



THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

50¢

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No War with Iraq No Blood for Oil or Ego

BARRY ROMO, DAVE CURRY AND JOE MILLER

It looks like those courtiers, known as advisers, who want a war with Iraq, have Bush's ear. From his speech before the United Nations in September, it is clear that the boy wants to finish daddy's war from 1990-91 and be a big hero himself. However, in addition to little things like the Constitution and international law stands the reality of a "war too far" in their never-ending war on terrorism.

The war in Afghanistan is not over. American troops will be there a long time and in great numbers, as in Korea, with no end in sight. Al-Qaeda and the Taliban are not eliminated. Afghanistan is supplying 80% of Europe's heroin, and our allies there admit they cannot, or will not, stop it. President Karzai is so weak that he cannot get his own bodyguards and must be guarded by U.S. forces. Our allies are committing war crimes (as exposed by *Newsweek*). We are killing civilians and making blood enemies in



a country that has lots of time for revenge. Finally, that poor country is still not getting the aid promised.

One would think with all this turmoil, the U.S. government would want to clean up this mess before moving on to other targets, but U.S. forces now are in nearly 150 out of the 189 member states of the United Nations. What other member state has its forces stationed in so many countries? What is the purpose of such an "imperial" stretch?

We've now expanded into the Islamic former republics of the Soviet Union, anchoring these from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea with U.S. troops. These strategic and oil-rich countries are a side prize to Bush's never-ending war.

With all the condemnations of Iraq's dictator, Saddam Hussein, you would never guess that he was one of the best friends

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VVAW Catalyzes Teach-In

JANET CURRY

With school year 2002-03 less than two days old, St. Louis-area high school history teachers Rebecca Taylor and myself stole a moment from the all-school introductory assembly. We must have Barry Romo (VVAW extended-family member and campus sponsor of Amnesty International), I insisted, and Taylor knew that we must take a day before the 11 September anniversary if we wanted in any way to frame student space for asking questions. Together with art teacher Chris Vodicka, campus sponsor of Gay Straight Alliance, and with clear support from the principal, the Teach-In plans were underway.

In addition to Romo, participants included two Iraqi speakers, both born and raised in or very near Baghdad; and Larry Baker of

the high school's history department. Close to five hundred students and faculty attended, with such resounding faculty responses as: "One of the best assemblies I have ever attended," "You are awesome; thanks for organizing," and, "There are times that Clayton doesn't feel like the average high school and, thanks to you, today was one of those days!" Student reaction was overwhelmingly positive, with many paper topic commitments born that day, and with extra attention paid to the breaking news on George W.'s phone solicitations to French, Chinese, and Russian heads of state.

Essential to this effect were the authentic Iraqi voices. Both speakers laid out compelling descriptions of Hussein's persecu-

tion of the Kurds, the deeply impoverishing consequences of the sanctions for the people of the country, and the tight hold Hussein has over the media. Beyond this point, however, both speakers

urged that U.S. bombing of Iraq would deepen the people's misery, that war is not a computer game, and that civilian casualties would be brutal and enormous in

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From the National Office

BARRY ROMO AND JOE MILLER

Welcome to the Fall-Winter 2002 issue of *The Veteran* — our Veterans Day issue!

VVAW commemorates its 35th anniversary this year, a year when Bush's unending "war on terrorism" is terrorizing people in this country and all over the world and when the threat of a major conflagration in Iraq and throughout the Middle East hangs over all of us.

While we invite you to recall the historical influence and continuing relevance of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, we call upon all of you to rededicate yourselves to the tasks that have been ours for these past 35 years - the ongoing struggle for social justice and peace for everyone.

When VVAW was first established in 1967, we wanted to end the war in Vietnam, but we did so much more. We've made history and we've changed America.

Yes, tens upon tens of thousands of vets found a home (not to mention husbands, wives, partners, parents, ne'er-do-wells and malcontents). But we did not just camp; we did not hide out, feeling "unappreciated." No, we spoke out. We acted. We took our message to the American people and to the international community. We changed policies and minds through our commitment and our

activism.

Long time peace and justice activist Dave Dellinger has said that we breathed new life into the peace movement. The largest demonstrations against the war were in the Seventies, not the Sixties: inspired by our arrival on the scene.

We were not only concerned about our brothers and sisters still in the military but about the victims of war as well. We showed our solidarity with the Vietnamese, Cambodians and Laotians by holding meetings, visiting their countries, and bringing up their side of the tragedy. We were the first to return and we continue to build friendship.

Yes, VVAW also began the whole Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) movement, nurtured and expanded it. There would not be compensation, vets' centers, or thousands of people alive today without our struggle. Agent Orange, educational benefits, the fight against homelessness, equal rights for women. Yeah, that was us, too.

We didn't have degrees or money, but we had experience and heart.

We were never blind to domestic ills, especially racism. We fought it in the South and the North. We faced the KKK and Nazis in Illinois, Mississippi, Alabama, Washington D.C., New

York, Chicago, California and Florida.

In Miami, 1972, not only did we trounce and decimate Nazis, but VVAW was in the leadership of the Poor People's Political Campaign at the Democratic convention — the only predominantly white group along with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, National Welfare Rights Organization, Tenants Union, etc.

We marched and fought in these struggles with pride, as we never did or could in the U.S. military. Of course, we did not go unnoticed by the FBI, the CIA and others. Tails, wiretaps, provocateurs, agents, investigations, trials and jail for many of us followed. The state came after us because we had served in the military. They had trained us, and they were afraid. It wasn't always easy in the movement. Many of us lost family, friends, and jobs.

The end of the war in Vietnam did not bring an end to our struggles. Real justice had not been achieved. We declared war on the Veterans Administration, and we demanded a decent shake for all vets, regardless of discharge, as well as amnesty for all draft resisters!

We took up the scourge of Agent Orange, following the lead of the courageous Maude De Victor, and we let Reagan/Bush know that there should be no war in Central America. We continued to warn the American public of "another Vietnam" (we in VVAW love the term "Vietnam Syndrome"), and again put our lives on the line to oppose the killing.

We did not stagnate, and we are proud of the younger vets who have found a home in VVAW over the years. Lebanon, Grenada, Panama and the Persian Gulf War (1990-91), all these have brought us new members. And yes, there are also people on active duty today who are members of

VVAW.

We have a past and a present. VVAW also has a future, as long as real social justice and peace elude the peoples of the world. As veterans, we know the true costs of war extend beyond any battlefield, and we have a responsibility to educate our fellow citizens about this. With Bush's threat to veto a bill that includes \$275 million for veterans' health care, we can see how hypocritical his administration is. They are certainly willing to go to war to produce more casualties, but they are not willing to pay for their own policies. This is nothing new to us.

We shall not sit idly by while Bush's endless "war on terrorism" engulfs the world and the "chickenhawks" like Cheney, Perle and Wolfowitz want to invade every country they happen not to like. VVAW members around the country and around the world must still speak out in high schools, colleges, pulpits, the halls of Congress and the streets. We still have to feed homeless vets and demand decent benefits. Why? Because it is crystal clear that this new American Empire is not willing to take care of anyone but the rich of the world.

So, on this Veterans Day, hold events that help to celebrate the longevity and the victories of 35 years of VVAW, and, more importantly, join with folks in your communities to continue the struggle toward a better future for a world of peace and social justice for all!



BARRY ROMO AND JOE MILLER ARE
NATIONAL COORDINATORS OF VVAW.

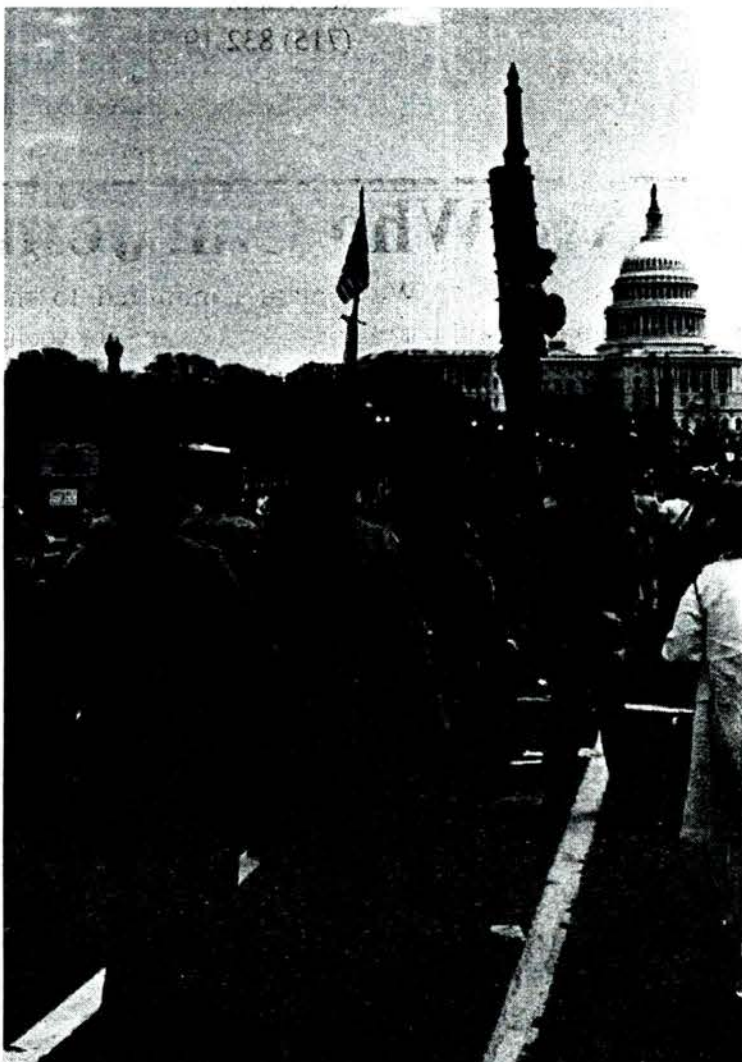
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Dewey Canyon III: To the Dome (courtesy of Stephen Sinsley)

Got something to say? Submission Guidelines for *The Veteran*

- Send us your article via email or post. Plain text in the body of an email message is preferred; check with us before emailing attachments.
- To submit an article, email vvaw@prairienet.org with "Attn: Veteran Editor" in the subject line or mail to:
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Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc. National Contact List

Below is a list of VVAW coordinators, national staff and contacts.

If you need a speaker for an event or class visit or interview, please contact the person nearest you.

If there is nobody in your area, contact the National Office at (773) 327-5756 or email vvaw@prairienet.org.

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Where We Came From, Who We Are, Who Can Join

Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc. (VVAW) is a national veterans' organization that was founded in New York City in 1967 after six Vietnam vets marched together in a peace demonstration. It was organized to voice the growing opposition among returning servicemen and women to the still-raging war in Indochina, and grew rapidly to a membership of over 30,000 throughout the United States as well as active duty GIs stationed in Vietnam. Through ongoing actions and grassroots organization, VVAW exposed the ugly truth about U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia and our first-hand experiences helped many other Americans to see the unjust nature of that war.

VVAW quickly took up the struggle for the rights and needs of veterans. In 1970, we started the first rap groups to deal with traumatic aftereffects of war, setting the example for readjustment counseling at vet centers now. We exposed the shameful neglect of many disabled vets in VA hospitals and helped draft legislation to improve educational benefits and create job programs. VVAW fought for amnesty for war resisters, including vets with bad discharges. We helped make known the negative health effects of exposure to chemical defoliants and the VA's attempts to cover up these conditions as well as their continued refusal to provide treatment and compensation for many

Agent Orange victims.

Today our government is still financing and arming undemocratic and repressive regimes around the world. Recently, American troops have been sent into combat in the Middle East and Central America, for many of the same misguided reasons that were used to send us to Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, many veterans are still denied justice, facing unemployment, discrimination, homelessness, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other health problems, while already-inadequate services are being cut back or eliminated.

We believe that service to our country and communities did not end when we were discharged.

We remain committed to the struggle for peace and for social and economic justice for all people. We will continue to oppose senseless military adventures and to teach the real lessons of the Vietnam War. We will do all we can to prevent another generation from being put through a similar tragedy and we will continue to demand dignity and respect for veterans of all eras. This is real patriotism and we remain true to our mission. JOIN US!

*see page 19
for membership info*

Notes from the Boonies

PAUL WISOVATY

I just read something in *Newsweek* that I found pretty sad. (Not surprising: just sad.) According to the federal government, the "poverty line" in this country is defined as a family of four earning less than \$17,463 a year. Since I have minimal math skills, I had to get out my calculator to figure out what that means.

Here's what it means. If Sue and I each had full-time jobs earning \$4.20 an hour — about a dollar less than the federal minimum wage — we would still be above the poverty line. I'm not sure what that would mean to us (I guess we could include it in our annual Christmas time form letters to families, if we could afford the stamps), but I know what it means to the federal government. It means that we would officially be part of the 90 percent of Americans who are not poor, and they're damned proud of themselves for that.

For openers, what six-figure custom suit in Washington came up with that \$17,463 number? If two full-time working people are making just 82 percent of a minimum wage that Congress hasn't raised since 1996, but still qualify as not poor, isn't something wrong here? Poor people may be poor, but that doesn't necessarily make them stupid.

Lest you think that these are just paper figures which have no

practical meaning, think again. To cite one example, the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) provides subsidies to substance abuse counseling agencies for services to indigent clients. If the clients aren't considered indigent, there is no subsidy, and the clients have to pay for it themselves. It may not surprise you that HHS establishes qualification for subsidy about as sensitively as it does in drawing the so-called poverty line. If you are a single parent with two children, earning six dollars an hour,

eighteen years for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Collectively, we've been working with a lot of these officially not-poor men and women for fifty-five years. Speaking for the six to eight thousand families with whom we've worked during that period of time, that ten-percent figure, designating persons living in poverty, is absurd. I realize that neither of us has what could be called a representative American caseload. But we've worked with several thousand *working* families over those

years. If he knows the next question is going to be, "May I search your car?" Speaking as someone who has never been asked that question, I have to think that being asked it, absent any clear indication that I might have something in my car I shouldn't have, is more than a little humiliating. What it says is, "You're driving a 1977 Ford Fairlane with bald tires, so you've got to have some dope in there."

Before you ask, no, nobody died and made me chairman of the sociology department at Yale. I'm just kind of shooting from the hip here. But I'd like to leave you with one last thought on the subject, and then you can re-read "Fraggin'," which, besides being a great column, has a lot neater title than "Notes From the Boonies." [There is actually no "Fraggin'" this issue, so why not read Paul's book review instead? —Ed.]

Even though his Douglas County approval ratings are right down there with Osama bin Laden, it was old Ted Kennedy who, about forty years ago, started beating the drums for some sort of universal health care coverage in this country. Even the much-maligned Clintons tried to get something legislated in that direction. They all failed. Way too many of Sue's and my *working* adult clients have no health care coverage at all. That is unpardonable. This isn't Ethiopia. It's the nation about which Abbie Hoffman once observed, "This country is so fat you can live off what it throws away." Unfortunately, we're throwing away a lot more than half-eaten school lunches at Tuscola Elementary. We seem to be doing a pretty good business in people too.

Sometimes I'm sitting on my front porch, drinking a cold beer and listening to the White Sox lose, and a wave of nostalgia passes over me. I long for the good old days. You remember, the days when being a good Humphrey liberal seemed the apex of political wisdom. The days when we honestly believed that the people who ran this country cared about the people who live in it.



PAUL WISOVATY IS A MEMBER OF VVAW. HE LIVES IN TUSCOLA, ILLINOIS, WHERE HE WORKS AS A PROBATION OFFICER. HE WAS IN VIETNAM WITH THE US ARMY 9TH DIVISION IN 1968.

If two full-time working people are making just 82 percent of a minimum wage that Congress hasn't raised since 1996, but still qualify as not poor, isn't something wrong here?

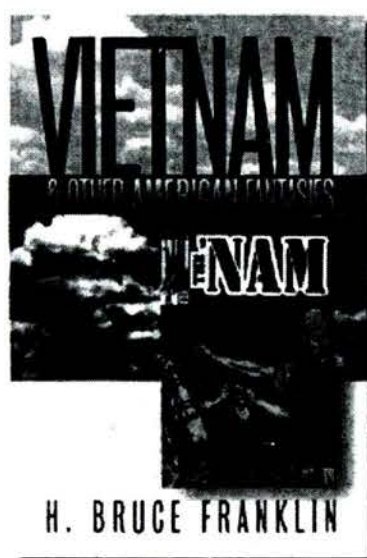
you don't qualify for any subsidy. I do not think that last sentence requires any elaboration. Like I said, these are not paper numbers.

