



Exposing the True Costs of War and Militarism Since 1985

While Promoting a Sustainable and Peaceful World

VETERANS FOR PEACE

Organized locally. Recognized internationally.

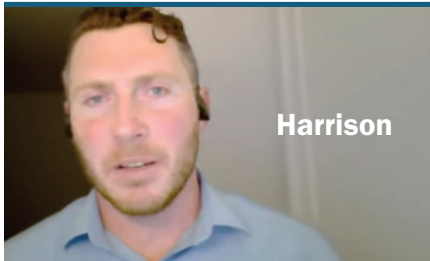
VFP National Newsletter

veteransforpeace.org

Summer/Fall 2024

War resisters celebrated and supported by Veterans For Peace

ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS of the 2024 online VFP convention was listening to three recent GI resisters, live, as they shared personal stories of transformation, courage, action and hope. Harrison Mann and Juan Bettancourt addressed the convention as keynote speakers on Friday; Joy Metzler got a chance to speak during the Saturday evening program. We welcome them as new members of the VFP community.



Harrison

Harrison Mann is a former U.S. Army Major and executive officer of the Defense Intelligence Agency's Middle East Africa Regional Center who, citing moral injury, resigned in protest of his office's support for Israel's war on Gaza, and then went public to make a bigger impact. His action inspired another military officer to act.



Juan

Senior Airman **Juan Bettancourt** is one of those active-duty GIs whose path to VFP was illuminated by the heroic flame lit on February 25 by Aaron Bushnell. Juan has been a key part of VFP's *Appeal for Redress v2* campaign.* His application for discharge as a C.O. is pending.

Joy Metzler, a 2023 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy, is part of the growing movement of active-duty service members who stand against the genocide happening in Gaza funded by our tax dollars and enabled by our government.



Joy

EACH OF THESE veterans describe a personal process of change driven by first listening to conscience, and then finding the courage to act. They expressed appreciation to VFP for our support. We have pulled out excerpts from their talks, which are included in the videos of our Friday and Saturday evening programs along with other 2024 convention tapes, now up on the VFP YouTube @ [veteransforpeace/videos](https://www.youtube.com/veteransforpeace/videos).

Excerpts of their talks start on p. 14.



2024 Convention Thanks

OUR 2024 NATIONAL CONVENTION, held online August 16–18, showcased the teamwork, knowledge, and talent of the Veterans For Peace community with well thought out, often brilliant programming reflective of members' ongoing activism for peace and justice. Those of you who registered for the convention may continue to access individual workshops via the 2024 convention website, and we are excited to also share this year's programs with a wider audience on our YouTube channel — www.youtube.com/VeteransForPeace.

VFP presenters brought us up to speed on major projects—addressing nuclear proliferation and past harms, bringing deported veterans home, stopping the privatization of the VA, calling out the role of war and militarism in the climate crisis. We had presentations on foreign affairs aimed at stopping wars before they start, and one that examined the nature of “moral injury” caused by being witness or party to war's impact on humans. Attendees were centered by two morning meditation sessions, awed by live (and recorded) performances of poetry and music, and enlightened by the wisdom of Native American veteran elders. (We urge members to participate in Four Arrows'

...continued on p. 2

*veteransforpeace.org/take-action/redressv2



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NATIONAL NEWSLETTERS

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**Next Chapter Report due date:
January 10, 2025. Send to:
editor@veteransforpeace.org**

Preferred Word Count: 200 words
Include chapter name, #/location
and reporter name.

Submit 1-3 of your best photos,
the higher resolution the better.
Please include photo credit
and caption. Thank you!

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jennywarriorpoet.com



Ralph Nader comes through again in 2024!

VFP MEMBER AND ADVISOR
Ralph Nader not only speaks out regularly on corporate power, militarism, and empire, he also puts his money where his mouth is. We are extremely grateful to Ralph for boosting Veterans For Peace fundraising yet again with a generous matching gift. At press time we are in the home stretch of matching this year's \$30,000 challenge. Please make your donation *"in celebration of Ralph Nader!"*

Convention thanks ...from p. 1

Worldview Reflections & Peace project!)
Our hearts heavy with the knowledge of the genocidal horrors being visited on Gaza with U.S. complicity, we wove the **Ceasefire Now!** theme throughout. We heard from courageous active-duty military members who have refused to stay silent (see story on page 1). And our Saturday evening program featured three dynamic young movement leaders on how to break the siege on Gaza. Sunday's closing lifted up VFP members willing to risk their lives to break the illegal Israeli blockade of Gaza via the Freedom Flotilla.

As in years past, our 2024 convention exhibited the dedication of VFP members who share life-affirming values acting together to create change; focusing not just on stopping wars, but on creating a stable, long-lasting peace.

Finally, we want to express our gratitude to all the chapters, members and allies who supported this year's convention by sponsoring an ad. If you haven't had a chance yet, **please take a close look at each individual advertisement, viewable online at: www.vfpconvention.org/ads**

Sincere thanks to all who participated!

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 composed of over 100 chapters worldwide whose work includes: educating the public, advocating dismantling the war economy, providing services that assist veterans and victims of war, and most significant, 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 resist racism and repression in our home communities;
- To oppose the militarization of law enforcement;
- 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 nonviolent 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.

VFP Special Projects

Report by Mike Ferner

IN 2024, my role with Veterans For Peace shifted from National Director to Special Projects Coordinator. To give a sense of what that means, here are three projects I coordinated this year:

• VFP's Letter to the U.S. Department of State

Written by volunteer Toledo attorney Terry Lodge, this letter documents in 11 pages and 35 footnotes exactly how and when the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and the federal government have violated five current federal statutes and one administrative policy. When the letter received no response, at Jack Gilroy's suggestion, VFP members activated and delivered it in person to domestic DOS offices in 16 different cities.

• Appeal for Redress v2

Fashioned after our Appeal for Redress during the war on Iraq, version 2 focused on Gaza. Our news conference promoting it featured a former IDF special forces soldier, a former Hamas youth activist, an Israeli C.O. who spent time in prison, and three Air Force C.O. applicants. [Senior Airman Juan Bettancourt also spoke at our convention—see cover story.]

• September Days of Solidarity with Palestine

VFP members in 25 cities took part in coordinated days of action during the first week in September. Leslie Harris and Dallas Chapter 106 members deserve a special shout-out! [See p. 25.] The September Days of Action report is in preparation.

Here's to the VFP members who participated in these projects and to all our supporters who make our work possible.

FALL CALENDAR

SEPT 21: INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

This year's theme: Cultivating a Culture of Peace. Learn more about this UN-declared day at internationaldayofpeace.org.

OCT 11–14: 2024 JUSTICE FOR OUR DESERT

This weekend gathering convened by Nevada Desert Experience concludes with an act of nonviolent resistance at the nuclear test site. Info at nevadadesertexperience.org.

OCT 13–19: SHUT DOWN DRONE WARFARE!

Join CODEPINK, Veterans For Peace, and Ban Killer Drones for the 2024 Fall Action Week at Creech Killer Drone Base located near Indian Springs, Nevada. Info at shutdowndronewarfare.org.

NOV 11: ARMISTICE DAY

Find resources for observing Veterans Day in a way that honors its origins: veteransforpeace.org/take-action/armistice-day.

NOV 16–17: SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS WATCH

SAVE THE DATE! More information forthcoming at soaw.org.
“This November [35th anniversary] gathering is an affirmation of life and a declaration that we will not be silent in the face of injustice and militarization inflicted upon the impoverished and displaced communities across the borders.” —Roy Bourgeois



DECEMBER: CELEBRATE THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE

Find resources at: veteransforpeace.org/take-action/remembering-christmas-truce.

VFP President's Report

Dear
Colleagues,
Friends and
Comrades,

THANK YOU for your extraordinary activism in the pursuit of peace, justice, and democracy. We live in the most unsettling, disturbing, and destructive times, and yet despite all obstacles, Veterans For Peace persists, moving along dynamically because of the dedication and determination of our members.

You exemplify the proud veteran voice for peace in our country, calling out the deleterious impact on climate of U.S. militarism and the war industrial complex. You show courage and determination as you express the values of VFP through nonviolent actions to end war in Gaza, Ukraine, and elsewhere—and to stop war before it starts. You show support for our **Golden Rule** peace boat—now touring the northwest delivering solidarity along with its anti-nuclear message. You show up for veterans, whether working to save the VA from privatization, advocating care and repatriation of our deported veterans, or providing for unhoused veterans.

At the national level, the work of Veterans For Peace continues to be supporting members by: assisting in the development of national projects and chapters, assisting local efforts as needed; providing resources and coordinating communications—email, print, social and web-based—to encourage local, national, and international connections and activism; responding to members' concerns, and assisting in the resolution of issues as they arise.

Gratitude for Our Solid Staff

The work of our national office and board is facilitated by our talented and hardworking national staff: Special Projects Coordinator **Mike Ferner**; Business Manager **Shelly Rockett**; Membership Coordinator **Casey Steinmetz**; Communications Coordinator **Chris Smiley**; Office Assistant **Gail Aquino**; plus VFP editor and graphic artist **Becky Luening**; and part-time *Golden Rule* Project Manager **Helen Jaccard**. In 2023, Mike Ferner was selected by the VFP Board to be our Interim Director as we reorganized staff roles and responsibilities to ensure our ability to continue being a strong and vibrant veteran voice for peace.

Ferner worked with us as Interim Director until May 2024; he then requested that we hire an Executive Director as he shifted into his current role of Special Projects Coordinator. As that search continues, Executive Director responsibilities are being assigned to national staff and members of the board. This year, as we reorganized and more clearly defined roles and responsibilities, we began recruiting more volunteers while also reviving and boosting staff positions. In January, we brought back Casey Steinmetz, a former VFP staffer many of you may remember, to be our Membership Coordinator. This summer, our Communications Coordinator, Chris Smiley, was boosted from part-time to full-time, as was Gail Aquino, whose critical administrative assistance to VFP Business Manager Shelly Rockett includes managing our online store.

Together, our small staff manages all member, chapter, and project communications, the production of our widely distributed eNews and print newsletter, maintenance



Susan Schnall was one of several VFP members who turned out to honor Aaron Bushnell at an event held at the U.S. Mission to the U.N. in New York on March 15, 2024.

of the VFP website, and growing a robust video channel and social media presence. VFP staff are very responsive, and always provide extra support around special action campaigns as well as assistance with planning and running virtual events.

Improved Financial Outlook

In February 2022, when a VFP Executive Committee review found our national bank account contained only enough funds to meet national staff payroll for two more weeks, we called on you, our members, along with other supporters, to contribute and keep us functioning. We developed a financial plan to move us through 2022. One of our active board members raised money through a substantial grant to help put money back into our savings account. [See VFP Board minutes from April/May 2022]. As a result of our budgetary review and subsequent recommendations

made by the Finance Committee, the board proposed major changes to the budget, which were accepted.

Today we are in a much stronger position, thanks both to your support and the actions we have taken as an organization to ensure ongoing fiscal security. We consistently track our finances and currently have over \$180,000 in operating, savings, and restricted accounts. We have transferred our checking and savings accounts to Amalgamated Bank, which—founded by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America nearly 100 years ago—is considered the bank for the working people, with the SEIU being its largest shareholder.

VFP National Board

This past year, individuals serving on the national board have continued to accept additional responsibilities. **Gerry Condon** is now serving as Communications Chair and **Kelly Wadsworth** is our Transformative Justice Chair. Requests from other organizations for endorsements now go through VFP Vice President **Josh Shurley** and, when necessary, are reviewed by the Executive Committee and full board.

In the past year Veterans For Peace has issued a number of official statements, drafted by members and approved by the board—on Aaron Bushnell; in support of students protesting the genocide in Gaza; denouncing allegations of foreign funding of progressive organizations; and most recently, an open letter to Kamala Harris demanding *Ceasefire Now!* in Gaza, peace negotiations, and stopping the sale of arms to Israel and Ukraine.

Our VFP Statement of Purpose is clear: We are against war. We support war resisters.

Open Meetings

VFP Board of Directors meetings are held monthly on the 3rd Saturday at 12:40 pm Eastern Time on Zoom.

To all members who are interested in the issues and deliberations of the national VFP Board: Our meetings are open and we welcome your attendance! We revisit key issues and priorities throughout the year, and are always happy to consider your ideas and hear your concerns. We use regular Zoom meeting format so that all participants can be seen if they wish. The meeting link is posted on the VFP website and in emails sent to members ahead of time.

