



Fascism is Not an Option

VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR NATIONAL OFFICE

January 15, 2021

Statement from VVAW National Office in response to the insurrection in Washington, DC January 6, 2021

When VVAW was formed in 1967, we were about opposition to an illegal and immoral war that was chewing up our generation and untold numbers of the Vietnamese people. We became part of the largest social movement in history that organized for peace and real social justice. We engaged in peaceful forms of protest, including civil disobedience.

Since those days, we have continued organizing for peace and social justice, in opposition to repression of all types. Our members, in large part, had parents who fought against fascism in World War II. We still take that seriously.

The home-grown fascist mob we all saw invade the Capitol on January 6, 2021, did not care about human life or democratic norms. They were all about support for the Great Leader, no matter what the cost to human life. Their propaganda and the actions of the hate groups who form their Brownshirts reek of racism. These echoes from the history of fascist movements in Italy and Germany are all too significant. This includes their efforts to lay the blame for the death and destruction on democratic activists on the anti-fascist left.

VVAW protested in Washington, DC, many times in our history. In April, 1971, we led a large contingent of veterans in an event called Dewey Canyon III. We occupied the Mall in opposition to a Supreme Court order. We petitioned members of Congress

and lobbied them to help end the war. We marched to Arlington National Cemetery to honor our dead brothers and sisters. We were refused entry. We occupied the steps of the Supreme Court and were peacefully arrested. When we ended the week's events with a plan to return our medals to the US Government, we were faced with a ten-foot high wire fence around the Capitol building. Did we try to knock it down? No. We simply tossed the medals over the fence while making public statements about our opposition to the war.

We were targeted by the Nixon Administration due to our effectiveness in promoting greater activism against the war.

We occupied the Statue of Liberty twice. Always peaceful and well-organized.

In July 1974, we marched on DC again, demonstrating for decent benefits for veterans. Again, well-organized and peaceful. We were attacked by the cops. We defended ourselves.

Our history has always been about organizing for greater democracy, political, social, and economic.

We fight fascists when necessary, as we have done many times in our history. We fought them in Miami in 1972, when they tried to disrupt a peaceful protest during the Republican Convention. We fought them in the streets of Chicago.

We now have a situation where the outgoing President of the United States is trying to hold onto power with the aid of fascist mobs. Fascists want to be above the law. Their Great Leader IS the law. We need to be clear

about who the enemy is and how we need to respond to them.

We are not saying that the US Government is perfect, but we are not out to destroy the remnants of democratic institutions. Democratic actions, broad social organizations that engage in peaceful protest, unionization of greater numbers of working people, all these are needed to make any positive change.

We should have no illusions about the Biden Administration. We should oppose any effort to let the fascists off the hook for their murderous violence.

As veterans, we never claim to be above the law. In our actions, we always knew that we could go to prison for what we did. We were not violent. We defended ourselves when attacked. We were trying to stop a war. We were fighting for decent benefits for all veterans.

So, what do we do in this current situation? This is not a joke. This crisis will not go away with Trump. We need to understand who is behind this fascist resurgence. How are they funded? What is the corporate interest in setting the stage for fascist violence? How might we view this period in the light of earlier historical examples of the undermining of democratic institutions and attacks on political and racial minorities?

We know that there were organized cells within the insurrection that were intent on destruction and violence. Our elected representatives, staff, and anyone in their way were at the risk of death. We know that some on the Capitol police force, and possibly even elected officials, were

also in on the attack. These people saw those around them as disposable and used them as cannon fodder to achieve their goals. A common tactic of these authoritarian movements is a disregard for those around them. This stands in stark contrast to our history and the many movements since then. Our struggles are FOR the people and work WITH the people to fight for social justice.

We also know that in contrast to the white-kid-gloves treatment of these insurrectionists, our brothers and sisters in the Black Lives Matters movement have suffered at the hands of these white supremacists and fascists and their agents within the police force and armed services. We call on all our fellow veterans and officers of the law to root out those racists and insurrectionists and remove them from their ranks.

We must be vigilant. We must use our experiences to educate others. We must demand explanations, not coverups; justice, not slaps on the wrist. People died in the Capitol for Trump's personal vanity and for the class interests that continue to support him.

By the time you read this, Trump will be out of office. The craziness that he promoted every single day of his time in office will not go away. It may go underground, and we should all be on our guard.

Know who the enemy is. Prepare for the continued struggle for PEACE and REAL SOCIAL JUSTICE !!



We Have To Be Winter Soldiers

BILL BRANSON

From the National Office

1971 was a year of great crisis in the US. 1971 was also a year of intense struggle, and growth, for VVAW.

2021 is the 50th anniversary of many of VVAW's iconic actions—national, regional, and local: the Playboy ad, the Winter Soldier Investigations, Dewey Canyon III, Operation Heart of America, Operation POW, Operation Peace on Earth, and more.

In this issue and the next, we will feature memories and reflections on those times.

VVAW is collecting the stories, photos, and videos of 1971 in an easy-to-access location on our website. We would like you to add your stories. To leave your memories and view our collection, go to: www.vvaw.org/1971

"We who have come here to Washington have come here because we feel we have to be winter soldiers



Dewey Canyon III, April 1971.

now. We could come back to this country; we could be quiet; we could hold our silence; we could not tell what went on in Vietnam, but we feel

because of what threatens this country, the fact that the crimes threaten it, no reds, and not redcoats but the crimes which we are committing that threaten it, that we have to speak out."

—John Kerry, April 22, 1971

Secretary has called on the Services to conduct a 60-day stand-down on the issue of extremism in the military. The military must go further and root out the white supremacists who are expanding their influence

We are encouraged by the fast pace President Biden is undoing the damage of the Trump years, but we need to apply pressure where and when we can to advocate for peace, justice, and veterans' rights. After seeing how effective the VA has been in getting the COVID-19 vaccines to us, we know how much more it can do if we reverse the attacks and push for change.

Congress just approved the Saves Lives Act, that makes all veterans, as well as their spouses and caregivers, eligible for a coronavirus vaccine through the Department of Veterans

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PO Box 355
Champaign, IL 61824-0355
www.vvaw.org
vvaw@vvaw.org

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We are breathing a sigh of relief that Trump has been defeated at the polls. While completely aware of his toxic influence, we were still taken aback by the fury of his insurrectionists on January 6. In response, VVAW issued a statement "Fascism is Not an Option" (see above). We encourage members to be vigilant. The Right has not given up. The Trump cult is active and very dangerous. The insurrectionists need to be prosecuted.

We know the right wing has been organizing from within the military forever. We raised this issue in the 1970s. We are glad that the Defense

Agent Orange Update

JOHN LINDQUIST

Agent Orange has been related to Vietnam Veterans. Now it has been extended to Korean Veterans. If you are not currently a patient of VA Medical Services, make your own family physician aware of the multiple illnesses related to Agent Orange, so they can ask their patients if they served in Vietnam or Korea.

- Porphyria Cutanea Tarda
- Prostate Cancer
- Respiratory Cancers (includes Lung Cancer)
- Soft Tissue Sarcomas other than Osteosarcoma, Chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's Sarcoma or Mesothelioma

Please note. The illnesses listed below are related to defoliant exposure.

- AL - Amyloidosis
- Chronic B-Cell Leukemias
- Chloracne
- Diabetes Mellitus Type 2
- Hodgkin's Disease
- Ischemic Heart Disease
- Multiple Myeloma
- Peripheral Neuropathy, early onset

If you are a Veteran with with any of the above illnesses or a surviving spouse, contact a Veterans Affairs representative immediately. Pass the word!



JOHN LINDQUIST IS A LONG-TIME VVAW MEMBER FROM MILWAUKEE, NOW LIVING IN ENGLAND.



Dewey Canyon III, April 1971.



Dewey Canyon III, April 1971.

Thanks to those who have put VVAW in their wills. These gifts have helped VVAW keep on keeping on and have contributed to the building of the library in Vietnam we are sponsoring. If you would like to put VVAW in your will and don't know how, contact the National Office at vvaw@vvaw.org. VVAW is a tax exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Thanks to Jeff Danziger and Billy Curmano for their cartoons. Thanks to Sheldon Ramsdell, Elaine Elinson, Bill Christofferson, Mark Hartford, Phil Hostetter, Bill Richardson, E. C. Streeter, Bhavia Wagner, Tran Thi Thuy, Nancy Grider, Steve Jaffe, and others for contributing photos.

Veteran Staff

- Jeff Machota
- Bill Branson
- Joe Miller

VVAW Wants Your Stuff

Cleaning out the garage this Spring? De-cluttering? The VVAW Archive Project wants YOU, or rather YOUR VVAW or anti-war related pictures, old copies of local leaflets, posters and newsletters, VVAW National Steering Committee minutes and correspondence, PICTURES! Back in the Day, we were more interested in doing shit than recording it for posterity. So, there are many gaps in our coverage of VVAW's outstanding events, our meetings, the work we did on "PTS", Agent Orange, solidarity with movements and countries under the gun of US oppression, War on the VA, etc.

If you have some stuff, let us know. We can pay for shipping, if necessary. If you want to keep the originals, we can copy and send them back to you. Give us a call at (773) 569-3520 (warning, it's a robot), or preferably, email us at vvaw@vvaw.org!

VVAW Merchandise

HONOR THE WARRIOR, NOT THE WAR

Vietnam Veterans Against the War
Fighting for Veterans, Peace and Justice since 1967
www.vvaw.org



Mail order and check to:
VVAW Merchandise
c/o Dave Kettenhofen
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Saint Francis, WI 53235

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 - White (M, L, XL, XXL) - \$18.00 _____
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Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc.

National Office
P.O. Box 355
Champaign, IL 61824-0355
(773) 569-3520
vvaw@vvaw.org

Below is a list of VVAW coordinators and national staff. If you need a speaker for an event, class visit, or interview, please contact the National Office at (773) 569-3520 or email vvaw@vvaw.org and we will put you in touch with the nearest VVAW member.

VVAW National Coordinators:

Bill Branson	Joe Miller
Ann Hirschman	Meg Miner
Brian Matarrese	Marty Webster

VVAW National Staff:

Charlie Branson
Dave "Red" Kettenhofen
Jeff Machota

We Have to be Winter Soldiers

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Affairs. The House approved the legislation under unanimous consent. That shows how the VA should be open and free to vets and families, period. In my opinion, the VA is the real example of what Healthcare for All should be, not Medicare.

We hope that newly appointed VA Secretary Denis McDonough can help fix and improve the VA. We need to encourage our elected representatives and Secretary McDonough to do the following:

- * Reverse the privatization of the VA, including restoring or building VA clinics and Vet Centers in areas relegated to privatized care.
- * Fill all VA staff vacancies.
- * Pursue a program of VA expansion.
- * Restore the offices and access to the Veterans Service Officers from the various Vets organizations and VA employee union reps.
- * Forgive the debts that the VA failed to bill for during the COVID crisis. NO surprise bills for Vets!

Also, we urge VA Secretary Denis McDonough to re-examine a proposed Trump-era regulation that would unjustly freeze out thousands of veterans from VA benefits. Specifically, the rule would hamper the ability of veterans with less-than-honorable discharges to access VA care and support. This population is disproportionately composed of veterans of color, veterans with mental health conditions, veterans at risk of suicide, and LGBTQ+ veterans.

A recent, groundbreaking study by economists at Stanford University contrasted the care of veterans in the VA with the care of non-veterans in non-VA facilities. The Stanford study categorically demonstrates that veterans who get their care at the VA live longer during and after a medical emergency, and at lower cost, than those receiving non-VA care. The message of this study is crystal clear: privatizing VA care by outsourcing more services to the private sector is

not only irresponsible policy making but actually may cost veterans their lives. The study found that the VA spends less than the private sector providers in producing such markedly better outcomes. Once again, we call for no privatization of the VA, and VA access for ALL veterans, regardless of discharge status.

We also need to pressure President Biden and Congress to end the Forever Wars.

* Bring the troops home, from the Middle East, Afghanistan and the 250 secret bases in Africa, and around the world.

* Provide all "downsized" GIs with FREE education, fully paid, including a stipend for living expenses. That means all the way through a doctorate degree. Oh, and no time limits.