I'm not writing this column based upon something I read in an old *Berkeley Barb*. I've been a probation officer for twenty-three years, my wife has been a public aid caseworker for fourteen years, and before that she worked for

years whose gross annual incomes beat that \$17,463 figure, and they were sure as hell poor.

Number-crunching aside, What does it mean to be poor in 21st Century America? (As King said to Taylor in "Platoon": "You gotta be rich just to ask a question like that.") Assuming that the number of persons living in poverty, in the "greatest nation on Earth," is more like upwards of 15 percent (according to the Economic Policy Institute), I'd suggest that it means a lot more than not having enough left from the weekly paycheck for your next carton of Camels.

I'd suggest that being poor is almost as much a state of mind as it is an economic condition. (You may justifiably return to the "Platoon" quote.) My average probation guy, making eight bucks an hour with two kids, doesn't just know he's waking up every morning hoping to keep his head above water; he knows everybody else knows it too. He knows nobody is going to invite him to be this week's guest at Rotary, and he knows that most of the guys in Rotary couldn't give two shits less if he's hurt by that unspoken exclusion. When he walks into the bank to cash a paycheck, he knows he's going to be asked for two IDs, and a bank officer is probably going to be called in to OK the transaction. When a police officer stops him for a minor traf-



Vietnam and Other American Fantasies

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2002 Homeless StandDown

BILL BRANSON

We made it again! Thanks to Mike Woloshin, Richard Stacewicz, Barry Pomo, Janet and Zoe Curry, Dave and Pat Kettenhofen and John Poole for really sweating it out in the kitchen. Ray Parrish also helped out as a counselor. Annie Luginbill was with us in spirit from Jamaica; she left written instructions for her replacement in the storage room. We expect a cage match between her and Betsy next year to see who

inherits the title "Storeroom Annie."

Thanks to some dedicated VA workers, various bullshit security restrictions were overcome, so the vets were able to sleep overnight.

The VVA, VietNow and the VFW really turned out again to cook some great meals. The doors next to the kitchen had been sealed shut, so we had very little ventilation. The weather was not too bad,

but the fish fry was so blast-furnace hot that the oil almost exploded when the first fish was dropped in. It did not help that the cooks were drunk. New cooks were substituted. It was then that we realized that the armory had no fire extinguishers! We all stank like fish oil for hours.

The homeless guests really dug it, though. People ate seconds and thirds. I'll have to get back to you with a head count, but it looked

like a smaller number of vets.

We were all old folks, except for Janet and Zoe. We really need to make an effort to interest some young whippersnappers in sharing the workload. Please leave one or two days off for the November StandDown. It's never too soon to start recruiting!



BILL BRANSON IS A MEMBER OF VVAW'S CHICAGO CHAPTER AND A VVAW NATIONAL STAFF MEMBER.

Dear Bill (and the gang),

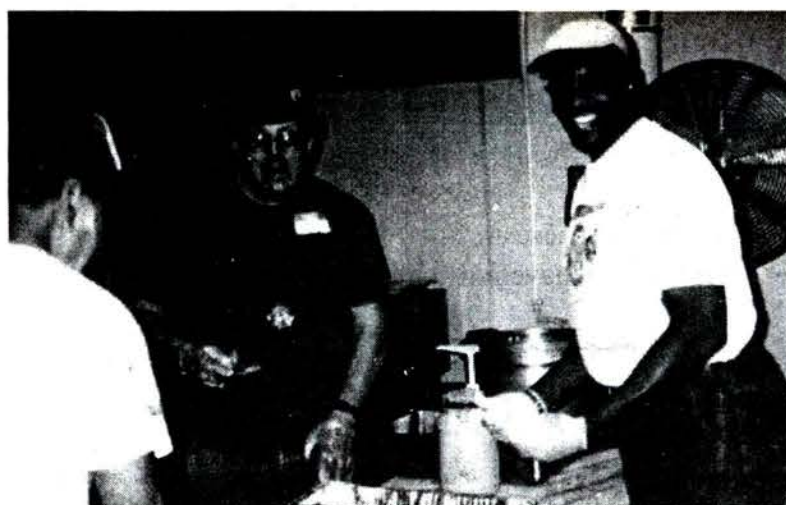
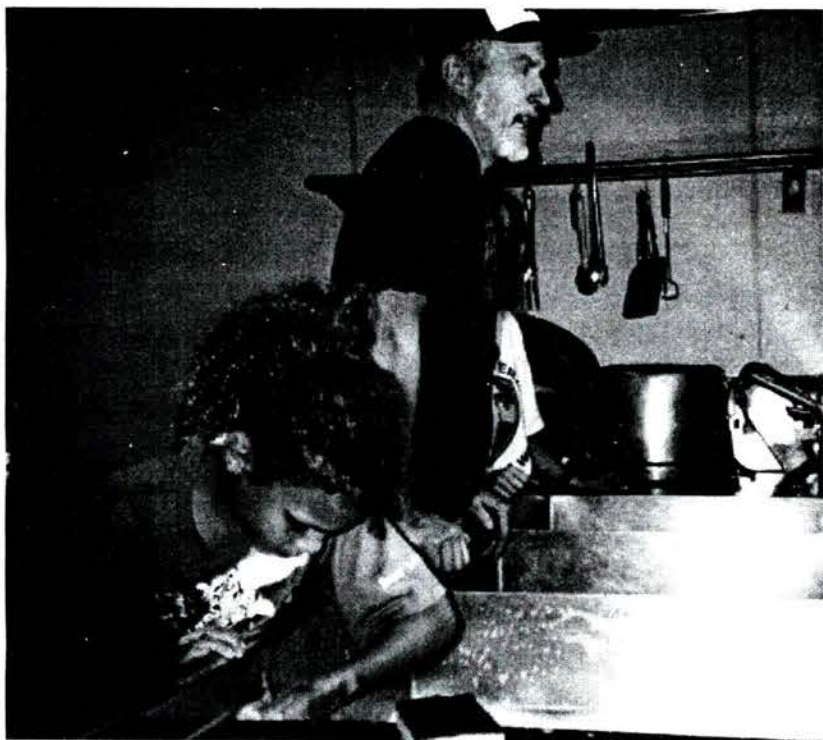
This year at StandDown we registered over 550 veterans and provided services that included medical, dental and optical care, housing and employment referrals, social security and VA disability assistance, health and substance abuse counseling, clothing, haircuts, food, and entertainment. The event ran very smoothly this year and I want to acknowledge that VVAW is a large part of what makes it a success.

We are so fortunate that you have taken responsibility for the kitchen all these years. After ten years, weaker souls might have abandoned ship, but you have remained as reliable and steady as ever. I know that you have to deal with many different personalities and you do that with grace. I know that you have to deal with cramped quarters and lots of mess, but this does not seem to faze you. You have worked to find a solution to the "volunteer eating" dilemma, which I know has remained a problem. But, when you had to face that unbreaded perch this year, I thought there would finally be a revolt! But somehow you all managed to stay in that awful kitchen and fry up fish in 120 degrees. I am making it my mission to find a veterans group that will take over this Friday evening meal, because I feel that too much of this has fallen on you each year. I know that each of the groups that come in to prepare meals appreciate your support and remark on how much easier their job is because of you.

Veterans come to StandDown for many reasons. Some have a specific service that they want to access that day. Some come for the free food and festive atmosphere. Some wander in not sure why they are there and leave with new direction. It is very hard to measure the specific accomplishments of StandDown, but I know that without the dedication, generosity and good humor of VVAW, StandDown would be in trouble.

Warmest regards,

Jeanne A. Douglas Ph.D.
Oak Park Vet Center



StandDown photos courtesy of Zoe Curry

"Another Brother" on Rikers Island

ELENA SCHWOLSKY-FITCH

"My name is Clarence Fitch. I was born in Harlem, Harlem New York. My parents came to New York City from the South after the War. They were working-class people. My father was an auto mechanic. My mother was a telephone operator."

The gravelly voice of my husband Clarence fills the classroom. The dim light from the TV screen flickers across the faces of the young men gathered to watch the video documentary, "Another Brother." Chairs scrape across the tile floor as kids fidget in their seats. A few murmured comments, a nervous laugh and then Clarence's voice again: "I was eighteen years old, right out of high school. I wanted to get away from the authority of my parents. I believed in the so-called ideals that may or may not exist. I believed the whole spiel — I went for it hook, line and sinker. I enlisted in the Marines right out of high school." The image of Clarence's youthful face, smiling in a graduation cap and gown, then stiffly serious in his Marine Corps uniform comes up on the small screen. The classroom is quiet now. The kids sink deeper into their chairs. The murmurs and laughter have stopped.

"Another Brother" is a documentary film about the life of my husband, Clarence Fitch. Clarence was an African American Vietnam veteran and anti-war activist, a recovering drug addict who died of AIDS in 1990. He spent the last few years of his life telling his story to black and Latino kids from poor neighborhoods — in schools, drug treatment programs, youth groups, wherever he could find them — hoping that they would learn something useful from his experience. Making "Another Brother" was our way of continuing Clarence's work. The documentary was shown on PBS in 65 cities during Black History Month when it debuted in 1997 and has won awards at several international film festivals. Now we are working hard to get it into the hands of substance abuse counselors, community organizations and veterans' groups. But above all, we want young people to see it — the young people that Clarence was trying to reach. Tami Gold (the film's producer) and I have shown "Another Brother" at high schools all over New York and New Jersey. Today we are at Ho-

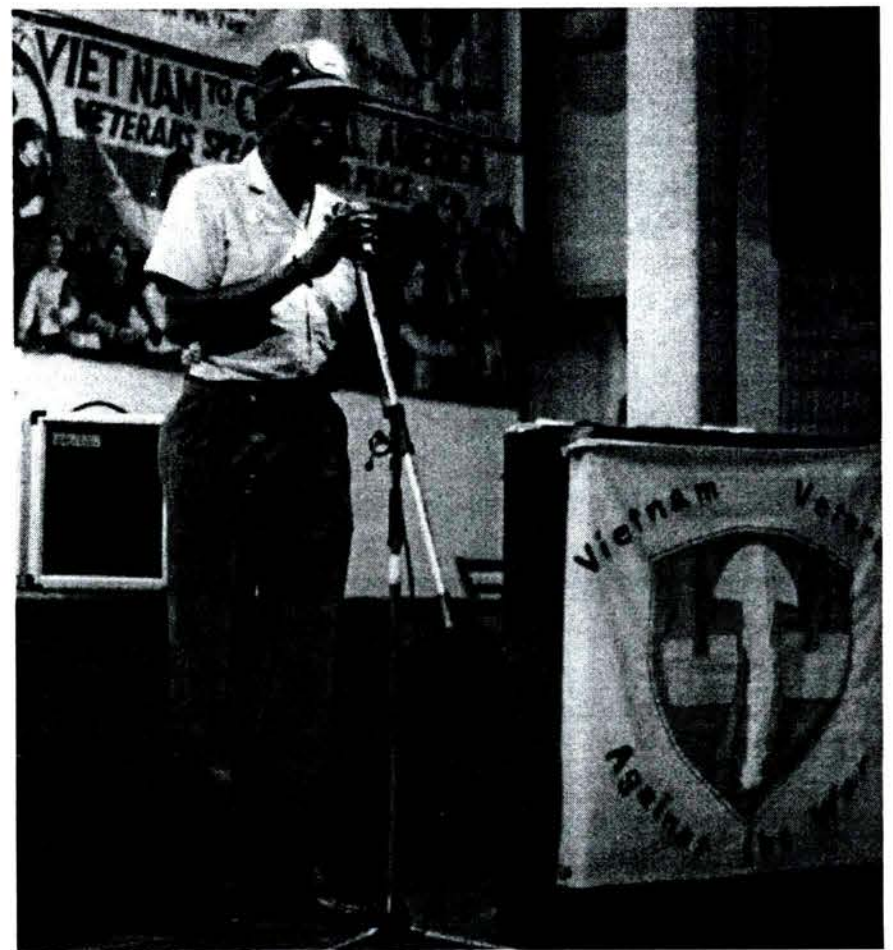
rizon High School. Horizon is on Rikers Island and the students who are watching Clarence speak are detainees in the adolescent detention center located there. This is the first time we have shown the film to kids in jail.

A teacher at Horizon invited us to show the film to his class. He supplied us with detailed directions, but the entrance to Rikers Island is hard to find and we make several wrong turns before we find the road leading to the jail tucked into a residential neighborhood in Queens. A bridge with a guardhouse divides the island from the community. Armed guards in full battle gear wave us along as we drive through the entrance. We have been warned that security has been tightened here, as in many locations, due to the "terrorist" activity in the Middle East, but the sight of semi-automatic weapons pointed directly at our car as we pass is chilling.

A large sign across the entrance proclaims the Rikers Island corrections officers to be "the boldest in the world." It feels to me like we are entering enemy territory and voluntarily placing ourselves in the hands of these bold correction officers. Though they undoubtedly see our white faces and assume that we are on their side in the war on crime, I keep thinking that they can see right through me to the radical activist of the 60s who shouted "Down with the pigs" at anti-war demonstrations on the streets of Berkeley. Or that they know I am carrying Clarence's story on video with me in my backpack. How would they react if he were presenting himself? I remember one Sunday afternoon when he burst into our apartment shaking with fear and rage. The cops had noticed him cleaning out his car on a side street of our quiet suburban neighborhood and had frisked him at gunpoint because he looked "suspicious."

As we hand over our papers at a series of ID checkpoints, my anxiety intensifies. Finally, we are issued a plastic chip that allows us to move through a turnstile to a waiting bus that will transport us to the detention center. As the doors shut behind us, I have a fleeting fantasy that all of my past transgressions against the law will be discovered and I will not be allowed out.

The detention center is a



large, square, nondescript building that houses the adolescent population at Rikers. We have been told to call Marty, the teacher at Horizon, when we arrive so we can be escorted to the school. A sign at the checkpoint here warns us: *No firearms can be loaded in this area.* We are informed that an "alarm" is in progress so we should sit down to wait. After about fifteen minutes, Marty appears to claim us, and we are ushered through an automatic metal door that clangs noisily behind us, and into the halls of Horizon High School.

Horizon is a Board of Education-sponsored program that has been at Rikers for almost three years, explains our host. It was set up as the result of a class action lawsuit filed by the Legal Aid Society in 1996 against the New York City Board of Education and the Department of Corrections, which claimed that the lack of schooling at Rikers for 18- to 21-year-old prisoners violated state and federal laws.

Horizon serves a constantly-changing population of young men, mostly in their late teens, who are being detained at Rikers while awaiting trial. Marty explains that these kids can be here for anywhere from a few days to two years. Attending school is not mandatory at Rikers, but it's just about the only activity allowed. Nearly one third of all Rikers inmates read below the 5th grade level, so there's a great need for education programs. Last year at

Horizon, seventy-nine kids earned their GEDs out of the two thousand students then enrolled. But success is hard to measure in this environment, where a student may be working on a project in the computer lab one day and the next day be sent upstate to serve 25 to life. Marty focuses on the success stories — a few students actually passed their state Regents Exams, and one student recently wrote him to celebrate his enrollment in a college program.

The smell of strong disinfectant is overpowering as we move through the narrow hallway toward the desk where we will show our IDs one more time. Guards move around the hallways, and classes shut down completely whenever an alarm is sounded. But the teachers make every effort to create a real school environment. As the kids are getting ready for a lunch break, Marty shows us around. Bulletin boards proclaiming "Hispanic Awareness Month" line one wall, containing photos of Ricky Martin, Jennifer Lopez, Tito Puente and Rita Moreno. Another bulletin board honors "students of the month." Three names are posted.

Tami and I wander in and out of several classrooms where small groups of kids are working. We are introduced as "the producer and the star" of "Another Brother." The kids look very young to me. They are mostly black, a few Latino. Tami and I and the teacher

continued on next page

Another Brother

continued from previous page

have the only white faces in the room. We engage in some light banter with the group for a few minutes and explain why we are there and what "Another Brother" is about.

