including *Veteranos Por la Paz España* (VFP Spain) and *Veterans For Peace ROCK, Okinawa*. The statement was posted at **Korea Peace Now** (koreapeacenow.org) on January 26, 2021:

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED civil society organizations in the United States, South Korea, and around the world, call on President Biden to suspend the annual U.S.–South Korea (ROK) combined military exercises. Suspending these costly and highly provocative war exercises will be a crucial step toward re-starting genuine diplomacy with North Korea (DPRK). It will remove a formidable obstacle to a peaceful resolution of the ongoing 70-year-old Korean War and allow all parties to focus on other intractable global issues facing our nations today, such as creating a nuclear weapons-free world and resolving the current COVID-19 pandemic.

In the mid-1950s, just after the Korean War, the U.S. and ROK began combined military exercises in South Korea that prepare for war with North Korea. In the 1970s the drills developed into large-scale exercises that mobilize considerable

WE WANT PEACE TALKS, NOT WAR DRILLS AND MILITARY CONFRONTATION. WE URGE THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION TO RESOLVE THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND NORTH KOREA—THE UNRESOLVED KOREAN WAR...

weapons, equipment and the deployment of U.S. troops stationed in both South Korea as well as U.S. bases outside the Korean Peninsula. Since the 2000s they have been based on operation plans that reportedly include pre-emptive strikes and “decapitation measures” against the North Korean leadership. Due to their scale and provocative nature, the annual U.S.–ROK combined exercises have long been a trigger point for heightened military and political tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

For years these combined military exercises have involved the use of B-2 bombers (which are designed to drop nuclear



TAKE ACTION: Sign now to add your voice to the U.S., South Korea (ROK) and international organizations asking for a suspension of the U.S.–ROK combined military exercises. Find the petition at: <https://bit.ly/3prL9z2>

bombs), nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and submarines, as well as the firing of long-range artillery and other weapons. They not only increased tensions on the Korean Peninsula, they have cost U.S. taxpayers billions of dollars and have caused irreparable harm to local residents and the environment in South Korea.

At a time when the world is facing urgent humanitarian, environmental, and economic crises, these military exercises divert critically needed resources away from our capacity to provide true human security such as healthcare, a sustainable environment, and other priorities. Furthermore, they heighten geopolitical tensions and risk re-igniting a hot war on the Korean Peninsula, which would have catastrophic consequences for millions of people.

We want peace talks, not war drills and military confrontation. We urge the Biden Administration to resolve the root cause of the conflict between the United States and North Korea—the unresolved Korean War—which has driven a dangerous arms race, harmed the most vulnerable people through punishing sanctions, and enforced the tragic separation of hundreds of thousands of Korean families. Continuing to rely on isolation, pressure, and threats to force North Korea’s unilateral denuclearization is a recipe for failure.

Suspending the combined military exercises will be a major confidence-building measure toward renewing diplomacy to resolve the longstanding 70-year-old conflict with North Korea and, ultimately, achieve permanent peace and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

The full list of signatories can be viewed with the call posted at **Korea Peace Now** via this link: <https://bit.ly/3j2VDCr>.

The Climate Crisis and Militarism Working Group

Contact: climate@veteransforpeace.org

As you are probably aware, the crisis of global climate change grows worse each day. What gets much less attention is the contribution of the U.S. military to this crisis. This is even true within most climate activist groups. The U.S. military is the largest institutional consumer of fossil fuels and emitter of greenhouse gases in the world. As Veterans For Peace, part of our Mission Statement is to educate the public on the costs of war; thus, as we publicize the various ways the U.S. military is destructive to people's well-being and to our planet, we need to highlight and oppose the military's part in exacerbating the global climate emergency.

The Climate Crisis and Militarism Working Group of VFP (CCMWG) formed to take the lead in carrying this out. We invite you to join us! Enclosed with this newsletter is our brochure, a tool to educate folks on the U.S. military and the climate crisis. It can be downloaded at <https://www.veteransforpeace.org/our-work/working-groups/climate-crisis>. Please distribute this brochure widely—both electronically as a PDF and by printing it out and making paper copies.

Our Working Group has prepared a slideshow that addresses the most relevant concerns of our society. The COVID-19 pandemic has lessons to teach us beyond our immediate survival. With the breach of the U.S. Capitol by armed insurrectionists on January 6th, many across the country are asking if our national security system is really keeping us safe.



Members of Chapter 34 at the September 20, 2019 Climate Strike in New York City. Banner and Photo: Ellen Davidson

Global warring has circled back to us all as global warming. Understanding how U.S. militarism contributes to the climate crisis is essential to fixing the problem.

We would like to present via Zoom to your chapter or to any group who would be interested. Spreading this information is critical and it is *our* work. Nobody else is going to do it for us. The time to act is *now*.

Getting the U.S. military to begin reducing its carbon “boot print” and redirecting our tax dollars to social needs is a much-needed project in the global struggle to save and enhance life on this planet. Our lives do indeed depend on it.



NUKES OUTLAWED! ... from page 1

members of Congress who vote to continue their nuclear weapons arsenal and their profits.

These political leaders need to hear from everyday people who are rightfully concerned about the very survival of human civilization. We must demand that the U.S. and all the nuclear powers sign the Treaty and begin the de-nuclearization of the planet.

The Nuclear Ban Treaty goes into force four days after the national holiday honoring Martin Luther King, Jr., who passionately called for ending the nuclear arms race. In his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech in December 1964, Reverend King implored,

“Somehow we must transform the dynamics of the world power struggle from the negative nuclear arms race which no one can win to a positive contest to harness man's creative genius for the purpose of making peace and prosperity a reality for all of the nations of the world. In short, we must shift the arms race into a ‘peace race.’”

The United States can be a leader in the peace race, but only if our leaders hear a loud message from the people: nuclear weapons are an unacceptable threat to all of humanity, and they are now also illegal.

Veterans For Peace calls on the U.S. government to take immediate action to step back from the brink of nuclear war, and to show leadership in the worldwide effort to eliminate all nuclear weapons. The future of humanity hangs in the balance.

This statement was authored by Gerry Condon, Viet Nam-era veteran and former board president of Veterans For Peace.

PROTESTING WAR PROFITEERS



Photo by Victoria Estes

Rejecting Raytheon in Asheville

Imagine our surprise when we learned in October that our county, state, and local Chamber of Commerce had been negotiating with Raytheon for over 15 months to build a Pratt & Whitney plant in Asheville, North Carolina. Pratt & Whitney builds engines for the F-35s, as well as for commercial aircraft. In November, VFP members showed up at the one and only county commissioners' hearing on the matter, along with members of the Sunrise Movement and the Democratic Socialists of America, only to have our 30 dissenting testimonies disregarded and a unanimous vote taken to give P&W a \$27 million tax incentive to locate here.

The bait for the local acquiescence was the promise of 800 pretty well-paying jobs, a bonanza for our pandemic-struck tourist economy. And of course there was the usual talk about how this 1.2 million-square-foot plant on 100 acres of prime forest land would serve as a catalyst for further economic development in the area.

With outrage and a sense of betrayal, we who testified formed a coalition to oppose this steamroller of a project, calling ourselves Reject Raytheon AVL. We set up social media sites, wrote letters to the editor and opinion pieces, continued to show up at the county commissioners' meetings voicing our outrage, and conducted a die-in in the town center. We went out to the land being stripped for the plant, took pictures and got them out in public for people to see what looks like another mountaintop removal project here in Appalachia.

Our concerns are about bringing Raytheon—a war profiteer—to our community, especially in light of its sales of equipment to Saudi Arabia for use in its genocide in Yemen. And we also oppose investing in a multinational aerospace and defense corporation whose business model depends on the ravenous use of fossil fuels in this time of climate emergency. Then there is the

polluting of the French Broad River that is bound to happen from the use of toxic chemicals and sedimentation run-off. The traffic tie-ups on the road leading to the entrance of the plant is yet another issue. As well, opportunities have been lost to invest in local businesses and to deliver on promises of reparations to our African-American community.

We are only two months into our movement at this point and plan to keep at our resistance for the long haul. We may or may not be able to stop Raytheon from moving here, but we can expose them for who they are and what they do. We can use Raytheon to raise people's consciousness, and consciences, about the extractive role of these huge defense contractors in our economy, the wars and the migration they fuel, and the immorality of our own complicity with them. And that's exactly what we mean to do.