* When these troops come home, put them to work on the COVID pandemic.

We know this is a lot. But, better we go for it, than sit back and let them keep destroying the VA, making GIs kill for someone's profit, and condemning vets to a lifetime of

debt penury for getting an education. Not to mention letting vets watch their families die, because vaccination in the public sector is so FUBAR.

Contact your elected representatives. Write your local papers. We must make sure the voices for veterans, peace, and justice are not silenced.

Especially during this time, don't forget your friends and comrades in the struggle. Everyone who can needs to reach out and give a call or email or zoom or whatever. We can't let this current period push any of our friends over the edge. Let's make ourselves available!

We know that struggle is an ongoing process. We may be slower, thicker, and balder than we were 50 years ago, but we know our voices still need to be heard. The fight for peace, justice, and veterans rights is never over.



BILL BRANSON IS A MEMBER OF THE VVAW BOARD.

Notes from the Boonies

PAUL WISOVATY

I was sitting around the other day trying to come up with something worthwhile about which to write in the column. I spent quite a while drawing a blank, when an old friend stopped by to drop off a short paperback entitled "Wall Magic." (It's not about the Great Wall of China, so please continue) I'll start with the preface, courtesy of Jim Knotts, president and CEO of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. (He should know, OK?)

Jim Asks, "So what is this so-called "Wall Magic?" Those of us who stand at the Wall know of the unbelievable coincidences, twists of fate and, well, "magical moments" that bring long awaited healing and reunite loved ones."

That says it a lot better than I could. So I'm offering these stories, all written by very hard working Wall volunteers who obviously know what they're talking about.

Dan Acant was volunteering at the Wall one late Fall afternoon in 1993, when he saw "a young couple silhouetted by the setting sun approaching his position." He "decided to wait and see whether they had any questions for me. From a respectful distance, I watched as tears began to flow freely from the woman's cheeks. They stood perfectly still for what seemed like fifteen minutes.

The spell was broken when the young woman walked up to the Wall and laid a bouquet of flowers at the base of panel 2E. A few minutes later, I saw the couple leave and walked up to the bouquet the young lady had left. A small handwritten note was attached loosely to one of the flower stems. The note read:

*September 5, 1993
To Lee Roy James
Killed September 5, 1965*

*Dear Dad;
Yesterday your baby girl married a wonderful, wonderful man. Although I did not see you there, I felt your presence in my heart and in the hearts of your family and friends. I am leaving you the flowers I carried from the aisle when Tom escorted me. It should have been you. I love you.*

*Always,
Tina Loy*

Nineteen years had passed since that September, 1993 late afternoon. I was able to make contact with Tina via email, and we exchanged notes. In one of them, she explained 'I left the note and my wedding flowers at the Wall, the place where I felt more connected to my dad than any other

place in the world.' "

That kind of says it all.

Bill Shugarts was volunteering at the Wall one day when two Vietnamese who had fought in the war approached him. He asked when and where they had served with the ARVN (The Army of the Republic of South Vietnam). He had assumed, incorrectly. These two gentlemen had fought with the Viet Cong, as had two other Vietnamese whom Bill had met only a week earlier. All four of them had come to pay tribute to our war dead, and to leave a rose at the Wall.

"I quickly recovered." Bill wrote, "back into my role as a docent at the Wall, and thanked them for coming to our memorial to honor our war dead."

"Some things you just don't expect, but you are often glad that they happened. All of these Viet Cong gentlemen were doing what they thought was right, and maybe what they felt they had to do."

They may have been enemies in the field, but they still respected each other.

And that says a lot.

I will close with this account, which clearly speaks to the reality of "Wall Magic."

"At the tenth anniversary of the Wall, a long line of people waited in the November cold to read aloud a

list of names inscribed on the Wall. An elderly, frail looking lady was standing next to a man as large as a football lineman. They chatted nearly two hours as each waited to read their personal list of names. When it was the woman's turn, she stepped onto the stage and read all the names on her list except the last one. Pausing, she said 'and my son...'; then she read his name.

The big man nearly collapsed. For twenty-five years, he had been looking for the mother of the soldier who had died in his arms; there she was, reading his name."

"Wall Magic" includes seventeen other accounts by Wall volunteers, and if you can't find it in a bookstore, you can contact the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, 1235 South Clark Street, Suite 910, Arlington, VA 22202.

As you could tell, the stories are not about politics. They are about healing. We all need some of that, don't we?



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



Dewey Canyon III, April 1971.

Fraggin'

BILL SHUNAS

You get the feeling that we are at one of those turning points in history. COVID may have a lot to do with that. But there is more. Game changing events seem to pop up one after another. And there is no shortage of folks commenting on events. The pandemic is bringing some of these changes to the way we live, the way we work, the way we play. More than that is happening. Politics are changing. Efforts to bring equality and to resist equality are out there. Change is in the air to be resisted or fostered. Some of the commentators consistently reveal their stupidity and emptiness. On the other hand it is good that truth is being spoken to power.

Black Lives Matter has been raising issues for a few years now, and there has been much reaction. If you believe Senator Ron Johnson, black people are scary. He did so declare when commenting on the January 6th insurgency. Is this a moment when the lights are returned on and the cockroaches come forward blinking and talking? In the meantime the Democratic Party won the presidency and control of Congress because African-Americans organized. Obviously they scared the bigots because hundreds of bills in states around the country were now introduced to limit black voting to

prevent a recurrence of the November, 2020 election. All this progress goes to show we have come a long way on Civil Rights, and there is still a long way to go. Equality and voting rights and state brutality toward minorities have to be dealt with.

Who would have thought that we would see an invasion of the US Capitol? But there it was, another unheard-of event. We don't know if this is a game changer, but it was a new direction. Considering the firepower of the US state, it was kind of stupid. Like bringing a knife to a gunfight. Nevertheless, it resulted in the death of seven people and serious injury to many more. It had great shock value to most people. Unfortunately it might have helped right wing recruiting. Where did these people come from? Where were they hatched? We knew about right wingers in this country, but this? This was a step further.

Blame goes to, among others, Trump who mobilized these people. Did he really think they would install him as president on January 6th? Is he that delusional? He overturned the election results in his mind, abetted by the help of lots of Republicans who knew better but wanted to get re-elected, and so said nothing. And

this implosion of the Republican Party could also be added to the list of game changing events. This time we were lucky. We had an incompetent fascist as the face of Fascism.

Speaking of cockroaches like Trump, Tucker Carlson probably says outrageous things for his own publicity. He probably loves it that so many of us respond to him even if it is to call him out. Sometimes he needs to be called out. He disrespected our troops and veterans. Rumors are that he wishes to run for president. Maybe he's following the Trump game plan. Find a way to dodge serving in the military when it means that you have to be in or near combat. At the same time keep running your mouth and offend somebody. That keeps you in the limelight. It doesn't make much difference who you're talking about.

The troops and veterans Carlson disrespected were the women troops and veterans. We now have a woman vice president, more women in the Cabinet, a woman on the team that produced the vaccine, and women having a role in all aspects of society. And still you see and hear disrespect from men like Carlson or a groping governor. Women are moving forward. I don't know if this is a turning point

or a long slog, but women are on the move.

We are living in a time when speaking out is normal. Issues are out front. Central are the just demands for racial and sexual equality. Let us not forget that there was a period (1960s & 1970s) many of us participated in promoting variations of the same theme. Maybe we made some progress, but obviously there was a way to go. So today we are again in the middle of political clashes, culture clashes, and racial clashes. And looming in the background is a pandemic which has caused much stress as well as ethical questions. And looming behind that background is a climate crisis which has its own stresses and ethical questions. These are interesting times. These are times that need to be embraced. Biden has done some good and needed things on the domestic side. Good to have him for that. His foreign policy needs work. However it isn't Biden who will move anything forward. It is us as point turners.



BILL SHUNAS IS A VIETNAM VETERAN, AUTHOR, AND LONG-TIME VVAW MEMBER.

Recollections of 1971

The following recollections were posted on the VVAW website. To leave your memories, go to www.vvaw.org/1971guestbook/

Andy Berman

I was in basic training at Fort Lewis when VVAW held Dewey Canyon III in Washington, DC in the Spring of 1971. The intense drama of Vietnam vets throwing their medals over the fence onto the Capitol was reflected in the demeanor of the new recruits. You could see it in their eyes and hear it in their nervous conversations about what was happening 3,000 miles away. A few made crude disparaging remarks about it. Most were sober and struggling to understand it. Many of those recruits later wound up in Vietnam. I often wonder how the VVAW demonstrations impacted them when they arrived in Vietnam.

Patrick Francis McCann

1971, December 4th to be exact, was when this active-duty GI (USAF) began his 50-year journey as a freedom fighter. I attended the 2nd anniversary of Fred Hampton's murder by the Chicago police and the FBI. Left the Southside Chicago church that night no longer "their" soldier. Been a member of VVAW since 1973.

Bart House

I was 18 that year.

This was the first draft year that Selective Service abolished the College Deferment.

I was totally against the War.

I applied for Conscientious Objector Status from my local draft board.

I was denied. I appealed. I was denied again.

I enlisted in the Navy in 1972.

Jim Wohlgemuth

1971 and I was still on the

Westchester County LST 1167 off the coast near the Mekong. We just floated back and forth supplying attack helicopters and PBRs. My frustration at our mindless assignments was numbed by visits to Hong Kong, Singapore, Subic, and Yokosuka and being 500 days short and counting.

Paul Tabone

1971 meant I was back in the world for a whole year that July 20th. Being lucky and drawing an I1B MOS gave me the opportunities to see the war up front and personal. Fortunately I had more good times than bad in the Northern I Corps. I did go to a VVAW meeting in my town but at that time I couldn't connect. Some years later I finally decided that I owed it to myself and joined again, this time as a Life Member. I tend to be more a supporter than a doer, but that's my problem, nobody else's. I have learned that I trust nothing related to the US Military. Never did and never will. The USG is only concerned with making the military bigger and bigger. Now we even have a "Space Patrol" WTF?

John Zutz

I came home from Nam on Veterans Day '69, but I still had more than 6 months left to serve, so they wouldn't discharge me. I was stationed in California when the "big" actions happened, but I could buy Playboy at the PX. I kept the flag-draped casket inside my locker, and I still have it on my wall. I was a late comer, but I thank all of you who led the way.

Joseph T. Miller

Chicago, April, 1971. Since I was not able to attend any VVAW events away from home, my wife Linda and our daughter Lisa joined me in the April 24, 1971, march in Chicago. Lisa was only five, so we had her in a stroller. As we marched, the chants bounced off the buildings on State

Street. "One, two, three, four, we don't want your fucking war!" was among the most popular. The next day, we were at my folks' place for Sunday dinner. Five-year-old Lisa, dressed in her Sunday finest, began marching around the living room shouting "One, two, three, four, we don't want your fucking war!" My wife laughed, my parents were shocked, and I caught hell that day. I was so proud of my daughter, though. I still am.

Bobby Clarke

I spent two years in Thailand loading weapons on F4 jet fighters 1968-1970. While still serving back in the states I saw an ad for VVAW in Playboy. When I was discharged I investigated VVAW locally and there was no official Pittsburgh Chapter. I did become aquatinted with a vet who had been to Dewey Canyon and together we started up the Pittsburgh Chapter. I'm mentioned in the attached VVAW article.

<http://www.vvaw.org/veteran/article/?id=3888>

Mike Turek

With help from the Hawaii People's Coalition For Peace and Justice, we planned an anti-war demonstration. On a Sunday in May 1971, 70 short haired young men, soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen dressed in Hippie garb demonstrated against the Vietnam War and Militarism at the front gates of Schofield Barracks Army Base.

Thomas Nelson

US Army veteran I returned from RVN 8/70 I had been overseas for 18 months and wasn't 20 years old yet. I was with the 5th Mech in N I corps. The guys who participated with me during Dewey Canyon III have passed. We spent I don't know how many days there. It was amazing!

To those who didn't run.

From those who didn't forget!

Jim Payne

In July, 1970 I was discharged from the USAF to attend school at the University of Wisconsin-GB. There I met fellow vet Bill Van Oss and together we started the UW-GB chapter of VVAW signing up many vets and marching in Madison.