"I wanna make a movie," declares a tall, light-skinned boy. "Can you help me? It's gonna be called 'Gangsta Vampires of the Lower East Side'."

Tami explains that "Another Brother" is not a Hollywood movie but a documentary about real people. We speak briefly about Clarence, the work he did, why we made the movie. I introduce myself as Clarence's widow, which causes some confusion in the group.

"Clarence, he's black, right?" asks one young man sporting a jail-issue orange jumpsuit and a head full of elaborate twists. "Yes, he was black," I reply, and from the back a kid with a big grin offers: "Oh-oh. Jungle fever!"

We all laugh, me a little nervously, and Tami nudges me. "Are you sure you're ready for this?" she asks.

We wait through another half-hour's worth of head counts, escorted trips to the bathroom and one interruption by the head guard, who strides into the classroom and loudly and forcefully threatens to "haul every last one of you to the gymnasium and strip-search your asses." This comes in response to a rules infraction — a few of the kids brought food into the classroom. Finally, we are ready to show the video.

For the next 50 minutes, Tami and I watch these twenty incarcerated young teens watching "Another Brother." Whispered cries of recognition greet the appearance of familiar New York City streets and the Colgate Clock Tower in Jersey City. There is warm laughter at the sight of Clarence's white-haired 70-year-old mother showing off the absence of stretch marks on her belly after giving birth to eight children.

The room is hushed as the screen shows images of young men in Vietnam bandaged and grimacing with pain, dead bodies being dragged in from the field, a young American soldier holding a gun to the head of a blindfolded Vietnamese boy. "I saw guys get their heads blown off, get their testicles blown off. I never knew

what dead people smelled like till then. When you lay down at night the emotions just flooded through you; and we were so young," begins Clarence, describing his experience in Vietnam at the age of 19. These kids are 17, 18, 19. Is jail their rite of passage to manhood, as Vietnam often was for the young poor and working-class men of my generation? Will they come out of it as traumatized and bruised as Clarence and so many others did from the war? The archival footage of tanks lumbering down riot-torn streets in Newark in 1967 and of combat-weary and wounded soldiers in Vietnam has cast a silent spell on this small classroom at Rikers Island.

Other scenes bring verbal responses from the group as the film continues. Loud laughter greets the political cartoon image, taken from a GI resistance newsletter of the 60s, of a white Uncle Sam being wrung out and muzzled by a series of strong black hands. When I appear in the film, since I have prepared them ahead of time for the numerous hairstyles I wear through the years, there is finger pointing and a general gasp of recognition. They pick out Tami from an old family photo in a collage of stills. This is not a Hollywood movie. We are real people and we are standing before them in a classroom at Rikers Island.

"I was in and out of rehabs, mental hospitals, methadone maintenance, the VA hospital; suicide would have been the easy way out for me. I couldn't live like I was living." This is how Clarence describes his difficult recovery from a thirteen-year heroin habit. Can these young men at Rikers Island imagine a time when their communities were not flooded with drugs? How many of them have fathers, uncles, mothers and brothers who have wrestled with the demons of drug addiction? I watch them watching Clarence. They seem to be hanging onto every word.

The last segment of the film is always hard for me to watch, though in many ways it represents the heart of Clarence's message. As Clarence describes in a matter-of-fact way his first battle with AIDS when he came so close to dying without saying goodbye, I am transported back to the intense pain of that moment. But Clarence survived that first round and lived his life to the fullest for the next two years — working for peace, reaching out to young people, cel-

ebrating small victories.

"I've been pretty lucky, I guess," Clarence says in a quiet voice as the film ends. "I have no regrets. Nothing more to say, man. The struggle continues." And then it is over and we stand before the class and ask for questions. I invite them to ask me anything, even very personal questions. Somehow I want to be completely open to these young men, as if Clarence could materialize before them through my open heart.

The first question nearly breaks my heart. "What do you think Clarence would be doing if he were alive today?" asks a young man on my right. Without hesitation, my response: "He'd be here talking to you, educating you, trying to give you some options and some tools to make choices in your lives." From the back, the boy who offered "jungle fever" is quiet and serious now. "How did you feel when you found out about his HIV? And how did his family deal with you?"

I talk honestly and painfully about those first moments after Clarence's diagnosis: pulling the family together, not knowing if he would live or die. And about being an interracial couple in the 80s: the lack of acceptance by my family, the assumption on the part of the hospital that I was Clarence's "social worker," not his wife, when I brought him to the ER.

More questions fly around the room. "Why did you decide to make this movie?" someone asks Tami: it's the "Vampire Gangstas" aspiring screenwriter really wanting to understand.

When the questions have died down and it is time to go, I ask them to do one thing for us: to write down their impressions, how "Another Brother" affected them, and send them to us.

"Uncensored?" they want to know. "The real deal?" asks one. A show of hands commits five or six in the group to write.

"Will you write us back?" a small, sweet-faced boy in the back asks.

We will, we promise.

What will become of these young men, so expendable and cast aside? We know nothing about what brought them to Rikers and have not asked. We have shown them a film and shared a piece of our hearts, and they have reciprocated by taking our effort seriously and opening up a little to us. I am moved beyond words by

this encounter. Tears are caught at the back of my throat but cannot be shed in this place. They will come later.

The teachers are effusive in their thanks as we prepare to leave.

"So many people promise to come, but they never show up in the end," reports one. "Too much of a hassle, I guess."

As we are packing up to leave, a tall young Puerto Rican kid, who kept getting yanked out by the guards during the film showing, approaches us in the hall. "I'm a poet," he informs us, and we invite him to share one of his poems with us. He reads from a speckled black-and-white school composition book. The poem is gritty but full of hope and determination — he uses words well. "Keep writing!" I tell him. "Write it all down, everything."

As we turn to leave, he touches his heart. "My mom's HIV-positive," he says quietly. "That movie really got to me."

We have been inspired by this encounter with the staff and kids of Horizon High School. Marty, the teacher who invited us, wants us to come once a month to show the film and develop some learning activities with the kids related to the issues it raises — the war, racism, drugs, recovery.

Clarence would have showed up. We will bring him with us.



ELENA SCHWOLSKY-FITCH IS THE WIDOW OF CLARENCE FITCH.

Another Brother

Produced and directed
by Tami Gold

"Another Brother" is a 50-minute award-winning video documentary about the life of black Vietnam veteran and anti-war activist Clarence Fitch. When it was released in 1997, "Another Brother" was screened on PBS in over 65 cities. It is currently being distributed to classroom teachers, church groups, community organizations, and veterans' groups throughout the country.

For ordering information, visit
<http://www.twn.org/record.cgi?recno=304>.



Ground Zero 9/11/02

JIM WILLINGHAM

*To suffer woes which Hope
thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than
death or night;
To defy Power, which seems
omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope 'til
Hope creates
From its own wreck, the thing it
contemplates.*

These words are from poet Percy Shelley, an antidote to the John Wayne thing, and we need symbolic alternatives to the glory of immortality formed around the warrior ethos — anti-war commitment and anti-John Wayne softening, changing attitudes toward maleness.

We need to mourn. As we grieve for our losses of September 11, we also mourn the losses, military and civilian, of Afghans and Americans. Our military response to the attacks has caused more civilian deaths in Afghanistan than the hijackers caused in our country. Now the broadening of this undeclared war to include a so-called "Axis of Evil" loosens the standards of defense to include pre-emptive strikes.

The cause we are fighting for is madness and grotesque death. A direct image of death, empty and naked, came to us again with Ground Zero, September 11, 2001. "But that was different," you will say. Why? It was us, not them. It was an act of direct terror against a civilian population, not part of a war.

Several years ago, I was telling someone about my Vietnam experience, the defoliation and bomb damage. Suddenly, she said, "You don't care about the Americans. You only care about the Vietnamese." That's the problem: us and them. I spent a year as a cargo pilot picking up dead soldiers and flying them back to the morgue. You think I don't care about my country? I can feel those body bags, their weight, the blank stares and angry grief around them.

Remember the famous picture of the girl running away from the napalm? As awesome an image as the twin towers burning into our psyche for today. An attack fighter swooped down and dropped napalm. It was flown by a young man who grew up in a good family, was educated, went to church and then to war.

We cross the threshold into

another realm, the heroic life trajectory of the call to adventure, the road of trials, going to war for the masters, whom we revere, in the name of patriotism. This formula of the shining hero going against the dragon has been the great device of self-justification for all crusades: the socialized warrior becomes a distorted and manipulated version of the Hero-as-Warrior to cultivate skills in killing for the political-ethical-religious vision of his cause. This process is the same for all, from Napoleon to Al-Qaeda to the cavalry at Wounded Knee.

The faces of power prefer manipulated social warriors to less manageable heroes who are dedicated to principles which go beyond either themselves or their country's rulers. Dissenting voices, anti-war veterans and a manifesting culture of peace and peacemakers have emerged. We changed.

We became softer, more tender and vulnerable. It took a war to do that — Vietnam Veterans Against the War and a larger youth culture's collective mockery of prevailing arrangements, the Sixties Generation. As one vet put it, "It's too bad all those people had to die so we could work through our stuff."

From Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade" (*Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die*) to Country Joe's "Fixin' to Die Rag," (*And it's 1,2,3 what are we fightin' for? Don't ask me, I don't give a damn, next stop is Vietnam. Open up the pearly gates!*)

George Mizo, a Vietnam veteran for peace, handed me his poem on a march to protest the School of the Americas. In battle, he was the only survivor of his platoon. He died last April.

*You, my church, told me it was
wrong to kill —
except in war.*

*You, my teachers, told me it was
wrong to kill —
except in war.*

*You, my father and mother, told
me it was wrong to
kill — except in war.*

*You my friends told me it was
wrong to kill —
except in war.*

*You, my country, told me it was
wrong to kill —
except in war.*

*But now I know
you were wrong —
And now I will tell you —
My church,
My teachers,
My father and mother,
My friends,
My country.*

*It is not wrong to kill — except
in war.*

*It is wrong to kill — period.
And this is what you have to
learn, just as I did.*

Ground Zero for New York is the same as Ground Zero for Hiroshima, for the 3,000 civilians who were killed in Afghanistan as collateral damage, to the dead and dumb ones burned in the bomb shelter when the cruise missile struck in Baghdad.

Once again, you say: but that was different. How was the terror and immolation for those 1,000 families inside the bomb shelter in Baghdad when struck by a cruise missile any different from the immolation and terror for those trapped inside the airplanes, human missiles, as they struck the twin towers in New York City?

"We strongly oppose any open-ended carte-blanc use of U.S. military power without proper cause or justification from the American people and the United Nations. We in Vietnam Veterans Against the War and Veterans for Peace call upon all who support peace with social justice to act on their principles and join with others in their communities to oppose the 'war on terrorism' as it is currently being waged and we demand the equal protection of everyone's civil rights."

The poet Diane di Prima, wrote:

Alba, for a dark year.

*The star, the child the light
returns.
The darkness will not win
completely,
nor will the green dragon
entirely devour the sun.*

*What is this softness that will
not take no for an answer —
That penetrates and masses like
love in an empty heart?*

*Buddha has seen the morning
star dawns purple
and then gold in the snowy
mountains.*

*Your hands flicker like sunlight
among candles.*

*Children sit down in the streets
they buy peace with their blood.*

*It shines on the
gloomy pavement.*

*Our prayers envelop us like a
crystal sphere in which
we are all moving.*

Dwight D. Eisenhower, U.S. president, said, "I like to believe that people in the long run are going to do more to promote peace than our governments. Indeed, I think that people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of their way and let them have it."



JIM WILLINGHAM IS A VVAW
CONTACT PERSON IN FLORIDA.



Dewey Canyon III: On the Steps (courtesy of Stephen Sinsley)

No War With Iraq

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of both Reagan's and Daddy Bush's administrations. U.S. taxpayers contributed billions of dollars in loans and aid to prop him up. When he invaded Iran we supported him with naval forces in the Persian Gulf, as well as with food and strategic satellite information. Not a word was said when he used poison gas on Iranian forces. Bush/Reagan even said that there was no credible evidence when he massacred Kurds in northern Iraq.

In fact, in each instance where Saddam Hussein invaded his neighbors and used weapons of mass destruction, he did so as an ally of the United States.

Of course, like a lot of our former allies — Bin Laden and Noriega to name two — Hussein became our enemy. In his case, he got greedy and wanted all of Kuwait.

A review of the first Gulf war would take too much space here, so suffice it to say we had the rest of the world on board. Iraq was surrounded by enemies, and the United States and its allies

could invade from Turkey, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf. We didn't even have to pay for it. The tab was picked up almost entirely by Japan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

This time will be much different. Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, Qatar all say no! So we'll need to invade from Turkey in the north, with parachute drops in the desert and amphibious landings at the tip of Iraq in the Persian Gulf with the help of Turkey (who'll probably kill more Kurds than Republican Guards, as has been their practice) and Great Britain. And Israel, but more on that later. In mid September Rumsfeld claimed that more countries had "quietly" committed themselves to aid with the invasion, but who really believes much of anything coming from this Bush administration?

This time our fields of maneuver and support are much smaller, and the Iraqi regime knows from Bush's statements that this time it's for keeps. That means that there will be no incen-

tive for restraint on the part of Hussein, if he has weapons of mass destruction. (If he doesn't, what absolute liars and tyrants we will be seen as by the world, sort of like what Saddam was seen as when he invaded Kuwait!) That means more American casualties and Iraqi civilian deaths.

Add to this the war cost of about \$100 billion during these bad economic times; the cost of oil, as it will surely rise with this conflict; and, finally, the effort to hold Iraq together (or not), but with a long term occupying force of U.S. troops and U.S. aid.

Then there is the Middle East and Israel and the Palestinians. Any invasion of Iraq while the Palestinians are denied basic human and national rights will lead to incredible turmoil throughout the region, no matter what Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and Perle claim. Now, with Israel promising to get in on the action, who knows where it will all end?

Iran is even making up with Iraq, regardless of the fact that they were invaded and suffered millions of casualties from Saddam's military. Why? Well,

Bush's "Axis of Evil," of course! They probably think they may be next. And, why not, with a quarter-million U.S. troops right next door? We should not forget, or take lightly, Bush's pledge to use nuclear weapons first, if he wants to.

And so what do we do? **We must all speak out: we don't want war.** It's election year, so surprise your representatives and senators with a visit. Join forces with others in pickets and demonstrations that cannot be hidden.

On this Veterans Day all VVAW members and supporters should remind the country that we continue to demand decent benefits for all veterans and victims of war. No more cannon fodder!



BARRY ROMO WAS AN INFANTRY LIEUTENANT IN VIETNAM. DAVE CURRY WAS AN ARMY CAPTAIN IN COUNTERINTELLIGENCE IN VIETNAM. JOE MILLER WAS AN ENLISTED MAN WITH THE NAVAL SECURITY GROUP JUST PRIOR TO THE TONKIN GULF INCIDENTS. ALL ARE MEMBERS OF VVAW'S NATIONAL OFFICE.

VVAW Catalyzes Teach-In

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number.

Larry Baker supplied certain textbook points regarding Bismark's rules of engagement, the artificiality of certain national boundaries in the Middle East due to British imperialism, whether war can be considered an extension of diplomacy, and such American options as containment, coalitionism, and confrontationism. Interestingly, Baker's comments slid to the left with each new hour of presentation. He was certainly listening as well as presenting. As he processed the U.S. sneak-attack bombing of Vietnam with 150 B-52s per day, delayed-fuse bombing of hospitals, the 50,000 Vietnamese children born with massive birth defects since the war (due to U.S. defoliant sprays), the Iraqi speakers' experiences of containment as squeezing the heart and life from the people, not the leaders, Baker spent less and less time exploring the alternative of war.

It was Romo's contribution, though, which combined the most gripping accounts of war on the ground, the most comprehensive and incisive analysis of U.S. military extensions of power over the

past 40 years, and completely on-target answers to student and faculty questions. For many who came to the event dominated by the fear of Hussein's nuclear, bio-

said to Curry, "because that's what the kids are interested in." Romo's response: Bush is now pursuing Iraq for reasons that do not include his compassion for the Iraqi people; few military experts other than the Viagra Generation's chickenhawks are advocating U.S. mobilization because we lack the

Bush is now pursuing Iraq for reasons that do not include his compassion for the Iraqi people.

logical, and chemical weapons capabilities, it was worth hearing Romo's point that the only time Hussein had ever used weapons of mass destruction was as a U.S. ally against Iran.