—Ken Jones, VFP # 099, Asheville, NC

CELEBRATING THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN!



“The elimination of nuclear weapons remains the highest disarmament priority of the United Nations. The Secretary-General calls on all States to work together to realize this ambition to advance common security and collective safety.”

—United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

DIRECTLY ABOVE: Among the 40–50 people who attended the New York City event, held at the Isaiah Wall across from the UN were 10 members of VFP Chapter 34. The two-hour event, featuring speakers, music, and chanting by Buddhist monks, was organized by Anthony Donovan, a long-time anti-nuclear activist and a very valued associate member of NYC VFP. Photo: Ellen Davidson

TOP CENTER: One of several messages projected onto the side of the UN building in the late night and early morning hours before the treaty entered into force on January 22nd. The four photos flanking that shot are from the Boston event in which VFP’s “Smedley Butler Brigade” partnered with WILPF and other anti-nuclear organizations to celebrate the nuclear weapons ban. Boston photos: Nate Goldshlag

#NuclearBan #TPNW



DIRECTLY ABOVE: VFP Chapter 35 celebrated the TPNW by marching with other Washington Against Nuclear Weapons Coalition members (wanwcoalition.org). This picture was snapped at the Peyton Building at 10 N. Post St. in Spokane after informational packets were delivered to the Congressional offices housed there. Their numbers grew as the activists proceeded to stage demonstrations at the Foley Federal Building and the Lincoln statue. Photo: Hollis Higgins

TOP: Two illuminated messages, from Hiroshima and New York City respectively, sourced from Twitter posts tagged #NuclearBan. The graphic at right was created by Oregon Physicians of Responsibility, which hosted a wonderful virtual celebration and raised a toast to the international Nuclear Weapons Ban on the night before it took effect.

“
I never thought I would live to see the day where enough countries would sign on to the nuclear ban treaty... it is like a dream.

Dr. Hideko Tamura Snider, hibakusha, anti-nuclear activist, and One Sunny Day Initiatives founder

#ReclaimArmistice



**VETERAN'S DAY
PEACE TREE COMMEMORATION
OAK HILL CEMETARY**

Veterans For Peace Chapter 104 members dedicate the Peace Tree progeny at the veterans area of Oak Hill Cemetery in Evansville, Indiana, to commemorate Armistice Day 2020 (see Chapter 104 report). Photo: Eyewitness News, WEHT/WTVW, Evansville, Indiana



Celebrations of the 102nd anniversary of the WWI Armistice may have looked a little different than past Armistice Day celebrations, but Veterans For Peace chapters and members across the U.S. and abroad still took the lead to Reclaim

Armistice Day as a “day dedicated to the cause of world peace.” Whether hosting virtual inspirational gatherings or adapting in-person events to ensure everyone’s safety, we saw our members embracing creative ways to continue pushing the celebration of peace into the national conversation on Veterans Day!

Among the online offerings were a special edition of the weekly VFP **#StandDownLive** panel discussion and the premiere of the new VFP Armistice Day video which featured a number of VFP Members, Board Members, and Advisory Board Members. During the 2-hour special edition of **#StandDownLive**, hosts Natasha Erskine (VFP Board Vice President) and Miles Megaciph (VFP Board Treasurer) invited Brittany Ramos DeBarros (Organizing Director, About Face: Veterans Against the War), VFP Executive Director Garrett Reppenhagen, and VFP Board Member Ben Schrader to discuss

the far-too-often misunderstood origins of this international day for the recognition and celebration of peace.

Check out the Chapter Reports in this issue to read more about how chapters took action, and visit the **Armistice Day 2020 Recap** page at <http://bit.ly/AD2020Recap> to watch recordings of the many wonderful virtual events, and find additional photos and reports from local chapter actions, links to articles, podcasts, radio shows, videos and more!



The Clarence Kailin VFP Chapter 25 in Madison, Wisconsin, had 100 of these new yard signs made for 2021. Proceeds from sales will help fund chapter activities.

VFP CHAPTER REPORTS



On 11/11, 2020, at 11am, Chapter 23 members reclaimed Armistice Day by gathering with flags and banners—and masks!—on the Veterans Memorial Bridge in Rochester, New York. Built in the 1930s, the bridge was so named at the request of Gold Star Mothers who wanted to honor those who had served and died in “the Great War” that ended with the 11-11-11 Armistice. Photo: Phyllis Griswold

#023 – ROCHESTER, NY

Chapter 23 continues to hold meetings on the third Wednesday of every month, inviting speakers as a way of engaging members and raising interest in attending these monthly Zoom meetings.

Chapter 23 had a strong showing for an International Peace Day rally and demonstration on September 20, 2020, in Rochester, in conjunction with Genesee Valley Citizens for Peace and other peace advocates.

Following a presentation by Hector Lopez and Manny Valenzuela of the Deported Veterans Advocacy Project during our October 2020 Zoom meeting, the Chapter voted to make a donation to directly aid the Unified U.S. Deported Veterans. We are proud to report that through the generosity of our members, we raised a total of \$900 for the Tijuana, Mexico-based center. Chapter 23 also continues its advocacy for deported veteran Hans Irizarry. [See Fall 2020 VFP Newsletter, p. 13.]

Following the disclosure of the murder of Daniel Prude by Rochester police, members of Chapter 23 joined BLM protesters to speak out against police brutality in Rochester and across the U.S. The peaceful protests were met with unrestrained police attacks and arrests. Fortunately, no members of VFP were injured or arrested, and Chapter 23 continues its support of the BLM movement.

The COVID-19 pandemic may have slowed us down, but we

are still able to serve our community and fellow veterans via direct action and moral support.

Rev. James L. Swarts

#025 – MADISON, WI

After meeting outdoors with social distancing throughout the summer, Chapter 25 faced another winter in Wisconsin with continued COVID-19 precautions.

We jumped into the Zoom sphere with both feet in October, hosting our first virtual monthly meeting and a Zoom event, “The Cost of War: Personal, Societal, Moral, and Police Militarization.” Chapter members have found Zoom to be easier to use than expected and it has been good to welcome back members Daryl Sherman and Joan Kemble. Since October, all meetings have been held on the Zoom platform, including committee meetings.

The Cost of War event went very well, thanks to the efforts of the event committee, especially John Fournelle. Unaffiliated members attended, and we made contact with VFP supporters from Minneapolis.

Thanks to the efforts of Paul McMahon, we now have a donate button on our website. The website is well maintained by Brad Geyer, along with our Facebook page and new Twitter account. We are developing a public YouTube channel for our events, David Giffey’s counter-recruiting video, and others.

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VFP CHAPTER REPORTS continued



GERMANTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

Members of Chapter 31 joined with other Philly-area peace & justice groups to stage an anti-racism protest in Fall 2020. Photo: John Grant

Chapter 25, Madison, Wisconsin, continued...

With generous donations we continue our Peace Scholarship program and a yard sign project, providing financial support to Chapter 182/Deported Veterans, and to an organization (to be determined) in support of social justice.

Fran Wiedenhoft

#027 – TWIN CITIES, MN

On Saturday, January 9, 2021, seven members of Chapter 27 drove two-and-half-hours each way to the encampment at the construction of the Line 3 Pipeline in Hill City, Minnesota. We presented tobacco and \$500 in cash to Winona LaDuke (Indigenous leader of Honor the Earth). We told her we were there to stand in solidarity with the courageous Water Protectors to stop Line 3. Our Peace Bus drew lots of thumbs up and peace signs from the diverse group of protesters. This pipeline holds a clear danger to the many waterways in our state and has been rammed through the regulatory processes to get permits to build.

Dave Logsdon

#031 – PHILADELPHIA, PA

The Thompson Bradley Chapter participated in various demonstrations and campaigns in the Philadelphia region. The chapter, through the work of Gene Cleaver, supported and worked with the New Sanctuary Movement, an immigrant-led organization inspired by peaceful movements for social change to end injustice against immigrants. We participated in a letter-writing campaign for the Thompson family. They fled violence in Jamaica in 2004 and lived and worked in this country for

14 years before being subjected to a deportation order in 2014. Local churches provided asylum for the family in the long tradition of sacred spaces where fugitives are entitled to immunity from arrest. Partly as a result of the campaign, the deportation order was rescinded, and the Thompsons were freed on December 10, 2020.