VFP Worldview Project

The opening program of this year's convention featured VFP member, author and scholar **Four Arrows (Wahinkpe Topa)**, who introduced the **VFP Worldview Reflections and Peace Project**. Four Arrows has studied Indigenous worldview extensively and together with Dr. Darcia Narvaez developed 50 precepts encompassing unique perspectives, values, and ways of understanding the world held by Indigenous peoples. In contrast with the more individualistic worldview dominant in the west, Indigenous worldview focuses on collective well-being and long-term sustainability.

Indigenous worldview precepts can provide valuable insights into sustainable practices and holistic approaches to problem-solving. This project seeks to show how integrating these principles can lead to enhanced strategies and stronger relationships and help to cultivate a more inclusive and ethical organizational culture within VFP.

Veterans For Peace has received a grant for a university-sponsored

study to see how daily reference to the “Worldview Chart for Rebalancing Life Systems on Planet Earth” might rebalance, revitalize, and transform our lives and organizations in ways that reverse the problems fostered by our uninvestigated colonial worldview.

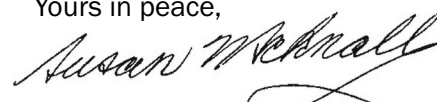
We are asking all our members to please participate in this project!

The project asks members to commit to spending ten minutes a day studying and meditating on the contrasting set of values as outlined on the Worldview Chart [included in this newsletter]. After doing this for a period of 90 days, members are invited to complete a ten-question survey. It is that simple! For more info, email Josh Shurley at josh@veteransforpeace.org, or visit the project website at worldviewliteracy.org/veterans-for-peace-survey-1

In Closing

As we reflect on the success of our annual convention, as well as the significance of the special projects Mike Ferner has been initiating — our recent Days of Solidarity campaign saw letters detailing U.S. lawbreaking delivered by our members to government officials and war industry locations in 16 cities nationwide! — I want to extend my deepest gratitude to all of you. Your ongoing dedication and tireless efforts have been nothing short of inspiring. Together, let us continue harnessing the power of veterans' voices. Together, let us continue building a culture of peace. Thank you for your extraordinary contributions and for standing united in this crucial mission.

Yours in peace,



Susan Schnall, President
VFP Board of Directors



Climate Crisis & Militarism



Members of Veterans For Peace joined CodePink, 350.org staffers, and others to protest the Blue Angels' appearance at the Annapolis, Maryland, Naval Academy graduation in May. The protest garnered an article in the Baltimore Banner.

Summer 2024 turned out to be even hotter than Summer 2023, as global temperature rise hit 1.5 °C several years before predicted. Two U.S. proxy wars, in Ukraine and Gaza, add many million metric tons of greenhouse gases as well as toxins to the world's atmosphere—not to mention human misery.

In the face of this grim reality, members of the VFP National Climate Crisis and Militarism Project (CCMP) are working hard to communicate and protest the deadly combination of fossil fuel emissions and the impacts of war and militarism. In an interview with a local television host, CCMP Steering Committee member Cindy Piester discussed connections between the catastrophe in Gaza and climate catastrophe shortly after bombing began.

Cindy Piester was a badged virtual participant in the COP 28 UN Climate Change Conference in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, Nov. 30 to Dec. 13, 2023. The biggest of its kind, with some 85,000

participants, more than 150 heads of state and government were counted in national delegations, along with representatives of civil society, business, Indigenous peoples, youth, philanthropy, and international NGOs.

No MAS! No military air shows!

CCMP continues to build alliances and gain supporters across the country for the No MAS protests against military pollution. Jet pollution is easily visualized at air shows and the conversation soon turns to the bigger picture of overall military pollution, including noise, jet fuel exhaust, and greenhouse gas emissions.

This summer and fall, VFP members, along with local allies, will protest military air shows in Seattle, San Diego, Virginia Beach, and San Francisco, and possibly other locations. The 2024 campaign will culminate in the delivery of the petition to Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro.

As part of our outreach efforts to educate the public about military

pollution, VFP's Climate Crisis and Militarism Group has been collaborating with 350.org US on this year's protests of eight local military air shows.

We invited staffer Taylor Hams Smith to speak during the CCMP webinar at this year's convention, and she spoke powerfully! We are also collaborating on the development of a petition. 350.org U.S. and CCMP have put together a petition demanding the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of the Air Force cancel all military air shows. Timed to hit your email inbox in early September, if you missed it, go to bit.ly/no-air-show to sign on and share. Our goal is 10,000 signers by November 1, 2024. The petition will be delivered to the Secretaries in late fall.

Kudos to No MAS! strategic leader Gary Butterfield, who started the campaign in his hometown of San Diego and is working hard to make this a national campaign.



CCMP members including Dr. Jim Rine, seen here at Earth Day in Royal Oak, Michigan, attend public events to communicate the links between militarism and the climate crisis. We are out and about—marching with allies, tabling events, and speaking at rallies.

Coalition-building

Members of CCMP have been regularly attending meetings of the U.S.-Climate-Militarism coalition led by allies at the National Priorities Project, and the new Dismantle the MIC (military-industrial complex) coalition, as well as connecting regularly with climate groups including Youth vs. Apocalypse (YvA), Climate Reality Project, local 350.org chapters and others.

In exchange for our financial support, CCMP will be credited as a producer of the Empire Files documentary *Earth's Greatest Enemy*, an exposé of the world's biggest polluter—the U.S. military. [Watch the trailer at bit.ly/earthgreatestenemy.]



Screenshot from *Earth's Greatest Enemy*

Scan the QR code to watch the film trailer, or go to: bit.ly/earthgreatestenemy

Veterans and Labor for Sensible Priorities

An offshoot of CCMP, Veterans and Labor for Sensible Priorities (VL4SP) has been a VFP-sponsored project for about a year. VL4SP has been seeking endorsement from labor unions and labor-oriented groups for a \$100 billion cut in the Pentagon “budget” (NDAA) as part of the larger “People Over Pentagon» movement. As of early July, we have 31 such endorsements.

Recently, we have begun seeking VFP chapter endorsements as well, and currently have 12. We are encouraging chapters to additionally build connections with anti-war union members in their local areas. To add your chapter's endorsement, please email labor@veteransforpeace.org.

Opposition to war by U.S. labor in the past nine months has been mainly expressed in Resolutions for Ceasefire in Gaza/Israel, from national and local unions that represent a majority of unionized workers. VL4SP strives to build on this momentum and extend it to cutting the military.

To learn more about Veterans and Labor for Sensible Priorities, click the “VETERANS AND LABOR” button found at www.veteransforpeace.org/ccmp.

“Emissions from Israel’s war in Gaza have immense effect on climate.... The first months of conflict produced more global-heating gases than 20 climate-vulnerable nations do in a year.”

—CCMP SLIDESHOW NARRATIVE

TAKE ACTION ON CLIMATE & MILITARISM

Find CCMP online at veteransforpeace.org/ccmp

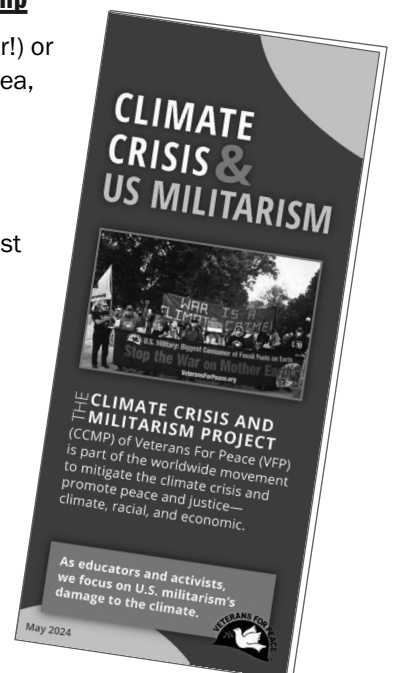
To request a CCMP presentation (150 given so far!) or inquire about military air show protests in your area, drop a line to climate@veteransforpeace.org.

For info and resources on protesting military air shows, click the **No MAS** button on our website.

Got a suggestion, compliment, criticism, or request for CCMP? Want to order a *MILITARISM FUELS CLIMATE CRISIS* banner? Send an email to climate@veteransforpeace.org.

Want more in-depth information about the intersection of the climate crisis and wars/militarism? Click the **EXPLORE ISSUES** button on our website.

The recently updated CCMP brochure is available to download and print at www.veteransforpeace.org/take-action/climatecrisis/climateresources1





veteransforpeace.org/SOVA

Stop U.S. tax dollars from going to the profit-centered health care industry

EARLIER THIS YEAR, I was out of town and needed emergency room care. The VA was an hour away, so the VA triage nurse referred me to a local hospital where I could be seen right away. That was Thursday evening. On Friday afternoon I went to the local VA and received an ophthalmology evaluation. The following Tuesday, after I had returned from my trip, I was treated for my problem at my local VA Ophthalmology Clinic. On Wednesday my primary care provider called me to schedule an ER follow-up visit the next week.

My case exemplifies the holistic, patient-centered care the VA is able to provide, because the VA is not profit-centered. And I'm just one of nine million veterans they provide care for.

This model is threatened by an increasing number of referrals being made to the private sector. The budget for private sector care rose from \$14.8 billion in 2018 to \$28.5 billion in 2023—33% of VHA's current budget. TriWest Healthcare Alliance and Optum, the third-party administrators managing private sector referrals, are seeking an increase of \$103 billion over their original \$86 billion budget for the remainder of their 2019–2026 contract. Optum already received an additional \$4 billion for one of five regions for the last seven months of FY 2024.

It's not only VA health care being targeted as a source of profit. Health Care for All advocates are trying to stop tax dollars flowing into the insurance industry through Medicare Advantage plans, which are predicted to increase Medicare costs over \$600 billion in the next eight years.

Government agencies can assemble a task force, called a Red Team, to conduct a review and recommend solutions in crisis situations. Recently the VA convened a Red Team in response to VA cost overruns. The panel of six health care leaders came to unanimous agreement that ***“the VA urgently needs to take action to control community care utilization and spending if the direct care system is to continue to be available to serve the diverse, specialized, and often highly complicated health care needs of enrolled veterans.”***

Congressional Representatives, the President, and the VA Secretary all need to heed this report. It makes many recommendations to avoid “a potential existential threat to the VA Health System” and states that “addressing this matter should be an urgent priority for VA/VHA leadership.”

Report by Arlys Herem



Arlys Herem and Jeff Roy met with U.S. Congressmember Ilhan Omar to ask the representative to support the VA and to urge Congress to heed the Red Team Report.

TAKE ACTION!

veteransforpeace.org/SOVA > CALLS TO ACTION

SOVA works to counter threats to VA health care and preserve the choice of a strong VA for veterans. Work with us to force Congress to stop siphoning money from the VA to the private sector with no accountability. We welcome your involvement!

VA IG ignores VCCP private-sector care

The VA Inspector General (IG) routinely inspects VA operations and makes recommendations the VA is required to address, but rarely addresses the quality, timeliness, and cost of care given by private providers under the Veterans Community Care Program (VCCP). This is in spite of the fact that VCCP spending is now a third of the VA health care budget, with \$27 billion allocated to it. TELL CONGRESS: Evaluate VCCP providers as well as the VA!

VHPI: “Project 2025 would drastically change VA health care”

Project 2025 plans for the VA would decimate VA health care and slash veterans' benefits. Read the Veterans Healthcare Policy Institute's analysis at veteranspolicy.org.



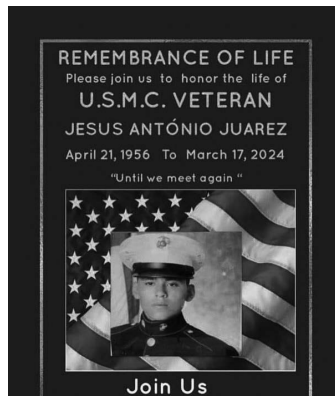
Leave No One Behind! Help DVAP keep its Tijuana resource center open.
Give online at veteransforpeace.org/our-work/vfp-national-projects/deported-veterans-advocacy-project/donate-dvap or mail a check to the National VFP office earmarked for our Deported Veterans Advocacy Project.

Deported Veterans Advocacy Project

DEPORTED VETERANS ADVOCACY PROJECT (DVAP) opened the doors to VFP Sgt. Barrios Memorial Chapter 182/Unified U.S. Deported Veterans Resource Center, Playas Barracks, in Tijuana, Mexico, in April 2017. The center sits just a few short yards from the PedWest Port of Entry, which is also the deportation area for folks being removed from the U.S. Since then, this operation has been a force of advocacy for the repatriation of deported veterans and support with obtaining rightly earned VA benefits. Our office has been and continues to be a crucial operation in support of deported veterans as well as ex-pat veterans living in the Baja area. As an active stakeholder in the Department of Homeland Security's Immigrant Military Members and Veterans Initiative (IMMVI), our coalition has played a part in attaining over 105 veteran repatriations, with several more in process.