Barry led rapt listeners through accounts of Vietnam and the war's aftermath of veteran suicides, through Colombia, and through Afghanistan. He stated that the number of civilian casualties to U.S. bombing in Afghanistan had by December 2001 surpassed the number of Americans who died on September 11.

At least one history teacher was not catching the connections. "See what you can do to keep the Vietnam speaker on Iraq," she

necessary allies; and the United Nations is the path to resolution of this issue. Question the media, because no one is objective: each of us has to dig deeper for the truth. Look for the attempts to dehumanize people that any U.S. administration happens to dislike at the moment — the dehumanization that young people are taught in military training. Look for it, and don't fall for it.

As September 11 arrived, the school had arrived at a format for its recognition: a moment of silence in honor of the 9/11 dead, the Pledge of Allegiance, twenty minutes of discussion of such questions as "How has 9/11 changed the country?" "What has

been done to make sure terrorism does not strike again?" and "Are you willing to give up civil liberties in exchange for added security?" Two students who had attended the teach-in convinced the principal to broaden the moment of silence to include recognition of those who have died around the globe this year in violent and preventable ways. These students are preparing a counter-essay to those read at school on 9/11 claiming a new unity within the United States. They will be citing Amnesty International's condemnation of U.S. cluster bombing in Afghanistan, and they will recognize Afghan civilian deaths and the number of kids this year murdered in St. Louis as lives no less precious than those who died in New York, Washington, or Pennsylvania.

Zoe Curry, my third-grade daughter, spoke up for the Afghan people in her own classroom's 9/11 observance. She must have been listening to all this preparation, if not to direct instructions regarding cleaning up her room. She has good priorities. It is a good time to be a VVAW extended family member.



JANET B. CURRY IS A HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY TEACHER IN THE ST. LOUIS AREA.

A Cowboy President

MARCO PALACIOS

The United States continues to pour hundreds of millions of dollars of military aid into Colombia, fanning the fires of civil war. The following article analyzes the recent presidential election in Colombia of right-winger Alvaro Uribe. Written by Marco Palacios, former rector of the National University of Colombia, the article was published in the Madrid daily, El País. It was translated by David Alper and Charlie Roberts and reprinted with permission of the author.

Portrayed as a right-winger, President Uribe's ideology is not explicit. It would be superfluous in Colombia, a country where people are fed up with traditional politicians, distrust what they say, and take note of their gestures and attitudes only to figure out whether it's worth voting or not.

However, support for the new Colombian president has come from the traditional political establishment. Uribe's political career stretches back 30 years, including experience as a member of Congress and the three levels of the executive. The sixth Colombian president to come from the rich, populous and conservative state of Antioquia, Uribe is the first Antioquian from the Liberal Party. During the infighting in the Liberal Party in the 1980s, Uribe aligned himself with the mainstream faction and against the reformist current of Luis Carlos Galán, supported the candidacy of President Samper, and campaigned in the 1998 elections with Horacio Serpa.

With the announcement of his presidential ambitions, Uribe was portrayed as a "law and order" candidate, in a country that many observers see floundering towards chaos. Uribe is known as the founder of the *Convivir* "self-defense cooperatives" he set up while governor of Antioquia (1995-97) that worked with paramilitary death squads. Uribe consistently opposed the policy of peace negotiations of former President Pastrana. Politically astute, he tapped into the growing sense of frustration in Colombian society with the weakness of President Pastrana and the corrupt and ineffective methods of the members of Congress.

When the terrible events of September 11 radically transformed the context of international

political discourse, Uribe had already planted the idea in public opinion of a sheriff in the Wild West: "Either with me or against me." Few politicians had the credibility to speak of the FARC or ELN guerillas as terrorist organizations and at the same time criticize traditional politicking. Modernizing public institutions and defeating terrorism went hand in hand, and only an effective government, inspired by middle class values, could save Colombia.

The change in language brought on by September 11 permeated Colombian media, the middle classes, the urban and rural poor. The implausible obstinacy of President Pastrana in maintaining negotiations with the FARC, as if nothing had changed, as well as the paralysis of his rival Horacio Serpa, unable to distance himself from the disdained political class, explain Uribe's meteoric rise and victory, which was bolstered by the excesses of the FARC, in their attempts to polarize the country.

Once again, Colombians have put all their expectations into their president. Uribe is in a strong position because of the mandate from Colombians searching for authority. His strength derives from the fragmentation of political parties, and is also due to the diminished capacity of constitutional (and illegal) actors to react to his initiatives. For example, congressmen who slyly slid into his cap cannot ignore the plank of Uribe's platform, which states: "On August 7, at 5:00 p.m., if I am elected, thanks to the grace of God and the support of the Colombian people, I will present a 'Referendum against Political Corruption' reducing the size of Congress, and eliminating their salary, pension and pork privileges. Another plank of his platform states: "We cannot continue to have a Congress that costs \$240 million dollars a year (much less than the FARC's budget) while the entire budget for public housing is only \$60 million. We must reduce the number of congressmen from 266 to 150 ..."

Other factors contribute to a better understanding of the new prospects for Colombian politics. In a country with great regional disparities, Uribe represents the stereotypical *Antioqueño*: individualistic, hard working, festive, white, Catholic, respectful of au-

thority and above all, patriarchal hierarchy. This explains Uribe's insistence on recovering values of order and harmony derived from the enjoyment of private property. These values were instilled into him during his youth, while working on the family farm, before his family moved to the city of Medellín, so that Alvaro, the oldest son, could receive the best possible education. He was born in 1952, while Colombia was in the throes of La Violencia, which cost 300,000 lives. The conflict diminished during his childhood and adolescence, as Medellín boomed. But in 1983 he experienced the nightmare of so many Colombian families. His father, visiting one of his cattle ranches in Yolombó, two hours from Medellín by car, was assassinated by the FARC when he resisted a kidnapping attempt.

Uribe has never lost his vocation as a cattle-rancher and his love for horses. He has a farmer's view of the world and of Colombia. While he is not the biggest cattle rancher in Colombia, he is no small fry either. On his farm El Ubérrimo, located in northeast Montería county, capital of Córdoba state, and Colombia's paramilitary capital, Uribe has 1,000 head of cattle and 60 purebred horses. In extensive cattle ranching, Uribe ranks as one of the 2,300 Colombians owning farms larger than 2,000 hectares, and who collectively control some 40 million hectares. This is in contrast with the 2.5 million smallholders in Colombia who own less than 5 hectares, who account for only 4.5 million hectares.

This concentration of land ownership, one of the highest anywhere, according to the World Bank, has increased in the past decade. This is due to insecurity, and the de facto power of guerillas, paramilitaries, drug traffickers and political patronage in regions like Córdoba.

The good news in Córdoba is that Carlos Castaño has resigned from his position as national leader of the Colombian paramilitary organization, in order to stay in his Córdoba base. Observers of Colombian paramilitarism had predicted this turn of events. In the variegated mosaic of Colombian regions and micro-regions, it is very difficult to maintain a unified command for any length of time. Fragmentation rules. This leads us

to the final point of this commentary.

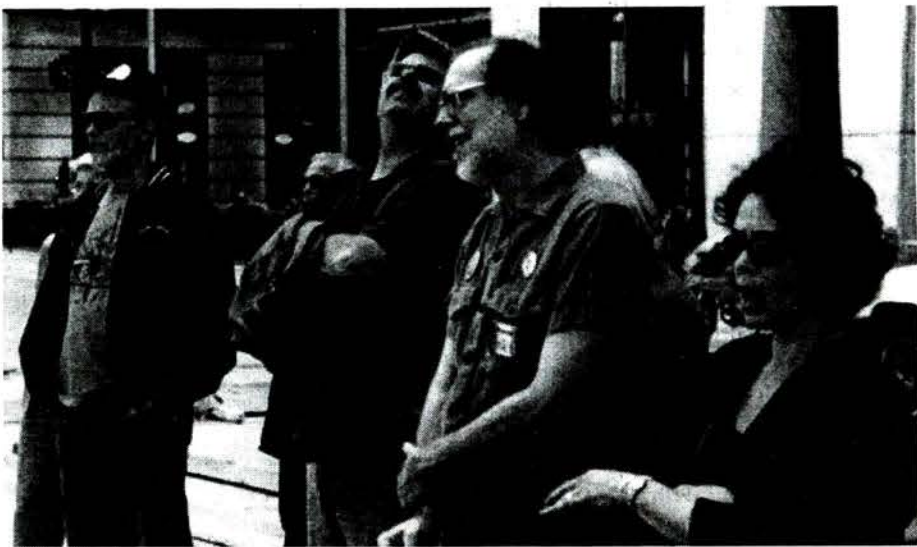
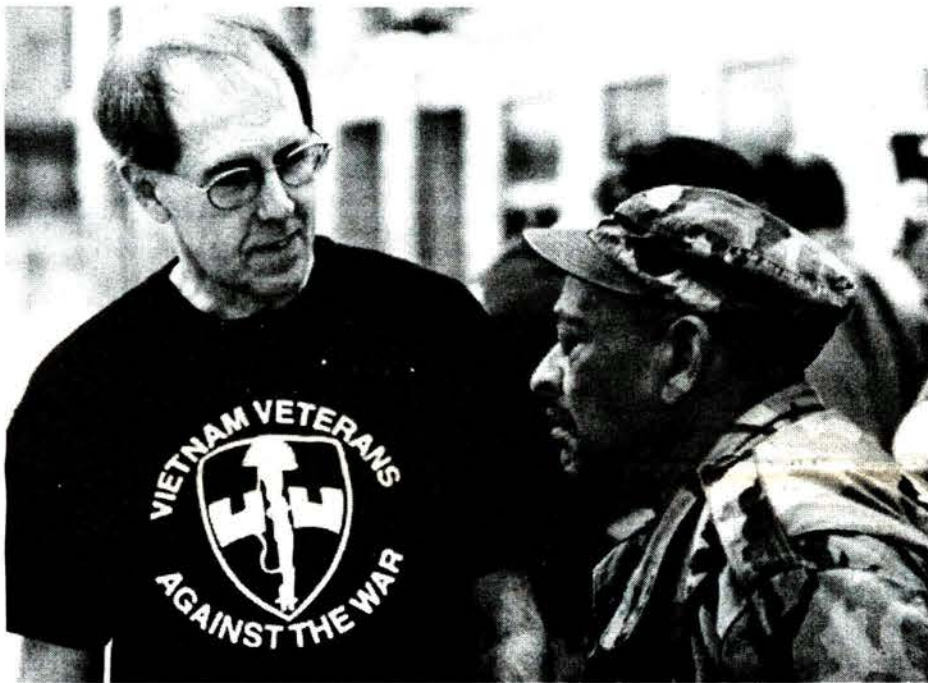
Apart from institutional modernization, Uribe has taken on the task of overcoming the military ascent of the guerillas. We must examine how and why these organizations, and especially the FARC, have maintained a unified command. It is useless to call them terrorists, bandits or kidnappers. They may be all of these things at the same time. But, as enemies of the Colombian government, they have built a web of organizational and communication links that could not operate in a social and political vacuum. They are politically involved at a local level, yet coordinated nationally in a way that not even the fragile Colombian state has been able to decipher. Their operation surpasses what we may want to attribute to a mere criminal gang. The struggle for local power launched by the FARC long ago has made the cattle-ranching class that President Uribe and his family belong to their main antagonist. The traditional oligarchic enemy, for example, the wealthy bankers of Bogotá, have been relegated to an abstraction in the guerilla's manual. In the development of this armed struggle, it was inevitable that the paramilitaries would appear and that the civilian population would be caught defenseless in the crossfire.

A devoted horseman, the new president has declared, "The horse demands that one must discipline oneself in order to maintain balance, before one can think of disciplining the horse. A horse accepts neither cajoling nor mistreatment; it demands balance. Government demands the same thing."

One can only hope that Uribe maintains this sense of balance when he studies his options for confronting the guerillas politically, ideologically and militarily. For now, he remains committed to stale formulas of counter-insurgency strategy. The "war on terrorism," as it is now called, just like the "war on drugs," is doomed to sow more disorder, illegitimacy and misery, always to the detriment of political freedoms, though always in their name.



VVAW Memorial Day Event, Chicago, 2002



VVAW 35th Anniversary

DAVE KETTENHOFEN

Milwaukee welcomed Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc. for its 35th Anniversary Celebration on Friday, June 21, 2002 with plenty of beer, bratwurst and ever-changing Wisconsin weather. The opening night's event, sponsored by the VVAW Milwaukee Chapter, was held on the riverfront patio of Lakefront Brewery, a longtime supporter of the organization.

Members and friends from across the country trickled in throughout the evening for the "Welcome to Milwaukee" party. Old friendships were rekindled and new ones formed as partygoers feasted on such basic Milwaukee staples as beer and brats. Matt Stewart and Lisa Boucher provided impromptu entertainment with their wonderful renditions of Irish folk music. Hot, humid air and intermittent rain showers failed to dampen spirits as everyone had to move indoors occasionally for the shelter of the brewhouse, where those interested were treated to an educational and hilarious brewery tour by John Zutz. The party finally broke up around 1:00 a.m. as the "aging" guests straggled back to their hotels or homes.

Registration and setup for Saturday's events was scheduled for noon at the Ramada Inn in downtown Milwaukee. However, a problem was immediately apparent when it was learned that the Ramada Inn had double-booked the conference room that was to be used for the afternoon's events. The other conflicting event, a wedding reception, took precedence in their minds, so another venue had to be found. The owner of the Tasting Room, site of the scheduled evening program, was contacted and very graciously allowed VVAW to move the afternoon events to his facility.

In the meantime, while VVAW representatives were (sometimes heatedly) negotiating with Ramada personnel, a large group of peace activists on an anti-war protest march from Madison to Milwaukee — flower-painted bus included — met up with the VVAW anniversary participants and had a spontaneous rally in the Ramada parking lot. To be sure, the Ramada Inn was not delighted to see these events unfold in front of their other hotel guests.

After relocating to the Tasting

Room, a much more intimate and friendly venue, the afternoon's event was opened at 2:00 p.m. by National Coordinator John Zutz with a short, humor-laced history of the city of Milwaukee (*see text on page 16*). John read a number of letters and e-mails from supporters who were unable to attend the celebration. John also read a resolution from a plaque that was presented to VVAW from Milwaukee County Supervisor and longtime VVAW member Roger Quindel (*see box on this page*).

He was followed by other national coordinators Barry Romo, Joe Miller and Dave Cline, who spoke on how VVAW has impacted history by working to end the war, promoting friendship with the Vietnamese, starting the PTSD movement, sparking Agent Orange studies, working to improve veteran's benefits, and fighting racism, homelessness and injustice. They said VVAW must continue the struggle in these areas and to speak out in schools and elsewhere for peace and social justice in the future. A showing of the video "Only the Beginning" followed their remarks.

A panel on VVAW and the media, hosted by author Richard

Stacewicz ("Winter Soldiers: An Oral History of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War"), then convened. Participants included John Prados ("The Hidden History of the Vietnam War"), Jerry Lembcke ("The Spitting Image"), Andrew Martin ("Receptions of War: Vietnam In American Culture") and Professor Joe Miller. They gave presentations on their writings and opinions and then fielded questions from the audience.

The media panel was followed by remarks from the various VVAW contacts present and then an open mic ensued where many longtime members talked about what VVAW has meant to them and related colorful stories, many of which were quite humorous. It should be noted that former national coordinator Bill Davis, who missed his true calling and should have been a comedian instead of a "hammer mechanic," interjected smart-assed comments from his seat throughout this portion of the event.

John Zutz's most memorable moment of the anniversary came when John Lindquist admitted that he'd begun the myth of the "spat-upon Vietnam veteran." Zutz said, "Longtime VVAW members will know Lindquist as a gung ho Marine. It's hard to believe he was even more gung — and extremely ho — when he joined the Corps. As he walked through the airport on his way to basic training he spotted a lonely ensign walking toward him. He knew Navy and Marine personnel despised each other and he felt he needed to express this disdain. So he hawked up a juicy loogie, spat it on the floor and said, 'Float your boat in that one, swabbie.'"