Several members of Chapter 31 participated in live and virtual demonstrations in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. The sign “Veterans For Peace and Against Hate” was prominently displayed. Mike Felker wrote a letter to the editor titled “Service & Sacrifice: A Viet Nam Vet on Why the President is Not Fit to be Commander-Chief” and sent it to newspapers around the country, and it was published in a few.

Charles Rossi

#034 – NEW YORK CITY, NY

Chapter activities continue despite COVID-19. We are conducting online meetings with increased member participation. Meeting speakers have included: PaxChristi UN Representative Doug Hostetter about Vietnam CO Experience; Japanese Activists Seishi Morikawa and Naoko Suzuki about nuclear weapons horrors; Mike Hastie about Portland, Oregon, BLM protests; Suzanne Gordon, Essam Attia, and Paul Cox on VA Privatization; Patrick O’Neill of Kings Bay Plowshares 7; Ann Wright, Doug Rawlings, Ken Mayers, and Paul Cox reflecting on VFP history and member-based activism.

Projects: VA Privatization; Move the Money; Stop Sanctions/ Save Yemen; Agent Orange; *Peace & Planet News*. Designed NYC BLM T-shirts.

continued on next page...

To commemorate 75th Anniversary of Hiroshima/Nagasaki: on 8/3 representatives visited Japan Consulate General; 8/5 Global Online Peace Gathering: <https://youtu.be/MjidHvka1Tk>

A total of 150 people—from across U.S., plus Ireland, UK and Central America—attended our Reclaim Armistice Day event, co-sponsored by Vietnam Full Disclosure, and New Jersey, Boston, Maine and San Francisco Chapters. Organized by Ellen, Susan, and Tarak, the program included slides of past events, bell-ringing, music & poetry. Ann Wright, Rory Fanning, Matt Hoh, Peggy Akers, Doug Rawlings, Danny Sjursen, Ben Griffin, Jan Barry and Edward Horgan spoke: <https://youtu.be/c4pMXxl5tSQ>

Webinars: (1) Ending War in Afghanistan, with Kathy Kelly, Arash Azzada, Rory Fanning, Danny Sjursen, Ann Wright, and Matt Hoh; (2) Police and right-wing repression; (3) Biden's Foreign Policy, with Norman Solomon, Medea Benjamin, Danny Sjursen, John Tarleton; (4) January 22nd Celebration of Nuclear Weapons becoming illegal under International Law.

Congratulations to New York City Chapter 34 President Susan Schnall on her election to the VFP National Board!

Bob Keilbach

#035 – SPOKANE, WA

Yes, we now think of VFP Chapter 35 as a regional organization, knitting and weaving past members and new contacts from the Canadian border, over into Montana, down into Colorado, to Portland, and all the way to Fresno, California, with connections on the west coasts of Washington and Oregon.

We are concentrating on local issues—housing, police accountability, oil trains—while aware of global existential threats. We have members participating in the China Working



Promoting NYC Chapter 34's "Move the Money" campaign at the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty demonstration on January 22, 2021. L to R: Jerry Hassett (leaning against the fence with VFP flag), Gloria Brandman and Tom Gogan. Photo: Ellen Davidson



Fall 2020, Creech Air Force Base, Nevada—Humboldt Bay chapter's Peter Aronson (in white t-shirt) was one of several VFP members who participated in the 11th annual "Shut Down Creech" action, a national nonviolent resistance mobilization organized by Bay Area CodePink twice a year and co-sponsored by VFP, which aims to shut down "killer drone" operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, and everywhere. (See Fall 2020 VFP Newsletter cover story.) More information at: <https://shutdowncreech.blogspot.com/>

Group and supporting Viet Nam Full Disclosure. Two members are delegates to Washington Against Nuclear Weapons (WANWCoalition.org).

Welcome to VFP 1005 in Spain, and VFP's newest national board members, Susan Schnall, Paul Cox, and Ken Mayers!

Chapter 35 mourns the loss to bone cancer, likely generated by uranium mining in Wellpinet at the Midnite Mine, of our dear friend, Spokane Tribe activist, Debra Abrahamson. Debra founded the SHAWL Society (Sovereignty, Health, Air, Water, Land), a grassroots advocacy group based on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Eastern Washington focused on developing community education and strategies to address impacts of radiation exposure due to 50 plus years of uranium mining and milling on the reservation. In their words: "We respect, share with, and take care of each other."

Hope y'all have found remedies for "computer butt." Wear masks, socially distance, wash hands, and get the vax!

Care 4 Peace 4 All!

Hollis Higgins

#056 – HUMBOLDT BAY, CA

Our area is blessed with rural open spaces and a relatively sparse population, so we have fared pretty well so far with the Covid crisis. However, like many or most chapters, we haven't physically met since March. But weekly Covid-compliant vigils continue in Arcata and Eureka every Friday. Groups have gathered in front of the Eureka courthouse since March of 2003 and in the Arcata Plaza since 1997, each with VFP logos, flags and banners, "The First Casualty of War is the Truth."

Chapter Reports continued on page 16...

To the Ramparts

A newsletter for anti-nuclear organizers

To the Ramparts is a thoroughly researched newsletter put together by John Wilks, III, the Environmental Committee chair of the Donald and Sally Alice Chapter 63 of Veterans for Peace in Albuquerque. *To the Ramparts* provides an in-depth look at nuclear issues from plutonium pit production to legacy nuclear waste in New Mexico. By distilling the work of Nukewatch.org, Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety, and others, and providing ongoing updates, additional research and insight, John crystallizes invaluable information in a simple format that can be shared with movement associates who wish to educate themselves or others, including the decision-makers at all levels of government and bureaucracy who should be protecting us from these expensive and damaging developments. Contact vhtiwal@gmail.com (VFP Chapter 63, Albuquerque, NM) to subscribe or request a sample copy of *To the Ramparts*. Work for peace!

—Bill Tiwald, Chapter 63, Albuquerque, NM

RIGHT: Members of Donald & Sally-Alice Thompson VFP Chapter 63 in Albuquerque, New Mexico turned out on Friday, January 22, 2021 to celebrate the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) going into force with a public demonstration.



Chapter 56, Humboldt Bay, California, continued...

Our chapter newsletter, *Foghorn: Cutting through the Fog of War*, features essays, events, book reviews, and relevant local, national, and international articles. The current issue includes an extraordinary piece by S. Brian Willson and memories of Viet Nam by veteran Rob Hepburn. It also contains an important piece about the Covid Relief Bill being packed with billions in military funding. View that issue at: http://www.vfp56.org/Newsletters/VFPNews_Jan21.pdf. You may request FREE digital copies of the *Foghorn* by emailing butshushu@gmail.com with a request to be added to our mailing list.

Peter Aronson

#057 – GREEN MOUNTAIN, VT

During these COVID-19 times, Chapter 57 has continued to meet via teleconferencing to continue our work as best we can.

A new initiative for the Will Miller Green Mountain Chapter is a monthly book reading and discussion group. Last month we read and discussed *War: How Conflict Shaped Us* by Margaret MacMillan. Up next is *There are no Flowers in a War Zone* by Camillo Mac Bica. By reading and discussing, we hope to gain

insight into the best ways to raise awareness of the need to foster peace and avoid war of all kinds.

Another new initiative for our chapter is to raise awareness of and to encourage the divestment from weapons manufacturing and related enterprises. In cooperation with CodePink, we are founding a local group to carry on *Divest from the War Machine* efforts in Vermont.

One critical item we have not made much progress on is recruitment of new members. The future of our Chapter is in jeopardy unless we recruit new, younger, motivated members to carry on. Chapter 57 would greatly appreciate hearing concrete suggestions from anyone who has had some success attracting and retaining new members.

Richard Czaplinski

#062 – NEW HAMPSHIRE

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Chapter 62 (NH VFP) has met virtually and has collaborated with other peace and justice groups such as New Hampshire Peace Action and American Friends Service Committee of New Hampshire.

continued on next page...

Our chapter continues to support the Poor People's Campaign. Two of our members were arrested at the New Hampshire State Capitol doing nonviolent protests relating to Racism, Poverty and Militarism. Other members have participated in vigils and marches during Black Lives Matter events.

NH VFP has embarked on supporting legislation introduced in the New Hampshire State Legislature. First, a state representative agreed to sponsor a bill we proposed that would require the posting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in every public school library and in classrooms where U.S. History and Civics classes are taught. We believe that universal human rights must be emphasized so that young people will become human rights defenders!