Since the pandemic, keeping our center's doors open has been a financial challenge, and we now find ourselves at a critical point in our operations where we must engage in serious fundraising if we are to keep our doors open. Some people have suggested we close our office and go to strictly remote operation. But our office has served and continues to serve as a community center for deported veterans—a place they can come for in-person assistance with navigating the complicated process for repatriation, and for obtaining their rightly earned benefits, as well as to receive food and clothing assistance (when donations permit). We continually receive new requests for assistance from veterans, each with a unique story. Recent contacts have come from: a U.S. Army veteran deported to Canada with medical/mental health issues; a U.S. Army combat veteran living in the shadows in Texas, re-entering the U.S. after being deported; a U.S. Army veteran currently held in immigration detention, fighting deportation; a U.S. Army veteran deported to Matamoros, Mexico.

In the last two months we have had the unpleasant task of assisting the families of two USMC deported veterans who died in exile waiting for humanitarian parole approval so they could enter the USA to receive adequate medical/mental health treatment. **USMC Jesus (Chuy) Juarez** passed in Tijuana on March 17, 2024. His remains were brought across the border



to the U.S. by his family and we were able to secure a memorial service at St. Andrews Episcopal Church in La Mesa, California, officiated by U.S. Army retired chaplain Lt. Col. Bob Blessings, with close to 100 family members, friends and veterans in attendance.

USMC Cpl. Jose Alaniz passed in Monterrey, Mexico, on May 17, 2024. In communication with his spouse, she indicated this veteran's last wishes were to be buried at a U.S. National Cemetery. We immediately begun the process of creating a gofundme campaign in support of fulfilling Veteran Alaniz last wishes. In the same manner, we proceed as a stakeholder to reach out to the IMMVETS team for support in obtaining a humanitarian parole for the veteran's spouse to accompany the veteran's remains to El Paso Texas, as well as arrangements for burial at Fort Bliss National Cemetery, with Marine Honors. Attorney Tran Dang, Director of the Rhizzone Center for migrants and deported veteran coalition member, immediately offered her support in filing the humanitarian parole request for Veteran Alaniz's spouse and diligently followed up on the request, having documents translated to English as well, so approval was granted for the humanitarian parole request and Veteran Alaniz's spouse was allowed to not only travel with Veteran Alaniz's remains, but also attend the funeral service on June 14, 2024, at Fort Bliss National Cemetery.

I know both families are very grateful for the support DVAP/VFP/Unified has provided in such a difficult time. We are very grateful for the quick response of DVAP Coordinators Willie Hager and Jan Ruhman, as well as the generous support of VFP member and friend Mike Tork. We are also grateful for generous contributions received from many members of the San Diego Episcopal Diocese. Very special gratitude to Attorney Tran Dang for her tireless support of our non-citizen veterans and being a force in securing the needed humanitarian parole.

With your VFP chapters' support across the U.S., we trust our mission in support of our non-citizen veterans and military families will continue to be offered at our resource center in Tijuana, Mexico.

*Robert Vivar, Executive Director
Unified U.S. Deported Veterans Resource Center*

Korea Peace Campaign



IN ORDER TO END the forever U.S. war in Korea, the VFP Korea Peace Campaign (KPC) has engaged in solidarity work with various peace groups in South Korea for about twenty years now. The updated KPC leaflet, “End the Forever U.S. War in Korea,” is available for distribution to the general public. Download it from the right sidebar of our project page, at veteransforpeace.org/our-work/vfp-national-projects/korea-peace-campaign



Elliott Adams and Ellen Barfield at the podium on June 13, 2024, mourning the Korean schoolgirls crushed by a U.S. tank. Both are U.S. Army veterans who were stationed in South Korea during their military service. Visible behind them is a mural of the huge candlelight vigil held for the girls at the U.S. Embassy in 2002.

Hyo-sun & Mi-seon Peace Park Commemoration

In June 2023, VFP sent a message of solidarity to the annual commemoration ceremony in remembrance of the untimely deaths of two Korean teenage schoolgirls due to a reckless driving incident involving a 57-ton U.S. Army armored vehicle. In response to our letter, the Hyo-sun & Mi-seon Peace Park Project Committee kindly invited VFP to send two representatives to attend this year’s ceremony. Fortunately, the Korea Peace Campaign’s two Steering Committee members, veterans who had been stationed in South Korea as U.S. Army soldiers, volunteered to go. Thus, Elliott Adams (former VFP President) and Ellen Barfield (current board member and former V.P.) attended the ceremony in South Korea on June 13, 2024.

In his speech, Elliott pointed out, **“As veterans who have seen our share of tragedy as well as cover-ups, it is fitting that we should remember [schoolgirls] Hyo-sun and Mi-seon, and remember the injustice of their unnecessary and early deaths.”** He emphasized the critical role of the solidarity work of the Korean and American people working together for peace and justice, saying, **“...the Peace Park here and the future archive building you will have here can help in laying a foundation for 70 years of cooperative peace-building for us.”**

In her speech, Ellen talked about her experience as a U.S. Army soldier stationed at Camp Humphreys, Pyong Taek, in 1980. She reminded the audience: **“Clearly the continued presence of so very many U.S. troops in South Korea as well as so many other nations around the world has nothing to do with protecting the U.S., or any other nation or people, but is for continuing U.S. hegemony, economic and military control.”**

About 150 people, young students and peace activists, attended the ceremony. The Peace Park Project Committee is, at this time, trying to raise funds to build a Hyo-sun & Mi-seon Archive building next to the Peace Park with a target date of 2027. Any individual or local VFP chapter interested in contributing, please contact us at kpc@veteransforpeace.org.

Preparation for an International People’s Tribunal

The host committee for the 2nd International Forum on the 1945 Atomic Bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki contacted KPC, asking us to send a VFP representative to attend its Forum in Hiroshima in early June. Elliott Adams agreed to attend this meeting, since he was going to be visiting South Korea about the same time.

During the Forum, which ran June 7–9, participants visited the Atomic Dome and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, and held a Memorial Ceremony for the Korean A-Bomb Victims. They also discussed the formation of the International People’s Tribunal on the 1945 U.S. Atomic Bombings (IPT), and participated in panel discussions dealing with (1) the illegality of the use of nuclear weapons under international law and (2) the illegality and incompatibility of extended deterrence with peace on the Korean Peninsula and in northeast Asia.

Elliott observed: “This Tribunal in New York 2026 has implications for all of us. We should pay attention to it and organize around it.”

Korean victims of the A-bombs will be the main plaintiffs in the IPT, and they will be seeking an official apology from the U.S. Government. Another purpose of the Tribunal is to deter any further use of nuclear weapons in the future as war crimes.

The main organizer of the IPT is a group called Solidarity for Peace and Reunification of Korea, or SPARK. At present there are 15 international partners for the Tribunal. They include the Japan Council against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs, International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, Merchants of Death War Crimes Tribunal, Peace Action, Church & Society/the United Methodist Church, World Beyond War, and Veterans For Peace. The Tribunal’s website, in development, is abombtribunal.campaignus.me/

Submitted by John Kim for VFP’s Korea Peace Campaign

“BEST WORKING BOAT”

Golden Rule wraps up Pacific Northwest tour



The above is one of sixty great advertisements that were placed for the 2024 Veterans For Peace online convention. View them all at vfpc convention.org/ads

THE GOLDEN RULE PEACE BOAT is wrapping up her summer 2024 voyage. The historic anti-nuclear sailboat and her crew have visited Seattle, Tacoma, and Olympia, Washington; the Peace Arch Park on the U.S.-Canada border; White Rock, Vancouver, and Victoria, British Columbia; San Juan Island, the Port Townsend Wooden Boat Show, the Vancouver, Washington, Peace and Justice Fair; Portland, and soon Rainier, Oregon, on the way out the Columbia River back to the Pacific Ocean and home to Humboldt Bay. *Whew!*

There were a lot of memorable highlights on this tour. While in Vancouver, B.C., we joined Canadian activists and Indigenous leaders to protest a dangerous oil pipeline and oil tanker. At the Victoria Classic Boat Show, the *Golden Rule* won the Best Working Boat award. Upon receiving the plaque, Project Manager Helen Jaccard noted: “The Golden Rule is not a tug boat, and she is not a fishing boat. *We are working for peace!*”

Probably our most profound day was September 4, when the *Golden Rule* was joined by “kayaktavists” (peace activists in kayaks) for a protest on the water outside of the Bangor Trident Submarine Base. A mere 25 miles west of Seattle, this inconspicuous base hosts eight Trident nuclear-armed submarines and the largest concentration of nuclear warheads in the world. According to Leonard Eiger of **Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action**, “just one of these submarines could destroy every major city in Russia, while ushering in a nuclear winter that would starve billions of people to death.”

The next day, September 5, the *Golden Rule* protested outside the **Indian Island Weapons Depot**, just across from Port Townsend, Washington, on the Olympic Peninsula. The Navy sends their ships here to reload with weapons of considerable

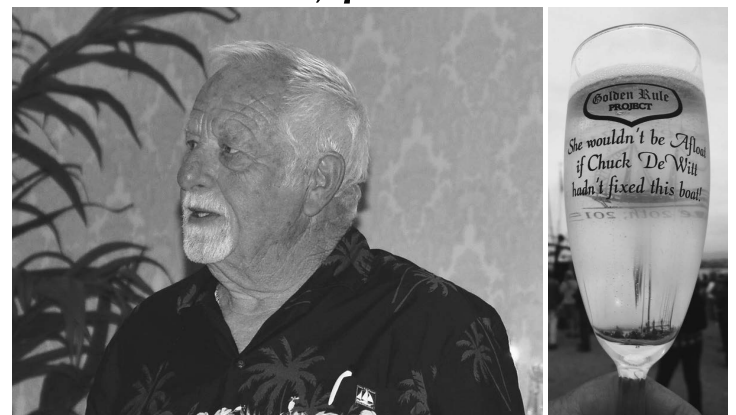
destruction. The USS *Nimitz* aircraft carrier was there when the *Golden Rule* arrived. The *Nimitz* is scheduled for de-commissioning in 2025, but has recently been deployed in the Middle East to defend Israel and threaten Iran.

In Portland, the **Mosquito Fleet** greeted us in multi-colored kayaks, carrying banners that read NO NUKES and STOP THE U.S. WAR MACHINE. We had a great event that night at the Multnomah Friends Meetinghouse, with Quakers, VFP Chapter 72 members, and Columbia Riverkeepers, among others. VFP leader Dan Shea spoke about how moved he was by the words of the Vietnam veterans onboard the boat in our film, ***Making Waves: the Rebirth of the Golden Rule***. Seven years old now, this great short film continues to serve us well, and can be downloaded for free from the Golden Rule website, vfpgoldenrule.org.

We have some very sad news to share. **Golden Rule Reconstruction Coordinator Chuck DeWitt**, who devoted five years of his life to rebuilding the *Golden Rule*, passed away on September 15, after a battle with cancer. Chuck will be missed, but not forgotten. A brass plaque honoring his contribution is prominently displayed in the cabin of the *Golden Rule*.

A lot of people have been involved, and continue to be involved, in making the **VFP Golden Rule Project** such a success. That is a large part of the *Golden Rule*'s magic. This is our tenth year of sailing for a nuclear-free future and a peaceful, sustainable world!

Chuck DeWitt, ¡Presente!



VFP Chapter 56 member Chuck DeWitt received a special award at the 2015 VFP Convention in San Diego (left), after being toasted at the June 20, 2015, Golden Rule launch into Humboldt Bay (right).