After a break for supper, the evening concert/social time kicked off at 8:00. Guests were treated to the Irish music of Matt Stewart and Lisa Boucher, the avant-garde music of Billy Curmano, a solo performance by Country Joe McDonald and a joint presentation of poetry by M. L. Liebler accompanied by the music of Country Joe. Rounding out the evening was a very entertaining encore performance by Matt Stewart and Lisa Boucher.



DAVE KETTENHOFEN IS A MEMBER OF VVAW'S MILWAUKEE CHAPTER AND A FORMER NATIONAL COORDINATOR OF VVAW.

Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

WHEREAS, the Milwaukee Chapter of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc. is hosting the national organization's 35th Anniversary Celebration in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on June 21-22, 2002; and

WHEREAS, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc. is a national veterans' organization founded by six Vietnam veterans in 1967 to voice the growing opposition among returning servicemen and women to the war in Indochina; and

WHEREAS, membership in Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc. in the late 1960s rapidly grew to over 30,000 members in the United States and included active GIs still stationed in Vietnam; and helped U.S. civilians come to understand the harsh reality and unjust nature of the war; and

WHEREAS, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc. quickly entered the struggle for appropriate medical care, mental health services, educational opportunities and employment prospects for returning service personnel; and

WHEREAS, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc. continues to be a voice of clarity and reason raising questions about continuing American military support of undemocratic and repressive regimes around the world; and

WHEREAS, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc. works for justice for all homelessness, post-traumatic stress disorder and other health problems — while opposing cutbacks or elimination of vital services for veterans, now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that members of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, on the motion of Supervisors Roger Quindel, Kathleen S. Arcizewski, Elizabeth M. Coggs Jones, James J. Schmitt, John F. Weishan, Jr., T. Anthony Zeilinski, and County Board Chairman Karen M. Ordinans, do herewith honor Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc. for their achievements, commend their dedicated efforts and contributions to the nation and wish for their continued success in future endeavors.

Signed,

Karen M. Ordinans, Chairman

Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, June 21, 2002

Gimme an "F"

STEPHEN SINSLEY

There I sat in front of the stage in that warm friendly bar in Milwaukee, gripping a cold beer (or maybe my fifth or sixth) and flashing back to a damp tent and sleeping bag in August of '69. I was 22 at the time and had hitchhiked up from Greenwich Village ... but that's another story.

That night in Milwaukee, Country Joe gave us a nice show, but never did give us more than an "F". He just used it as a teaser. Fucker. But here I was, sitting in a room full of "my generation," still angry, still idealistic, and, most importantly: still hopeful "after all these years." We have seen too many of our brothers and sisters drop out, burn out, or blow out.

But here we were, more wrinkles than we would want, more pounds than we would want, and more aches and pains than we deserve — but we were here. And we spoke of and drank to those members who were no longer with us. We were here to celebrate VVAW's 35th anniversary.

As José Martí once said: "I have lived in the belly of the monster, and I know its entrails, and my sling is that of David." The monster is big, the biggest empire yet to acknowledge its own imperialism, but so was the Roman Empire, and empires come and go. Back in the Sixties we used to hear people scream at us "Our country, right or wrong!" They

probably didn't know that the whole saying (by Carl Schurz) is: "Our country, right or wrong. When right, to be kept right; when wrong, to be put right." That is where I believe we are all coming from. From our rude awakening in 'Nam, to Winter Soldier, to Dewey Canyon III, up to the present day.

I shared drinks and shot the shit with people I had known for a number of years, and with others I had just met. There were those who had driven in from their homes 10 minutes away, to my grueling 22 hour bus ride from PA, to those who flew in from the coast. Electricians, journalists, postal workers, photographers,

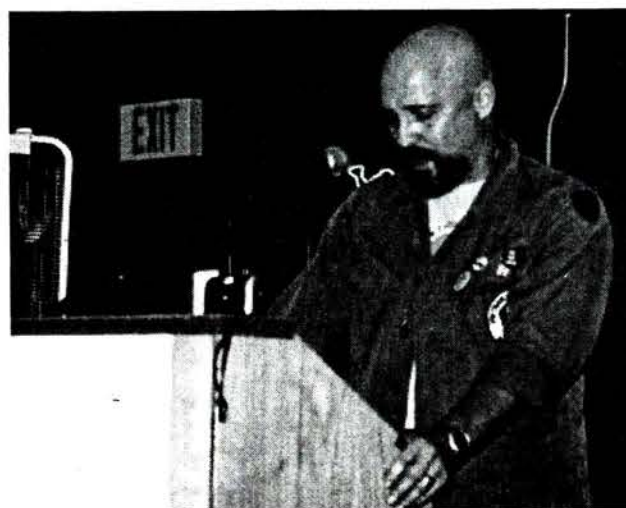
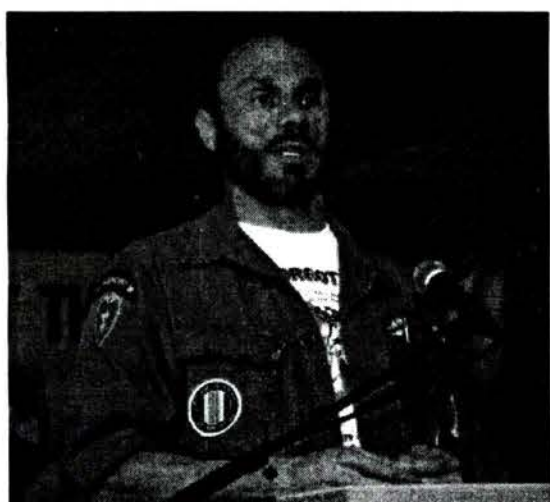


Country Joe at Woodstock

musicians, the same eclectic blue collar/white collar mixture that stood up 35 years ago and yelled, "One, two, three, four, we don't won't your fucking war." We gave 'em an "F"!



STEPHEN SINSLEY IS THE VVAW CONTACT PERSON IN PENNSYLVANIA.



Is the Plantation (Corporation) the Model for America?

HORACE COLEMAN

Kevin Phillips, formerly a conservative Republican and now a moderate one, was a political analyst for Nixon's 1968 Republican presidential campaign. His 1969 book, "The Emerging Republican Majority," predicted the future very well. His latest book ("Wealth and Democracy: A Political History of the American Rich") is about money, how it's distributed and its effect on American politics and democracy.

Borrow this hefty book (472 pages) from a library and look at the pictures in it (charts and tables, in this case). Columnist Paul Krugman wrote about it for the *New York Times* ("Plutocracy and Politics," June 14, 2002). Krugman described a table that shows the pay of CEOs this way:

In 1981 those captains of industry were paid an average of \$3.5 million ... By 1988 the average had soared to \$19.3 million ... But by 2000 the average annual pay of the top 10 was \$154 million. It's true the wages of ordinary workers roughly doubled over the same period, though the bulk of that gain was eaten up by inflation. But earnings of top executives rose 4,300 percent.

The rising tide may lift all boats, but it doesn't turn a rowboat into a yacht. Remember Ronald Reagan's "trickle down" theory of economics? I didn't mind the trickle as much as the painful snatch-up. Has your 401K been acting like a raisin in the sun lately? How's your pension plan doing? We all know the stock market goes up and down — that's natural, mostly. Our folding money has "In God We Trust" printed on it. Many of us have heard: *The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away*. We've figured out that also applies to the lords of the land whose cards and dice are used in the economic gambling game. Kevin Phillips firmly says, "Sit down, you're rockin' the boat!"

Remember these lines from a moldy oldie ("For What It's Worth," by Stephen Stills)?

*There's something
happening here
What it is ain't exactly clear
There's a man with a
gun over there
Telling me I got to beware*

It's very clear what's happening here:

Too many CEOs and corporations are cooking their books as they do the old flim-flam of "draggin' the till" and 'fessing up to "accounting errors" when caught.

Bush wants to privatize social security, while sidestepping question such as: "What happens if your investments don't pan out? What happens if the market is waay down when you need the money? How will the shortfall in the current Social Security Ponzi scheme's revenues be made up if people put part of their SSI payments into the stock market?

the national credit card. If you keep fat-mouthing about how you're going to beat someone's butt, the other party is often considered totally within his rights and right mind if he jumps out of a bush and tries to give you a fat lip.

You don't have to be a leftie, socialist or communist to ponder some things. You don't have to be a Marxist to know that, in ol' George Wallace's phrase, "there's not a dime's worth of difference" between slaves, indentured servants, wage slaves or "independent contractors." Unless you're like Bob Dylan's "Mr. Jones":

Because something is

The United States was founded on three things: Indian (Native American) land, black chattel slavery and white indentured servitude (voluntary short-term slavery).

Stock analysts and racetrack touts often act alike.

The class war of rich against everyone else is in high gear; the rich are winning — as usual.

Congress is bought and paid for — as usual.

Illegal immigration is totally out of hand and beloved by those who love cheap labor. They ignore petty issues such as: "Can the country provide enough housing, education, jobs and medical care for the population already here while avoiding the inevitable clashes between citizens, non citizens and those who'll be given amnesty if they hang around long enough?"

Dubya is pushing for a war with Saddam Hussein because he wants a war just like the war that harried dear ol' Dad. Hussein has no long-range bombers or ICBMs nor is doing or planning evil to the United States — directly or indirectly. We know he's not "nice." If he's an "evildoer" with a desire to put a cloud of doom over us, Bush (or someone) better verify enough of his dirty deeds toward that end to justify spilling American blood in sand and running up

happening here

*But you don't know what it is
Do you, Mister Jones?*

In one verse of his "Ballad of a Thin Man," Dylan says:

*You hand in your ticket
And you go watch the geek
Who immediately walks
up to you
When he hears you speak
And says, "How does it feel
To be such a freak?"*

When they were old enough to know some history and understand it, I told each of my children that:

The United States was founded on three things: Indian (Native American) land, black chattel slavery and white indentured servitude (voluntary short-term slavery). The Bureau of Indian Affairs is still ripping off the sovereign aboriginal nations it made treaties with — and continually violates both. Also, some early English settlements and colonies were started as royal charters and/or plantations — in other words, as proto-corporations. The

worst thing about capitalism is corrupt and greedy capitalists.

America is well worth defending, but a lot of its wars aren't worth fighting.

A woman I've corresponded with recently asked me what I thought of the flap about the Pledge of Allegiance and the phrase "under God." She sent me a copy of the way she thought the pledge should go. Marianne Hart's words:

*I pledge allegiance to
the Constitution
Of the United States of America
And to the democracy for
which it stands:
One nation, respecting
the universe,
Indivisible in its desire
For liberty, justice and
equality for all.*

That's accurate enough and good enough for me. We need to work at making *those* ideals real.

I recently bought a paperback book for a quarter at a public library: "Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, A Modern Abridgment." I immediately skipped to the short last chapter where Gibbon sums up the four reasons why Rome fell:

1. "The injuries of time and nature." Natural disasters. We have fires, floods, droughts, AIDS and E. coli.

2. "The hostile attacks of the barbarians and Christians." He explains this by saying, "In simple truth, the northern conquerors were neither sufficiently savage, nor sufficiently refined, to entertain such aspiring ideas of destruction and revenge." A few sentences later, Gibbon says, "From these innocent barbarians the reproach may be transferred to the Catholics of Rome. The statues, altars, and houses of the demons were an abomination in their eyes; and in the absolute command of the city, they might labour with zeal and perseverance to erase the idolatry of their ancestors." In other words, a domestic Taliban ran wild; religious fundamentalists helped ruin Rome.

continued on next page

Things You Aren't Supposed to Ask

HORACE COLEMAN

The American public was told stopping communism in Southeast Asia by winning the war in Vietnam was crucial to our safety, health and happiness. How is America worse off because we lost that war?

How do we expect to win the "war on terrorism" when we can't drastically reduce the flow of drugs and illegal aliens into the country? Do we even have the desire, ability or will to appropriately do that?

Will any CEO pirate be convicted of any crime serious enough

to get them serious time in a non-country-club prison?

Will Fidel Castro's inevitable loss of power and death satisfy Miami's Cuban community?

Can drilling for oil in Alaskan game preserves actually reduce the country's need and desire for cheap oil?

Could the Evildoers beat the Great Satans in a cage match or barroom fight?

Will getting rid of Saddam Hussein really "make the world safe for democracy"? Or just change the name of the individual

or clique running Iraq?

Is our real foreign policy inflicting "free market" capitalism, "democracy" and Christianity (all controlled or influenced by us) on others whether they want, need, desire, are ready for, understand, actually practice or master them while some Americans make a profit out of the situation?

Is the greatest threat to democracy our inability to "feel safe" and our basic unwillingness to pay the true cost of being the boss? In other words, does any one here know how to play this game?

Where was Dubya all those months he was MIA in the 'Nam-era Air National Guard? On a secret mission to Hanoi?

Will Israel or Mexico become the 51st state?

What's the real meaning of September 11, 2001, religious fanatics, international and domestic terrorists and what is the best response to them?



HORACE COLEMAN IS A CALIFORNIA-AREA VVAW CONTACT.

Model for America?

continued from previous page

3. "The use and abuse of the materials." *They paved Paradise, put up a parking lot*, as Joni Mitchell sang in "Big Yellow Taxi."

4. "I have reserved for the last the most potent and forcible cause of destruction: the domestic hostilities of the Romans themselves." Gibbon explains, "In a dark history of five hundred years Rome was perpetually afflicted by the sanguinary quarrels of the nobles and the people." In other words —

Pogo's will do: "We have met the enemy and he is us." The nobles forgot they were people too; the people weren't as noble as they thought they were.

Why we think we can win a vaguely-defined global "war on terrorism" is beyond me. Especially when we don't even have the will, common sense or ability to maintain our own borders. In California illegal immigrants are routinely: found in Conex boxes

shipped from Asia, caught wading ashore after being dropped off by small ships, killing themselves and U.S. citizens while driving the wrong way on highways, fleeing to Mexico after committing crimes in California, etc. We're not even 500 years old and we're at war with ourselves (domestic terrorists, homophobes, abortion clinic bombers, freelance lynchers/racists, police brutality), while more ingredients are put into the overflowing American stewpot.

The "war" we have to win is a long-running series of battles. Its tactics and strategy shift but the end objective is constant: a

just and decent society. We know how that struggle goes, don't we? Long, slow, consistent, persistent. It's funny how the biggest hawks tend to be people who've never smelled cordite and rotting flesh. In the meantime, police and the FBI can't keep up with an Egyptian immigrant who sold phony IDs to two 9/11 hijackers and anyone else who wanted them. We have one more hitch to do.



HORACE COLEMAN IS A MEMBER OF VVAW.

Madame Binh Visits New York

DAVID CLINE

Nguyen Thi Madame Binh, the 75-year-old vice president of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, was in New York for a United Nations General Assembly special session on children and found the time for a meeting with American friends of her country on May 9.

Some of you may remember Mme. Binh as the head of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam (PRG) delegation at the Paris Peace Talks. After 1975 she was the minister of education and was a deputy of the National Assembly for four terms. She was elected vice president in 1992 and again in 1997.

Accompanying Binh were other Vietnamese officials, along with a religious delegation made up of Buddhist monks, Roman Catholic priests and Evangelical

Christian ministers who had come to the United States to talk about churches in Vietnam and to counter claims of lack of religious freedom there.

About 200 people packed the 1199 SEIU (New York's health care union) conference center. Before Binh spoke, Bev Grant and the Brooklyn Women's Choir sang. Several people, including Dave Dellinger, presented flowers and other gifts to Binh.

Binh expressed gratitude to those who opposed the U.S. war in Vietnam and talked a little about the legacy of that war, especially the continuing effects of Agent Orange, which include a substantial number of birth defects among post-war generations.

She talked about Vietnam's economic development, remarking that the country was unable to

feed its own population just over a decade ago but is now the world's largest rice exporter and the second-largest exporter of coffee.

Binh said that they were building socialism in Vietnam and that Ho Chi Minh had taught them that independence meant nothing if the people did not achieve happiness. She spoke of efforts to improve living standards and mentioned that the number of Vietnamese living in poverty had been reduced sharply, while the education level among the general population was increasing.

There were a number of veterans present, including Ellen Barfield, Ben Chitty, Angel Quintana, Richie Breyer, Moe Fishman and myself.

I had the great honor of being one of the people who introduced Mme. Binh and made a few

comments "from the heart." I presented her with a VVAW button and VFP lapel pin, and she responded by hugging me when I gave them to her.