Second, NH VFP will testify (virtually) in favor of a bill that would replace Columbus Day with Indigenous People's Day, an action our brother Howard Zinn would have applauded.

Heeding the call of Chapter 27, we will be seeking sponsors for a bill that would "Reclaim Armistice Day" from Veterans Day in our state.

Will Thomas

#063 – ALBUQUERQUE, NM

VFP member Tom Dent played a key role in planning the Albuquerque Center for Peace & Justice's annual holiday gala, a virtual event held December 5, 2020. The program included special recognition of three members of our chapter: associate member Mandy Pino and veterans Allen Cooper and Sally-Alice Thompson. Sally-Alice presented a tribute to chapter member Stuart (Terry) Riley, who died in September. Terry constructed a float featuring the VFP logo, which for many years he towed in parades and exhibited at various events. Terry was a staunch VFP advocate and pillar of the progressive community.

Charles Powell

#072 – PORTLAND, OR

With new members activating and technologically-challenged members finally finding their way to Zoom, attendance at VFP Chapter 72 monthly virtual meetings is growing. Tom Riddering, who is determined to become an expert on Zoom, hosts both monthly meetings and weekly social gatherings for the chapter.

Malcolm Chaddock agreed to serve as chapter president. He appears to be energized by the role, and is in turn reenergizing the chapter. At the end of 2020, we established a new website and fresh listservs. Dan Shea continues as our liaison and a leader in the local SOVA campaign.

Not surprisingly, "Peace at Home" has become a major focus for Chapter 72, in response to a war playing out on our downtown streets that has been simmering for years and raging since George Floyd's murder.

Former chapter president Jenika Sharon's efforts to bring food and comfort to houseless Portlanders has grown into a

full-blown operation, and VFP is doing what we can to support her. The So Hum Foundation recently awarded a grant of \$5,000 to Jenika's project, which they discovered through posts at *Project Homeless* and on her own Facebook page. Chapter 72 member Mike Hastie has established his own sandwich distribution service for Portland campers, with her guidance.

Becky Luening

#089 – NASHVILLE, TN

Chapter 89 has become the Hector Black Chapter, to honor the life of the WWII veteran member and Quaker activist who died this past fall at the age of 96.

Chapter President Joey King announced his departure as of June 2021. Filling his shoes will be Tina Meli.

We have started a weekly vigil outside of our Congressional Representative Jim Cooper's office in downtown Nashville with a "To Do" list: \$2K Stimulus checks; Medicare for All; Fix, Fund and Staff the VA; End Endless War; Rejoin the Iran Deal and the Paris Accords; Criminal Justice Reform, and more [see photo].



We participated in hearings about the removal of the bust of Nathan Bedford Forrest (slave trader, war criminal, traitor, first grand wizard of the KKK) from its current place of honor in the Tennessee State Capitol in Nashville.

Our radio show celebrated five years on the air this month. All shows can be found at <http://bit.ly/VFPradiohour>. Recent shows featured a panel on the January 6th white supremacist insurrection, militarization and racism of policing, and the grim prospect of VA privatization. We observed the 40th Anniversary of the murder of the four U.S. Churchwomen in El Salvador and we recalled the Second Best Christmas Story ever—the 1914 Christmas Truce.

We would love to have your feedback and suggestions for programming. Surely somebody out there has a story they want to share!

Harvey Bennett

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VFP CHAPTER REPORTS continued

#092 – SEATTLE, WA

It has become tradition! On New Years Day, VFP92 again joined the annual Caroll Cochran Peace Walk in tiny Index, WA. Then, on MLK Jr. Day, our contingent marched for “Good Trouble.”

#45 is OUT!!!—but, tragically, his evil racist and deadly legacy will be felt for generations. Reflecting on 2020, we managed to “keep it together.” Members joined Seattle Anti-War Coalition (SAWC), led by Beth Brunton, with its monthly vigils mostly at the Federal Building against endless U.S. wars. Will Alleckson is taking charge of SOVA bannering at the VA. Members joined the Veterans Day car caravan in Auburn.

Our Chapter radio program KODX 96.9 FM, marked its First Anniversary! Mike Dedrick and Michael McPhearson have been conducting important interviews with chapter members. Leonard Eiger spoke of the long-awaited Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), effective 1/22/21.

Pete Schoonmaker is leading our Counter-Recruitment efforts, with “The Gun Show” Cynthia Linet joining the team. The work is daunting, with no in-person contact with students.

We’re sad to lose Board Member Reverend Kelly Wadsworth, who is moving to Oregon for a new opportunity; however, we gained new Board Director Kem Hunter, and James Williams as our new President—so we’re good to go for ’21!

Kim Loftness

#102 – MILWAUKEE, WI

Operating virtually does have some benefits. Our 13th annual Armistice Day event was our first virtual one, and had the biggest audience ever, with more than 200 participating, including some from around the country. Another 100-plus have watched the video on VFP’s YouTube channel. David Swanson, executive director of World Beyond War, and Fred Royal, Milwaukee NAACP president, were the main speakers.

We joined Milwaukee’s African American Roundtable in pressing for a shift in priorities in city and county budgets, testifying in favor of moving resources from the Milwaukee Police and Sheriff’s Departments to community needs like housing, job creation, and mental health programs. It generated debate and media attention, but little significant change in the budgets adopted by the Common Council and County Board. This will be a long-term effort.

We continue to partner with the Milwaukee Area Labor Council and unions representing workers at the VA Hospital to oppose further privatization and anti-union pressure. We will work with the VFP’s national SOVA campaign to keep the heat on the new administration.

We also joined the National Lawyers Guild in asking state government to include incarcerated people among the top priorities to receive COVID vaccinations, which has now been approved.

Bill Christofferson



Jan. 1, 2021—Chapter 92 contingent at Caroll Cochran Peace Walk. L-R: Dan Gilman, Kem Hunter, Albert Penta. Photo: Kim Loftness

#104 – EVANSVILLE, IN

On November 11, 2020, members of Veterans For Peace Chapter 104 commemorated the Armistice that marked the end of World War I by dedicating a progeny of the Peace Tree in the veterans area of an Evansville cemetery. [See photo from television coverage on page 20.] The Peace Tree is a linden tree brought to Evansville from Germany in 1912 as a seedling by Joseph Freudenberg and nurtured by his family for more than a century. This progeny of the original Peace Tree was nurtured from a sapling by VFP member, master gardener Larry Miller. A stone marker accompanying the tree declares:

“Linden. Progeny of a tree brought from Germany and planted by the Freudenberg family in Darmstadt, Indiana and dedicated on the Armistice of 11 November 1918. Propagated by Veterans For Peace in 2018 and transplanted here on 11 November 2020. May this tree ever stand as a reminder of the universal thread that binds together all humanity—the deep eternal longing for peace and the lives that bear silent witness to our failures.”

Due to the ongoing pandemic, we were not able to gather in December for Lennon Night, our annual celebration of John Lennon’s life that serves as a fundraiser for the Iraq Water Project. However, due to a generous contribution from one member, we were still able to contribute \$1,000 to this vital project.

Lynn Kinkade

#112 – VENTURA COUNTY, CA

Warm greetings from Ventura County, California. Coalition actions are sparse due to the pandemic. Just as fall 2020 approached, Chapter 112 rallied with a non-profit coalition partner called Justice for All (J4A), Ventura County. In the city of Ventura, socially distanced from city hall to the beachfront, we helped sponsor a pre-election day Wall of Justice. Weeks later, chapter veteran member George Sandoval interviewed for the J4A video series. You can see George's videos of the Wall of Justice rally and his interview at the J4A, Ventura County website, <http://justiceforallvc.org/>. The interview with George includes a three-minute trailer on deported veterans in Tijuana, Mexico. In January 2021, we contributed 50 rain ponchos to the J4A annual January appeal.

Last November, veteran member Michael Cervantes assisted Truth in Recruitment (TIR), Santa Barbara, by writing one of the eleven email letters sent to the Santa Maria High School District board meeting. TIR is attempting to establish a recruiter policy in the high school district. Michael listened in on the NNOMY-sponsored counter-recruiting Zoom workshop in January 2021 attended by a whopping 55 participants. It was recorded and can be reviewed at: <https://nnomy.org/en/>. (Scroll down to "CR during a pandemic," click on "read more," and navigate to January 10, 2021.)