DEATH BECOMING

She asked, "Do you regret joining the military?"
I don't believe in regrets
And definitely resentment towards the Army institution that betrayed me
There was a sadness that was drowning my soul,
And shame at my own reactions to the people trying to help me
But regrets,
NO, I don't believe in them
The thing that gets me is the guilt
Guilt loves to attach to me,
Maybe it was that catholic, catechism, first holy communion shit,
I still can't dispel out of my childhood cells
But regrets, no,
Well, I got some cool stories, bruh...
A life experience many people don't have,
My memories so heated,
Branded by the sands of Iraq
Burnt into my snow white skin
Casting reflections
Of someone I don't recognize
Our innocence erased
Your desire to draw beauty into the world
My idealism of making the world a better place
Replaced with daydreams of the middle east being a parking lot
My life after the military was lived on the Edge
The Edge Of Dead and Alive
How it began... I could have died in Iraq,
Many of us died over there,
7,077 service members in over 20 years of war
AND one million civilians of Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen and Syria
My guilt surges
I may not have physically died over there
A combat death
However that check...
You Know the one... The blank check,
Every military member signs
Contractually agreeing to give up our life for this country,
The USA!
My enlistment contract was signed by a child,
By a girl who believed she had no other options.
I miss her, I miss you
You signed that check to go to art school
Artists are not designed for war

You see... the contract is where it begins
It was a grave we already dug with our own hands
Holding hands with Death
It sang lovingly,
Throughout the land of the free and home of the brave
About broad stripes, bright stars,
The rockets red glare, bombs bursting in air,
O' Sweet land of liberty

In those desert convoys I strived to see that flag rise
Through the twists and turns of my depleting humanity
Death taunted me with every bomb that exploded
Every bullet that ricocheted off
My green military ambulance
Every mortar that missed
The tent, the hospital, the sea huts
And especially the one that missed the old Iraqi Army barracks
Where women military service members were hidden from the male service members

O sweet death, always by our side in the darkness
This acceptance of death
It becomes our destiny
You weren't killed in action
You died at home
Did your soul ever make it home?
I wish I could have saved you
I hear on the mainstream news, it's not just you.
Suicide
Veterans dying by suicide
22 a day
That's 8,030 veterans a year
So much more than combat deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan
Let's hear that One more time
More suicides than ALL the combat deaths combined
Over 20 years of war
And let's not forget
How death can be creative
The Uncounted
Drunks in car crashes
Drug abusers injecting death in every vein
Choking and suffocating in death's rhythm
Passing out into that dark abyss
Quiet, Still, Inevitable
After years of chasing
Lunging
Luring death
It becomes apparent to me
Those sweet lies death told me
As we held hands with the mission of militarism
The purpose of our death funding a capitalistic cause
Not a humanitarian one
When militance is spoken to children in songs and pledges
The words of indoctrination weave a contract
With death as a promise for their future
My future
My future, What does it hold?
Dear Annetta Carman,
I want to share my discovery with you...
I kept looking OUTSIDE myself
I kept looking to external forces

Being driven by mottos like
 "Mission first"
 "The most important thing is the people standing next to you"
 "Become part of something bigger than myself"
 And it Left me ... feeling ... Empty, Alone, Unfulfilled,
 Depleted, Burned out ...
 So I went on a search into my internal landscape
 My internal landscape ...
 Listening to my own inner voice on:
 Why to, How to Live
 For me, Because I meant something ...
 I mean something!

I didn't need to attach my self worth to my "to do" list
 I didn't need to attach my self worth
 To a mission,
 To a song, to a cause, to a flag,
 I have better dreams, bigger dreams of how to empower myself,
 To ascend to the best version of myself
 Dreams of recuperating, recreating, replenishing my life
 THEN giving
 To my family, my community, to the world
 Filling, completing my soul, before everything else.
 That is how I learned to live for me.

— Jenny Pacanowski

VFP Poet Laureate Jenny Pacanowski is an Iraq Veteran, and Founder and Director of Women Veterans Empowered & Thriving [see womenveteransemPOWERED.org]

TOO MANY SOMEONES: AN ELEGY



I don't like to sleep
 because in my dreams
 I hear screams
 coming from somewhere
 I can't see
 but I know it's someone
 it's a child
 they need me
 it's Azad
 it's Omid
 at least it might as well be
 it's someone
 it's a child
 longing to break free
 from a gallows of rubble
 of rebar and concrete
 it's someone
 it's a child
 praying to humanity
 with tiny hands and feet
 scratching and kicking
 until they can't breathe
 but I can't see
 and we can't see
 someone
 a child
 at least we pretend
 as we bend reality
 to fit our needs

planting seeds
 of indifference and apathy
 god, tell me
 how can't we
 see someone
 a child
 when, really, we know
 we're the reason for their screams
 and for their scratching
 and for their kicking
 and for their silence
 and I wake up
 and theres been no end
 to the genocidal violence
 and I'm lost
 in an ocean, on an island
 and my heart and my soul
 are half a world away
 buried beneath the rubble
 with too many someones
 and I hold my sons
 and I cry
 and I ask god, why
 but no one answers,
 and more children die
 and more children die
 and more children die

—Jayson Mizula

Jayson Mizula is a member of Hawaii VFP Chapter 113. He wrote this poem upon his return to Hawaii from the Gaza flotilla.

VFP Supports War Resisters! *continued from page 1*

Harrison Mann *on Finding Hope*

[Describing his experience on the Hill]: There were Congressmembers and staff who were upset about what was happening [in Gaza], but they also were...scared about what would happen if they voted against the next aid bill, or if they spoke out about it. And then there were some of the progressives who had already been doing their best to try to end the war, and they were also like, “Hey, we’re all out of Schlitz here. I don’t know what else we can do.” So that was quite disheartening.

My takeaway was that, in the same way I was held back by my fear, there’s a lot of people out there, both in the bureaucracy, in the administration, and in Congress, who kind of want to do the right thing, but are too afraid. And there’s also a lot of people who, like I felt, feel incredibly hopeless. And if you look at what was happening in Gaza and look at the discussions in D.C., whether in November or April-May, when I started to resign publicly, or today, I wouldn’t blame you for feeling hopeless. But over the past few months, despite a lot of these really discouraging interactions and developments, I’ve had some cause for hope....

The first thing that made me quite hopeful was discovering how all these people I worked with who were totally silent about [U.S. complicity in the horrific war crimes committed by Israel against the Palestinian people] for six months, once given the chance, started talking about it, and were really excited that somebody had stepped up. After I left, my friends who are analysts, who are still in the office, said, Yeah, now we discuss it openly. And I know some people are starting to take [small actions]...to try and move things in the right direction with regard to Israel.

Something else that gave me hope was [that a lot of people] reached out to me...including active-duty people in the military, ... who said, “Yes, I think you’re right. I’m glad you said something.” I had somebody whose unit was preparing to do something related to the conflict [reach out to me, saying] “Hey, can you help me? I don’t think this is right.” ...Riley Livermore, who used to be an Air Force Major—to my knowledge, he’s the only other military officer who has publicly resigned because of the conflict—told me that seeing my letter and my stories is what inspired him to publicize his resignation.

[E]ven though most of my time [in Washigton] was pretty disheartening, I got invited back by one member—Congresswoman Delia Ramirez, who represents part of Chicago—on the day of Netanyahu’s address to Congress. She was one of the members who was attending the counter-programming event and wasn’t going to sit in on his speech.

I remember sitting in her office with some of her staff, and in the morning [we heard there were around 30 or 40 members sitting out the address]. Three hours later, it was over 100. It escalated that morning. And Nancy Pelosi was among them. And that’s unprecedented. That’s never happened before that that many members have sat out. And I’m not sure anybody as prominent as her had sat out.

In a couple weeks, we’re going to have the student protests starting again. And right now, the uncommitted movement, which also represents, I think, an unprecedented—or in recent history, unprecedented—lever of pressure against the administration and the Harris campaign, is also activating, and that gives me some hope. I think the trajectory of both popular sentiment and U.S. policy towards Israel is clear. [I]t’s not moving fast enough, ...but it’s undeniable that there has been irreversible movement on this issue.

I am drawing incredible strength and inspiration from remembering that folks like you all have been out here fighting for years with, honestly, much more patience and much less frustration than I’ve subjected myself to over the past several months.

I hope, in turn, it gives you some little encouragement, both going into this convention and then going forward as activists or as engaged citizens, to know that even over the course of just a few months, I have so much more hope than I used to.

Juan Bettancourt *on Remaking the Meaning of Duty, Service, and Honor*

Roughly three months ago, when VFP launched their second Appeal for Redress [see www.veteransforpeace.org/take-action/redressv2], I stated that my contribution to this campaign was my proudest act of service. Although this statement was intended to distance myself from my two years in the Air Force, the concept of duty, service, and honor have continued to occupy my mind as I reflect on their significance in a society driven by militarism in the pursuit of profit.

Throughout my conversations with peers about my decision to become a conscientious objector and the need for a second appeal, two particular phrases kept resurfacing, as if they were part of an unspoken script. “Don’t forget, Juan, you did take an oath to the Constitution,” and, “It’s not about your feelings and beliefs, Juan, it’s about service before self. We’re here to take orders.” The overwhelming repetition of those phrases led me

to realize that they were not cliches born from popular wisdom or an effort to evade discussions about the true nature of war in the elites who benefit from perpetuating armed conflict. Clearly, these were ingrained ideological markers in my sphere of consciousness, the products of years of indoctrination and immersion in military thinking. These cliches serve as a means for peers to garner a false sense of righteousness and shield themselves from ethical dilemmas stemming from our military service. They are a convenient escape from their own political agency, a pitiful but yet seemingly legitimate excuse to justify their apathy and actions as military members, as if our allegiance to the Constitution, an inanimate object, grants us full immunity from moral and even legal obligations.

These phrases are a constant reminder of Hannah Arendt's haunting notion of the banality of evil, a controversial concept which has helped me grasp the endless cycle of war and colonialism that forged our modern world. Throughout history, Arendt argued, evil has been seen as a metaphysical force beyond human comprehension, a demonic entity that takes hold of individuals and transforms them into ruthless killers, despots, zealots, all willing to destroy any shred of humanity in pursuit of their twisted convictions and pleasures. Instead, Arendt offers a different picture. Evil is not some otherworldly force reserved for the most despicable individuals, but rather it is a mundane process carried out by average, unsuspected people in their quest for conformity, professional success, or appeasing those in positions of authority. This evil is often carried out by faceless bureaucrats, ambitious politicians, and military members who claim to be simply following orders in a misguided sense of duty and honor.

As I embarked on my path to becoming a conscientious objector, I came to understand that true change in our moral principles towards a world free of war goes beyond simply choosing not to partake in all conflict based on personal conviction. It also requires reshaping the very foundations of what we understand as duty, service and honor.

In other words, we must fashion new oaths to values and ideals that foment peace and liberation, not war and oppression. This act undoubtedly requires revolutionary imagination, but also compassion with ourselves and our communities as we come to terms with the ways power and contingency have shaped our way of thought. This journey for me has been more about creating than discovering new oaths. And through it, I have found not only a new sense of service to a greater good, but also the camaraderie that I longed for when I originally joined the Air Force.

Joy Metzler *on Overcoming Conditioning to Stand on the Right Side of History*

[I am] a post-9/11 child...taught to hate terrorists from a very early age....And I grew up Protestant Christian, so I believed..., you know, God loves that other person across the ocean, but, he probably would also like self-defense, and things like that. This is how I grew up thinking, and this is the mindset that I entered the [U.S. Air Force] Academy with.

One of the questions I was asked during my application [to the academy] was, "Say you're a pilot and you're given an order to destroy a building with women and children in it, as well as weapons of mass destruction that are going to be used against the American people. How do you respond to that?" And of course, there was a correct answer to this, because we aren't entering the academy to be peace lovers. We're not entering the academy to be diplomats. We're entering to be war makers. So [my answer] of course, was, if it came down to it, I would do it....I knew [what] they wanted to hear, and it was the answer I believed at the time....We are conditioned from day one to glorify violence, to participate in violence, and that was emphasized throughout my academy career....Waging war is a career, a profession for us. And even though we had classes on ethics, even though we had classes on the law of war, [legal concerns were] completely overtaken by this mindset.

One more example from the academy....I think it must have been as a junior, I remember sitting in an auditorium with a group of 1,000 cadets—about the size of my entire class. I don't even remember what this speech was about, but they put up real feed of drone strikes. I was sitting there in the auditorium watching little pixelated people run around, and every single time a cloud of dust exploded on the screen, we all cheered, we all clapped. My husband reminded me about this a few months ago. He said, that was effed up, right? And I was like, yes, yes, that was very effed up. How could we have, as an institution, gotten to a place where we can cheer at the death and destruction of other people?...

When I graduated from the academy and began graduate school in Georgia, I was happy about finishing up my commitment, and still thought I was doing the right thing by being in the military. The mindset that was instilled in us at the academy...was still deeply rooted inside me.