Because she is a foreign dignitary on an official visit, the Secret Service had the responsibility of providing security for her. They searched everyone's bag before the meeting and stood around monitoring everything, so you can be sure they got an earful at this meeting.

All in all, it was a good event and expressed friendship and reconciliation with the people of Vietnam, something that we have worked for over many years. I'm glad I was there.



DAVID CLINE IS A MEMBER OF VVAW'S CLARENCE FITCH CHAPTER.

Taking the Hard Way Out

REVIEWED BY PAUL WISOVATY

GI Resister: The Story of How One American Soldier and His Family Fought the War in Vietnam

By Dick Perrin with Tim McCarthy (Trafford, 1997)

A couple of years after I got back from Vietnam, I was commiserating with a fellow college student who had just gotten his draft notice. At one point I said something like, "If you decide to go to Canada, I'll support you." His response startled me, although it shouldn't have. "That's easy for you to say," he snapped. "I didn't see you going to Canada when you got drafted."

Good point. It was a lot easier to oppose the war with a DD214 in my pocket than with an active duty military ID card. It was a lot easier to go to DC and shout obscenities at the White House while I was drawing the GI Bill to help pay for the trip. My dad (a World War II vet) had a lot easier time accepting my opposition to the war knowing I'd been there. Strutting around the University of Illinois in 1968 with a 9th Infantry Division patch on my fatigue shirt made all of that a lot easier. Nobody challenged me. I had the best of both worlds. Dick Perrin, author of "GI Resister," didn't have that luxury.

Perrin has written a very readable and personal account of "our" generation — the kids who grew up with John Wayne movies and listening to stories from their dads about "The Big One," the kids who believed everything their government told them, because

anything less would have been heresy. There are a couple of differences between me and Dick Perrin (they both go in his favor), and they are these: he figured it all out a lot sooner than I did, and he had the courage to act on that knowledge.

Perrin takes us from his high school days in Vermont to his enlistment in the Army, his stint at Fort Sill, Oklahoma (where he was court-martialed for "leaving

ing a John le Carre novel.

But Perrin wasn't writing a spy novel, and he didn't spend his time sitting around a sleazy bar in Paris lamenting the fall of Western civilization. He was an activist. He spoke out against the war while at Fort Sill, which led to his court-martial for an offense that, at worst, would've gotten him one extra day of KP if he'd just kept his mouth shut. Following his desertion and move to France, he

He spoke out against the war while at Fort Sill, which led to his court-martial for an offense that, at worst, would've gotten him one extra day of KP if he'd just kept his mouth shut.

base without a pass"), to his desertion from active duty in Germany and subsequent relocation to France. The Paris chapter includes a cast of well-known characters, including Danny "The Red" Cohn-Bendit (leader of the Spring 1968 riots), Stokely Carmichael and Jane Fonda. He joined Carmichael in an American network TV news interview, and Jane even invited him to a pre-release screening of "Barbarella." Less prominent protagonists include several multinational expatriates, burned-out philosophers, and even an undercover CID agent. Halfway through the book, I almost thought I was read-

helped to organize RITA (Resisters Inside the Army), offering information, support and encouragement to other anti-war active-duty military personnel. RITA put out a newsletter called ACT, which was distributed "all over western Europe and beyond." When he moved to Canada a couple of years later, he and his wife, having formed the Regina Committee of American deserters, operated a safe house for deserters and draft-dodgers who had gone north of the border. Like I said, Perrin wasn't just another disenchanted Sixties guy who tuned in, turned on and dropped out.

I said earlier that Perrin has

written a "personal" account. As may be assumed, dropping a bomb on your World War II-era parents that you're deserting from the U. S. Army could not have been an easy decision. By the time he was granted amnesty in 1977, he had reconciled with them, and they had come full circle to support his decision. If that sounds like a happy ending, I suppose it is. But there had to be a lot of bumps in the road to get there, and those bumps had to take a toll.

Perrin closes "GI Resister" with the suggestion that "maybe all the old hawks will have to die first" before this country can step back and "repudiate the terrible and unjustified devastation we leveled upon Southeast Asia and upon our own country." I'd go a little further. As I tell my high school students every year, I'm afraid that every last man and woman in my generation — the American Legion guys, Junior, me, Dick, Joe and Barry, all of us — will have to be dead and buried before that can happen. If I'm wrong (not unlikely), then Dick Perrin's book may have performed one very valuable service. Whenever that day of reconciliation may be, "GI Resister" may have moved us a day, a week or a month closer to it. If so, it will have done its job.



PAUL WISOVATY IS A MEMBER OF VVAW. HE LIVES IN TUSCOLA, ILLINOIS, WHERE HE WORKS AS A PROBATION OFFICER. HE WAS IN VIETNAM WITH THE US ARMY 9TH DIVISION IN 1968.

Welcome to Milwaukee: 35th Anniversary Opening Remarks

JOHN ZUTZ

I'd like to welcome you to the 35th anniversary of Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

I want to apologize for any difficulties or delays getting through security here at the Tasting Room. I know the metal detectors are a hassle. And the bomb sniffer broke down briefly. It's been repaired now, and we will be checking you on your way out.

I want to take a moment to give a special apology to those of you who were strip-searched. I want to assure you that it was totally random that you were all

women. It had absolutely nothing to do with profile ... profiling.

It's my job today to welcome you all to Milwaukee. We are happy and proud to have all of you here. For those of you from out of town I'd like to give you a little background.

Milwaukee is still a small town. In fact, "important" Milwaukeeans tend to have somewhat of an inferiority complex about that fact. Avis recently began using their old commercial about second place trying harder. Well 24th place tries even harder.

Our civic leaders are desperately afraid that when the outside world looks at Milwaukee, they only see brats and beer. Their desire to appear to be more cosmopolitan is the reason why we built a new baseball palace, and a new art castle.

I've lived in Milwaukee almost 30 years and I've discovered a few things that most people don't know. You won't find these facts in history books, and they aren't taught in school, so pay close attention: this information will be included on the final exam.

As the last glacier retreated about 12,000 years ago the Paleoindians moved into the area we call Milwaukee. They were followed by modern tribes such as the Ho-Chunk, Potawatomi, and Menomonee. They were all nomadic hunter-gatherers until they made their fatal discovery.

Seeping from the side of a bluff was a brownish-colored liquid. Nobody had seen anything like it, and many of the bravest warriors were afraid of this un-

continued on next page

Welcome to Milwaukee

continued from previous page

usual fluid. They called for the bravest of the brave; Indian legend says his name was "Mikey."

Mikey was suspicious at first, but then decided to go ahead and taste it. Then he tasted it again. And again. The other Indians were amazed. They looked at each other and said, "He likes it!"

Yes, you've probably guessed by now: Mikey had discovered the first beer spring. Once they began looking, the tribesmen found many of these springs scattered around the area.

The discovery of beer had a profound effect on the primitives. Beer consumption caused them to develop large bellies — and even larger bottoms. This made it difficult to walk. Their nomadic days were over. They were forced to develop bottling lines so they could trade their precious commodity. As boxcar loads of beer went out across the continent, trade goods and valuables came in. Wisconsin burials from 2,000 years ago contain obsidian from Wyoming and turquoise from Arizona. I understand a 1,500-year-old pop top was recently discovered in an Arizona kiva.

Meanwhile, they constructed elaborate "breweries" to distract potential rivals from their valuable beer springs. All the stuff you might hear about malted barley and hops is pure malarkey. We tell it to tourists to keep out the poachers.

Of course the breweries attracted traders and tourists demanding a brewery tour — along with a free sample (or two). Realizing that this practice would soon bankrupt them, the Indians developed a way to recoup their losses. They built casinos.

Trade was thriving and everything was going fine when the first European landed in Green Bay in 1634. Jean Nicolet climbed from his canoe dressed in a grand robe of China damask. He fired his pistols into the air. In Milwaukee his memory is honored at midnight on New Year's, when many residents symbolically fire their weapons. Nicolet was greeted by the local natives who presented him with their highest honor: a Brett Favre bobbing head doll. This simple gesture kept Europeans away for 50 years.

In 1673, Louis Joliet and Father Jacques Marquette journeyed from Green Bay up the Fox

River, then down the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers. By 1700, this was the main trade route. Milwaukee was just a convenient camping spot on the way to Chicago. Since much of what is now downtown was a swamp, you could say Milwaukee was a literal backwater, and the secret of the beer springs was secure.

While trade kept the community flourishing, trade was also devastating. Smallpox, cholera, measles, typhoid, scarlet fever, and influenza decimated the tribes. It's also interesting to note that the first recorded mention of a trader in Milwaukee (in 1741) is also a report of alcohol abuse.

Jacques Vieau opened the first trading post in 1795 and continued trading into the 1830s. In honor of his 40 years of commerce, Milwaukee has named a street after Vieau. It is a total of one block long.

In 1822 an army lieutenant reported, "I arrived on the 17th of July and found the Indians too much intoxicated to assist me in crossing the river." Soon the Indians lost not only their land but also their treasured beer springs.

By the 1830s the land east of the river, controlled by Solomon Juneau, was known as Juneautown. The land west of the river was known as Kilbourn town (after Byron Kilbourn), while the south side, founded by George Walker, was known as Walker's Point. The first courthouse was built in 1836: the same year Wisconsin became a territory. By that time speculation had turned Milwaukee into a boomtown with Juneau, Kilbourn, and Walker selling the real estate.

Cross-river rivalries built over the years. In 1840 the Wisconsin Legislature required Milwaukee County to build a drawbridge. This was so convenient that soon three more bridges were built. By 1845 the years of competition exploded into what is known locally as the Bridge Wars. Shots were fired, men were wounded, cannon fire was threatened. The results can still be seen today: downtown streets don't align; every bridge runs at an angle. That spirit of unity and cooperation continues in Milwaukee to this day.

Until this point the immigrants to the area were of French and Yankee backgrounds. That

was about to change. In the 1840s, 50s and 60s a large influx of German immigrants changed the face of Milwaukee and the world. The Germans formed a wide variety of social groups, and their key social lubricant was beer.

Though the first brewery in town (technically) was organized by a group of Welshmen in 1840, its product found few takers among the Germans. Luckily, Hermann Reutelshofer arrived in 1841 and began producing lager beer in Walker's Point. By 1856 there were more than two dozen breweries in Milwaukee, all owned and operated by Germans.

The Germans followed the ancient practice of building "breweries" to disguise where the beer actually came from. They liked Wisconsin because the countryside reminded them of the fatherland, and they brought with them the seeds to plant the first sausage fields, just like the ones in Germany.

I know everyone has always wondered what is in sausage and how it is made. Well, today I can tell you: sausage is a tuber. They grow underground and are dug up in the late fall. The old-time Germans told people there was meat in them to increase sales. Today, with the sausage shortages, we encourage vegetarians to avoid them so there will be more for us.

After years of cross-pollination and modern grafting techniques, Wisconsin sausage plantations today harvest a wide variety of sausages. Franks, bratwurst, Vienawurst (known today as wieners), liverwurst, summer sausage and braunschweiger are only a few of the many varieties available. Many of the "lunch meats" on your grocer's shelf came from the sandy soil of Wisconsin.

More importantly the Germans brought with them the secret of good beer: the beer well. That's right — drilling for beer.

You have all heard of aquifers: underground water. Through modern technology, sonar mapping et cetera, we know Milwaukee is atop the world's second largest sudsifer (the largest sudsifer is in Germany). We also realize that beer comes in different weights. That's the reason Bud Light is found so near the surface, where it's often discovered by college students.

The Germans' first beer wells produced Pilsener-style beers. As they drilled deeper and deeper they tapped more robust beers like Bocks and Scotch ales. They real-



ized at that time that the deeper they drilled, the thicker and heavier the beer became. They kept at it to finally reach the barleywine level. The Germans were happy in Milwaukee.

Things flowed (get it? — flowed) smoothly until the 1900s, when some people thought society's problems were caused by alcohol. Carrie Nation came to town in 1902 and expressed disgust at being "in the town where all you hear is 'beer, beer, beer.' If there is anyplace that is hell on earth, it is Milwaukee." Nobody paid much attention till June 1, 1919: Prohibition began.

When the boys came back from World War I, they couldn't even have a beer. Milwaukee went into mourning. Millions of dollars of modern brewing equipment stood idle. Thousands of workers were unemployed. The breweries tried to stay in business making and selling other things as diverse as soda water and snow plows.

Beer was still available, however. Though the government might be able to cap the beer wells, the beer springs were still gushing. A number of enterprising Milwaukeeans were injured attempting to dig backyard beer wells.

Finally, the farce was recognized. On April 7, 1933, Prohibition ended. Milwaukee was ready to party, but at the request of clergymen the celebration was postponed until after Lent. The day after Easter — April 17 — even though the taverns had been open for ten days, 15,000 hungry, thirsty Milwaukeeans jammed the Auditorium. 5,000 more were turned away. This party was so successful it was decided to do it annually. The Midsummer Festival attracted millions of citizens over eight years and became the forerunner of today's Summerfest, where it is remembered in the many beer tents.

So now you understand that Milwaukee is much more than beer and sausage. The rest, as they say, is history.



John Kniffin (1940-2002)

John W. Kniffin, a decorated veteran of the Vietnam War whose experiences as a tank commander turned him into a peace activist, died September 2 in Brenham, Texas. He was 62.

Mr. Kniffin was among the first Marines sent to Vietnam in 1965. While serving with Bravo Company, 3rd Tank Battalion of the 3rd Marine Division near Hue City during the Tet Offensive in 1968, *Life* magazine published a photograph of his tank covered with wounded U.S. servicemen with the caption, "Tank turned ambulance."

During his 32 months in Vietnam Mr. Kniffin received, among other decorations, the Bronze Star with the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and two Purple Hearts. He was honorably discharged in 1968 and returned to his native Texas where he devoted the rest

of his life to improving conditions for all Americans.

In Houston he worked with the civil rights movement. In 1970, after moving to Austin, he married Catherine Goodnow who shared his concern for the welfare of both people and animals. In 1971 he joined Vietnam Veterans Against the War and expanded his activities to include the GI and veterans' movements.

He and his wife opened their home to veterans and geared their efforts to providing drug rehabilitation for service personnel and veterans that was not otherwise available to them. They also supported the GI coffeehouse, Oleo Strut, outside Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas.

By 1972 Mr. Kniffin had been elected to the National Steering Committee of Vietnam Veterans Against the War as the Texas

coordinator, a position that brought him into direct opposition to the Nixon administration, landed him in jail a few times, and resulted in his being indicted in July, 1972, as one of the Gainesville Eight, for conspiracy to riot at the Republican National Convention that August.

The Gainesville trial was the last of the Nixon conspiracy indictments in which dissidents, including the Berrigan brothers, were indicted for alleged plots that could not be proven but served to cripple the anti-war movement.

In the Gainesville, Florida case the government put on a battery of witnesses, including several FBI informants. The defense called one (1) to testify on a minor technicality. The jury quickly returned a blanket acquittal.

After the trial, Mr. Kniffin, who was born in San Antonio on

February 9, 1940, settled quietly in Brenham, Texas, with his wife, but never stopped caring about others. During the blizzard of 1996, he and two other veterans drove a dying Marine to the Vietnam Memorial Wall eight days before he died from cancer caused by exposure to Agent Orange.

At the time of his death, Mr. Kniffin had also succumbed to the effects of Agent Orange and had been declared 100% disabled.

Mr. Kniffin was preceded in death by a brother, Stephen Humble of Cambridge, Mass. He is survived by his wife, his mother, Jane M. Humble of San Antonio, a sister, Yvonne J. Hough of Jacksonville, Florida and one brother, James E. Humble of Boerne, Texas.



A Comrade, Friend and Brother

Many longtime VVAW members will remember John Kniffin as a Texas coordinator of VVAW and Gainesville Eight defendant.

John always told me that the most important part of his life was his relationship with his wife Cathy. He believed that she made it possible for him to grow and have peace. He knew how lucky he was in this.

John spent six years in the U.S. Marine Corps and did three tours in Vietnam, yet he deeply

distrusted authority of any kind. He hated the war, but held a special affinity for fellow vets, especially Marine vets.

What drew many people to John was the fact that you could trust him. He was a private person who, along with his wife, opened his home to many. If John decided you were a friend, he was caring, understanding, forgiving, open to a fault, and willing to share anything.