Michael Cervantes

#113 – HAWAII

Beginning with a Zoom call for VFP members from all the islands of Hawai'i for Armistice Day, Chapter 113 has met monthly via Zoom, and plans to continue virtual meetings regularly for the duration of COVID and even post-COVID.

VFP's historic anti-nuke sailboat, *The Golden Rule*, is still in Hawai'i. The peace boat was involved in an event on January 22, 2021, to recognize the ban on nuclear weapons becoming an international agreement with the ratification of the 51st country, and entering into force.

VFP members continue to participate in webinars on militarization of Asia and the Pacific, and to submit community comments on Environmental Impact Statements on military-related issues in Hawai'i including closing the massive fuel tanks at Red Hill that sit 100 feet above the water supply of Honolulu; terminating the \$1 lease for 65 years on 23,000 acres of Hawai'i state lands in military Pōhakuoloa Training Area on the Big Island of Hawai'i; and opposing the massive \$133 million military radar to be built on one of the islands, which will only make Hawai'i a bigger target for military attack. Citizen activism saved Oahu's cultural area at Kaena Point from the radar, but another location on Oahu and the Pacific Missile Test Range on Kauai are still under consideration.

[Read about Chapter 113's USS Bowfin campaign on p. 3.]

Ann Wright



Ventura County VFP Chapter 112 Vice President Shane Meserve stands by the chapter's Wall of Justice signs in Ventura, California. The signs did the talking for this pre-election day Wall of Justice rally, stretching from the city hall to the beachfront.



LONG SHADOWS

VETERANS' PATHS TO PEACE

Edited by David Giffey

Atwood Publishing, 2019
(originally issued 2006)

VFP Clarence Kailin Chapter 25 in Madison, Wisconsin, is responsible for reprinting this compelling book, which presents the personal stories of 19 veterans of 8 wars, from the Spanish Civil war up to Iraq and Afghanistan, including the Yom Kippur war. The lives of all 19 of these veterans were touched by war, and all—by one path or another—ended up as activists against war. Editor David Giffey served as a combat journalist in Viet Nam, and is a Chapter 25 member.

“There is an immense literature of war, so any new entry into that formidable body of narratives, commentaries, analyses, and memories needs to be looked at carefully to see if it adds something significant to our knowledge of war and those who are drawn into it. I believe that this book meets that test and informs and touches us in ways that we will not easily forget.” These words are from Howard Zinn’s powerful introduction, which provides a terse summary of the wars that the U.S. has perpetrated, going back to its founding.

Robert Kimbrough said he became a pacifist the first day on the line in Korea: “I was first put in charge of the light machine gun squad, and my sergeant was showing me the line: the trench lines, the dugouts, the fields of vision, the

fields of fire. Suddenly the Chinese side started shooting at me. And I thought to myself, ‘Why is anyone shooting at me? They don’t have anything against me. I don’t have anything against them.’ And I suddenly realized, ‘Hey, dummy, you’re not in your backyard with your fingers playing boom-boom, you’re dead.’ It came home to me: ‘This is not good.’”

One of the 10 Viet Nam veterans featured is Will Williams, whose powerful account starts with growing up as a black man in Jim Crow Mississippi. “Viet Nam made me... It made me look at life, at all people, as being sacred... I think if I was of the age I am now when the draft was going I would say ‘No.’ I’d steal my grandkids out of the military.”

Copies of *Long Shadows* are available to peace groups and peace-minded-people at only \$10 a copy plus shipping (\$3.50 media mail, \$7.75 priority mail). Bulk and low-income discounts are available. Contact John Fournelle at jhfour@gmail.com to order.

—John Fournelle, associate member of
VFP Chapter 25, Madison, Wisconsin



BENDING THE ARC

STRIVING FOR PEACE AND
JUSTICE IN THE AGE OF
ENDLESS WAR

Edited by Steve Breyman,
John W. Amidon, and
Maureen Baillargeon Aumand
SUNY Press, 2020

Fr. Dan Berrigan has been an unfailing source of inspiration and encouragement for me. When I find myself discouraged, I often think of his quote: “The difference between doing something and doing nothing is everything.” (Vocalist Sheri Bauer recorded a beautiful chant inspired by this quote—go to <https://soundcloud.com/johnandtherealspacealiengirl/the-difference> to listen.)

For many years, I wrote to Fr. Dan inviting him to speak at the Kateri Peace Conference. I knew it was unlikely, as he was quite elderly then; still, I enjoyed writing a note and simply saying hello to someone I so esteemed. Sadly, Fr. Dan never did get to speak at the peace conference. However, his influence contributed to its founding and subsequently to the publication of *Bending the Arc* in August 2020.

The book is a collection of essays by 17 peace movement activists: Ann Wright, David Swanson, Kathy Kelly, Medea Benjamin, and Jim Jennings are among them. Their writings give us intimate insight into their lives, their work, and their thinking.

We so truly desire a world free from violence. We envision a world without endless war and imbued with the spirit of kindness and compassion coupled by the effort to help our neighbors live lives filled with security, dignity, decent housing and good food to eat, healthcare and education. We also cherish a world that encourages us to dream of love and beauty and to create and express these dreams that embrace and nourish all people.

Bending the Arc is born from these dreams. We are hopeful that it will help cultivate and nourish all who desire these cherished goals which can only be realized when peace and justice and a world without war prevail.

Please consider purchasing this book as a source of inspiration, enjoyment, and edification—for yourself, or as a gifting choice for a friend or perhaps your library or faith community. Peace Be!

—John Amidon, member of
VFP Chapter 10, Albany, New York



THE BEST OF MEDIC IN THE GREEN TIME

WRITINGS FROM THE
VIETNAM WAR AND
ITS AFTERMATH

by Marc Levy

Independently published, 2020

Levy's startling essays and poems have long graced the pages of Vietnam Veterans Against the War's newsprint publication, *The Veteran*. Since 2007, he has curated the website *Medic in the Green Time*. He has now collected these and many other memorable war and peace stories, by his own hand and those of other vets, in *The Best of Medic in the Green Time*.

Much of the book is focused on recollections by Viet Nam veterans who tell of war jokes, drug use, nightmares, being overrun in combat, being thanked "for your service." Among the most bizarre, unexpected stories is Roger Byer's account of going home to Grenada after surviving a tour in Viet Nam as an infantry medic and becoming [the prime minister's] pilot. In October 1983, the U.S. military invaded the tiny Caribbean island and suddenly Byer was treated as an enemy in his own nation by U.S. troops. "Standing in my bedroom in front of an open closet was a private first class. He was gingerly holding up my U.S. Army dress greens jacket with its four-and-a-half rows of assorted medals... The

platoon sergeant's eyes blazed and his nostrils flared, his head swiveled around threateningly. He barked... 'Just who the fuck does this jacket belong to?'"

—Jan Barry is Poet Laureate of VFP,
co-editor of *Winning Hearts and Minds*,
War Poems by Vietnam Veterans



GUANTÁNAMO VOICES

TRUE ACCOUNTS FROM
THE WORLD'S MOST
INFAMOUS PRISON

Edited by Sarah Mirk
Introduction by Omar El Akkad
Illustrated by 11 different artists

Abrams ComicArts, 2020

Everything they told us about Guantánamo is a lie. From the very first story in Sarah Mirk's *Guantánamo Voices: True Accounts From the World's Most Infamous Prison*, readers can tell there was something wrong with the mission from the very beginning. Was Guantánamo simply a huge blunder that needed to be sold as the prison that housed "the worst of the worst"? How much of what happened was a cover for the faulty intelligence that led to wrongful imprisonment, or other transgressions carried out at Guantánamo? How could we, citizens of United States of America, condone these hateful acts? How can we condone the prison's continued existence?

Sarah Mirk has done an excellent job of capturing the voices of those who were there—prisoners and their

defenders, U.S. military personnel, and journalists. She invited a different artist to draw each graphic story, tying them all together through a beautiful color pallet reminiscent of the colors one would see on this Caribbean island. Mirk's choice to make an illustrated book allows the artists to convey aspects of these first-person accounts that may not come across to the reader in words alone.

For those who have the courage to read *Guantánamo Voices: True Accounts from the World's Most Infamous Prison*, you will be armed with the truth so we can make better policy choices as a nation. This important and powerful book could appeal to a wide variety of audiences in a potent and emotional way. Unfortunately, since this book uncovers nasty truths about our government, our nation, people will look away in denial.