[At the time] October 7 happened, I would say the majority of military people I was with might have seen a little bit of America's struggle against terrorism reflected in how Israel responded to this terrorist attack. That stayed with me for so long so that, even as I started seeing more footage coming out of Gaza, even as I was seeing the horrendous pictures that were trying to get me to understand... [the human] consequences of

...continued on p. 31

Worldview Chart for Rebalancing Life Systems on Planet Earth

Common Kinship/Indigenous Worldview Manifestations

1. Egalitarian
2. Courage and fearless trust in the universe
3. Socially purposeful life
4. Emphasis on community welfare
5. Respect for various gender roles and fluidity
6. Emphasis on intangible values
7. Earth and all systems are living and loving
8. Emphasis on heart wisdom
9. Competition to develop positive potential
10. Empathetic
11. Bio-centric
12. Words are sacred, truthfulness is essential
13. Truth considered multifaceted, accepting the mysterious
14. Flexible boundaries and interconnected systems
15. Regular use of alternative consciousness
16. Recognition of spirit in All
17. Emphasis on holistic interconnectedness
18. High interpersonal engagement, touching
19. Inseparability of knowledge and action
20. Resistance to authoritarianism
21. Time as cyclical, permeable and fluid
22. Seeking complementary duality
23. Intolerance of injustice
24. Emphasis on responsibility
25. Generosity is way of life
26. Ceremony is life-sustaining

Common Dominant Worldview Manifestations

1. Rigid hierarchy
2. Fear-based thoughts and behaviors
3. Living without strong social purpose
4. Focus on self and personal gain
5. Rigid and discriminatory gender stereotypes
6. Emphasis on possessions
7. Earth as an unloving “it”
8. Emphasis on intellect
9. Competition to feel superior
10. Lacking empathy
11. Anthropocentric
12. Words used to deceive self or others
13. Truth claims as absolute, intolerant of ambiguity
14. Rigid boundaries and fragmented systems
15. Unfamiliarity with alternative consciousness
16. Imperceptive of spirit in All
17. Disregard for holistic interconnectedness
18. Minimal contact with others
19. Emphasis on theory and rhetoric
20. Acceptance of authoritarianism
21. Time as linear
22. Dualistic thinking
23. Acceptance of injustice
24. Emphasis on rights
25. Accumulation (hoarding) as way of life
26. Ceremony as rote formality

27. Learning is experiential and collaborative
28. Trance-based learning is helpful and natural
29. Human nature is good but malleable
30. Humor is essential tool for coping
31. Conflict resolution is return to community
32. Learning is holistic and place based
33. Personal vitality is essential
34. Nature's laws are primary
35. Holistic self-knowledge is most important
36. Autonomy for individual, group & future generations
37. Nature is benevolent and relational
38. All earth forms are sentient
39. High respect for the feminine
40. Honors diversity and multiple perspectives
41. Communal healing and transformative gatherings
42. Bonded to the land
43. Emphasis on becoming fully human
44. Mutual dependence
45. Centrality of gratitude
46. Noninterference
47. Relational healing is self-initiated
48. Understanding/embracing death and dying
49. Reciprocity is a guiding principle
50. Practical and spiritual connection to cosmos

27. Learning as didactic
28. Trance is dangerous or stemming from evil
29. Human nature as corrupt or evil
30. Humor used for put downs
31. Conflict mitigated via revenge, punishment
32. Learning is individualistic and passive
33. Personal vitality minimized
34. Societal laws are primary
35. Self-knowledge not prioritized
36. Autonomy for self alone
37. Nature as dangerous or utilitarian only
38. Other-than-human beings are not sentient
39. Low respect for the feminine
40. Little realization of the importance of diversity
41. Privatized healing and individualized transformation
42. Detachment from the land
43. De-emphasizing becoming fully human
44. Independence from relations
45. Centrality of striving
46. Manipulation of others
47. Relational healing is outsourced to experts
48. Fearing and avoiding death to the extreme
49. Competition as a guiding principle
50. Scientific interest in the cosmos

Most of these precepts were originally published in ***The Red Road*** by Four Arrows, and presented at the UN General Assembly's 78th Session in 2023, with Darcia Narvaez. They were collaboratively revised in summer 2024 after publication of the book, ***Restoring the Kinship Worldview: Indigenous Voices Introduce 28 Precepts for Rebalancing Life on Planet Earth***.

Learn more about worldview, discover resources for using this chart for self-study, download a PDF for free or buy a poster version, at WorldviewLiteracy.org.

The Worldview Literacy Project is an initiative of KindredWorld.org.

Boycott of Israel over illegal occupation of Palestine is growing!

BDS—BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT, AND SANCTIONS—is an effective, nonviolent tool for bringing the illegal occupation of Palestine to an end. Initiated in 2005, BDS aims to dismantle the illegal occupation of Palestine, targeting firms with violations on multiple fronts. BDS is gaining traction, and becoming the most important tool in our toolkit for defeating Zionist supremacy. Recent news reports illustrate Israel is taking increasing economic hits, as more people engage. *The Wall Street Journal* reported on July 10, 2024, that the boycott of Israel is spreading into new corners of society.

Support for apartheid and genocide is not only unlawful and immoral—it's economically unsound

Collectively, Americans send \$3.3 billion of their tax dollars annually to uphold apartheid in Palestine (over \$310+ billion in 2024, as of May). Since October 7, 2023, an additional \$43+ billion tax dollars have gone toward committing genocide, with \$2 billion dollars further invested in Israel bonds without the American public's consent.

Fifteen states and local governments invested heavily in Israel bonds post-October 7, with Palm Beach County, Florida becoming the world's largest investor. In addition to significantly increasing their investment from \$40 million to \$700 million over a few short months, Palm Beach passed legislation to increase portfolio exposure to 15%. In response, a coalition called **Break the Bonds South Florida** filed a lawsuit against these investments in May of 2024, which they announced at a press conference and rally attended by 75 people.

The legal argument centers on the risky nature of the investments given Israel's unstable, deteriorating economy. Political instability and the war's effect on Israel's economy have led global credit agencies like Moody's to downgrade Israel's credit ratings. Israel's GDP has declined by 20% over the last year; their foreign direct investment fell by 60% early last year, and another 26% late last year. Other issues include decreased consumer spending, negative consumer sentiment, worsening labor markets, and a decline in tax revenue.

Recent BDS victories

- Turkey halted trade, worth \$7 billion a year, until a permanent ceasefire.
- Norwegian Pension Fund divested nearly \$500 million from Israeli bonds entirely citing uncertainty in the market. Norway's 2nd largest asset manager, Storebrand, divested holdings in IBM worth \$141 million. Four Norwegian universities cut ties with Israeli institutions linked to IDF.

- JPMorgan Chase divested 70% of its holdings in Elbit Systems, Israel's largest weapons manufacturer. Scotia subsidiary (largest foreign shareholder) cut investment in Elbit by 41% (from \$402.1 to \$237.6 million).
- Universities that cut or paused ties with Israeli institutions or companies involved with Israel and its occupied territories include Portland State Univ., Univ. of Helsinki, Ghent Univ., and Univ. of Copenhagen (which divested from portfolios including Airbnb, Booking.com, and eDreams ODIGEO.)
- Consumer boycotts have cost Starbucks \$29 billion, and McDonald's \$28.8 billion.
- On July 1, the Presbyterian Church (USA) voted to divest from Israel bonds and also passed a resolution denouncing Christian Zionism.
- The United Kingdom divested \$100 million from Israel bonds.
- Ireland's sovereign investment fund divested \$3.2 million from Israel.
- San Francisco State University recently pulled its investments from four companies tied to weapons manufacturing or Israel's war in Gaza

Inform and empower yourself and your community

- **Economic Boycott | BDS Movement**
bdsmovement.net
- **U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR)**
uscpr.org/activist-resource/boycott-divestment-and-sanctions/bdswins/
- **American Friends Service Committee (AFSC): Companies Profiting from Gaza Genocide**
afsc.org/gazagenocide-companies
- **Boycott-Israel.org**
boycott-israel.org/

—Patrick McCann

The topic of VFP's Southeast regional zoom held August 20—attended by 35+ people—was **how to build a conscious, ethically responsible investment portfolio**. If you're interested in developing a conscious, ethical investment portfolio, contact Patrick McCann at unityact2@aol.com.

On the Hector Black chapter's 07.11.24 Veterans For Peace Radio show, **Dr. Javeria Farooqi discusses BDS**—its importance, its successes, its impact. She explains boycotting tactics, as well as investment strategies for creating a more humane, compassionate world. Scan the QR code to listen.



Veterans For Peace



Maine VFP member Peggy Akers holds a banner asking for a ceasefire in Gaza. Anti-genocide protests are ongoing across the state.

Chapter Reports

#001 – MAINE

Maine Veterans For Peace has been very active this Spring. Members Doug Rawlings and Rob Shetterly took part in a series organized by Reversing Falls Sanctuary titled *The Art of Protest: Politics and War*. On March 17, Rob, a Brooksville artist known for his portrait series *Americans Who Tell the Truth*, shared stories of peacemakers in his portraits. On June 14, Maine chapter president Doug Rawlings, a founding member of VFP, shared his poetry.

Members Don Kimball and Eric Herter continue to feed the unhoused most Saturdays in Portland, Maine, in a program we call *Proudly We Serve*, with funds donated by Maine VFP and other peace groups in the state.

Don also shared the good news that the Maine State Museum has added the Samantha Smith Way banner to their collection telling the story of this important Mainer. Samantha, of Manchester, Maine, became world famous in 1982 when at age 10 she wrote a letter to Yuri Andropov, leader of the Soviet Union, asking him what he would do to prevent a nuclear war with the United States. He invited her to visit the Soviet Union, and in 1983 she and her parents made the trip. She died in a plane crash in Maine in 1985 at age 13. Two years later, the state declared the first Monday in June as Samantha Smith Day in Maine. Our chapter worked with Maine legislators and town

officials over the past year and succeeded in having a major highway intersection named Samantha Smith Way.

Members Peter Morgan and John Morris attended the Moms Demand Action group for their Advocacy Days at the Maine State House on March 13 to encourage the passage of gun safety laws.

On May 31, many members joined PeaceWorks for the annual Topsham-Brunswick Memorial Day Parade.



Maine VFP member Eric Herter leads walkers in Ogunquit, Maine, at the start of PeaceWalk 2024. Photo: Maine Public

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VFP Chapter Reports

Maine Chapter #001 continued:

On June 8, members joined Americans Who Tell the Truth for the unveiling of artist Rob Shetterly's portrait of Lewiston, Maine native Dr. Bernard Lown. Dr. Lown was a renowned cardiologist, teacher, peace activist and humanitarian who held a deep sense of responsibility for physicians to heal not only our physical bodies but debilitating injustices in the body politic.

Lynn Ellis

#013 – TUCSON, ARIZONA

Intersections: We all count! Veterans For Peace Jon Miles Tucson Chapter 13 Jon Miles Chapter 13, Tucson's report follows in the form of two captioned images.

Cara Bissell



Left: Alice Ritter, a lifetime member of Veterans For Peace, presented her Twentieth Annual Peace Partner Award (PPA) to graduating seniors at Sunnyside High School (SHS) in Tucson on May 13. Each student wrote an essay giving specific past, present, and intended

future activities they have done, are doing, and plan to do toward achieving peace in their lives. The PPA was conceived when President George W. Bush said, in 2001, "I KNOW there are weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq." (No WMD were ever found in Iraq!) Her chosen community, Alice has nurtured SHS as her "child."



Above: Hassan Clement holds a STOP GENOCIDE poster designed by Joel Holodinsky (back facing camera) who also made the poster on the right. Hassan and Joel, both active members of the Tucson VFP chapter, vigil weekly with 20–30 others on Fridays from 5 to 6 pm at the intersection of Euclid and Speedway in Tucson. In addition to VFP, the coalition includes members of Women in Black, NOW, WILPF, Global Justice Center, and several church congregations.

#034 – NEW YORK CITY

The New York City Chapter hosts online monthly meetings with engaging speakers as well as ongoing in-person events addressing urgent peace, environmental, and social justice issues including the climate crisis, Gaza, Guantánamo, Korea, Okinawa, Yemen, Julian Assange, war resistance, war tax resistance, and nuclear weapons.



Veterans For Peace Twin Cities Chapter 27 has never been busier. We have regularly scheduled events every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, plus others that pop up weekly. Above: Some of our members protested with friends from WAMM (Women Against Military Madness) in front of the Minnesota Governor's mansion, with our banner: STOP the WARS, SAVE the EARTH! Report submitted by Mike McDonald.

Meeting Topics/Speakers: Matthew Hoh—U.S. complicity in Gaza genocide; Pat Elder—Military Poisoning of Gaza; Jodie Evans—targeting of peace and social justice organizations to stifle dissent; Ellen Davidson—PeaceWalk 2024.

Veterans For Peace got a great response from spectators at the St. Pat's For All Parade on March 3, 2024.

NYC Chapter Projects: Move the Money; Save Yemen; Agent Orange; *Peace & Planet News*; Ban Killer Drones, Julian Assange, and VFP Japan/Okinawa Peace Speaking Tour.