Dave Carr

February 1971: with the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing in Danang.

April 1971: with the VVAW in DC for Dewey Canyon III.

Made my head spin.

Immediately after Dewey Canyon III, I wrote an article for the *Pittsburgh Fair Witness* newspaper detailing the events. It was written as a letter to someone who was still in Vietnam. I couldn't find a copy of it but no matter. There are many other, more complete sources. See, for example, Gerald Nicosia's *Home to War* where he devotes 60 pages to DC III, plus all the info here on [vvaw.org](http://www.vvaw.org). Rather I will just relate a couple memories.

Memory 1: I'm sure many there remember the concerted effort to work with the DC Park Police to get enough trash cans etc. so we could keep our section of the Mall clean - a task we knew well.

Memory 2: I think the following occurred on Wednesday night, but I could be wrong. The *CBS Evening News* with Walter Cronkite devoted a good portion of that evening's program to interviews with folks at DC III. Also there were a number of "government provocateurs" that were hanging around. With their relative clean looks and new-looking jeans they stood out like sore thumbs. It appeared that they were trying to provoke a violent response from us. We basically ignored them but they were becoming a pain so one of the organizers got on the microphone and asked us all to go to our own areas (we were divided into state or city or other groups where we had set up our sleeping bags and gear), sit down, and don't let anyone into our area that we didn't know. That left two or three(?) dozen of these provocateurs walking around...with nothing to do. They left. Sorry Tricky Dick, it didn't work.



Dewey Canyon III, April 1971.

Defund the Pentagon

JOHN KETWIG

Our country has endured a number of crisis situations over the past year or so, and we are expected to take comfort from the news that the Biden administration is creating a new task force at the Pentagon to develop advanced "defense" technologies intended to make our military establishment more competitive with the Chinese. This group will no doubt steer additional funding to the Pentagon itself, and all the components of the military-industrial complex. A similar panel in 2018 suggested that competition with China would require defense budget increases of 3% to 5% over the long term. To pay for these increases, they suggested Congress should consider cutting Social Security and other safety-net spending.

Let's look at a few pertinent facts before those cuts are proposed again. Perhaps the most obvious is the fact that our military has not won a significant victory since the end of World War II, three quarters of a century ago. Total "defense" spending, including the costs of caring for veterans and military retirement benefits, currently exceeds 1.2 trillion dollars a year. Then there's the "overseas contingency operations" account that funds our "forever" wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Yemen, and many other countries. The US currently maintains over 800 military bases overseas while the rest of the world's nations combined have approximately thirteen! In a similar vein, America's military spending is more than the next eleven biggest-spending nations combined. Total interest on our national debt in 2019 was \$67,018,850,756.40. That's \$67 billion, or more than Russia spent on military matters. If we cut our military spending to half, we would still outspend China and Russia combined. Don't you wonder why the Pentagon needs more funding, but they are able to donate so much equipment to local police forces? President Biden is proud to point out that his Secretary of Defense is the first Black to hold the position, but he fails to mention that Lloyd Austin III comes directly from a seat on the board of directors of weapons powerhouse Raytheon. Or that he has chosen more than

a dozen people affiliated with the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) lobby group that has urged the Department of Defense to "sustain and enhance" military contractors for key positions in his new administration.

But the real questions taxpayers must ask is, "What are we getting for our money?" and "Where might that money be better spent?"

In 2016, Mark Skidmore, a Professor of Economics at Michigan State University learned that a Department of Defense Office of Inspector General report had found \$6.5 trillion in unaccounted-for Pentagon spending in the year 2015 alone! Skidmore, a bean-counter at the highest professional level, examined a variety of government websites dating back to 1968 and assembled a collection of official government documents revealing that "unsupported adjustments" totaling \$21 trillion had been reported to the DOD and HUD through the years 1998 to 2015! That was, just by coincidence, almost exactly the total of our national debt prior to the Covid pandemic. A Forbes magazine report on Skidmore's efforts said "the Pentagon response was stonewalling and concealment." Detailed reports, replete with errors and dead-end adjustments, have been removed from the DOD inspector general's website. The unsupported and unexplained adjustments were 54 times the level of the total spending authorized by Congress. Remarkably, the Obama-era Congress with its vocal Tea Party element completely ignored this incredible discrepancy.

Conservatives, as we know, are especially concerned about excessive spending, and the Tea Party faction passed legislation requiring all departments of the vast federal bureaucracy to submit to a financial audit, with results required in 2017. The Pentagon had never before been audited, and they announced that any audit of its books is "not feasible." The good Generals and Admirals declined to explain to the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee how and where it might be able to cut spending. They do not feel that the American people have any right to know how much they spend or where they spend it, and Congress

applies little pressure. On November 15, 2018 it was announced that the Pentagon's first-ever audit had failed. A small army of auditors announced that they could go no further. The DOD's records, they said, "were riddled with so many bookkeeping deficiencies, irregularities, and errors that a regular audit was simply impossible."

In 2015, the army was allocated \$122 Billion as its annual budget, but the Treasury Department made a cash deposit of \$794.8 billion to the army's account. That amount was greater than the Pentagon's entire military budget for that year, and at the same time the army records alone showed accounts payable, or bills due, of \$929.3 billion! What in the world were they buying? And from whom? The most questionable items, the hidden treasure of the Defense Department, were once again the "unsupported adjustments," or sums of taxpayer money that disappeared by "adjusting" entries to reports and journals. A July 2016 report by the DOD's own inspector general found that the Pentagon's Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) based in Indianapolis could not account for \$6.5 trillion! The military routinely avoids providing financial tracking, journals, ledgers, purchase orders, itemized bills, transaction dates, or any documentation whatsoever that might provide trillion-dollar tracks in the DOD budget snows. We, the American taxpayers, are being snowed in blizzard proportions! Investigative reporter Scott Paltrow of *Reuters* summed up his findings writing: "For two decades, the US military has been unable to submit to an audit, flouting federal law and concealing waste and fraud totaling billions of dollars." Don't you wonder what they're teaching at our military academies? A few years ago, West Point reported it was discontinuing its ethics classes. The 2016 OIG (Office of the Inspector General) report concludes that the unexplained missing trillions of dollars are the result of the Pentagon's "failure to correct system deficiencies." Next time the family checkbook doesn't balance, try using that excuse with your mortgage company.

The Pentagon cannot tell us how

many private contractor companies it employs, but the number is thought to be somewhere in excess of 600,000! A Pentagon review in 2011 found that service contractor companies had become "increasingly unaffordable." An article in the January 7, 2019 issue of *The Nation* magazine reported that on September 10th, 2001 Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld along with Vice President Dick Cheney told a press conference that "according to some estimates we cannot track \$2.3 trillion in transactions," by the Department of Defense, which had a total budget of \$313 billion that year. America's adversary, Rumsfeld said, was not China or Russia. "It's closer to home: It's the Pentagon bureaucracy," he warned.

In today's environment of total disruption of our economy due to Covid-19, the Pentagon has marched on uninterrupted. Unemployment claims filed since the pandemic began have exceeded 93 million, and 24 million Americans are going hungry, including 12 million children. Isn't it time we recognize the fraud and corruption hiding behind the five walls of the Pentagon? The ultimate status symbol in today's America is not a Rolex watch or a Rolls-Royce in the driveway. It is a defense contract, a license to coin money. Isn't it time we the people take back control of Congress and turn off the financial gusher that has been bankrupting our country for years? We can afford Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. We can afford to feed all of our people, and educate the children who will be our future. We can afford to fix our rotting roads and bridges, and we can afford to provide universal health care to all Americans. We can no longer afford the Pentagon, and it should be defunded immediately.



JOHN KETWIG IS A LIFETIME MEMBER OF VVAW. HE IS THE AUTHOR OF ...AND A HARD RAIN FELL, A G.I.'S TRUE STORY OF THE WAR IN VIETNAM AND VIETNAM RECONSIDERED: THE WAR, THE TIMES, AND WHY THEY MATTER. PORTIONS OF THIS ARTICLE HAVE BEEN TAKEN FROM THE LATTER BOOK.

R. I. P. Alan Canfora



Alan Canfora, Kent State, May 4, 1970.

Thoughts on Sacrifice

JACK MALLORY

Been mulling this over for awhile.

Our generation has seen interesting and significant changes in the concept of public or national service. From our parents' era to the present, the way Americans have valued sacrifices for the public good—from giving one's life for others to wearing a piece of fabric for others—has changed radically.

For generations, indeed from the Civil War until the Vietnam War, it was widely accepted that citizens might be expected to alter, risk, or even lose their lives for the betterment of others and the nation as a whole. It was commonly accepted that some might be asked or forced, to leave homes and families, to live under the strictures of military life, to miss football games and weddings and Thanksgiving dinners, to undergo mental and physical rigors, perhaps to kill and perhaps to die because their neighbors, through their government, asked them to make

that sacrifice.

This is not to say that everyone supported these voluntary or involuntary sacrifices, or believed that every instance was worth what was given up. It is not to say that everyone making the sacrifices did so eagerly or even willingly. But the national will, the public policies endorsed through democratic governance, supported them for 100 years or so. Only the purposeless abuse of those who served during the Vietnam War, and perhaps the guilt of those who encouraged that war and that abuse, put an end to the forced form of sacrifice called the draft.

Now we see a nation in which, for many, the minor or moderate impositions that might benefit others are excessive. Once, some were asked to give up the right to make decisions about what to wear, what, where and when to eat, when they could see their loved ones, when and how to die. They

more or less willingly agreed.

Now, we are asked to make some changes about whether to go to dinner, to give up going to that football game, to consider skipping a holiday dinner with the family, to wear a piece of fabric on our face. All to guard the health and lives of those we love and others. For many, these sacrifices are too great; the response varies from whining about being asked (not forced) to skip that dinner to showing up at the State House armed with semi-automatic weapons to protect rights to an unencumbered face.

Issues of individual freedom are and must be paramount in a democracy. Government infringements of individual rights are an inherent threat to a free people. What the government can ask of citizens in terms of sacrifice and the reasons for such sacrifice are worthy of lengthy debate.

But in any society, the value of individual sacrifice for social good

must also be considered. In any community some may need to voluntarily subject themselves to discomfort, disturbance of their lifestyles, even risk their lives, so that the community as a whole may be safe and prosper. Again, the circumstances generating that need and the sacrifices necessary may be debated. But that sometimes we might choose to undergo discomfort, disturbance, or risk for the greater good is something that society and the individuals that comprise it should perhaps address anew.



JACK MALLORY IS A LONG-TIME VVAW MEMBER. HE SERVED IN VIETNAM 69-70 AND JOINED VVAW IN 1970. HE'S ALSO AN ARCHAEOLOGIST, AN EDUCATOR, AND A DAD. LIKE SUPERMAN, FIGHTING FOR TRUTH, JUSTICE, AND HIS OWN VERSION OF THE AMERICAN WAY. HE WON'T CLAIM TO BE WINNING, BUT WTF ELSE CAN HE DO?

VVAW Library Project: Changes and Updates

CHUCK THEUSCH

In 2018, VVAW reconnected with the Library of Vietnam Project (LVP) with the goal of funding and building its own library for children in Vietnam. In 2019, fundraising began, a site was chosen, and plans were to have the library completed in March 2020.

We all know what happened next. The global pandemic brought everything to a halt.

We continued to keep in touch to see when we could get the project moving again. However, as if the Covid-19 Pandemic didn't present enough challenges, differences in the local District People's committee surfaced.

After our diplomatic but firm requests for some resolution were ignored, VVAW and LVP agreed on moving the site.

We went back to Quang Ngai where we were aware of a need for a library some 30 minutes south of My Lai/Son My.

Known in American War time maps as Pinkville because of the color of the maps, Quang Ngai has a long history of resistance and revolt—literally going back more than a thousand years. It was an area of heavy Viet Cong activity. The destruction from the War and poverty have continued to present challenges.

It is one of Vietnam's poorest Provinces. But it has a Department of Foreign Affairs that is engaged

in outreach to foreign NGOs. When I visited the Province (where I was deployed during the war) on my first return to Vietnam in 1999, they were open to my offer of a library. We are taking them up on that offer.