Today, 40 prisoners are still being held in Guantánamo. It has been 19 years and most of these men have been cleared of any wronging or denied trial, yet they are still being held indefinitely in Guantánamo.

I invite you to be brave; to be a good citizen: Read this book, and then pass it along.

—Laura Sandow, a U.S. Navy Veteran,
served in Guantánamo Bay from
October 2001 to September 2002



Book Reviews continued on page 22...

MORE RECOMMENDED READING

BOOK REVIEWS *cont'd from page 21*



THE HIGH ROAD

by Mark R. McVay

48 Hour Books, 2020

From the online book page: “Mark McVay was born in Michigan and spent most of his early years in the Detroit area. *The High Road* is his first book and is both a memoir and includes the novella *Matthew Parrott’s Long War*, a story of love, loss, and retribution based on his experiences in South Viet Nam with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment in 1969–70.”

Mark is a veteran based in Golden, Colorado, and was on the 2018 Viet Nam Tour with me and others. His book is extraordinary—at first a collection of newspaper and magazine columns he’s written over the years, then some poems and songs, but I must highly recommend what he calls “fiction”... an account of a couple of boys from Durant, Michigan, in Viet Nam and a racist Colonel Grady there, who wreaks havoc and kills Vietnamese at will. Back in Durant they meet up again and execute a plan to track down Grady and...well, you’ll see.

It’s the best book I’ve read about the war and its aftermath... the suicides, the lasting wounds, and friendships and loyalty. You can get a copy of the book for \$10. You won’t be disappointed.

—Jill Godmillow, associate member of Chapter 34, New York City

IN RESPONSE to the Recommended Reading & Listening list we published in the Fall 2020 newsletter, we received some additional suggestions from these VFP members. —Ed.

Recommended by Mike Turek

BOOKS:

Working Class War: American Combat Soldiers & Vietnam by Christian G. Appy (Univ. of North Carolina, 1993).

Soldiers in Revolt: GI Resistance During the Vietnam War by David Cortright (Haymarket Books, 2005).

The New Winter Soldiers by Richard Moser (Rutgers Univ. Press, 1996).

Dangerous Grounds: Antiwar Coffeeshouses and Military Dissent by David L. Parsons (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2017).

VIDEOS:

Sir! No Sir! The Suppressed Story of the GI Movement To End The War in Vietnam by David Zeiger (2005).

FTA by Francine Parker (2008). (Find it on YouTube.)

Recommended by Andy Berman

BOOKS FEATURING SYRIAN VOICES:

No Turning Back: Life, Loss, and Hope in Wartime Syria by Rania Abouzeid (W.W. Norton, 2019). A remarkably well-written history that brings a compelling human feel to the conflict.

We Crossed a Bridge and It Trembled by Wendy Pearlman (Custom House, 2018 reprint ed.). A critical resource that gives voice to the voiceless Syrians through their own words.

My Country: A Syrian Memoir by Kassim Eid (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018). The compelling story of a young Syrian man who survived a sarin gas attack and went on to work for peace and justice.

Burning Country: Syrians in Revolution and War by Robin Yassin-Kassab & Leila Al-Shami. History of the roots of the conflict and its course to the present (Pluto Press, 2018, 2nd ed.).

SYRIAN FILMS:

The Cave – A Syrian-Danish documentary about medical care in Syria’s wartime conditions. A portrait of courage, resilience and feminist solidarity. 2020 Academy Award nominee.

For Samia – A gripping documentary about a Syria journalist and her husband raising their child in Aleppo, Syria. The film achieved a 99% approval rating on Rotten Tomatoes. Currently available on YouTube.

Recommended by Skip Oliver

TWO EXCELLENT BOOKS ON THE EARLY ANTI-NUKE MOVEMENT:

The Voyage of the Golden Rule: An Experiment with Truth by Albert Bigelow (Literary Licensing, 2011). A very good read. (And part of the story of VFP’s restored *Golden Rule*.)

Women Strike for Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s (Women in Culture and Society) by Amy Swerdlow (University of Chicago Press, 1993).

Recommended by Doug Rawlings

BOOK:

Letters To The Wall: Memorial Day 2019–2020 edited by Doug Rawlings & Jeff Kelley (independently published).

For six years, VFP members have gathered to deliver **Letters to The Wall** to the Viet Nam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., on Memorial Day. In 2020, all our letters were delivered by VFP D.C. member Mike Marceau. I dedicated this last volume of published letters to all who have written letters over the years, and to those members of VFP who helped bring this campaign to fruition. —Doug



Indigenous community control across the Pacific more important than ever

by Kevin Lee

On March 26, 2020, an aircraft carrier, the *USS Theodore Roosevelt*, docked on the unincorporated territory of Guåhan (Guam), home to the Indigenous CHamorus of the Marianas. With approximately two dozen sailors testing positive for COVID-19, 3,000+ of the Roosevelt's crew members disembarked and were housed in the central tourist district of Tumon while they awaited testing and further quarantining procedures.

For permitting these sailors to be housed in Tumon, Governor Leon Guerrero faced immense local resistance. Guam Senator Sabina Flores Perez wrote an open letter denouncing the “reckless double-standard of potentially placing exposed military personnel in local hotels,” while the CHamoru feminist collective I Hagan Famalåo'an Guåhan (in partnership with seven other community-based organizations) wrote an open letter urging Guerrero to “reconsider her position, as the people of Guåhan should be her first priority.”

Fortunately, no COVID-19 cases have been traced back to *Roosevelt* sailors yet. But the results could easily have been disastrous. CHamorus often live in multigenerational households and tight-knit community structures, which would aid the easy spread of COVID-19. And given their poor health outcomes (a direct product of colonization), many CHamorus are also immunocompromised, which increases their risk of COVID-19 death.

U.S. Military Occupation

This isn't another story of mishandled COVID-19 risks. It's also part of a long-standing history of the military acting against the community interests of Indigenous Pacific Islanders.

More recently, on December 8, 2020,

the U.S. House of Representatives passed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). This authorized more than \$660 billion for additional military construction projects on Guåhan—the latest development in a multi-decade process of military buildup on the island.

To address the current shortage of skilled construction labor on Guåhan, the bill includes provisions that would authorize H-2B guestworker visas on Guåhan—an easy fix for labor shortages in anticipated military and civilian construction projects.

This version of the NDAA promises to harm CHamorus in at least two ways. First, it expands military infrastructure on Guåhan, in spite of long-standing Indigenous resistance to growing military presence. Currently, more than one-third of Guåhan's land mass is reserved for military use.

Second, by actively inducing a supply of migrant guestworkers to address skilled construction labor shortages, the military misses an opportunity to increase the supply and skill of local (especially CHamoru) construction workers.

Community Control and Resistance

More community control could have prevented or better managed these travesties. With stronger sovereign control over territorial borders, Guåhan could have placed more restrictions on military movement. And with stronger political voice (e.g. with Congressional voting power or through international agreements such as the Compact of Free Association), Guåhan could have a seat at the NDAA negotiations table.

Absent formal mechanisms to robustly negotiate between the interests of the CHamorus of Guåhan and the interests of the military, Guåhan has limited leverage against U.S. military occupation—even as Indigenous resistance remains potent and visible.

Across the Pacific, the lack of Indigenous community control has had severe consequences for many decades. Nuclear testing in the Bikini Atoll in the 1940s and 50s resulted in polluted, radioactive environments, and generational health issues for Indigenous Marshall Islanders. In the late 1990s, the Navy seized approximately 800 acres of land designated as Native Hawaiian homesteads at Luaulualei, O'ahu for its communication stations.

Today, this lack of community control has led to heightened COVID-19 risks—not just in Guåhan but throughout the Pacific. In late May 2020, the Secretary of Defense greenlit increases in military travel to Hawai'i. And in August, the army hosted RIMPAC, a set of multinational war games, on O'ahu, in spite of fierce Indigenous resistance from Native Hawaiians and their allies. The public health consequences of these actions are still unclear. Under orders from the Pentagon, military COVID-19 incidence data on Hawai'i have not been released—even as this data are publicly available on Guåhan, Japan and Korea.

As COVID-19 rages on and the NDAA heads to the Senate, Indigenous community control over U.S. military action across the Pacific is more important than ever. The demands of Indigenous peoples across the Pacific are loud, clear and strong. They must be recognized with greater formal mechanisms, to ensure that the military heeds them as well.