PeaceWalk2024 began on May 7 in Maine and ended in D.C. in early July in time to protest NATO's 75th anniversary commemoration. Participants crossed New York State from Connecticut to New Jersey on June 2–4. Ten PeaceWalkers attended WESPAC Foundation's 50th Annual Awards Ceremony on June 2 featuring honorees JVP-Westchester, Yonkers Sanctuary, and Community Voices.

Matt Jacobs arranged a two-night stay for PeaceWalkers at the historic 1753 Chappaqua Friends Meeting House, the oldest Quaker meeting house in Westchester, a stop on the Underground Railroad and birthplace of the New York abolitionist movement. On June 4, the PeaceWalkers attended a ceremony at the Manahatta Lenape Village site in Inwood Hill Park before crossing the George Washington Bridge.

Bob Keilbach

#035 – SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

Leveraging the Peace Veteran's Voice—more important than ever NOW!—Brother Moji Agha, VFP member from Colorado, calls us to organize Chambers of Compassion to save the planet. [Look for Moji's ad online at vfpconvention.org/ads].

A portrait of Aaron Bushnell, our comrade who made the ultimate sacrifice by fire, has been painted by Jacob Johns, our Hopi friend who was shot by a MAGA intruder during ceremony in New Mexico. The portrait was gifted to VFP Spokane by the artist and will be mounted near our office.

We met five City Council members urging implementation of Ordinance #36299 making Spokane a nuclear weapons free zone, and calling for annual review of purchasing contracts/retirement investments to be diverted away from nuclear weapons makers/parts suppliers. Working with Washington Against Nuclear Weapons (WANW) [wanwcoalition.org] we've assisted other cities to do the same. Two hundred copies of the ordinance have been sent to peace organizations, and World Beyond War has produced a template for any city to utilize.

A chapter committee has been formed to monitor NATO activities, and Spokane sent a delegate to Washington D.C. in early July to observe the anti-NATO (Nuclear Armed Terrorist Organization) anniversary events [NO to NATO] in July.

At the Emergency Rally for Palestine held in June, organized by a coalition of seven local organizations, VFP spokesperson Jack Talcott emphasized the exceptional power of Love to change the narrative worldwide to Peace and Compassion.

Hollis Higgins



Three Veterans For Peace members spoke at the March 15, 2024, Aaron Bushnell demonstration held at the United Nations: Advisor Ann Wright (left), National President Susan Schnall (center), and NYC VFP (and About Face) member Brittany Ramos DeBarros.

#042 – CONNECTICUT

Members joined VFP #PeaceWalk2024 at 15 stops in Connecticut between May 19 and June 2. At General Dynamics' Electric Boat in Groton and Coast Guard Academy Graduation Day in New London, our banners reminded workers at these institutions that nuclear weapons are against international law, calling for peace and war divestment. We also walked and supported student encampments for Gaza at Yale, and John Miksad of VFP Chapter 18 and World Beyond War led an event at St. Paul's Church in Norwalk. In his presentation at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Stamford, John did a fine job warning of the threats of nuclear weapons, climate change and pandemics. In July we had a chance to meet Miko Peled and hear his talk at the Palestine Museum in Woodbridge [photo on page 22].

In August we gathered with activists in New Haven and Hartford in remembrance of the horrific events of the 1945 nuclear bombings of Japan. Find all VFP-042 events here: m.facebook.com/jim.basile.79/

Jim Brasile

#055 – SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Santa Fe Veterans For Peace continues to liaison with the local anti-nuke community (see photo on page 22), and with Palestine liberation communities in New Mexico.

On the morning of June 29, 2024, a small contingent of Santa Fe Veterans For Peace took part in the 31st annual Santa Fe Gay Pride Parade with many thousands of spectators looking on. George Jiracek remarked, "When we reached the central plaza, the cheers and well-wishes reached a crescendo. We

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VFP Chapter Reports



On Sunday, July 21 members of VFP-NYC Chapter 34 and Connecticut Chapter 42 joined about 50 other peace activists at the Palestine Museum in Woodbridge, Ct., for a talk and book signing with VFP Advisor Miko Peled, author of *The General's Son*. Left to right: Jim Pandaru, Miko Peled, Ellen Davidson, Tarak Kauff, John Miksad, Jim Brasile, Anthony Donovan.

Santa Fe, NM, Chapter #055 continued:

waved our flags and banner and mouthed the words ‘thank you’ over and over again. Goosebumps literally spread over my entire body. This is what America feels like when we join together.”

Greg Corning

#057 – VERMONT

Five Vermont Will Miller Chapter 57 members met Saturday, June 15, to review the past year and discuss activities for 2024–2025. Members reviewed a list of active chapter members and made plans to contact members to encourage more participation during the coming year. We plan to distribute the *Peace & Planet News* quarterly statewide.

Bud Haas

#069 – SAN FRANCISCO

The greater San Francisco Bay Area has almost daily vigils, rallies, marches, street murals, actions, encampments and arrests—all in protest of U.S. complicity in too many months of Genocide against Palestinians. A large Chapter 69 contingent in the annual San Francisco Saint Patrick’s Day Parade brought the official Irish government’s message—*Peace and Ceasefire Now*—to the tens of thousands who lined the main-street parade route.

April saw major VFP participation in a **Youth vs Apocalypse**—led Militarism and Climate Crisis rally (addressing Gaza, Congo, and South Sudan), and ended with a march to war-profiteering corporations. Chapter 69 was a co-host of the West Coast Regional VFP Conference held in April, in Ukiah.

Palestinian organizations, Jewish Voice for Peace, and CodePink are all extremely active in the San Francisco Bay Area, with VFP reps often asked to speak at demonstrations. Yet the horror continues as Congress greenlights the U.S.–armed and financed war crimes of the Israeli government. This fall’s Get Out the Vote efforts will be a national priority!

VFP Chapter 69 is co-organizer of the annual October VFP trip to visit and aid Viet Nam hosted by Viet Nam “Hoa Binh” VFP Chapter 160. We marked International Agent Orange Day, Saturday, August 10, by organizing a public educational event. Vital donations for our Viet Nam projects can be made securely through the VFP Chapter 160 website at vfp160.org. Every penny goes directly to Viet Nam!

Nadya Williams and Steve Morse

#072 – PORTLAND, OREGON

VFP Chapter 72 saw a lot of action last spring. Vietnam veterans Mike Hastie and Dan Shea, in April and in May respectively, spoke out at Portland Public School Board meetings in opposition of JROTC coming into Portland public schools. Other members also showed up or wrote letters to PPS. Unfortunately, after admitting that public opposition to JROTC was 100 to 1, PPS board members still voted 4 to 3 in favor. VFP will continue to protest and challenge the school board’s vote along with local teachers and SEIU union reps.

For a number of years, VFP members Jenika Sharon and Mike Hastie have both been independently involved in ongoing efforts to provide food, water, clothing, and human contact to some of Portland’s unhoused residents, in collaboration with other community members.



Santa Fe, New Mexico, June 14—Chapter 55 members turned out on a blustery, slightly rainy Friday for the weekly anti-nuclear vigil (L to R): Roberto Roibal (VFP Santa Fe), George Jiracek (VFP San Diego), Renée Imperato, and Stephanie Hedgecoke (VFP Santa Fe).

In May, Portland chapter member Dan Shea traveled to the Philippines with BAYAN USA for a three-week mission of peace, education, and information-gathering. Dan joined the delegation to learn about, and report back on, the impacts of U.S. military presence on the lives of the Filipino people; their concerns, fears, and forms of resistance. Dan signed up for this mission partly because, 55 years ago, after leaving Viet Nam, he was deployed to the Marine Corps Separate Barracks in Subic Bay, the Philippines, and subsequently spent nine months guarding weapons and ammunition stored there. Dan is eager and willing to share what he learned on his recent trip with others in VFP. [Connect with Dan on Facebook @ dan.shea.VFP]

At the end of May, VFP members took part in antiwar protests staged during Fleet Week on the Portland waterfront. There just doesn't seem to be an end to the fascist march to war, union busting, and attempts to privatize and militarize our schools, police, and all public institutions.

We were excited to help welcome the Golden Rule to Portland and help celebrate the boat at a potluck social at the Multnomah Friends Meetinghouse on September 16.

Next on our agenda:

- NO To RIMPAC
- NO TO GENOCIDE
- NO TO JROTC
- NO TO NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION
- NO TO U.S. MILITARY in the PHILIPPINES
- YES TO STUDENT ENCAMPMENTS
- YES TO FREE PALESTINE
- YES TO PEACE

Daniel Shea

#075 – PHOENIX, ARIZONA

On May 4, members of Mark Von Hagen–George Mizo Phoenix VFP Chapter 75 conducted our annual Kent State University commemoration for the students killed and wounded when members of the Ohio National Guard opened fire on them while they were participating in, or observing, an anti-war demonstration on the Kent State campus. We distributed information to store patrons, including the obituary of Alan Canfora, who died in January 2021. One of the wounded, Alan spent the rest of his life fighting to ensure that the university did not erase this tragedy from its history.

On August 4, chapter spokesperson Richard A. Smith (USN 1965–69) visited the Phoenix Changing Hands Bookstore to commemorate and remember the victims of the U.S. bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. His discussion included, among other things, the long-debunked rationale for using nuclear weapons against Japan (one million U.S. casualties predicted in a land invasion) and praise for the brilliance and accuracy of the movie, *Oppenheimer*. A question-and-answer session followed.

On Veterans Day, Chapter members will return to the

Changing Hands Bookstores in Phoenix and Tempe, at which we will distribute poppies and remind store patrons of the significance of Armistice Day.

Richard Smith

#90 – BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

VFP Chapter 90 has staged multiple actions this spring and summer, starting on Tax Day, April 15, with delivery of the VFP “Broken Laws Letter” to war industry players guilty of supporting Israel’s genocidal campaign in Gaza. We delivered three in one day, starting with General Dynamics in Scranton, Pennsylvania, maker of the ammo most wanted by Ukraine and Israel—155mm; then to Lockheed Martin of Archbald, Pennsylvania, maker of Paveway laser bombs (used to tear apart Gaza children and other living beings and destroy hospitals, homes, schools, and markers), where a security guard took our letter and said he would deliver it for us; then to BAE Systems in Endicott, New York, the company that supplies the delivery mechanism (Howitzers) for the 155mm ammo made in Scranton.

Jack Gilroy was arrested by Endicott Police while attempting to deliver the letter to BAE. At his hearing he elected to have a trial, where he defended himself on June 26 in front of a packed courtroom of supporters. Those who were unable to find seats stood outside with banners and signs. Jack’s defense put the real criminal on trial—BAE Systems—but he was found guilty of trespassing. The trial got local news media, while Chapter 90 produced its own news report [youtu.be/OP8q9VLIIMXM] and got good internet coverage of the action.

On Memorial Day Chapter 90 set up our annual memorial on a lawn facing the Memorial Day parade—a cemetery consisting

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PHOTO CREDIT: GARY R. INGRAHAM

On July 27, Binghamton chapter members staged an impromptu protest outside Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer’s office after witnessing the obscene spectacle of U.S. House and Senate members clapping and hooting in joy when murderer Benjamin Netanyahu, the executioner of tens of thousands of Gazans, stood before them.

VFP Chapter Reports



Ocean Beach, California, March 2—Members and friends of San Diego VFP Chapter 91 gather for their regular Saturday morning peace vigil.

Binghamton, NY, Chapter 90 continued:

of one tombstone representing total killed U.S. forces and 100 tombstones representing all Vietnamese, Afghans, and Iraqis—citizens and military—killed in U.S. wars.

VFP members joined in solidarity with Upstate Drone Action, Pax Christi, and Jewish Voices for Peace to protest the 174th Attack Wing’s Clergy Day event held at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base on Tuesday, June 4. A story written by Jack Gilroy about the events that took place at the killer drone assassination base in Syracuse that day was published by *Covert Action* magazine on August 16.

During VFP’s Days of Solidarity, chapter members went to Binghamton University the first Thursday in September to support students protesting General Dynamics while on campus for a job fair. Jack Gilroy recruited students to help distribute two flyers with QR codes; one linked to VFP’s Feb. 11 letter to the State Department, and the other linked to a “conscientious objection pledge” to not interview or work for weapons companies.

Jack Gilroy

#091 – SAN DIEGO

Veterans For Peace Hugh Thompson Memorial Chapter 91 in San Diego has had a very active quarter. With CODEPINK we co-led and actively participated in a weekly protest in Ocean Beach demanding a ceasefire in Gaza, drawing an average of 40 protesters each Saturday.