John had a drive to continue

to learn and grow in life. He challenged those around him to do the same. Sometimes he was hard on those close to him (as we all are), but at other times he'd be stunning with insight and gentleness. He was inspiring without being pretentious.

He was, for many in VVAW and out, a comrade, friend and brother.

Tom Wetzler



The Gainesville Eight, John Kniffin lower right

Dr. Le Cao Dai, Agent Orange Researcher, Activist

Professor Le Cao Dai, M.D., one of Vietnam's premier researchers on the effects of Agent Orange on human health and recently retired director of Vietnam's Agent Orange Victims Fund, died on April 15, 2002 after a short illness. He was seventy-four.

Born in Hanoi, Dr. Dai studied medicine in the northern highlands of Vietnam during the Resistance War against the French. During the U.S. War, he directed North Vietnamese Army Field Hospital 211 in the western highlands of central Vietnam south of the demilitarized zone. His journal, "Tay Nguyen Ngay Ay" ("The Western Highlands During Those Days"), published by Hanoi's Labour Publishing House in 1997, is a vivid portrayal of the war between 1965 and 1973. Dr. Dai later served as director of the 108 Military Hospital, one of Hanoi's most prestigious medical centers.

Dr. Dai personally observed the first effects of defoliant spraying during the Vietnam War. He was a founding member of the 1080 Committee, which studies the long-term consequences of

defoliant spraying on human health. His research, conducted in partnership with U.S. scientists, was published in *Chemosphere*, *the American Journal of Public Health* and *the Journal of Occupation and Environmental Medicine*. Dr. Dai also presented his findings as a panelist at the 1999 annual conference of the American Public Health Association. He is the author of "Agent Orange in the Viet Nam War: History and Consequences," translated by Diane Fox and published in 2000 by the Vietnam Red Cross. Dr. Dai also served on the steering committee for the conference, "Long-Term Environmental Consequences of the Vietnam War," which was held in Stockholm at the end of July 2002.

Dr. Dai firmly believed that those who were victims of Agent Orange should receive assistance. He directed the Agent Orange Victims Fund under the auspices of the Vietnam Red Cross from the fund's inception in 1998 until shortly before his death. The Agent Orange Victims Fund provides humanitarian assistance to



victims and their families, including financial support, health care and vocational training. The Ford Foundation and the American Red Cross have been generous contributors, as have individuals and organizations from Denmark, Great Britain, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United States, and other countries.

Dr. Le Cao Dai is survived by his wife of nearly fifty years, the artist Vu Giang Huong.

Those wishing to contribute to the Agent Orange Victims Fund in honor of Dr. Le Cao Dai can do so by contacting the Fund directly at agoravif@fpt.vn.



Ralph C. ("Bud") Schremp (1945-2002)

My husband was a pretty remarkable guy. I met him in his wonderful used book store and just never left until he took me home. In addition to the love of books he was also an accomplished artist and photographer. Here in New Jersey and in our Newfoundland home he is sorely missed — for the art and his humor and his generosity.

He was not a vet, but he was an important supporter of VVAW. It was fairly early in our relationship that I said to him, "Hon, I'm going to DC with about 60,000 guys, OK?" There was no problem. We hosted Barry, John & Annie and Bill D. one annual meeting, and poor Bud had never even seen that much beer in our house. Wacky Jacky lived with us

for a couple of months, too. One day I got a call from the store that a customer was in PTSD crisis, and Bud just gave the guy the phone and let him get therapy right there. With Bud, business could take a back seat to people with needs.

He died suddenly of a heart attack while doing work that he loved. It is a source of comfort to

me that we managed to do many of the things we dreamed of and that he lived richly every day. His legacy is the message: *Don't postpone joy!* He never did.

Annie Hirschman



Colleen Novosielski

Sadly I learned that Colleen Novosielski passed on October 10 after a long bout with cancer.

Colleen's husband Gary is a Vietnam vet and both were members and supporters of NJ Vets For Peace, VVAW and the Jersey City Vietnam Veterans Memorial Committee. Colleen was also active in the Unitarian Church, Green Party, and Peace Action as well as being the mother of two sons.

Colleen grew up in Jersey City, and I remember on Memorial Day 2000 she spoke at the

service there about her former classmate, Joseph Bursis who was killed in Vietnam. After telling some high school memories of him, she said that his death was what began her on a lifelong commitment against war.

For all the years I knew her, she remained true to that commitment. She was a beautiful person and will be deeply missed. RIP

David Cline



Dewey Canyon III: On the Statue (courtesy of Stephen Sinsley)

Unveiling the Unknown War

REVIEWED BY JOHN KIM

The Bridge at No Gun Ri: A Hidden Nightmare From the Korean War

By Charles J. Hanley, Sang-Hun Choe and Martha Mendoza
(Henry Holt & Company, 2001)

In the midst of the September 11 tragedy, many people may not have noticed the publication of an outstanding book in the same month, dealing with another great tragedy that is, perhaps, more shocking and cruel. To understand the implications of September 11, it is imperative for us to learn more about other massacres our government has perpetrated on other innocent civilians around the world. The U.S. massacre at No Gun Ri, South Korea in July 1950 clearly stands out as a classic example, unknown to the American public, that paved the way for more massacres later such as the one at My Lai, in Vietnam.

Although a half-century separates the two events, there are certain similarities between the Sept. 11 massacre and the U.S. massacre at No Gun Ri. In the recent attack on the World Trade Center, the setting for the attack was the twin towers, while at No Gun Ri it was the twin trestles under a railroad. Both attacks targeted innocent civilians and used airplanes. At the same time, there are certain aspects that make the No Gun Ri massacre more cruel: the killing was carried out by supposedly friendly forces and this heinous crime was buried, with the victims, for the last half century. There were no public services for the victims nor any assistance to the surviving victims or the victims' relatives. Above all, the Korean victims could not seek justice from their government, since they would have been accused of being communists if they complained to the extreme anti-communist regime of Syngman Rhee or Park Chung-Hee in the South.

In "The Bridge at No Gun Ri," the original AP reporters — Charles Hanley, Sang-Hun Choe and Martha Mendoza, who broke the story on No Gun Ri in September 1999 and whose report won them the Pulitzer Prize — succeed in presenting a more compelling and comprehensive picture of the cold-blooded war crime that killed some 400 Korean civilians in the early part of the Korean

War. Their investigative book completely demolishes the misleading, self-serving conclusion of the U.S. Army's investigation report of January 2001, which stated that "U.S. commanders did not issue oral or written orders to shoot and kill Korean civilians in the vicinity of No Gun Ri." No wonder that the victims' relatives condemned the report as a "white-wash." This sentiment was shared by one member of the American civilian advisory board to the Pentagon investigation, former Rep. Pete McCloskey (R-Cal.), himself a veteran, who dissented from the report by stating publicly that "there is no question that there were orders."

This nonfiction book is based on some 500 interviews with the South Korean victims and American veterans who were involved in the No Gun Ri killing, along with newly-discovered U.S. documents from the National Archives. The resulting story is a gripping, convincing history that brings to life the men, women and children who were caught up in the three days of continuous shooting and killing. The book shows that the No Gun Ri slaughter was a deliberate result of a refugee control policy of the U.S. 8th Army and MacArthur's Far East Command. It also shows that the incident is only a tip of the iceberg of the widespread, indiscriminate killing of Korean civilians during the Korean War that have resulted in some three million civilian deaths. By early 2001, 61 complaints of U.S. massacre were made to the South Korean Defense Ministry.

According to the book, the American units directly involved in the No Gun Ri slaughter were the Air Force 35th Fighter-Bomber Squadron which recorded three air attacks in the area on July 26-27, 1950. The Army unit directly involved in the attack is identified as H company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, which was commanded by Captain Melbourne Chandler. When the refugees fled into the two concrete underpasses below the railroad track after being attacked by American airplanes, Capt. Chandler radioed Battalion headquarters to ask what to do with the refugees. His clerk, Gene Hesselman, remembers Chandler saying "we got to get rid of all of

them."

Capt. Chandler emerges as one of the key characters in the book. Instead of receiving any punishment, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and ended his Korea tour as commander of the same 2nd Battalion that was involved in No Gun Ri. In 1960, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Korean War, using his own money, Chandler publishes a book entitled "Of Garry Owen in Glory: The History of the 7th U.S. Cavalry." Interestingly, the 7th Cavalry was once commanded by Lt. Col. George A. Custer who is well known in American history as a tragic warrior who attacked the Sioux Indians at Little Bighorn in 1876. In December 1890, the same unit massacred some 370 Lakota men, women and children at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. No wonder the infamous history of the 7th Cav. repeated itself at No Gun Ri in Korea more than a half century later. Chandler devotes 93 pages to the regiment's history in Korea, but he never hints at the killing of South Korean civilians at No Gun Ri. Perhaps he wanted to hide the massacre from the unit's history permanently. In the end, Chandler succeeded in killing himself: alcoholism claimed him in 1970 at the age of 49.

The true dimension of the No Gun Ri massacre is as follows according to the new book: some 100 refugees were killed in the strafing by U.S. planes, some 300 were killed under the railroad trestles, about 200 escaped in the night, and two dozen survived the three-day ordeal. A Korean reporter wrote a news story about the massacre in the leftist paper *Cho Sun In Min Bo* on August 19, 1950. He said, "Shrubs and weeds in the area and a creek running through the tunnels were drenched in blood." This dreadful scene reminds one of the My Lai massacre in Vietnam. University of Chicago professor Bruce Cumings goes one step further: "This Korean War, I think, was a far dirtier war than the Vietnam War."

There are some mistakes in the spelling of Korean names in the book, but those can be forgiven. This book could have been more valuable if it contained footnotes for the various historical facts, but that would be too much to ask for a book intended for the

general public. Fortunately, for those who want to read the full text of the various declassified military documents, the publisher maintains a webpage at <http://www.henryholt.com/nogunri/documents.htm>.

The unfinished chapter in the story is how the Korean victims of No Gun Ri will realize full justice. The Korean victims sent their first petition letter to the U.S. Embassy in 1960, asking for an investigation and compensation. After several denials of their claims, the National Council of Churches (United States) took up their cause and asked the Defense Department for an investigation into the No Gun Ri massacre. The Pentagon's response on March 22, 1999 was that it "found no information to substantiate the claim." When the Army released its investigation report in January 2001, President Clinton only offered his "regret" but no apology. Furthermore, he decided against any compensation for the victims. Thus, the Korean victims such as Chung Koo-Hak, Chun Choon-Ja, Park Hee-Sook, and Yang Hae-Sook are left with a bitter feeling toward America. Chung Eun-Yong, who lost a son in the massacre, summed up their feeling: "America has no justice or conscience."

It is now up to the American people to raise their voice on behalf of the Korean victims of the cruel war which still continues in Korea today. True peace and reconciliation between Americans and Koreans will be impossible without a full understanding and accounting of the dark history of America's role in Korea. It is sad to note that the Pentagon is currently spending about \$7 million in celebration and glorification of the American military role in the Korean War, in observance of the 50th anniversary of the Korean War. The best way to observe the anniversary for the American people would be, in fact, to read this painful but powerful story.



JOHN KIM IS A BOARD MEMBER OF VETERANS FOR PEACE AND CHAIRMAN OF VFP'S KOREA COMMITTEE; HE IS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE CLARENCE FITCH CHAPTER OF VVAW. HE SERVED IN THE U.S. ARMY IN SOUTH KOREA.

The Long Road Home

MATT DAVISON

For thousands of veterans, the Vietnam War is not over. It is still taking lives. They'd have to build a wall several times as tall to record the names of all who have fallen since coming home. Many committed suicide. Some just popped and went off like rounds in an overheated gun. Many could not hold down a job and drifted into homelessness, stripped of dignity and pride, just trying to survive. Thirty-plus years after Vietnam, so many who survived the bullets and land mines are lost in a world that has passed them by, wishing only for a chance to go home. No, freedom is never free.

On any given night there are the equivalent of seventeen infantry divisions on the streets of this great nation with no place to call home. These are men and women who served our nation during its greatest times of need and now live without shelter or employment, food or medical care. They are the once-young men and women, now aging, whom we sent abroad to defend our country but cast aside upon their return. They are our country's forgotten heroes, those who at one time may have been awarded a Medal of Honor or Purple Heart.

Homeless veterans want to be able to regain personal pride by taking personal responsibility to remove the barriers that have prevented their transition to productive citizenship. In order to do

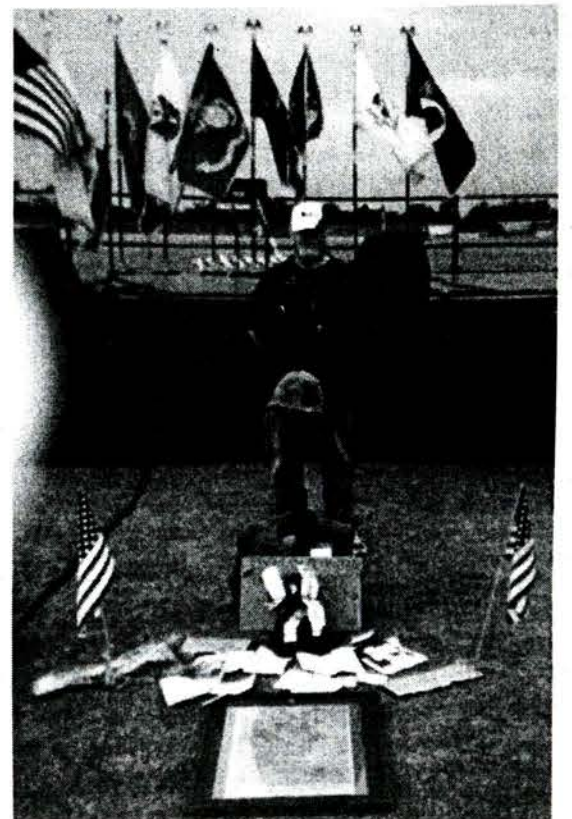
this they need access to substance abuse recovery and mental health programs, affordable housing, and employment opportunities. Programs such as the Department of Labor (DOL) Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project (HVRP), currently in operation at Joint Efforts, Inc. in San Pedro, is helping veterans live a part of the "American Dream" that they were promised but were denied for so long. Having and keeping jobs with decent pay and benefits is the key to ending homelessness. Having a job at the end of the tunnel is often the difference between success and failure for vocational rehabilitation and substance abuse treatment. Employment is central to keeping homes and families together.

Michael Jackson, a U.S. Army veteran, is just one of the homeless vets who has taken advantage of the services offered by Joint Efforts. "Joint Efforts has been helping me since September 6. I was homeless, was in a recovery program, had no source of income. Upon my first visit to Joint Efforts, I was enrolled into the HVRP Program and assisted in finding a place to live. Since then, I've been given access to the Joint Efforts computer lab, that offers classes in computer programs such as Word and Excel, as well as how to utilize the Internet for employment information. Through the guidance of my case manager, Tonie Chavez, and my job developer, Matt Davison, I

have been able to attend veterans' workshops to learn how to prepare for employment, and have already interviewed for three job prospects. I believe I am now on the verge of being hired by one of the prospects any day now. Joint Efforts has given me an entirely new perspective on life, and for that I am thankful." [Editor's note: This veteran now has housing and a full-time job.]

Now, in light of recent tragic events, there is even more reason to reach out to veterans who have defended our country in other times of peril,

and in memory of all those who have perished in defense of America's freedom. It takes a network of partnerships to be able to provide a full range of services to homeless veterans. No one entity can provide this complex set of requirements without developing relationships with others in the community. Joint Efforts is especially calling upon South Bay employers to consider hiring veterans for open positions and providing training opportunities with the assistance of DOL grant funding. More than ever before, it is time to say "thank you" to those who have served, and to lend a hand up to those who struggle to take their rightful place in our society. For more information on



the Joint Efforts Veterans Program, please call Matt Davison at (310) 831-2358, ext. 220, or Tonie Chavez at (310) 831-2358, ext. 221. Joint Efforts is a non-profit organization located at 505 South Pacific Avenue in San Pedro, California.



MATT DAVISON SERVED SIX YEARS IN THE FAR EAST AS AN INTERCEPT OPERATOR WITH THE U.S. AIR FORCE SECURITY SERVICE. HIS ENLISTMENT TERM ENDED AS THE VIETNAM WAR WAS IN ITS EARLY PHASES. HE IS CURRENTLY A CASE MANAGER AND JOB DEVELOPER FOR HOMELESS VETERANS AT JOINT EFFORTS, INC.