Kevin Lujan Lee is CHamoru with ancestral roots in Guåhan, and a doctoral candidate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Broadly interested in how state-society relations shape equitable economic development, he studies the role of worker power and human services in workforce development systems, and the transnational politics of Indigenous Pacific Islanders in the U.S. and Aotearoa/New Zealand.

UPCOMING EVENTS

TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2021

My Lai Remembrance

In honor of the My Lai Resolution passed by a vote of 430–8 at the Veterans For Peace 2020 virtual convention, VFP Chapter 35 calls for a vigil of 504 seconds [8 minutes, 24 seconds], beginning at 11:00 am, to remember the 504 innocent victims of atrocities committed by U.S. military members on March 16, 1968, known as the My Lai Massacre. Displays of memorial wreaths with 504 red ribbons at local Viet Nam War memorials is also encouraged.

LISTEN to an audio recording of The Viet Nam Experience, a May 27, 2018 panel hosted by VFP Chapter 35 at the downtown public library in Spokane, Washington, as part of the My Lai Memorial Exhibition that toured 16 U.S. cities that year. <https://www.vietnamfulldisclosure.org/viet-nam-experience-discussion/>

SEE the My Lai Memorial Exhibition created by Chicago associate member Mac MacDevitt (now retired, but still online): <https://mylaimemorial.org/exhibit/>

FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2021

Symposium | Winter Soldiers Against War and Racial Injustice: Vietnam, Iraq and Today

Co-sponsored by Veterans For Peace and the Vietnam Peace Commemoration Committee (VPCC), this webinar-symposium commemorates the Winter Soldier Investigation organized by Vietnam Veterans Against the War 50 years ago, and similar hearings organized by Iraq Veterans Against the War 37 years later. Veterans and participants in those events, will be joined by recently discharged members of the military to present on the atrocities of war and the racial implications of U.S. military policy.

The event will emphasize the relevance of these issues to the continuing struggles against war and racial injustice today. Hosted and moderated by the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, the 90-minute program will include three panel segments: the Vietnam War, the occupation of Iraq, and the current role of National Guard troops in relation to racial justice issues.

DETAILS TBA: Keep an eye on the VFP website.



A poster promoting the film made of the 1971 Winter Soldier hearings organized by VVAW. In March 2008, IVAW organized their own Winter Soldier event featured testimonies of veterans and active-duty soldiers of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars at that time.

SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 2021

#WorldAgainstRacism Day

Veterans For Peace is an endorser of United Against Hate's Principles of Unity, and we look forward to mobilizing together with others in a global opposition to racism by organizing events on #WorldAgainstRacism day, Saturday, March 20. Start building now in your community, workplace, house of worship and school.

INFO: <https://www.unitedagainsthateandfascism.org/take-action>

SUNDAY–SATURDAY, APRIL 4–10, 2021

Week of Nonviolent Resistance to Drones and U.S. Global Militarism

This annual SHUT DOWN CREECH action is co-sponsored by CodePink and Veterans For Peace. Mark your calendars and PLEASE JOIN US at Camp Justice and Creech AFB, “Home of the Hunters”—yes, that’s what they call themselves! Location is near Las Vegas, Nevada. More details coming soon.

(Still in the thick of the COVID pandemic, we ask that you wait to reserve flights for now. By March 10, there will be an update on whether air travel to Las Vegas is encouraged or not, depending on current health risks. Precautions will be taken as needed. We will be there, one way or another! Camping may be the only option, depending on the status of the pandemic at that time.)

INFO: <https://www.codepink.org/04042021>

CONTACT: Toby Blomé – ratherbenyckeling@comcast.net

SUNDAY MAY 9, 2021

Mother's Day

Let us know if your chapter plans an event for Mother's Day, so we can share on our website and in social postings.

MONDAY, MAY 31, 2021

Memorial Day

If your chapter has plans for Memorial Day, please let us know, so we can share on our website and in social postings.

THURSDAY–SUNDAY, AUGUST 12–15, 2021

Veterans For Peace 2021 Convention

See page 5 for the “Save the Date” announcement.

SIGN UP FOR THESE ONGOING COMMITTEES

- **Truth in Recruiting** (first Thursday of the month): <https://veteransforpeace.salsalabs.org/truthinrecruiting>
- **Climate Change Working Group** (meeting weekly on Wednesday evenings: email climate@veteransforpeace.org)

The Language of a Culture of War

by Leo R. Sandy

The lexicon or language of war is everywhere. It is needed to maintain any culture that values and practices violence internally, as in corporal punishment and the death penalty, or externally as in war.

Violent thought and language influence each other and are the precursors of violent behavior. In other words, before violence can be expressed, it must be preceded by thoughts and language that encourage its expression. Just as much as nonviolent cultures show an absence of such language, violent ones are rife with it. They have to be or the system would not work the way it does. For example, phrases such as war on poverty, war on drugs, war on terrorism, “the” enemy (as if everyone agreed), the target audience, ammunition for thought, a battle of words, sticking to my guns, winning the battle and losing the war, lock and load and on the mark are quite common.

Sports teams kill, annihilate, destroy, wipe out, murder, eviscerate, finish off, slay, atomize, decapitate, decimate, demolish, pulverize, smash, and wreck each other. One boot camp chant was “two, four, six, eight; rape, kill, mutilate.”

We have “collateral damage” for civilian deaths, “termination with prejudice” when the U.S. assassinates someone, “insurgents” for people who may be defending their own country against foreign invaders, “terrorists” only when people from Mideast countries terrorize civilians, “national interests” for business interests, and “fighting for one’s country” instead of fighting for corporate interests.

Let’s watch our language.

Dr. Leo R. Sandy is a member of A.J. Muste VFP Chapter 62 in New Hampshire. This essay is an introductory piece for a book he is writing about the language of war.

VETERANS FOR PEACE 2020 JAPAN TOUR

A speaking tour organized & Interpreted by Rachel Clark, VFP Japan Chapter 1004, with the following presenters:

Part 1: Saturday, Nov. 14th https://youtu.be/4JTK_lwGtEM
Chuck Searcy President, ex-pat VFP Chapter 160, Viet Nam
Masako Sakata documentary filmmaker, whose beloved husband passed away due to the cancer caused from AO.
Kazuaki Harada of KitaKyushu University, who has been researching AO produced, and abandoned, in Japan.

Part 2: Sunday, Nov. 15th <https://youtu.be/R2bTgAWCHLg>
Dan Shea President of VFP Chapter 72, Portland, Oregon
Garett Reppenhagen VFP U.S. Executive Director

WATCH IT ON YouTube thanks to **Tsukuru Fors, Zoom Tech Support** for the tour: <https://bit.ly/3pGJi9F>

FILM: *Trial of the Chicago 7*

Two reviews of this film are posted on the VFP Viet Nam Full Disclosure site (vietnamfulldisclosure.org). One is by Paul Glusman, a member of the CUNY teacher’s union, who was a journalist at the Chicago 8 (later 7) trial, reporting for *Ramparts*.

“I was there, day by day, in the courtroom and in the defense offices, for practically all of it, Glusman writes. “I was 22 years old, but the memories of that trial are indelible.” He observes that film treatments of historical events aren’t expected to be accurate to every detail. “But,” he writes, “when something happened within the memory of humans who lived through it, it seems to be a bad idea to mischaracterize what those people lived through so completely as [film director Aaron] Sorkin did. There’s so much wrong, I can only give examples.”

Glusman goes on to enumerate many things that Sorkin got wrong, and his article is well worth reading for anyone who is interested in comparing film events to actual events. The critique most pertinent for Veterans For Peace is this:

“The part about Hayden giving the speech for all the defendants at sentencing was made up and atrocious. Sorkin simply had Hayden read the names of the U.S. soldiers killed in the war, as if that was what this was all the protest was about. It wasn’t. The protests were more about what the United States was doing in Vietnam, to the people of that country. The U.S. soldiers counted, but they were NOT the main thrust of the demonstrations, or the trial. Rennie Davis testified in trial about what was happening in Vietnam, and why the war was illegal and unconscionable. It was powerful testimony. Sorkin left that out. Hayden at no point read off the names of U.S. soldiers killed in the war. The trial was not a Vietnam War Veterans memorial before its installation in D.C. And for Sorkin to twist that is unconscionable.”