The library currently at the Pho Thanh School, on the new site, is not a free standing, designated facility. It is located in a small area beneath the steps in one of the school buildings. This usage of minimal spaces is not uncommon in the remote, still poverty-stricken regions of Vietnam.

About 10 years ago the national government passed a law providing that for a school to receive its highest Rating Recognition it must have a separate library building; a big departure from the usual school reading rooms. The VVAW project will provide this badly needed facility and the recognition that will follow. The Duc Pho and Quang Ngai region are still poor, making the project a dramatic addition to the local education infrastructure.

The Government of Vietnam has been successful in curtailing the pandemic, but continues restricting travel. Restricted means no International VISA access for over a year. The project timeline has been dramatically altered due to the Covid travel cancellations. No international travel into Vietnam is allowed with the specific designated exception for very, very

few flights with special VISA status abroad. We are in touch monthly, with the Vietnamese Embassy in Washington DC and PACCOM in Hanoi regarding the "opening up" of Vietnam. We remain on hold, but there is a new optimism rooted in the continued improvements, vaccines and Covid VISA developments—on a monthly, even weekly, basis.

That said we are going forward with construction and have a set of School Leaders ready to go even if we can't meet in person for some time. The target is kids reading books in the VVAW Duc Pho-Pho Vinh School Library for the September 2021-2022 school year. We are not waiting any longer and thanks to the Duc Pho Department of Education, the Vietnamese will not wait any longer either.

We wish to introduce you to one of our many friends in Vietnam. Tran Thi Thuy was in college at Quy Nhon University, back when we first became acquainted in 2010, and has worn several hats since then. As Project Manager, she will bring her creative genius to the kids of the VVAW Pho Thanh Library.

The VVAW Project is special to her and her family on a personal level as well as its importance for the Children of Pho Vinh. Thuy has brought many skills to our project going well beyond teaching talents, as

reflected in her young but impressive resume. She has been responsible for bookkeeping, international wire transfers, construction contractors, the bid process, Department of Planning and Investment project certifications, meeting construction deadlines, and adhering to government regulations.

VVAW will have a project that will be a source of pride in accomplishment for Vietnam's future. While the country has moved on after the war in the big cities, places such as Duc Pho, My Lai and remote areas in Quang Tri and Thua Thien-Hue, are still mired in poverty and war legacy challenges. VVAW's investment in these areas speaks to a vision for a better future.

We look forward to placing this school on a recognized list of high performers of Quang Ngai Education Professionals. The resources will truly skyrocket thanks to the VVAW investment in this remote area's future. VVAW will change people's lives in this province.



CHUCK THEUSCH IS A VIETNAM VETERAN OF THE US ARMY, 4/3 INFANTRY, 11TH INFANTRY BRIGADE, AMERICAN DIVISION, VIETNAM 1969-70. HE IS THE FOUNDER/CEO OF THE LIBRARY OF VIETNAM PROJECT.



The new site of the VVAW Library in Vietnam.

Memorial Day

PAUL HAGUE

This is from a speech delivered several years ago at John Stark Regional High School in Weare, New Hampshire.

It is proper that we are gathered here today to remember and honor those who have served in our military and, throughout our history, suffered enormous casualties. Since the Revolutionary War, our country has been involved in at least 29 wars or conflicts. The greater among these, in terms of casualties, are the Civil War, WWI, WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. Since Vietnam, we have been fighting in Lebanon, Grenada, the Persian Gulf, Panama, the Gulf War, Kurdistan, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Global War on Terror. Over the course of our history, over 70 million men and women have served in our wars and conflicts, and have suffered at least 1,152,635 deaths. Over 1,400,000 have been wounded and an unknown number suffered mental and spiritual casualties, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. We here today are mindful and grateful for this sacrifice.

My war was the Vietnam War. I was there at the beginning. I served in the US Navy from September 1960 to September 1966. From May of 1963 I was on the crew of USS Constellation (CVA-64). At that time, the Constellation was the Navy's newest aircraft carrier, homeported in San Diego. In late July of 1964, we were deployed on a WESTERN PACIFIC cruise, enjoying a liberty call in Hong Kong. I was "on the beach", exploring that beautiful port city, when we were recalled to the ship to make ready for an immediate emergency departure. We steamed at flank speed to a place called Vietnam, where, on August 2 in the Gulf of Tonkin one of our destroyers, the USS Maddox (DD-731), was attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats. The Maddox returned fire, damaging all three of the boats, and called for air support from another aircraft carrier, the Ticonderoga (CV-14). When Constellation and her Task Group arrived on the scene the first skirmish was over, and we were placed in a state of battle readiness called General Quarters.

My job on the Constellation was to operate and maintain the Pilot Landing Aid Television and the Fresnel Lens Optical Landing System. The Pilot Landing Aid Television, or PLAT, makes a television recording of every launch and recovery of aircraft aboard the ship. It also serves as a training aid for pilots, allowing them

to review their performance during takeoff and landing, and provides a valuable record in case of a crash or other mishap. The Fresnel Lens Optical Landing System is a system of lights that allows a pilot to assume a proper approach and the correct glide angle to catch an arresting cable and land safely aboard. Needless to say, operations involving multi-ton aircraft moving at high speeds require highly trained personnel doing their jobs perfectly or bad things will happen. Sometimes, in spite of all our training and experience, bad things happen anyway, and casualties result.

I mention this only to emphasize that training and practice are necessary for any military operation, and everyone serving must be at peak performance for things to go smoothly. When there are screw-ups, communication failures, accidents and misunderstandings, the results can be tragic. The flight deck, during aircraft launches and recoveries, is a very busy and dangerous place. Imagine 10-20 jet aircraft, in an area of about 4 acres, engines howling, maneuvering to the catapults to be launched. Anyone in the wrong place or doing the wrong thing can be a problem, or injured. Once a crew member was blown by jet blast over the side, falling 70 feet to the water. He was rescued by one of our helicopters. Another time, an arresting cable broke on landing, and an F4 Phantom, with two men aboard, crashed into the sea.

On August 4, another destroyer, the Turner Joy (DD-951), reported being under attack from PT boats. Radar operators had seen what they believed to be swift moving targets approaching the ship, and the captain ordered the ship to open fire. Turner Joy also requested air support and Ticonderoga and Constellation launched aircraft to assist. After a search of the area, our aircraft saw nothing and returned to the ship. This second attack, perceived as real by the crew of Turner Joy, got greater attention in Washington, and President Johnson ordered Constellation and Ticonderoga to launch reprisal attacks on North Vietnam at the port of Haiphong, where the PT boats were stationed. During these first attacks, one of our pilots, LtJg Richard Sather, was shot down and killed. A second, LtJg Alvarez, was shot down and taken prisoner. He was a POW for over 8 years. Another crewmember, James P. Powell was killed on the flight deck during operations.

While these attacks were taking place, President Johnson went before

Congress and asked them to pass the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which granted him full powers to prosecute war on North Vietnam.

The first casualty when war comes, is truth; said American Senator Hiram Johnson in 1917. Subsequent investigation revealed that before the destroyer Maddox went to the Gulf of Tonkin, it stopped at Taiwan to have special radio and signals processing equipment put on board, to be operated by special secret personnel. The Maddox was then ordered to Vietnam, to patrol nearshore (these were called DESOTO patrols) to provoke a response by the Vietnamese, so they could analyze resulting radio signals. On 4 August, another DESOTO patrol off the North Vietnamese coast was launched by Maddox and the Turner Joy, in order to reinforce our presence after the first incident.

Further investigation by Naval authorities revealed that the so-called second attack on the Turner Joy wasn't an actual attack on the ship, but that over-eager radar and sonar operators, in a high state of readiness, had probably reported a phenomenon known as "sea return"; false targets which are radar reflections off of waves. This explained why aircraft from the carriers saw nothing. Can we conclude that inadequate training and faulty interpretation of radar data and the following government action resulted in the escalation of the Vietnam war?

I think so, and this incident, along with other elements of our government provoking the North Vietnamese, led to America's ten-year-war with Vietnam, resulting in 58,220 deaths and 153,303 wounded on the American side, and, no one knows for sure, but probably millions of casualties suffered by the Vietnamese. We dropped more bombs on Vietnam, a country roughly the size of California, than in all of WWII.

The Vietnam war led to massive social unrest at home. There are over 58,000 names on the wall of the Vietnam Memorial, and more than twice that number of Vietnam veterans have taken their own lives. Others live daily with the effects of PTSD, and many more live all their lives with the feeling that they "just don't fit in". Civilians don't understand what we've been through and expect us to forget the past and get on with life. It's not easy to forget the chaos and madness of war. To this day, I feel that the only person who really can know what I've experienced and understands how I feel is another vet. I visited the Vietnam Memorial in

Washington, for its tenth anniversary. It is a very moving experience to stand in front of that wall, with the names of all who died engraved on that black granite, and to see your own reflection superimposed on those names. Names of friends and shipmates. It produced in me a powerful mixture of feelings – an unutterable grief and a feeling of rage and futility. I wept like a child.

Since the Revolutionary War, veterans have had to fight for benefits promised them, and it continues today. Congress has voted to cut funding for veterans' care many times. Just yesterday the senate voted to block a \$21 billion plan for new VA clinics. At the same time, they advanced a \$600 billion corporate tax cut. If this injustice matters to you, please express your feelings to our representatives in congress. To hear a "Welcome Home" or a "Thank you for your service" is kind, but actually receiving excellent and timely medical care and the other benefits promised veterans would be much more supportive.

So today we honor those who have fallen, but let us also remember others who have suffered injury, disorders of the mind, drug addiction and unemployment. Additionally, may we be mindful that it is not only veterans who suffer the consequences of war, but their friends and families too.

If you are interested in learning more about veterans' feelings about war and its consequences, may I suggest the following books, all written by veterans, as a start:

- *The Killer Angels* by Michael Shaara
- *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria von Remarque
- *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway
- *The Thin Red Line* by James Jones
- *The Naked and the Dead* by Norman Mailer
- *Slaughterhouse Five* by Kurt Vonnegut
- *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller
- *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien (especially the chapter on how to tell a true war story)
- *Chickenhawk* by Robert Mason
- *Born on the Fourth of July* by Ron Kovic

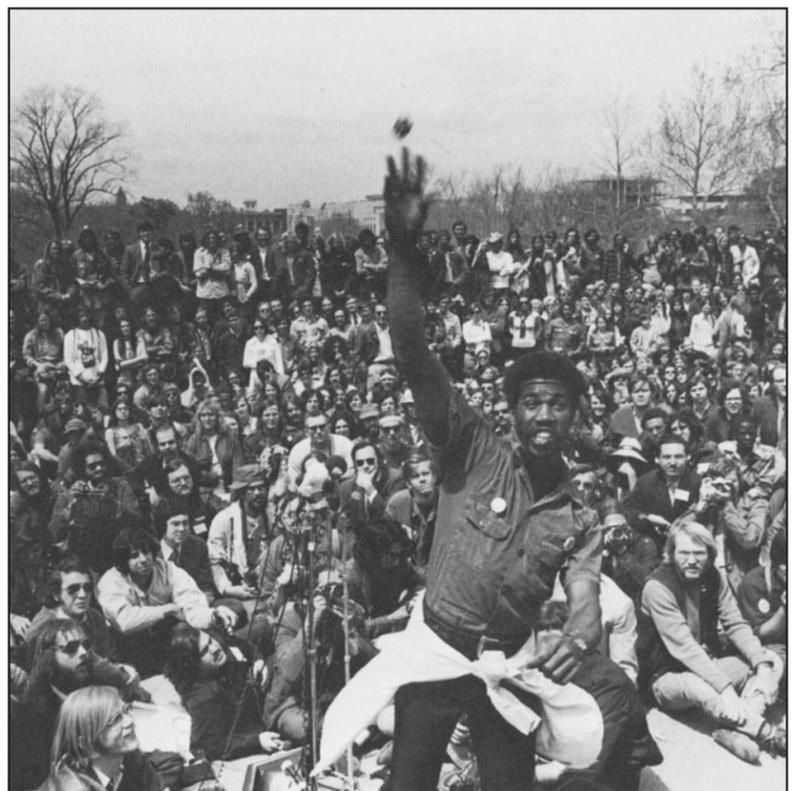


PAUL R. HAGUE WAS A FORMER IC2, US NAVY, USS CONSTELLATION (CVA-64)

The Night You Returned

A road crew was paving the highway
the night you returned from the war.
It was March; they had set up floodlights;
the black viscous tar steamed in the cold.
The workmen didn't notice you.
Why would they?
You weren't any different
from all the other passersby that night
or any other night, just another car.
They had a machine;
they were laying macadam
mile after mile.
Black. Viscous. Steaming.
Mile after mile after mile.
Deep into the night.