CONCERNING JOE MCCARTHY (1951)

The seeking mind's not only quite uncouth,
But shamelessly subversive, so they say;
It wastes the enterprising years of youth
On heresies. But who are they
That dictate to our splendid here-and-now
Their purse-lipped maunderings in the night?
Why, they're the fanatic few. And we must bow
In servile homage to their frowning might.
It's unanimity these days instead
Of honest doubt. Well, that's the way of things
When fearful folk go off to desolate bed
And psychopaths exert the power of kings.

Sandra J Fulton



VVAW 35th Anniversary Adbooks available

To receive a copy, send \$5 to:
Vietnam Veterans Against the War
PO Box 2065, Station A
Champaign, IL 61825-2065

Listen Up!

REVIEWED BY LISA BOUCHER

Vietnam: The Aftermath

Billy Bang

Justin Time Records, 2001
(www.justin-time.com)

Over the past 26 years, jazz fiddler Billy Bang's hard-edged tone, soulful sense of swing and expressive style have enhanced over two dozen albums by top names in a variety of genres, from the blistering funk of Bootsy Collins to the intergalactic uproar of Sun Ra.

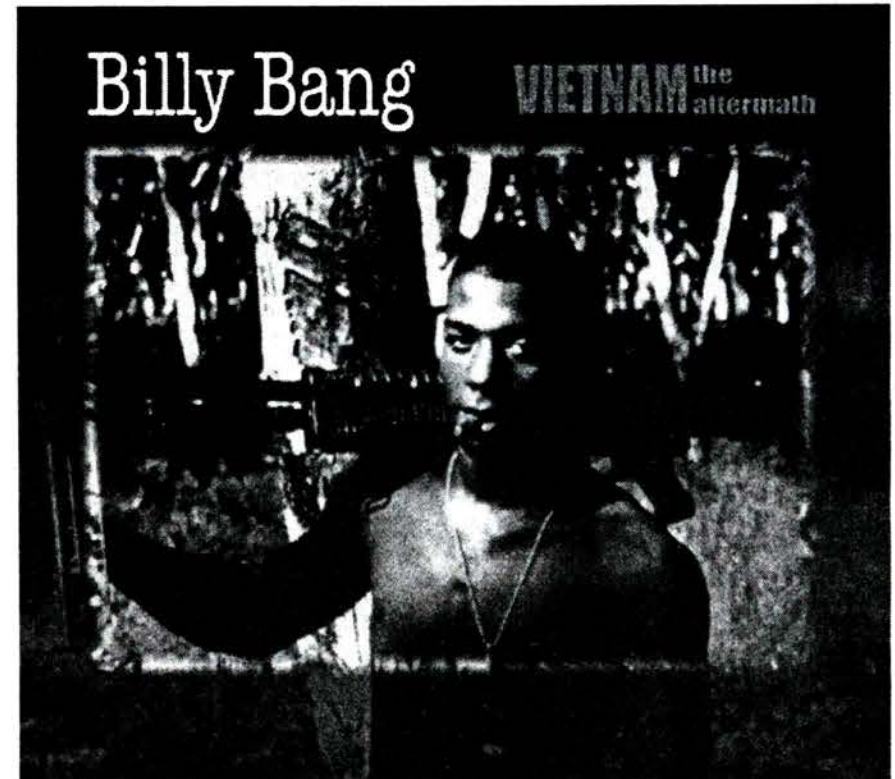
Drafted into the army following graduation, Billy was sent to Vietnam, an experience that profoundly affected his life. Returning home and radicalized, Billy became active in the anti-war movement, and by the late 60s had returned to music.

This recording is Billy's attempt to put into music his Vietnam experience. This is powerful, intense music made by premier musicians, most of whom happened to experience the war in Vietnam firsthand. Without words, with only sound, they manage to capture an intensity that cannot be expressed in mere words.

In the album's liner notes, Billy says:

For decades, I've lived constantly with my unwillingness to deliberately conjure up the pain of these experiences. At night, I would experience severe nightmares of death and destruction, and during the day, a kind of undefined ambiguous daydream. By allowing these awkward and unfathomable feelings to lie dormant in some deep dark place, I was able to tolerate my frankly vegetative way of living. It was preferable somehow — and safer — to let these monstrous thoughts embedded in my unconscious to remain in that state — inactive. This was the sad state of my life, which made it easy for me to seek an artificial comfort in drinking and drugs ...

... My immediate concerns were whether or not I was in fact strong and courageous enough to accept this challenge. The possibility of getting rid of the dark side that forever haunted me outweighed the pessimistic thoughts I had carried with me all those years. I knew I was faced with the monumental task of transforming my Vietnam experience, and all its attendant emotions, into a solid body of music. The overall sadness of losing close friends in com-



bat is not something that many experience, and to write eloquently of my trials and tribulations, of growing from a boy of nineteen and becoming a man, a soldier, in that God-forsaken war, has been a supreme challenge.

This beautiful, ugly, haunting album is probably the best recording I've heard in years. Combining Asian modes with the vocabulary of American jazz, going from toe-tapping swing to what-in-the-HELL-is-THAT

screaming fiddle sounds and back to the comfort zone again, Billy's CD has been in constant rotation on my player ever since it debuted last autumn, and I believe it deserves a good listen.



LISA BOUCHER WORKS AS A MUSICIAN IN CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, ILLINOIS. SHE IS ALSO THE COPY EDITOR FOR THE VETERAN (BUT PREFERS THE TERM "TEXT WRANGLER").

Letter to the Editor

I have just returned from a conference in D.C. called "Echoes From The Wall" sponsored by Jan Scruggs and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (www.vvmf.org). This curriculum, like the "Wall," can be for healing, will enhance global understanding and help get our kids directly involved in "People's History." I have some issues with the curriculum, but our participation corrects the areas that are lacking.

Our students have the opportunity to become active learners in the gathering of history for the Library of Congress through the Veterans History Project (www.loc.gov/folklife/vets). In their social studies classes, they would be charged to record the oral histories of veterans from World War II (immediate need), the Spanish Civil War (only 113 left from the Abraham Lincoln Brigade), the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Gulf War (thousands have died as a result of their participation).

The "Echoes From The Wall" curriculum recommends that the students interview and research all aspects of the participants of the Vietnam Era. They would interact with Vietnam veterans, Vietnamese-Americans and Vietnamese citizens that fought for Saigon or for Hanoi, anti-war activists, COs, Gold Star Mothers, and children that lost their fathers (Sons and Daughters In Touch: www.sdit.org). Everyone that was affected by the war should be interviewed. We need to promote organizations like the Veterans Education Project (www.vetsed.org). Our participation ensures that the notion that "war is glorious" is clearly spoken to and debunked.

As for the teacher-participants in the conference, I was simply blown away. There were 90 teachers and 20 or so were 'Nam vets. I made it clear at the beginning of the dialogue that I was VVAW from 1971 on. I was expecting cheap shots — I was even a bit defensive — and what I received was understanding, "thank-yous" and questions about our initial demonstrations and programs. A couple of the guys were a little less welcoming but were interested. I saw incredible photos from guys returning to 'Nam. Hill 861 North and South look like the hills of Ireland. These guys know that there is much pain that can't be seen. They are looking for ways to help. Jan Scruggs was a pleasure to hang with as was Tom Hall from VVA. Stephen Sossaman and Rob Wilson was there from VETSED. Duery Felton shared his work with the Wall archives and is a pleasure to rap with. Finally, I was ready to ask for clarifications from guest Joe Galloway about the "whole story" of the Ia Drang battles. He was way ahead of us. He struggled with the negotiations with Hollywood to keep the story straight (from his point of view) and feels that the movie is 80% fair. He had some very interesting insights on the clamping down on media by the military since Vietnam and works actively for an open door policy. He is very much an adherent of "hate war, detest the politicians and honor the memories of the kids that died."

Parents and teachers should request the "Echoes From The Wall" curriculum for their schools. This history is ours; it belongs to us. Make a request to your local school to participate, for you to be interviewed and to be able to bring in other guests to relate to the Vietnam era from all perspectives.

Jim Murphy
mandm11@optonline.net
Teacher NYC-Teen Talk WNYE
Vietnam '68-69
VVAW Statue of Liberty Christmas '71

MACV Insignia

U.S. Military Assistance Command (MACV) [official design by the institute of Heraldry, U.S. Army]. Under this insignia 60,000 Americans and 3 million Vietnamese died.



Yellow and red are the Vietnam colors. The red ground alludes to the infiltration and aggression from beyond the embattled yellow "wall" (i.e. The Great Wall of China). The opening in the wall through which this infiltration and aggression flow is blocked by the white sword representing United States military aid and support. The wall is arched and the sword pointed upward in reference to the offensive action pushing the aggression back.

It was first issued to the 12,000 "advisors" in Vietnam in March of 1963.

Insignia of Vietnam Veterans Against the War



We took the MACV patch as our own, replacing the sword with the upside-down rifle with helmet, the international symbol of soldiers killed in action. This was done to expose the lies and hypocrisy of US aggression in Vietnam as well as its cost in human lives. As with all the propaganda put out by the government to justify US intervention in Indochina, the MACV insignia also put forward lies. The US military was not protecting the Vietnamese from invasion from the People's Republic of China, but was instead trying to "save" Vietnam from itself.

Our insignia has come to represent veterans fighting against new "adventures" like the Vietnam War, while at the same time fighting for a decent way of life for veterans and their families.

Our insignia is 30 years old. It belongs to VVAW and no other organization or group may use it for any reason without permission.

Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc.

VVAW Membership
P.O. Box 2065, Station A
Champaign, IL 61825-2065

Membership Application

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
E-mail address _____
Dates of Service (if applicable) _____
Branch _____
Unit _____
Overseas Duty _____
Dates _____
Military Occupation _____
Rank _____
☐ Yes, add me to the VVAW e-mail list

Membership in VVAW is open to all people who want to build a veterans' movement that fights for peace and justice. Most of our members are veterans of the Vietnam era, but we welcome veterans of all eras, as well as family members and friends to our ranks. The annual membership fee is \$20.00 (not required of homeless, unemployed or incarcerated vets).

VVAW is a democratic organization. Chapters decide on local programs and projects under the general guidelines of the national program. Chapters elect local leadership and representatives to annual national meetings where major organizational decisions are made and national coordinators elected. These coordinators are responsible for the day to day organizational leadership of VVAW and issuing national publications.

Signature _____
Date _____
(Make checks payable to VVAW. Contributions are tax-deductible.)

Beware of VVAW AI

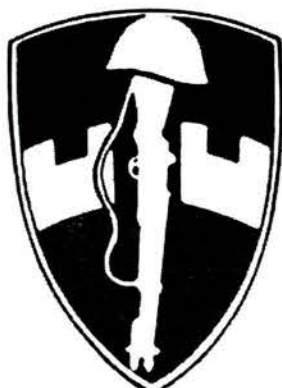
This notice is to alert you to a handful of individuals calling themselves "Vietnam Veterans Against the War Anti-Imperialist." Though few in number, they are highly mobile and may show up at meetings or demonstrations representing themselves as VVAW.

"VVAW AI" is not a faction, caucus or part of VVAW, Inc. They are not affiliated with us in any way. "VVAW AI" is actually the creation of an obscure ultra-left sect known as the Revolutionary

Communist Party and is designed to pimp off VVAW's long history of struggle. Their objective is to create confusion and deception in order to promote themselves.

We urge all people and organizations to beware of this bogus outfit. Don't be fooled. They are not what they claim. **Forewarned is forearmed!**

Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc.



For more information and to make donations:

- VVAW, P.O. Box 408594, Chicago, IL 60640
- 773-327-5756
- vvaw@prairienet.org
- www.vvaw.org

RECOLLECTIONS

The Village

JOHN MITCHELL

Waking up to the smells and sounds of daily life here, it didn't seem at all like there was a war going on. Villagers went about the same daily chores people there had been doing for centuries. Life went on, idyllic and peaceful. Here, no one cared who was president. Survival was more important.

During the night the Marines' mascot, a little stubby-legged dog named "Vicious," came over by the gun, looking like he wanted to make friends. The trust in his eyes overwhelmed me, so I accepted the offer and was no longer alone. Yesterday's events had handed me the job of point man, and during my morning patrol around the village I was surprised to see the little dog show up and take a position about twenty yards ahead of me. When I asked about this, the others said, "He always does that." Somehow that dog knew what was going on. Guerrilla war was new to me, and his company was reassuring. He would guide me for a long time; his sense of duty was uncanny.

As we made our way to yesterday's action, the people seemed afraid of us. Finding no blood trails and all the brass cleaned up, we returned to the command post. Nothing was wasted here. It took only a few days to realize we were not doing the people any good here and we had no plans to build any schools. Theory and reality differed. Imposing our will with guns didn't win the hearts and minds of the people — fear was the only tool we had. Hate for this place was building, death was welcomed here.

The Viet Cong were clever, hard to see; they would hit and run. Vicious and I adapted to this and would draw the fire to expose them; the 60 did the rest. It was a daily game for us: a sportsman's hunt. I stayed in that village and we whittled away at each other for a month or so. The tactic had only one drawback: it became hard to find volunteers to walk behind us.

One beautiful sunny morning, we were anxious to start the patrol, and while talking with my last good Vietnamese scout on the

way out of the village, I missed the little dog's alert. Without warning, the VC ambushed us with a .30-caliber machine gun they must have borrowed from us. Instantly returning fire was too late for my scout, who caught a 30-cal round through the hip and fell by my side, exposed and helpless. I reached down, still firing, and got him out of the way. The others came forward to cover us and I worked on my buddy's wound, which didn't look good. His leg dangled. The game was over.

The VC had ganged up, hit

Corporal Cool was the first one out; he was a hard-charging, gung ho Marine with no sense, and he ran into the ambush without any doubts. The VC had about thirty guys all shooting their one magazine at our guys and then they started to run right into us. Waiting for them to get to the middle of the rice paddy seemed an eternity. With about half in front now and the rest coming, we let the 60 open up. It was ducks on the water now. What a turkey shoot! The VC fell like rain; there were only a couple that escaped

little surprised at the age of the VC. Most weren't even 16 years old. A few might have been 18 or 19. Kids killing kids, I thought, and what a waste. I wondered what I had gotten into: just a politician's dirty work? But none were here; they were busy back in Washington, washing their hands. Everyone should have been ashamed of the reality here that day, but we weren't. Killing creates jobs all down the line, and the supreme command wanted more kills, and so did I. Bloodlust, I called it. They would get their wish in the days to come and we would lose "the count" over and over again.

My PF friend who was shot in the leg returned to the village in less than three weeks, his one leg gone at the hip. He was supposed to recover in the ville. I told him we got everyone that shot at us that day. It was of no comfort to him; he was a wasted man now and only wished I had let him die. At that moment I became fed up with the horror of this conflict. Hate consumed me and lust for blood was begging me on. I had finally crossed over into the animal kingdom. Only the strong survived there.



JOHN MITCHELL IS A MEMBER OF
VVAW FROM WISCONSIN.

**Killing creates jobs all
down the line, and the
supreme command wanted
more kills, and so did I.**

us with all they had and then disappeared. Night came, and we followed our usual plan: we would set up an ambush and then return to the village to eat and get a little sleep before the morning patrol. When it came time to return to the village that morning, I got another Marine and two PFs and we slipped along the river until we would be behind the VC's morning ambush. We set up on the rocks across from the rice paddies surrounding the village and waited for daylight.

As the sun rose, we could see the little buggers setting in for the ambush on our morning patrol. We were anxious to shoot these guys but had to wait and let the other Marines spring the trap. The VC would soon run right into us, in full view of the M-60. The sun was getting hotter as we watched our foe getting into better positions for their ambush. It was 8:30 a.m. by the time we finally made radio contact with the other Marines. Fatigue takes its toll here and it just caught up with them.

that day and only because the other Marine couldn't hit them with his M-14. The paddy was littered with dead. We had two Marines that got wounded on the way into the ambush (one was Corporal Cool), both minor, a small price to pay for the results that day.

The frustration of never seeing your enemy was over. We had the trophies, and it was good. I came out of the rocks and had a look at the corpses, and I was a