“WATCH THE MOVIE IF YOU WANT, BUT UNDERSTAND THAT ALTHOUGH IT USES REAL NAMES, IT DOESN’T DEPICT REAL PEOPLE OR THEIR MOTIVES IN OPPOSING THE GOVERNMENT AT THAT TIME.”

—PAUL GLUSMAN, TRIAL WITNESS

The Vietnam Peace Commemoration Committee—an organization of Vietnam-era peace activists—introduced an October 2020 webinar exploring Sorkin’s film treatment of history, saying: “Probably no single event in the history of the movement against the Vietnam war was and is as controversial as the protests at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968 and the trial that followed.” In that webinar, panelists representing trial defendants discuss what happened at the convention in Chicago and the indictment and trial the next year. Moderated by Frank Joyce and Terry Provance, and facilitated by John McAuliff, all VPCC members, the webinar is available for viewing at: <http://www.vietnampeace.org/2020-trial-of-chicago-7-film>

A Man with a Cigarette, William Orpen (Irish painter), 1917. Imperial War Museum, London, <http://media.iwm.org.uk/iwm/mediatLib//190/media-190445/large.jpg>.



A MAN WITH A CIGARETTE WILLIAM ORPEN, 1917

green ghost what's left to kill
so gaunt inside the trench
that France became: blue smear
of sky streaked white as if
the smoke from mortar rounds
could be your century's clouds:
the rest the earth your torn
fatigues are symphonies
of brown: Brodie helmet
rust-rimmed your eyeless face
shrunk withered as a prune:
the jacket where one arm
withdrawn inside balloons
so in its hidden sling
resembles pregnancy:
a joke too strained to work:
one pant leg tattered gone
is dangling there above
your bandaged calf that leads
the eye down to your boot
made laceless by the fight
to trudge half-deaf and starved:
here shivered wretch let's end
our dream of portraiture
with bones a limp the smoke
you hold inside your lungs
until it burns then swirls
and breaks against the cold
like steam that rises from
a boy who hugs his guts
and shrieks before he fails
to slop them back inside

— Adam Tavel

FOR A FELLOW POET I MAY HAVE WASTED IN VIETNAM

We found your body early the next morning
laying in its little pool of blood.
Your fellow soldiers left you there. Why not?
They couldn't go any further with you now,
and you had no more need to go with them.
I liked the way the light broke through the jungle
to shine on you, as if to say: this is what war does
but do not worry, you're in the light with us.

You hold your little notebook in your hand
as if your final thoughts are, here, take this—
you've taken away my life, now take my poems.
You must not let them die. Nor would I.
I took your book, complete with the author's blood
smeared on several pages. Of course you knew
the greatest poets always write with blood.
—You're never really a poet I sometimes think
until you bleed for someone or for something
that you love or hate. But you outdid them all
they couldn't have meant shed every drop of blood
you have, dip your hand in it, then stamp the cover
of your book with it as if to say: you may not read
the language that I write in, so take my handprint
as my metaphor, my final word and testament on war,
written in blood, and though it's of my hand
my blood is on your hands now as well.

You must have been a man who chose his words
with thought and care, I feel it in your presence.
I'm sorry to say I've never learned your language
but the cover of your book speaks volumes to me.
That bloody handprint that says, we must stop war,
stop killing one another before it stops us all.

It is little enough the living say of war or peace
that makes much sense, and the dead say even less,
but they say it with such silent eloquence
as the bloody hand reaches out to touch us all.

— Richard K. Olson
U.S. Army Medic, 9th Division, Mekong Delta

POEMS SELECTED BY
W. D. EHRHART
EDITOR-AT-LARGE

CONNECT WITH OTHER MEMBERS

SLACK

We are excited to introduce SLACK—a new communications tool for VFP! SLACK is a channel-based messaging platform that allows multiple conversations to take place in the same space, grouped by category. Many other organizations have found SLACK helpful in building community by allowing members to easily keep in touch and share plans, ideas, and resources with each other. The app is easy to download for smart phone or laptop/desktop, so you can access conversations from any device.

To join VFP on SLACK, you have to be a VFP member. To get started, please fill out the form at:

<http://bit.ly/VFPSLACKSignUp>

VFP staff will respond with a SLACK invitation that will be good for 30 days!

VFP-ALL Google Group

Veterans For Peace has for a long time maintained a VFP-ALL listserv open to all members for sharing announcements and information with other members. Up until recently, that listserv was hosted by Yahoo! but when the company decided to phase out its list service, VFP closed the Yahoo! account, then resurrected VFP-ALL list as a google group. To join the VFP-ALL group, go to:

<http://bit.ly/VFPALLSignUp>

This will take you to the google group page. Look for the Join Group link at the top, and click to automatically be added. If you have any problems, email shelly@veteransforpeace.org with a request to be added to the new VFP-ALL google group.

Weekly VFP Social Hour

Zoom is the platform for these open social meetings held every Thursday at 6 pm (Eastern) | 5 pm (Central) | 4 pm (Mountain) | 3 pm (Pacific). To join the gathering, go to our website at that time, <http://veteransforpeace.org>, and look for the meeting link under “Events.”



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Veterans For Peace is a global organization of Military Veterans and allies whose collective efforts are to build a culture of peace by using our experiences and lifting our voices. We inform the public of the true causes of war and the enormous costs of wars, with an obligation to heal the wounds of wars. Our network is comprised of over 140 chapters worldwide whose work includes: educating the public, advocating for a dismantling of the war economy, providing services that assist veterans and victims of war, and most significantly, working to end all wars.

Statement of Purpose

We, as military veterans, do hereby affirm our greater responsibility to serve the cause of world peace. To this end we will work, with others both nationally and internationally...

- To increase public awareness of the causes and costs of war
- To restrain our governments from intervening, overtly and covertly, in the internal affairs of other nations
- To end the arms race and to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons
- To seek justice for veterans and victims of war
- To abolish war as an instrument of national policy.

To achieve these goals, members of Veterans For Peace pledge to use non-violent means and to maintain an organization that is both democratic and open with the understanding that all members are trusted to act in the best interests of the group for the larger purpose of world peace.

Veterans For Peace Code of Conduct

~ a living document, to be updated as we learn ~

1. We will use our anger at injustice as a positive, nonviolent force for change.
2. We will approach every encounter, with fellow members and the public, with positivity and mindfulness, and with the assumption that concerns raised are coming from a positive place and present a learning opportunity.
3. Our attitude, as conveyed through our words, symbols and actions, will be one of openness, friendliness, and respect toward all people we encounter.
4. All members have an important role to play within Veterans For Peace, regardless of previous military rank, branch, or combat experience. We will respect one another as equal parts of a whole.
5. We will not assault, verbally, in person or online, anyone, to include fellow members and those who oppose or disagree with us, even if they assault us. This does not preclude a member's right to defend him or herself against a physical attack.
6. In keeping with our commitment to achieving our goals through non-violent means, there is an expectation that members will not carry weapons with them to VFP events or while representing VFP, regardless of the laws in their location.
7. We will follow the directions of the designated coordinators during public actions organized on behalf of VFP.
8. We will use democratic principles within our organization to ensure an open, fair, inclusive, and transparent environment.
9. We will speak as members of VFP but not for VFP, unless designated as a spokesperson for VFP. All members are free to speak for themselves or on behalf of their chapter as appropriate.
10. Sexist, racist, homophobic, ageist, transphobic, gender discriminatory, and all other discriminatory language and actions are common within the military; they are not acceptable within VFP.
11. Our words and actions will maintain the political and financial independence of VFP.
12. To achieve the above goals, we will also engage in “active listening”; that is, fully concentrating on what is being said rather than just passively “hearing” the message of the speaker.



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The Golden Rule with Diamond Head in background. Photo: Helen Jaccard

Since arriving in Hawai'i on July 31, 2019, the anti-nuclear sailboat has sailed to the islands of Hawai'i, Maui, Lana'i, Oahu and Kaua'i to promote the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The crew of the Golden Rule has presented to over 100 audiences on those islands and on Moloka'i about the dangers of nuclear weapons. The nuclear missile attack scare in the islands three years ago compelled many of the people of Hawai'i to join worldwide efforts to abolish nuclear weapons. Golden Rule crew members joined with many people around the globe in celebrating the historic day when the treaty entered into force, January 22, 2021.

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