On Memorial Day, we set up our Hometown Arlington West Memorial with 288 headstones honoring local servicemen and women who died in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We continue to fundraise and give out new Coleman sleeping bags to the neediest of our large unhoused population

downtown, a project begun in December 2010.

We attended the military funeral at Miramar National Cemetery for Sgt. Jose Valasco, a veteran deported to Mexico who was permitted to return to the U.S. only after death.

We supported the students at UC San Diego in their encampment effort to bring about peace in Gaza.

We sent one chapter member to the Shut Down Drone Warfare protest at Holloman AFB with the students from University of New Mexico Las Cruces in Alamogordo, and sent two members to attend the protest near the ICBM test launch at Vandenberg AFB.

We have participated in many varied webinars and virtual meetings, including the June 22 Peace Wave webinar. While we have been busy, we are already planning events and activities for our next quarter and the balance of the year.

Gilbert Field

#92 – SEATTLE, WA

Chapter 92 members continue to show up in Seattle area schools to counter the misinformation and outright lies those military recruiters use to press-gang students into enlistment. The chapter continues its monthly radio broadcast, available on KODX 96.9 FM as well as on vfp92.org.

For more than a decade, VFP Chapter 92 has held a rally on Tax Day to expose the enormous amount of the federal discretionary budget that goes to the military (always over 50%). This year we were part of a coalition that connected Earth Day with Tax Day, to illustrate that the billions more needed to address the existential crisis of climate change could be attained by cutting the military budget by hundreds of billions.

This spring VFP joined hundreds of students at the University of Washington protesting the slaughter in Gaza and

calling for the University to divest from the Boeing weapons manufacturer. In ending the encampment, students received several concessions from the university including a seat on a UW Board of Regents divestment committee, scholarships for displaced Gazan students, and transparency about UW's investments.

As part of August Seafair protests, VFP specifically targeted and protested the Blue Angels. Our banner read "MILITARY AIR SHOWS FUEL CLIMATE CRISIS." This action was done as part of NO MAS in coalition with several environment organizations.

The Seattle chapter was renamed Veterans For Peace Daniel Ellsberg Chapter 92, after consulting with Ellsberg's family. Ellsberg famously exposed the *Pentagon Papers*, which showed the decades-long lying by the U.S. government about its war in Viet Nam. On June 15 we celebrated Ellsberg's legacy with a Zoom broadcast.

Michael Dedrick

#102 – MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

It was a busy spring in Milwaukee.

Ten of us visited the Gaza protest encampment on the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee (UWM) campus in support of their calls for an immediate ceasefire and divestment. The university did not interfere with the peaceful encampment. It negotiated with students on an agreement that called for a ceasefire, condemned genocide and the Hamas October 7 attack, and promised to arrange a meeting with the UWM Foundation to discuss divestment.

We co-sponsored a *Waging Peace in Vietnam* exhibit at Marquette University's Center for Peacemaking, with panel presentations and films along with the exhibit about active-duty service members and veterans whose resistance helped end



Nicaragua is suing Germany for complicity in genocide in Israel. On April 8, a VFP-92 member accompanied Seattle Antiwar Coalition members to deliver a letter to German Consul General Uli Fischer supporting the Nicaraguan suit at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Though the Consul General refused to meet with protesters, he did read their letter. On April 30, a second demonstration was held in support of the ICJ's decision not to dismiss the case.



As Dallas VFP member Bob Fusinato approached the Raytheon guard gate with VFP letter packet in hand, he was joined by long-time VFP supporters Rev. Diane Baker and Robert Baker. As the guards screamed, threatened, and made calls to police, Rev. Diane sat, unafraid, displaying her message to arriving employees. The plant is in her neighborhood, and she wanted her neighbors, many of whom work at Raytheon—McKinney's biggest employer—to know.

the war. We sponsored a student essay contest with a \$500 prize, with author, peace activist, and philanthropist Le Ly Hayslip as judge. Le Ly's keynote presentation described growing up in a small village and trying daily to balance demands of the Viet Cong, Vietnamese Army, and U.S. troops.

A week later, Massachusetts singer-songwriter-activist Tom Nielson brought his musical satire and social commentary to town in a benefit concert for our chapter. We've hosted him three times, and it's always a great show and financial success. We highly recommend him!

Planning for our 18th annual Armistice Day program is underway, with national VFP Board President Susan Schnall a featured speaker.

Bill Christofferson

#106 – DALLAS/NORTH TEXAS

Members of VFP Chapter 106 engaged in a busy week of action for VFP's September Days of Solidarity with Palestine! Our first foray, along with CODEPINK allies, was to a coffee shop in Arlington, Texas, on August 30, where Democratic U.S. Congressman Marc Veasey, who has made several anti-Palestine votes and taken large donations from war industry profiteers, was holding a "Coffee with Your Congressman" event. We questioned him about his acceptance of large donations from multiple arms companies as well as from AIPAC. We then protested outside the coffee shop as constituents left the event.

Our next foray was to Raytheon Company in McKinney, Texas, on Tuesday, September 3, to do recon, and we ended

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VFP Chapter Reports



Members of VFP Chapter 112 in Ventura County, California, take time out to pose for a photo during their May 1st meeting. Back row (L to R): Diana Kubilos, Austin Ringelstein, Mohamed Diaw. Front row (L to R): Shane Meserve (vice president), John Jerpe, Cindy Piester, Helena Pasquarella (secretary), Michael Cervantes (treasurer), and George Lewis.

Dallas, TX, Chapter #106 continued:

up staging a small protest in front of the main entrance while there. We returned to Raytheon early Thursday morning, and while a few of us attempted delivery of a packet that included the VFP February 11 letter to the State Department demanding an end to weapons transfers to Israel, others entertained rush-hour traffic with flags, banners, and signs, some of which displayed a huge QR code linking to the letter.

During Friday morning rush-hour on September 6, we hosted a freeway banner drop on the Northaven Trail Bridge over Central Expressway in Dallas, reaching thousands of people on both sides of the overpass. Also, on two different nights, we did a light projection onto a water tower visible from surrounding high-traffic areas with the message: "Free Palestine."

Leslie Harris

#110 — ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Orange County members were involved in several big projects this spring. In March, chapter VP Bill Brackett and lifetime associate member Sam Coleman tabled at a faculty roundtable on the Ukraine War at California State University Long Beach, where they distributed Quincy Institute pamphlets and a QI working paper on diplomacy for a secure Ukraine.

On March 5, chapter president Wayne Marchyshyn, treasurer Jeff Merrick, and Military Families Speak Out (MFSO) board member Rossana Cambron joined Los Angeles VFP #007's Fernando Islas at a press conference organized around his delivery to State Department officials in Los Angeles a copy of the February 11 letter from National VFP to U.S. State Department heads notifying them of U.S. human rights law violations in sending arms to Israel.

Chapter 110 has maintained a monthly Arlington West Memorial display in Huntington Beach since 2003. In April 2024, over 16 high school students from local peace clubs joined us to help, and afterward we engaged them in a discussion about the costs of war and youth activism.

Chapter 110 continues to lead a collaborative effort to repeal the 2001 and 2002 AUMFs [Authorization for Use of Military Force] with nine other Veterans For Peace chapters. Other VFP chapters that would like to send a representative to one of our regular meetings to learn about this or other efforts, are welcome to contact Jeff Merrick at jeff.mfso@earthlink.net or 562-522-4241.

Sam Coleman

#112 — VENTURA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Last fall, member Austin Ringlestein organized a November 2023 Veteran's (Day) Storytelling event.

Since November 2, 2023, the Ventura County chapter has participated in unparalleled solidarity with collaborative organizations demonstrating against the latest layer of American moral bankruptcy.

Over the past six months, VFP Chapter 112 participated, collaborated, and supported many events initiated and organized by other community groups, and member involvement helped reinvigorate Venturans for a Just Palestine. Ventura County events included two huge asks for city council Gaza ceasefire resolutions (one passed, in Ojai, and one failed, in Oxnard); three distinctive city marches calling for a Gaza ceasefire; an Aaron Bushnell vigil; nine Gaza street-side rallies; and film screenings related to the situation in Gaza. Chapter members met with U.S. Congressman Carbajal to discuss Gaza,

and took part in a follow-up pro-Palestine demonstration in front of City Hall.

Community events we tabled at include: Martin Luther King Jr. Day; Junior College Diversity Day; Native American Powwow; Juneteenth celebration; and a Native American Peace and Dignity Journey—sponsored event (a 6,000-mile, 7-month spiritual relay run that passed through our county).

Of special note, a City of Ojai Memorial Day peace rally inspired newly elected chapter secretary Helena Pasquarella to write a letter later published in the *Santa Barbara Independent* (Letters, “Mourning the Soldiers and Civilians,” June 3, 2024).

Chapter member Cindy Piester, a leading member of VFP’s Climate Crisis and Militarism Project, got good mileage from her virtual participation as a badged participant in COP 28, the UN climate change conference held in Dubai, UAE, Nov. 30 to Dec. 13, 2023. Cindy was a guest on the January 9 segment of *VFP Radio Hour* along with Physicist Dr. Omar Clay, who gave an update on the science of climate change and how rapidly it is worsening. She also spoke at our chapter’s regional conference, and her “COP 28 Report: Rising Resistance and Demands for a Change of Course,” was published in the *WILPF U.S. Peace & Freedom* magazine (Spring/Summer 2024).

We tabled at a local high school district career expo where all branches of the military are invited and later reviewed the VFP brochures in the district’s career centers. Members participated in a once-in-a-lifetime invitation to a “fasting break” during Ramadan at newly acquired friends’ Islamic Center. Chapter members have recently joined City of Ojai weekly peace rallies, and visited and provided support to two nearby student encampments at UCSB and CSU Channel Islands. Our county has not been silent!

Shane Meserve

#113 – HAWAII

In response to Israel’s ongoing genocide in Gaza, two members of Hawaii VFP Chapter 113 participated in the Gaza Flotilla in April, with the mission of breaking the illegal Israeli naval blockade of Gaza. Coast Guard veteran Jayson Mizula first traveled from the Hawaiian island of Molokai to Italy to help with the search for a small passenger vessel. When that mission was cancelled, Jayson joined Chapter 113 member Ann Wright in Istanbul, Turkey, for the “Break The Siege” flotilla mission.

Nonviolence training for over 130 international participants was conducted by a team that included VFP associate member Lisa Fithian and former VFP national president Elliott Adams. Other VFP flotilla participants were veterans Barry Riesch and Michael Jacobsen, and associate members Medea Benjamin, Tighe Barry, and Coleen Rowley. Several U.S. veterans who participated were recruited to join VFP.

U.S. Boats to Gaza, the U.S. national campaign in the international flotilla coalition, has several associate members of Veterans For Peace on its steering committee—namely



VFP Hawaii members Jayson Mizula and Ann Wright hold the state flag of Hawaii in Istanbul, Turkey, with the Gaza Flotilla.

VFP Board member Ellen Davidson, Kit Kittredge, and Sherri Maurin—in addition to VFP Advisory Board member Ann Wright.

From June 26 to August 2, Chapter 113 participated in actions calling for cancellation of the massive Rim of the Pacific naval war practice held in the waters off the Hawaiian Islands. RIMPAC is the largest naval war exercise in the world, with 29 nations, 40 surface ships, 3 submarines, 14 national land forces, over 150 aircraft, and more than 25,000 personnel participating.

Incredibly, one-third of the countries bringing ships, submarines, and aircraft to the middle of the Pacific are not from Asia and the Pacific, but from Europe. Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and the United Kingdom—all full members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)—joined the United States and Canada in RIMPAC. In addition, five NATO “partners” in the Pacific—Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, and Colombia—participated in RIMPAC with ships, aircraft, and personnel.

Because of its testing of U.S. and NATO countries’ weapons on Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, Israel has been given special status by NATO and keeps an office in NATO headquarters. The U.S. has continued its invitation to Israel to have a ship and personnel in Hawaii for RIMPAC, despite the continuing Israeli genocide in Gaza. Israeli impunity in its war on Palestinians has a harmful influence on militaries participating in RIMPAC. It is most unfortunate when U.S. complicity in genocide sends a signal to other countries that violation of international laws and norms are perfectly acceptable in the U.S. “rules based dis-order.”

Ann Wright

Chapter Reports continued on page 28

VFP Chapter Reports

#161 – IOWA CITY

In February, VFP Chapter 161 organized a VFP bowling team to participate in a local Big Brothers/Big Sisters fundraising event. Our attempt to get other veterans' organizations to participate failed, but it's a goal for 2025.

We prepared an op-ed regarding Israel/Palestine signed by 27 of our members, and submitted it to 24 Iowa newspapers; it was published by three.