—W. D. Ehrhart



Dewey Canyon III, April 1971.

Spreading Goodwill: Supporting Education of Poor Children in Vietnam

BHAVIA WAGNER

I first went to Vietnam in 1991 with 30 people on a Peace Walk. We were an eclectic group of peace activists and Vietnam veterans. The visit was a gesture of goodwill and citizen's diplomacy at a time when the United States still had a trade embargo against Vietnam.

We did not do much walking. We traveled by bus and train from Hanoi, to Ha Long Bay, to Hue, to Da Nang, to Ho Chi Minh City. Everywhere we went, we saw beautiful scenery and it was quiet. The cities were still untouched by the Western world. Most people traveled by bicycle, motorbike, or public bus. I was impressed by the Vietnamese love of art and poetry and also how hardworking they are. I enjoyed the way they liked to laugh – gently kidding each other.

We were hosted by the Vietnamese government and the staff of the International Affairs Department accompanied us. They were also veterans in the American War (as they call it). They were very kind and gracious, and we really enjoyed their company. On the trip, we met with generals and other war veterans. Their attitude of forgiveness of Americans was a profound experience for all of us. Our veterans had deep healings after meeting "the enemy."

I was so moved by my visit to Vietnam that I decided to help other Americans have a similar experience. The next year, in 1992, I led a tour to Vietnam for Global Exchange, a non-profit based in San Francisco.

We were among the first Americans to visit the site of the My Lai massacre. A feeling of profound sadness still permeated that area. We met

with the local women's organization. They told us that there was a lot of poverty and asked us for financial help in starting a micro-credit program. The program would help poor families start income generation projects, like raising chickens. They needed \$2,000. I said I would try to find help.

Back in the US, I gave a public talk in Madison, Wisconsin about our visit to Vietnam and mentioned the women's request. Vietnam veteran Mike Boehm came forward and said he wanted to raise the money to fund them. That was the beginning of decades of charitable work in Vietnam coordinated by Mike, including building a Peace Park.

In 1994, I led my second tour to Vietnam for Global Exchange. While I was there, I met with the Vietnam Women's Union and we started The Vietnam Scholarship Program to help students living in poverty. Although education is free, the children still need to buy school supplies, school clothes, and sometimes a bicycle to get to school. In the poor rural areas of Vietnam, most families are subsistence farmers. They try to grow enough rice to feed their family for a year. The average income in rural areas is very low, about \$130 per month.

The Vietnam Scholarship Program provides gifts of approximately \$100 to students (in grades 1–12) who are working hard in school and come from families with a lot of hardships. We support girls because they are more disadvantaged than boys. The students and their families are so extremely happy to receive this support. This annual act of kindness continues to build goodwill between our countries.

The Vietnam Scholarship Program is administered by the Vietnam Women's Union, who select the recipient province and schools. Local teachers select the students. Each year our donors, including Vietnam veterans, support around 40 girls.

Here is a letter from one of the recipients:

My name is Hoang Thi Nham. I attend Van An Secondary School and am in 9th Grade. I am really lucky and happy to receive this noble scholarship. For me this is not only material support but also a great spiritual comfort to help me overcome all challenges in life.

Indeed, people often say "Every family goes through its own problems." Each person's situation is not the same as anyone else. When I heard about this scholarship, I knew there was more to it than the financial help. There is my fate, fragments of an unhappy life, but also an extremely energetic life.

The life that one experiences is alright, because together with that unlucky fate, there are your compassionate hearts. You gave us these extremely meaningful gifts. I am very touched and thank the aunts and uncles so much!

This scholarship will help me to cover expenses in my life and it will enable me to study hard so I can live up to the hope that the uncles and aunts have entrusted in me. I sincerely thank you!

—Hoang Thi Nham

We invite you to join us and help one or more students at \$100 each. Checks can be payable to Friendship with



Hoang Thi Nham, Van An secondary school, Ha Quang district.

Cambodia, the non-profit that wires the funds to Vietnam. Write Vietnam Scholarship Program on the memo line and mail it to Friendship with Cambodia, PO Box 5231, Eugene, OR 97405. Or you can donate online at www.friendshipwithcambodia.org. Donations are tax-deductible.

One hundred percent of your donation reaches the students because Friendship with Cambodia and the Vietnam Women's Union do not take administration fees. This program helps disadvantaged children and it is a gesture of peace and reconciliation which is tremendously appreciated.



BHAVIA WAGNER IS THE FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF FRIENDSHIP WITH CAMBODIA AND AUTHOR OF SOUL SURVIVORS: STORIES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN CAMBODIA.



Van An Secondary school, Ha Quang district.



Girl Scholarship in Cao Bang.



THE VETERAN

SECTION B

Volume 51, Number 1

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Memories of '71

JAN BARRY

Details get hazy thinking about 50 years ago. 1971 was a blur of anti-war actions, organizing meetings, and writing about what should be done about ending the war in Southeast Asia. All this on top of trying to deal with some nameless condition—let us call it survivor guilt/ moral injury/ Agent Orange poisoning and other things we didn't yet know about—with insomnia, terrible nightmares and panic attacks thrown in.

Shortly after my 28th birthday that January, many of us went to Detroit, Michigan for the Winter Soldier Investigation. In a provocative approach, VVAW publicly examined war crimes through our own actions and observations as soldiers in Vietnam.

It was a harrowing experience. Many vets were freaking out in corners of the Howard Johnson's New Center Motor Lodge, where the three day event was held on January 31-February 2. The news media in Detroit was hostile to the story we wanted to tell. Radical feminists showed up to condemn us as "male chauvinist pigs." On the positive yet intimidating side, fundraising was provided by Jane Fonda and a star-studded array of actors and entertainers including Donald Sutherland, Dick Gregory, Graham Nash, David Crosby, Barbara Dane and Phil Ochs.

Coordinating such an historic event was way beyond my skill set as a thinly published writer and grassroots organizer. When I was elected to head VVAW in the summer of 1967, we were a tiny group of anti-war vets in New York City who'd served in the early years of the war. Many of us were there in the secretive "military advisors" period before the "big battalions" and fleets of helicopters and bombers arrived in 1965.

Launching a Vietnam veterans' group for peace in Vietnam in 1967, we talked to generally skeptical people on street corners, at college campuses, at community events, and on talk radio and TV shows about how the war was created under false pretenses. It was a long, slow slog to get more vets involved and to get serious attention from the public. We quickly learned not to talk about war crimes because Americans were convinced that Americans did not do such things.

By 1971, the My Lai Massacre had been revealed in the news. Many vets were upset that only a lowly lieutenant was held responsible for a large scale killing of civilians. Most early members of VVAW had moved on, disgusted by the glacial pace of making a dent in the public's embrace of the war. However, a bunch of vets who saw combat in big operations joined VVAW more recently and marshalled their outrage to organize the Winter Soldier Investigation.

With military efficiency, a call went out for vets willing to talk about

war crimes to come to Detroit; a process was set up for interviewing these vets and seeking corroboration from documents, photos, buddies who were in the same unit; and a schedule was created for vets who served in the same division to talk on panels about actions that reflected policies—such as how prisoners of war were treated or mistreated—year after year from 1965 on.

Several vets not selected to testify on Marine or Army division panels demanded to also speak, so panels were created that addressed various other experiences, from racism in basic training to support unit actions and observations.

I co-chaired one of these panels with John Kerry, a former Navy Lt. who commanded Swift boats on Mekong Delta rivers. I felt conflicted about participating in this event. My experiences re this topic were minimal. As a radio specialist with an Army aviation unit in 1962-63 that transported MAAG and Special Forces teams on remote missions, I heard about air crews napalming villages and shooting farmers in "free fire zones." What our forum in Detroit provided was first-hand testimony from dozens of other vets that these cruel assaults were not aberrations, but perverse policy.

"We intend to show that the policies of the Americal Division which inevitably resulted in My Lai were the policies of other Army and Marine divisions as well," said former Army Lt. William Crandell, who'd served in the Americal Division as a platoon leader. "We intend to show that the war crimes in Vietnam did not start in March 1968, or in the village of Son My or with one Lieutenant William Calley.... We are here to bear witness not against America, but against those policymakers who are perverting America."

Despite our best efforts to show there was a pattern to killing civilians and other atrocities by US forces in Vietnam, vets who spoke out about their experiences were appalled by the scant national news media coverage.

Yet as Andrew E. Hunt astutely noted in *The Turning: A History of Vietnam Veterans Against the War*: "Despite poor publicity, the Winter Soldier Investigation was successful in other respects. On a personal level, the hearings became a therapeutic event for many veterans... In addition to the hundred witnesses who testified, as many as five hundred Vietnam veterans met in the hallways and rooms of the motel to discuss VVAW's future."

A deeply etched memory all these decades later: A crowd of furious vets in a jam-packed conference room at Howard Johnson's, denouncing the news media and wrangling about what to do next. John Kerry spoke out like a bullhorn and urged us to march on Washington and take this to Congress.

Mike McKusker, a former



Jan Barry speaking at the Winter Soldier Investigation, Detroit, Michigan, February 1971 - photo by Sheldon Ramsdell.

Marine war correspondent, suggested calling the march on Washington "Dewey Canyon III," a sarcastic reference to an incursion of Laos by South Vietnamese troops as the Winter Soldier Investigation got underway, curiously called Dewey Canyon II, and a previously secret incursion into Laos by a Marine unit, called Operation Dewey Canyon, that vets testified about in Detroit.

In April, a couple thousand vets marched past the White House and set up camp on the Mall in Washington, DC under the banner of Dewey Canyon III. It was quite different from the first anti-war march I went to in Washington in October 1967. In those days, peace demonstrators were confronted by troops with rifles and bayonets. In 1971, VVAW activists found that police were reluctant to arrest this array of aggrieved war veterans. Indeed, when the US Supreme Court ruled that the VVAW encampment on the Mall was illegal, the US Park Police declined to arrest us.

Indeed, it took a defiant demonstration on the steps of the Supreme Court—demanding a ruling on the constitutionality of the war in Vietnam—to provoke the authorities to arrest 110 vets for obstructing and impeding justice. A judge later reduced the charges to disorderly conduct and released the arrestees on a 10-dollar bond.

Groups of vets fanned out and lobbied members of Congress in their offices and committee hearings. Many were rebuffed by their representatives, who lectured combat vets about the conduct of the war. My own Congressman, John Rooney (D-Brooklyn, NY) tried to bully a small delegation of vets. "I know where you stand and you know where I stand. We're on opposite sides," he shouted.

Others in Congress were supportive. A transcript of the Winter Soldier Investigation testimony was read into the Congressional Record by Senator Mark Hatfield (R-Oregon). Senator George McGovern (D-South Dakota) and others called for a congressional investigation of the war crimes charges.

John Kerry gave an electrifying speech to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee about our concerns, including war crimes, the war's death toll, the sometimes terrible care in VA hospitals, and our conviction that our troops should come home and the war should end. That he later built a distinguished political career after denouncing a once popular war was amazing.

The last day of Dewey Canyon III was beyond anything I could have

imagined when VVAW was launched: Hundreds of jungle uniform-clad vets lined up and threw war medals over a crowd control fence in front of the Capitol building. Some were silent and grim as death. Others shouted to the news cameras: "Here's my merit badges for murder... I'm prouder today of the service I have given my country than at any time I was over there... I'd like to say just one thing for the people of Vietnam. I'm sorry. I hope that someday I can return to Vietnam and help rebuild that country we tore apart."

That week in Washington got the attention of Congress and the Nixon Administration, which destroyed itself trying to quash VVAW. (But that's another story.) Dewey Canyon III got daily national and international news media coverage. And an essay I wrote on Vietnam vets protesting the war appeared in *The New York Times*.