Fifty folks participated in our community serial reading of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Beyond Vietnam" and Memphis speeches on April 4.

We sponsored a guest speaker for an Iowa City Foreign Relations Council event held in honor of deceased VFP member Tom Baldrige.

Chapter 161 presented a Peace Pole to the local Unitarian Universalist Society, and members participated in the pole's dedication ceremony.

VFP members participated in a panel on nuclear weapons after a screening of the film *War Games* at a local Iowa City theater.

We have maintained a presence at a weekly peace rally held on Fridays with a lot of Palestinian and Jewish Voice for Peace participants.

For the second year in a row, at the invitation of the VA, we raised the Pride flag at our local VA hospital. We also participated in the Iowa City Pride Parade on June 15.

Chapter 161 has members from Dubuque, Iowa City, Burlington, Quad Cities, Mt. Pleasant, Brighton, Decorah, and Muscatine. We meet in person and on Zoom every other month.

Ed Flaherty

#120 – BOULDER, COLORADO

Boulder VFP Chapter 120 partnered with the Boulder Nablus Sister City Project to buy a new Mercedes Sprinter ambulance. We had it delivered to Ankara, Turkey, got it equipped with cardiac monitor, oxygen, suction, etc., then had it shipped to the West Bank of Palestine. It went into service in mid-June. We trust it has helped save lives.

George Newell

#178 – NORTHERN COLORADO

We have had three screenings of *What I Want You to Know* in our region [the film produced by VFP member Travis Weiner, a combat vet], and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. It has reinvigorated our small chapter and spurred all kinds of renewed activism that only comes from being better informed and emotionally and morally moved. The film has been accepted by an educational distributor, and we hope to see many screenings organized around Armistice Day this year.

During the September Days of Action, Tina Jayroe, Joe Mondello and seven other VFP members plus 50 Fort Collins



Members of Northern Colorado VFP Chapter 178 showed up to counteract all the militarism at the Ft. Collins July 4th parade.

activists distributed copies of the VFP letter to the Department of State at local weapons maker Woodward Corporation, while an overhead surveillance drone kept watch.

Joseph Mondello

#180 – FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

On June 1, VFP Chapter 180, in coalition with three partner peace groups, participated in the Fresno Rainbow Pride Parade and hosted a booth at the Pride Festival held the same day.

Since then, VFP 180 continues to fully support local weekly actions by Fresno's Palestinian Liberation Group, including a well-attended public Forum on Palestine on Aug 31.

On September 4, VFP 180 and allies delivered the VFP letter detailing U.S. lawbreaking to members of Congress in support of VFP's Days of Solidarity campaign.

Joshua Shurley



Members of VFP Chapter 180 marched in coalition with partner peace groups in the Fresno Rainbow Pride Parade on June 1, 2024.

Welcome VFP Norfolk Chapter #757!

[Photos by VFP member Ernest Lowery, a U.S. Navy veteran from Chesapeake, Virginia.]



#757 – NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

Brand new Veterans For Peace Chapter 757 celebrated its launch this spring in the Norfolk/Hampton Roads region of Coastal Virginia!

There is a dense concentration of military personnel in the area, with 13 active military bases and numerous contractors within a 50-mile radius, including Naval Air Station Norfolk, the world's largest. A vast regional economic engine is based on continuous war work, 24/7.

VFP-757 has no shortage of peace-building endeavors to take on! Our core members group planned three sequential public events in late April-early May, which included three veterans with powerful stories to tell of their lived experiences.

Mike Ferner, in his capacity as VFP Interim National Director at the time, visited Norfolk over three days to support and

celebrate the formation of our new VFP chapter—numbered 757 for the local area code. We showed different film clips, including *Madmen Arsonists*, narrated by Mike. Q&A followed. Local community partners—Quakers, several Norfolk Catholic Workers, Hampton Roads Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons (HRCAN) among them—were present with members of the public. We also had a review of the VFP-sponsored *Golden Rule*, which visited the waterfronts of Norfolk and Portsmouth in March of 2023. Two glorious VFP doves on crisp new flags were visible on the skyline each day for these well-supported events.

Members of VFP Chapter 757 have attended various city council meetings calling for council support of demands for immediate ceasefire in Gaza, with urgent access to humanitarian aid.

Peace at Home, Peace Abroad!

Ann Williams

Port Chicago Sailors Finally Exonerated

by Steve Morse



JULY 17, 2024, marked the 80th anniversary of the Port Chicago (California) explosion that killed 320 people—most of them black Navy enlisted men. On this day, the Navy exonerated 258 black sailors who had been court-martialed for being unwilling to work under the same conditions that led to the hundreds of deaths. Navy Secretary Carlos del Toro referred to the court-martials as “a tremendous wrong,” language quite different from Navy commanders’ at the time. Fifty sailors—the Port Chicago 50—were given sentences of between 8 and 15 years for mutiny; the other 208 were given summary court-martials. Advocates have worked for years to achieve this exoneration. Many, though not all, major media outlets covered this historic exoneration.

The Port Chicago explosion was the largest disaster, with the most deaths, that occurred within the continental U.S. during World War II. Armaments exploded were equivalent to 4,800 tons of TNT, about a third of the force of the nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima. The explosion was so powerful that it broke windows in Oakland, 25 miles away.

Understanding the flagrant racism practiced by the Navy at the time is key to understanding the Port Chicago disaster.

- Segregated Divisions of black sailors under the power of white officers were the sole loaders of armaments at Port Chicago.
- The sailors had no training in loading or unloading armaments. The militant, interracial Longshore union (ILWU) offered to train the sailors, but the Navy refused.
- The white officers competed, often with money bets, around whose unit could get the most work done in a shift. Black sailors realized that this led to dangerous work practices (which led to the disaster) but lacked the power to change the situation.

- Black Navy members were denied promotions to better or different positions, including being on ships, and barred from becoming officers.

IN THE AFTERMATH of the explosion, there was a toothless inquiry; no one in a command position was charged with anything. On the contrary, black enlisted men, including those who had been killed, were blamed for the explosion. And the black sailors who survived the explosion were not given survivors’ leave, while white Navy personnel were.

After the pier was rebuilt, about three weeks after the disaster, the Navy tried to get surviving sailors to again load armaments, having neither increased safety protocols nor offered training. The men feared for their safety and lives; many would not resume loading armaments. They all cooperated with the command in every other way, and indicated they would obey any other kind of order. Though most had neither received nor refused direct orders to load the ordnance, the Navy somewhat arbitrarily picked out 50 to label as mutineers.

In a six-week mass trial, naval lawyers mounted a commendable defense “within the limitations of Navy rules” as Thurgood Marshall put it. Marshall, lead attorney for the NAACP and later Supreme Court justice, got involved in the latter part of the court-martial and its aftermath. Consistent with the long tradition of military “justice,” the board took 80 minutes to convict all 50 of mutiny, and the convictions were upheld on appeal.

But the highly publicized trial did not reflect well on the Navy. As the war ended, the fight for racial justice at home took on more urgency for the black community and some white progressives. Civil organizations mounted a petition campaign for the Port Chicago 50; after a year and a half they were released. In addition, the Navy, while hardly eliminating racism, ended segregation in 1946. Thus, when Truman ordered the integration of the Armed Forces in 1948, the Navy had already complied.



THE MILITARY is an organization that facilitates external oppression while practicing internal repression. Those who resist within the ranks may focus on one or both aspects. The Port Chicago 50 fight was focused on the oppression directed at them; they were not opposed to the military mission. These Navy men were in a war to which there was little domestic opposition, with reasonable hope and expectation that creditable service to their country would result in a huge step forward toward social equality and against racism.

Interesting Port Chicago Connections

Despite the difference in focus, there are some interesting connections between the struggle of the Port Chicago 50 and later protests that were explicitly anti-war.

- The best-known GI Resistance of the Viet Nam war is the Presidio 27 action of 1968. Like the Port Chicago 50, they faced spurious mutiny charges, got 15-year sentences, and were released after a year and a half due to widespread support and publicity.
- James Frank Coakley, the hard-assed Navy prosecutor of the Port Chicago 50, became the hard-assed DA prosecuting Black Panthers and anti-war protesters in Oakland and Berkeley in the late 1960s.
- When the Port Chicago pier was rebuilt after the disaster, the Navy bought the adjacent small town Port Chicago that had been damaged by the explosion. They razed it, along with the pier, in 1968. Meanwhile, nearby Concord Naval Weapons Station (CNWS) developed into a major shipping point of arms for the Viet Nam war and the counter-insurgency wars in Central America that followed, and as such became the site of numerous protests. On September 1, 1987, former Air Force Security Captain S. Brian Willson lost his legs in a train-blocking action at CNWS. He and two other protesters commenced a fast on the tracks that day, fully expecting to be arrested (as promised by signs prominently posted in the public right-of-way where the protest was staged), but Navy commanders instead chose to play chicken and ordered the train not to stop. This author [Steve Morse] was one of about 7,000 protesters who showed up at the site the next Saturday in response to the tragedy. Protesters ripped up a section of track that day, and daily train-blocking actions continued at Concord for many months. Brian has been a long-time VFP member.
- Robert Allen, who rescued the Port Chicago mutiny story from obscurity, was a draft resister during the Viet Nam war. Allen spent years seeking out the survivors (including, notably, the leader Joe Small), listening, befriending, researching, and piecing together the history which he chronicled in *The Port Chicago Mutiny*. Allen was a black scholar/activist, dynamic teacher, sociologist, historian of black labor, and theoretician of internal colonialism. He died at age 82 on July 10, 2024, one week before the exoneration.

Steve Morse, a member of San Francisco VFP Chapter 69, is active with VFP's Climate Crisis & Militarism Project and Veterans and Labor for Sensible Priorities. Steve is a veteran of Viet Nam and GI Resistance.

War Resisters: Joy Metzler ...continued from p. 15

war—that we [just] accepted ...these civilian casualties had to happen, because we needed to win war for whatever reason. It was months. It was months of waiting around, waiting for these images to change me, and I avoided it as long as I could.

And then Aaron Bushnell self-immolated in February. That was my first kind of kind of light moment where I was like, Hmmp. I respect military members' opinions... My thinking started to shift ever so slightly away from, well, defending nations should do whatever they need to do to defend themselves. And that was when I started thinking, well, if military members are starting to stand against this, well then maybe I should be looking into it. And so I did. I started looking a little bit deeper.

And then the student protests in April happened. And I decided to myself, well, if students are also standing on this side of the issue, then they must be onto something. Because students are always on the right side of history.

Historically speaking, I truly believe that students are always on the right side of history. And when I started looking into this, I realized that everything I learned at the academy was starting to unravel.

Everything that I had learned about ethics, about the rule of law, about how we should conduct a just war, everything was just being torn to shreds by what Israel is doing against Palestinian people. And to see what I thought was once such an obvious standard to meet, what I thought was so clear at the time was being ignored, not only by the international community, but by our own government, the same government that I had signed up to be the enforcement arm of overseas—because the military is the enforcement arm of the U.S. government and foreign policy, I knew I was a part of that—to see them supporting this was absolutely horrifying to me...

I want to acknowledge Geoff Sumner and Marcone Cangussu from the Atlanta chapter of VFP. I met them at a student protest, and they're the ones who really helped put me on this path to peace, to pushing for peace, to lay down my arms, lay down my profession as a war maker, and try to adopt a profession of peacemaking. They're the ones who really helped me understand. They gave me the community I needed. They met me where I was at, when I was confused and didn't know what to do. And they were the ones who told me I could apply for conscientious objector status if I disagreed with what my government was doing, and no longer wanted to be a part of the U.S. war machine... [It's] because of people in this organization that I finally had the courage to say that I was done. I'm done with war. I am done supporting this government. I'm done being silent on the atrocities that are happening against the Palestinian people right now, against the genocide that is happening against the Palestinian people. I'm finished with it.



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September Days of Solidarity with Palestine!



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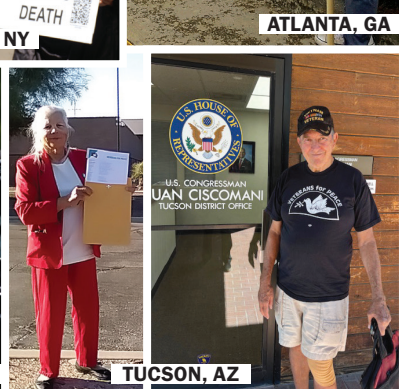


TOLEDO, OH

FLAG: Binghamton, NY



TOLEDO, OH



TUCSON, AZ

Thanks to ALL the VFPers who got out the first week of September . . . with a special shout-out to Dallas Chapter 106! (see p. 25 for their report.)