Clutching a treasured copy of *The Times*, I rushed from the dismantling of the encampment on the Mall to catch a shuttle flight to New York, wearing the grungy fatigues I wore all week, to appear on the Friday night *Dick Cavett Show*.

And with that, it was time to wrap up four years of often frustrating activism, to move aside for fresh, excellent leadership of VVAW and return to my previous life as a journalist. After a short stint in television, that transition led to an extensive career writing for newspapers, including an in-depth investigation of Agent Orange health issues, editing and writing books and poetry.

VVAW activism, I found, taught me how to network with people willing to share hard to find facts and how to effectively tell a true war story and other news. I learned a great many things in VVAW from fellow vets and supporters. And over the years, I came to repeatedly appreciate that among VVAW's best legacies were the lifetime friendships forged among men and women who protested together back in the day.



JAN BARRY IS A POET, ARTIST, AUTHOR AND EDITOR OF MORE THAN A DOZEN BOOKS OF POETRY, PROSE AND PHOTOGRAPHY, INCLUDING (WITH LARRY ROTTMANN AND BASIL T. PAQUET) *WINNING HEARTS & MINDS: WAR POEMS BY VIETNAM VETERANS*. A COFOUNDER OF VVAW, HE RESIGNED FROM THE US MILITARY ACADEMY AFTER AN ARMY TOUR IN VIETNAM. CURRENTLY, HE WRITES AND TEACHES ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND COORDINATES WARRIOR WRITERS PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS AND FAMILY MEMBERS IN NEW JERSEY.



Jan Barry at the Winter Soldier Investigation.

Memories of the Winter Soldier Investigation

BARRY ROMO AS TOLD TO JEFF MACHOTA

Interview with Barry Romo conducted by Jeff Machota on March 6, 2021.

*JM: Jeff Machota - Interviewer
BR: Barry Romo*

JM: So, as 1971 started, where were you living? What was your role in the anti-war movement and VVAW at that point? So, January of 71.

BR: I was just a member of the local anti-war group, which was at our community college. We had a ton of people. I was doing GI anti-war work by working and helping provide security for the GI projects in San Diego and LA. In San Bernardino, we had three projects, one at Twentynine Palms, one at Norton Air Force Base, and one at March Air Force Base, which was a B-52 base.

JM: So, you were not affiliated with VVAW at this point; this was organic anti-war stuff that had formed in that area?

BR: Right, and 90% of males were Vietnam vets, in fact. Everything from Marines, Army and Air Force. I can't remember having a Navy vet.

It was when Kent State happened. I became anti-war. Kent State and Cambodia invasion both. I went to see where the anti-war movement was after giving a tiny speech at an anti-draft rally. People said I should go to the campus newspaper office. It was just full of people, who were vets. Only one was a German vet.

We were also working on the George Jackson defense committee, before he was murdered. It was called the Soledad Brothers. We were working on various Panther support stuff as well.

JM: Were you aware of VVAW as a national organization at that point?

BR: No. What happened was, at the beginning of 1971, people came and told me there was going to be a war crimes tribunal, in Detroit, by Vietnam Vets Against the War, to expose the racist and whatever nature of the War. They said I should go because I had talked about some of the stuff we had done and stuff I had witnessed. I got in contact with VVAW. They gave me a free plane ticket to Detroit. I got picked up, I think not by VVAW people, but by anti-war labor people who were auto workers. They were multinational, Black and White. That impressed me.

Then, I got interviewed.

That was my first time in Detroit.

JM: Did you testify at Winter Soldier?

BR: I testified and I chaired the Americal Division. That was people in the 196th and 11th Brigade.

JM: You didn't testify on that panel, you testified on a different panel?

BR: No, I testified. We had a spontaneous revolt by the Third World people. Of course, we didn't know what PTSD was, then. They were only talking about war crimes, horrible things.

And so, Scott Shimabukuro and the other Asian vet from LA, who were Marines and a Black guy from the Revolutionary Workers Congress, I think; told me that they were going to have another panel and I should come and represent the Chicano point of view.

JM: So, at that point, those people were just in attendance, they weren't actually on any panels.

BR: Oh no! They were on panels, but the panels were all by unit. On those panels, they mostly talked about individual war crimes, not about institutional racism or institutional torture, murder, and rape. So, the Third World guys demanded and held a panel. The testimony you see in the Winter Soldier film, that was all from the Racism panel, which was spontaneous. We were afraid people were going to kill themselves.

JM: So you were in kind of a spontaneous uprising against the framework that the VVAW at that time had set up for the event?

BR: Yes.

JM: So, you chaired the Americal panel and you testified on the Third World panel. Did you testify at a different one at all?

BR: That was it. We were the very last panel. So you can imagine three days of insanity.

JM: The Americal was the last one, or the Third World?

BR: The Americal. The Third World panel was in between.

JM: So, any moments that stand out from the panels that you were on?

BR: Of course, Evan Haney and the AIM perspective; that killed everybody, including Black or Asian or Chicano or White, anybody. I mean

everyone cried when Haney started talking.

Because it [the panel] was supposed to go after institutional racism and lies and stuff and institutional torture of people. He talked about the history of the US with Native Americans. He compared Westmoreland with Custer. How they promised many things, which they never kept, talking about the US government. The thing they kept was the promise that we [Native Americans] could keep our land until the rivers shall flow and the crops shall grow. Now the one thing they do keep; cause the rivers aren't flowing and the crops aren't growing.

JM: And so the audience was completely enraptured by all this?

BR: Right. And the other people! I think Earl Rose talked about; he said "you know I'm going to Vietnam and I'm killing people. I'm looking at the Vietnamese and I'm calling them gooks and I'm thinking that's the same thing; I'm called a nigger in the US. That's the same thing that I was doing with the Vietnamese." Then he brought up institutional Racism.

JM: It looks like the moderator was Donald P. Williams. The participants were Scott Shimabukuro, Barry Romo, Evan Haney, Earl Rose, Alan Akers, Charles N. Stephens, William Light, Orville Carey, Larry Brooks, and Murphy Lloyd. That's a pretty big panel.

BR: Well, I only spoke for only about a couple of minutes. I think I said the problem with Chicanos and Brown

people is cultural and language, which throws in even more institutional Racism and shit.

JM: Any memories on the Americal panel?

BR: I was completely burned out. It was near the end of the whole event.

JM: You all stayed at the hotel that was there, the Howard Johnsons, or whatever?

*BR: No. I think some of the National people stayed there. I stayed at a private, non-vet citizen's, who was a leftie. I ran into her daughter [later]. I was speaking at a private school in Lincoln Park [Chicago], sponsored by a Black teacher. This woman came in and said "you stayed at my house in Detroit." This is like three years ago. She had a copy of one of the *Winter Soldier's* with the poster on the back. She said that "we stayed in contact with you guys for a while." She brought the poster over to prove she wasn't lying.*

Right after Winter Soldier, we went to Canada to meet with Vietnamese. Nixon said "if you want to be in NATO, you can't let these VietCong in." We were supposed to meet them.

We drove up. I couldn't go in, after three days of reminiscing about slaughtering the Vietnamese and stuff. The guy who drove us was a vet who testified. He said he wasn't going to go in either. So, we sat in the car the whole time. I said "there will come a time when I can." It was the Vietnamese Student Association, in Canada, which was anti-war. There were just tons of students there.

JM: PTSD wasn't really acknowledged as a thing yet at that point. Did VVAW have any mechanisms to help people out who were testifying?

BR: No. You look at how much better IVAW did by having the decompression stuff [at WSI II in 2008].

JM: What happened next?

BR: I go home. I hang out with all the people at Valley [the junior college], and the anti-war people. I got a call asking me to become California Coordinator of VVAW.

Further recollections of 1971 to be continued in the Fall 2021 issue of The Veteran.



BARRY ROMO IS A LONG-TIME LEADER OF VVAW. JEFF MACHOTA IS A MEMBER OF VVAW'S NATIONAL STAFF.



(from left to right) Scott Shimabukuro, Barry Romo, Evan Haney, and Earl Rose testifying on the Third World Panel at VVAW's Winter Soldier Investigation, Detroit, Michigan, 1971.



The Third World Panel at VVAW's Winter Soldier Investigation, Detroit, Michigan, 1971.

50 Years Ago

JOHN LINDQUIST

As I sit at the kitchen table and think back 50 years to the time period of April-December 1971, I'm flooded with memories and pride. Dewey Canyon III (DC III), April 19-23, 1971, Operation Heart of America, Kansas City, MO July 4th weekend and Operation Peace on Earth, Christmas Time 1971, flood my brain, or what is left of it.

In April 1971, I was released from jail in LA and could not wait to leave for Milwaukee. Ann Bailey and I rode back with another couple to Milwaukee and, luck for us, to a VVAW fundraiser at UWM. The Milwaukee Chapter was leaving the next day for DC, in a convoy of three or four cars. Buzz Noyes (RIP) and I had not seen one another since July 1970.

We were in the same company in Vietnam in the USMC. It was a great reunion. I will not rehash all the events, but will recall some memories.

The car convoy was long and luckily uneventful. On our first action, a march from Potomac Park to Arlington Cemetery, we had such high hopes. But the authorities locked us out. "Let's march to the Capitol Building", and we did. The distance now blows my mind. I remember being shunned as we marched past the headquarters of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

What I marvel at was our principle of Non-Violence. We were not trained this way. But tactically we knew it was our best weapon. As I looked at the scene in our capital, in January 2021, from the Trump mob, I knew we did the right thing.

How did we eat at DC III? We were fed by a hippy collective. It was good and it had a lot of rice. I respect people who cook for big groups. Beginning in 1971, I started to cook for VVAW with lots of help.

Women at the demo were few and far between. I remember Ann Bailey, Annie Luginbill, Ann Hirshman, and John Kerry's wife. A large group of Gold Star Mothers honored us with their presence. Also included were some hippy ladies in the food collective.

On day one, I ran into Bill Hatton, who was in the Minnesota chapter; the "Home Front Snipers" as they called themselves. We were in Vietnam together and had last seen one another in November 1968 at Dong Ha.

The demonstration numbers were big enough to split our forces. Big groups went to do guerilla-theater to educate people on the true nature of the war in Vietnam. We even had plastic M-16s. Others went to lobby Congress and we all went on marches. We returned to Arlington Cemetery to lay a wreath. We marched to the White House. Some of the Vets got arrested at the steps of the Supreme Court. Some vets even turned themselves in

for war crimes, but were not arrested. There was never a dull moment, plus it did not rain!

Walking the halls of Congress, lobbying for the Bill to end the funding for the War was exciting. The presence of Veterans in fatigues always had a big effect. Try to find some Vietnam War Camo fatigues now; good luck.

I was lucky to be in the room when the testimony in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was happening. John Kerry's speech was very moving, to say the least. I remember the Congress members who came to see us and support us on the Mall. Bella Abzug from New York even let us who were on parole or probation sleep on the floor in her office the night we voted to override the Supreme Court's order for us to leave the Mall. The headline the next morning on the Washington papers was, "Vets Override the Supreme Court." Later, we learned that the Bonus Army, 1932, camped on the same block. We were part of Veterans' history. From the Whiskey Rebellion in 1791 to Dewey Canyon IV in 1982. For good reading and pictures, look up the *New Soldier*- 1971 by VVAW, printed by Macmillan Company (Library of Congress number 76-171990).

On April 23, our last day, we returned our medals, ribbons, discharge papers, even canes and so on. What a day! Overnight, they put up a wood and wire fence surrounding the US Capitol. It blew our minds. But there was no violence. We just left a three foot high pile of these items on the other side of the fence. It took two and a half hours for all of us to pass by that day.

The next day, April 24, was the largest anti-war demo of the Vietnam War and we were asked to lead it. We did!

Operation Heart of America July 4th weekend 1971 Kansas City, MO

It was organized by the Kansas/Missouri chapter of VVAW. We had met John Upton (RIP), and John "Gunny" Musgrave at DC III. Six of us from Milwaukee drove down in "Hell's Fury" an old Dodge that had a bad front end shake. We camped at the American Legion WWI Memorial Park. We did guerilla theater in the parks and John Musgrave had a bull-horn which he used to explain what really happened in Vietnam.

If you saw the Ken Burns Vietnam War, 10 part series on PBS, you saw John Musgrave in at least two episodes. He was badly wounded with the 3rd Marine Division at Con Thien in 1967. We also had a big march on the last day. As we passed the VFW headquarters, they turned their big neon sign off. There were about 150 of us. I got to cook and it rained really



VVAW and Gold Star Mothers at Arlington National Cemetery, April 1971.

hard Saturday night.

We really miss Johnny Upton. But I'm glad the "Gunny" is still with us, even though he has gotten a haircut. I got one finally in 2010.

Operation Peace on Earth December 1971

If I remember correctly, it was held in New York City, Chicago, Killeen, Texas and San Francisco. It was timed at the same time VVAW member Barry Romo went to Hanoi with the peace delegation.

Chicago's demonstration base camp was at the IWW Hall on the North Side. I seem to remember over 100 of us. We slept on the floor and I cooked on a hot plate; oatmeal, tuna casserole, and what I called fish gunk (rice, vegetables). We held marches and went to the Chicago Cathedral on Christmas Eve. For some reason, we were going to burn a Christmas tree in protest. The Police had an informer in our group, so the tree was impounded by the cops and put in protective custody. I'm not kidding! Buzz and I met another vet that was in our battalion at Dong Ha—Jess Jespersion (RIP).

We were very proud of New

York when they occupied the Statue of Liberty and flew an upside down American flag from her crown. We did a lot of nonviolent actions throughout the years. We were good at it.

The Vietnam War ended in 1975. The US Navy even visits the country now. PTSD is recognized and there are Vets Centers across the country. The VA now recognizes twelve Agent Orange related disabilities, not just chloracne.

When I received successful treatment at the Milwaukee VA hospital for prostate cancer in 2019, I rated an automatic 100% disability rating because it is one of the twelve conditions recognized as caused by the defoliant. My disability decision took 65 days, not 650 days.

You now have your own assigned Dr. and Nurse. PTSD treatment is in groups or one on one. I now love the VA. I guess VVAW's "War on the VA" worked! It took a while, but I'm a proud old VVAW member.



JOHN LINDQUIST IS A LONG-TIME VVAW MEMBER FROM MILWAUKEE, NOW LIVING IN ENGLAND.



VVAW members inside the Statue of Liberty, December 1971.



VVAW's Operation Heart of America, July 1971.

Dewey Canyon III: A Limited Incursion into the Country of Congress

AS TOLD TO RICHARD STACEWICZ

Excerpt from Winter Soldiers: An Oral History of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War by Richard Stacewicz, pages 241-249.

Interviewed are Barry Romo, Jan Barry, Bill Branson, Sheldon Ransdell, and Terry DuBose.

Vietnam veterans, dissatisfied with the lack of press coverage received by the winter soldier hearings, decided to take their stories directly to Congress. On April 18, 1971, 1,500 anti-war veterans and their supporters converged on Washington, DC, to engage in four days of protest. The following narratives describe how veterans organized the event, what they hoped to accomplish, and how they were received by their representatives and the press.

Barry Romo (BR): After Winter Soldier, I was asked if I wanted to be the organizer on the west coast. [I] came back, and they called me up and said, "We're building up this demonstration, this march on Washington; we'll pay your way out to New York." [I] flew out to New York.

[We] fought for three days [in February of 1971]. We hammered out a basis of unity for a national organization, which was really ultra-left for the time. There was infighting over what we were going to do at the demonstration. We came up there with the idea of throwing our medals away. We came up with all the stuff we were going to do ahead of time.

[I] remember there was an argument for hours on what we were going to call the demonstration. As a joke, I told people, "Fuck it. Call it Dewey Canyon III. Why? Dewey Canyon I was a secret invasion of Laos, Dewey Canyon II was whatever, and Dewey Canyon III is the vets' invasion of Washington." And people said, "Hey, that's funny." It was an offhand joke. You know how you sit around a meeting drinking coffee, people have drunk too much, cigarette smoke, 50 people, 50 very powerful views, and getting tired and making an offhand joke. And then, "We'll use it." People got into it. By saying Dewey Canyon, we can expose that we had a secret invasion: Dewey Canyon I. That's cool. let's do it.

Jan Barry (JB): We went from being a handful of people to doing a demonstration on the Mall in Washington that was better organized than we probably organized things in the military. For Washington in particular, there were working committees. It was a huge enterprise to do. There had to be fundraising done. There was a fund-raising committee. We went to Boston one time with John Kerry and a couple of other people to talk to somebody like Marty Peretz, who now owns the *New Republic*. I

don't know whether he contributed or not, but we were talking to people of this caliber who put the money up for this to take place.

According to an FBI memorandum from the Washington office dated April 13, 1971, "VVAW had received fifty thousand dollars from United States Senators McGovern and Hatfield, who. . . obtained the money from an unknown New York source." Although VVAW did receive this relatively large infusion of cash, its resources were limited and were spent predominantly on advertising the event.

JB: This guy [Kerry] was born to this. His family is part of that whole circle. I had no insight, even into this life, but I didn't put it down, while other people are saying, "Why do we have people like this in VVAW?" There were these class resentments. A lot of guys were enlisted people. "Why do we have officers being prominent?" One of the things I could get away with was, I never became an officer. I told West Point what they could do with that. Enlisted people appreciate that.

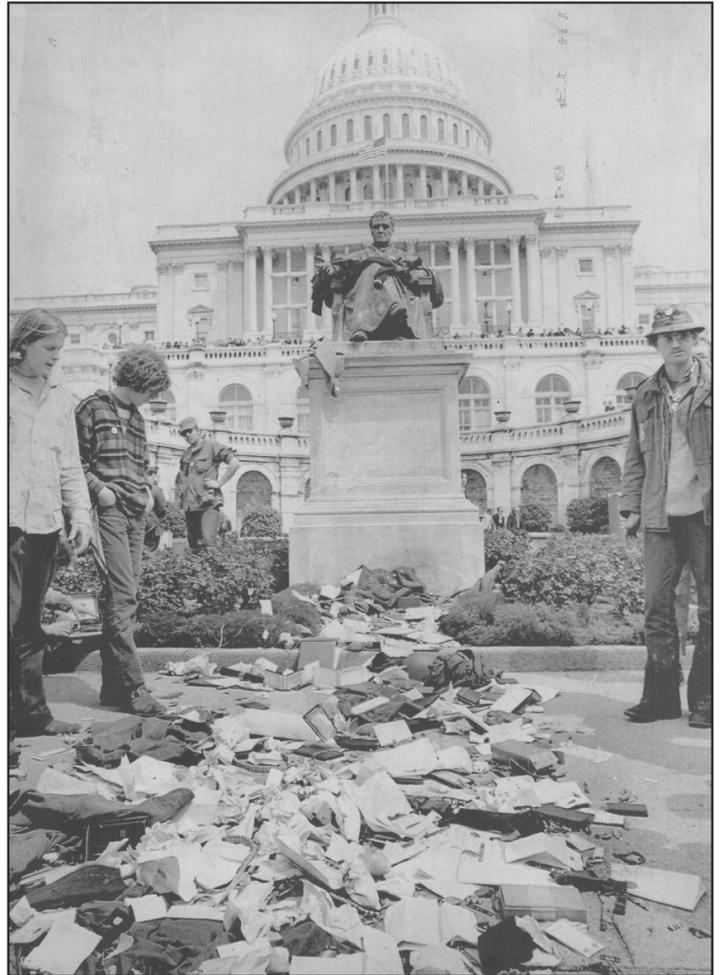
When we got to Dewey Canyon, the very first night—like a Sunday night—I got down to Washington. There were people pulling in and there was like a staging area, and some small group of people arrived from California and said something really rude and curt to me. I had no idea why they were saying that.

BR: [We] went to Washington. The national office of the headquarters where we were all coming into the first night's camp for Dewey Canyon III had a flag flying. This was like the night before we started. It was like an assembly area. We refused to register until they took the flag down. We then got the reputation as the radicals of the organization, but then a lot of people agreed with us.

Bill Branson (BB): We went to Washington—the big problem there is, we didn't have enough money to send all the people coming from California. They dicked around at the national headquarters, and we could have rented buses for all the money we spent. We could only send a few. I got to go because I had done a lot of organizing. It was my first big action.

We were incredibly militant. We figured if we were going to go all the way out there to Washington, to the belly of the beast, we were going to kick some ass. And we did. The leadership of the VVAW at the time. . . were from a different strata of society, like Kerry and those guys. They convinced a few people like Hubbard and others to take a conservative light on what we should do, like just basically be there and bear witness or some stupid thing. The vets who came were not in that mood.

We didn't want to tear the place apart, but we definitely wanted to



Pile of returned medals at the end of Dewey Canyon III.

make an impression. We were not there to do anything halfway. As we got together in bigger and bigger groups, we became more and more militant. The service had taught us: When you're with your comrades, you just fit right in.

When we got there, it seemed pretty damned organized. People picked us up and we got a van ride in there. At first we were on the Anacostia Flats. We weren't on the Mall. We started camping there.

We started a struggle immediately. When we got there—we were one of the first groups—there was this fucking garrison flag flying over the place, and we made them take it down. We got into quite a bit of face-to-face struggles over that, and we almost got into fights. But we weren't going to go that far. We definitely made them take that fucking flag down.

JB: We had the first mass meeting on Monday evening. Things were a little chaotic and hadn't come together as they had been organized, and everybody was milling around. We started this meeting and I started speaking. Somebody started hollering and screaming and saying nasty and rude things from the audience. Clearly this was organized to try to drown me out. I could see that there was some kind of organized business going on to try to discredit me and Hubbard and then right down the line, whoever appeared to be the leader of the moment.

So I figured the easiest tactic was to turn the meeting over to somebody else, which is what I did. I got up and sat down right in the middle of these people. The other person I left the

meeting to was a little flustered, but I knew that people could pick up on this.

Some members in the Washington action wanted to move the encampment from the Anacostia Flats, relatively far from the seats of political power, to the Mall, directly in the center of the political establishment.

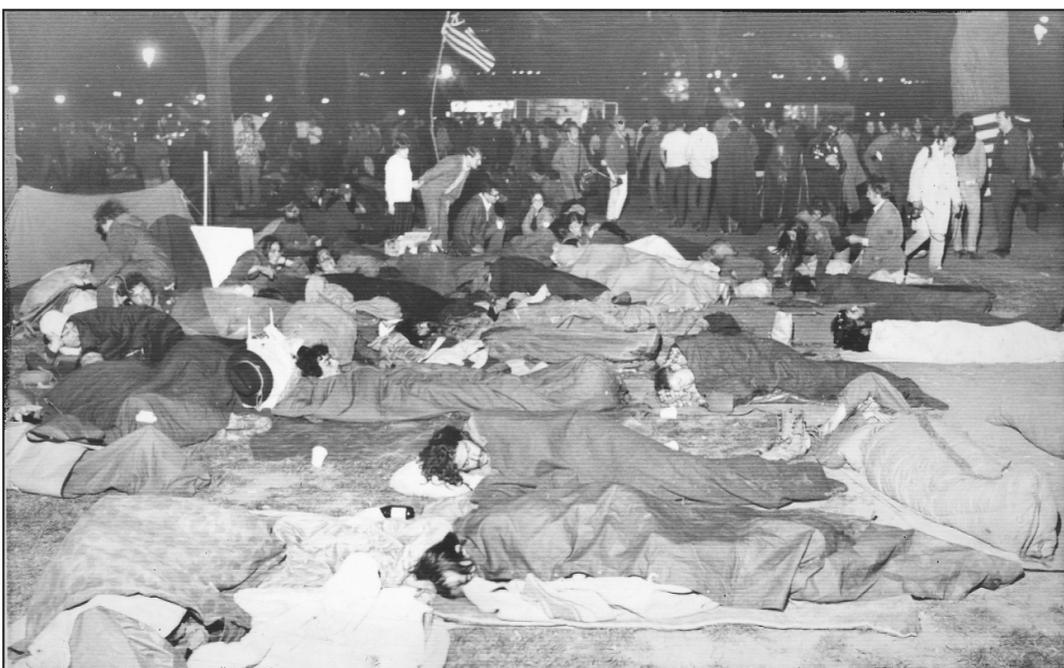
BB: We were supposed to be making the decision on whether we were going to fucking take over the Mall. Barry and some people were running around dragging people to this meeting where all this was being decided. There we are at this historic meeting. It turned out to be a heavy debate whether we should just go for it and whether the cops would attack us. Barry was arguing and others were arguing, "Fuck this, we're not staying here."

People had been talking about what we were going to do. There were original plans on what we were supposed to do. I don't remember what all they were, but it didn't involve taking over the Mall. It was mostly like a lobbying thing and stuff. People said, "Fuck this. We don't mind lobbying, but we're not going to sit down here near where the World War I vets were fucking slaughtered and have them do what they want to us on the side." It wasn't spontaneous; it was a decision that was made.

The next morning we took all our shit and packed it up and threw it on the trucks. We all got into this giant march. All these veterans staggered onto the road and marched up Pennsylvania Avenue. We had banners and stuff. People worked on banners all night. It was just buzz, buzz, buzz; no one got any fucking sleep. People got wired on the incredible amount of energy, pulsing energy, to the point of being manic.

It wasn't too hard to tell what we were all about. We marched up Pennsylvania Avenue and people came out everywhere. Buildings emptied; all the windows went up. I looked up and there were people everywhere. There were lots and lots of tourists there, and they were fucking cheering. We had people running out shaking hands. I had never seen a march like this.

There were cops along the sides of the street, but they stayed away from us. I can guarantee you, if they had attacked us then, there would have been guerrilla warfare in the streets. They knew better, which was good.



VVAW sleeping on the Mall during Dewey Canyon III.

continued on page 13

Dewey Canyon III

continued from page 12

They wouldn't have been able to stop us. Guys were not going to put up with a lot of shit.

What was the point of going to the Mall?

BB: I was for anything that was going to kick ass. I really didn't care what it was. I wasn't going to set anything on fire. Short of that, I was there to make an impression. I felt like Washington was full of assholes that sent us there and I was prepared to spit in their eye, amongst other things. I didn't have a highly developed line on propaganda, but all of us instinctively knew that we were in a historical situation. We talked about it a lot. We were there to do as much as we could. We weren't going to be told to be good boys and go home.

Was the discussion the night before causing tension between the national office and different people around the country, or was it pretty much consensus and everyone agreed after the decision and every one went along with it?

BB: I think as it became apparent that it was the right thing to do, they went along with it. They couldn't have done otherwise.

There was a definite force from the national to tone things down. Constantly. In fact, they tried to gather all our plastic guns and we said, "No, you're not." "Oh, no, you're going to get us shot at." "No, we're not. If they shoot at us, the world won't end tomorrow."

They were trying to get us to be conservative, and it just wasn't getting over. Your average guys there felt like they had been shafted. All those people had already had a chance to be fucked by the conservative people who were still in charge of society here that treated us as outcasts and shit. They had no jobs. We felt an intense kinship with the people still in Vietnam. We felt the war was wrong and it was going to go on forever if we didn't do something about it ourselves. It was time for us to make a statement. We made it in our typical fashion. We tended to be almost instinctively organized in everything that we did. We didn't take any shit, and we were smart in almost everything that we did. We were not conservative, so we got in arguments constantly with the leadership. I think almost immediately, as we started pouring in, they got scared.

I think they were afraid of us. I remember getting in a shouting match with Hubbard. He's telling us a lot of bullshit—that if you act this way you're going to get thrown out. We're telling him, "Fuck you, you're a jerk-off, why the fuck won't you talk to us like human beings, we're not fucking kids, we're part of this thing, you ain't shit, and who elected you anyway?"

JB: I stayed pretty much on the site. I went with Kerry on one occasion to the State Department. We gave a briefing to State Department people in a briefing room. It blew my mind.

They wanted to know why we were there! We had a list of demands that I read on the steps of Congress which in essence became a legislative model for several different things that were proposed in the following years, pointed toward the VA and various other directions.

Then it was like getting us through a week in which a lot of improvising went on. Something came up, like they refused to allow the group into the cemetery the first day. I had nothing to do with the decision that was made. Somebody, whatever number it was, decided that the solution was to go to the Pentagon and offer to turn themselves in as war criminals, which blew the Pentagon's mind. "What do we do with these people? We'd better let them into the cemetery."

BB: A bunch of guys from California went down to the Pentagon and tried to turn in a bunch of guys as war criminals. We took over everything—the Lincoln Memorial, the Rotunda—we walked in the streets. Nobody stopped us.

JB: When Nixon was quoted as saying he didn't think these were real Vietnam veterans, one group decided they were going to go parade at night around the White House with the flag upside down. It was tremendously dramatic.

Sheldon Ramsdell (SR): Ron Ziegler had said, from Nixon, that this was just a bunch of hippies. A woman came down to the Mall from the *AP* or *UPI*, [and] collected nearly 1,000 combat cards—you know, military service cards (DD-214s). She put that in the paper the next day. Nixon was totally discredited.

Terry DuBose (TDB): It was exhilarating. Incredible camaraderie. They had these tables with food laid out from people in the community. You could have anything you wanted. We all wore our fatigues, and if you went out on the curb and stuck your thumb out, a taxi would pick you up and take you where you wanted to go for free. They were all sympathetic.

Did you lobby?

BR: We lobbied; all of us lobbied. I didn't believe in lobbying at this point. I thought they [elected officials] were all scum. They would only move when we forced them to move. But we were going to lobby, so we went lobbying. We went and saw our congressmen and stuff. We decided lobbying just wasn't enough. It just wasn't dramatic enough.

We got up one morning and sat in at the Supreme Court. That wasn't planned. Some of the national people got mad: Mike Oliver, Jan Barry, Scott Moore, and Al Hubbard said, "You're going to ruin the demonstration by doing this." We said, "No, we're not." We got arrested and it made great news. Rather than be a detriment, it was good. The media loved it.

Why do these kinds of media-



Dewey Canyon III, April 1971.

grabbing events?

BR: They [the American public] saw the war on TV. They had to see us on TV. People's experience was not being in a rice paddy, but watching someone in a rice paddy. We had to interrupt their seeing war on TV with their seeing veterans demonstrating against the war on TV. We had to fucking interfere with their fucking lines of thoughts, and that was the only way to do it. We know, and they don't. We're telling you that what you see on TV is not it. It's part of it, but it's not it, and it's wrong and you've got to bring people home.

After the veterans decided to move their encampment, Justice Warren Burger upheld an order by the Justice Department that they were to be removed from the Mall at night. They were told that they would not be allowed to sleep in the park at night; it was illegal. One of the most critical debates among veterans took place as a result of this ruling.

BR: We came back [from the Supreme Court], and the Department of Justice said we can't go to sleep in the park. I think it was Mike Oliver [who] got up and made a speech: "We won't sleep; we won't break the law. We're going to stay here and demonstrate till the end of the week; we'll take speed to stay awake so they can't arrest us; we'll stay awake for the next three days." One of the guys, Sam Schorr from California, got up, and he said, "These guys are crazy. One, no one told us where we could sleep in Vietnam. Two, ain't nobody going to tell us as Vietnam vets that we can't sleep in our park. Fuck them. We are going to sleep in the park. If they're going to arrest us, they'll arrest us. We're not going to take drugs, drugs are destroying the country." People went back and had heartfelt discussions, and we won the vote. The overwhelming majority of people who lost the vote

stayed, even though they didn't want to get arrested.

JB: It was a huge discussion. It was a close vote, which everybody had sort of pushed aside. It was like 480 to 400 [to stay]. I had a telephone line to the outside so I could call and say, "We're now being arrested. It was a special line that had been put in so they could round up all the lawyers and the rest of it. I'm sitting there on a camp stool, and I think it's Urgo that came up and said, "Well, what are you going to do if they [the park police] come in?" I said, "I'm just going to stay."

I was torn. I was always a very conservative person when it came to tweaking the nose of the law. I saw no purpose in spending any time in jail whatsoever. I thought it was lost time, number one. Civil disobedience was a tactic to me and not a lifestyle. For a lot of people, it was their life. You do this and to hell with whether or not you accomplish anything, but you feel good. I wanted to know what we were accomplishing. I mean, what's the purpose of going to jail?

We [also] have a right to be here on this place, camping. They can't just arbitrarily take this right away from us. But there was this debate, which Kerry and Hubbard led, where people stood up in the crowd and argued this and that side of it, and then they voted. It was real democracy in action. It was astounding. Once the vote went 480 to stay, then the consensus was: Well, if you're staying, then I'm staying.

BR: We got our sleeping bags out, supremely confident that we were going to get arrested, smiles on our faces. [We] got into our sleeping bags—we hadn't been sleeping in them before—got in them because, by God, we were going to sleep there.

I remember Ron Dellums came to our delegation because he was a California congressman; [he] wore his medals. Ron Dellums stayed with our contingent overnight and said that if they arrest you, they're arresting me. They're not arresting me as a congressman but as a veteran. We loved the man. No publicity here. "I'm here, I go to jail with you."

JB: Edward Kennedy was there most of that night in a tent talking with veterans. You never knew who you were going to run into. I turn around and bump into somebody who's a member of Congress.

BR: We're in the bags; the park police start walking through and they looked down at us. This lieutenant or captain, this old chubby white guy, looks down at us and goes, "I don't see anybody sleeping. [Laughs.] Nobody



Dewey Canyon III, April 1971.

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Dewey Canyon III

continued from page 13

sleeping here. You guys don't have to worry about nothing because we don't see anything and we're not going to do anything." So we all laughed. And Dellums stayed until about two in the morning and said, "Well, they aren't going to bust, so I'm going to go home." We said that's all right. He was there.

We got up in the morning and we beat them. That made it "Vets Overrule the Supreme Court." It was a crisis in the national government, with Burger convinced that this was a communist march on Washington. He was the one that ordered us to be arrested on the Supreme Court steps, and the other justices are going, "What are you doing?" If you read *The Brethren* [by Bob Woodward and Scott Armstrong, 1979], you read how all the other Supreme Court justices think Burger has gone butt-fuck. This guy was having flashbacks to: MacArthur was right when he killed the Bonus Marchers. He wanted us killed and driven out of the city. He thought that was so just.

Despite the efforts by the Nixon administration to have the veterans evicted from the Mall—with which the Supreme Court had cooperated—John Dean sent out a directive ordering the park police not to arrest veterans. At this point, Nixon's aides did not want a confrontation that would arouse public sympathy for the veterans, who had been receiving a great deal of media attention. The veterans, however, did not know of this directive.

JB: The original intent of the Friday (event) was to take all the medals and throw them into a body bag and to take the body bag to the Capitol. People got mad because they put this fence across the steps of Congress. "What are they putting this up for? It's fencing us out." So on the spot, there was this mumbling and grumbling, and someone said, "Let's throw the medals over the goddamned fence."

BR: Getting ready to throw our medals away, [there] was a fight with Kerry. Kerry wanted us to put them in a body bag. [Kerry argued] that it would be disrespectful to throw them away; people wouldn't understand. That was the only fight I ever remember having with Kerry. I said, "Fuck you. God damn it, we decided this months before; at every point you want to change shit. The only way we're

going to wake the public up is to do dramatic events, and we got these medals. . . We're making a statement that they can't ignore," and stuff like that. People handily decided to throw their medals away. I don't think Kerry did. Then we went and lined up and just threw the medals away. [It was] one of the heaviest things.

On April 23, 1971, about 700 veterans and their supporters gathered outside the fence erected by the Nixon administration at the west steps of the Capitol. They lined up, approached the fence one by one, and announced their names and ranks and the awards they had received while serving their country. They then threw their medals over the fence—back to those who had conferred these honors on them.

JB: After we had really reached a peak, we heard there were also soldiers on active duty ready to be sent in to do whatever they were ordered to do, as in the 1932 march. There was a big story in the Washington papers, recalling all those events in which they turned soldiers on their own companions of World War I. One of those evenings, this young guy arrives in the middle of the camp and says, "I'm from the 82nd Airborne" or something. He said, "They order us to come in here, we're not coming. You guys are our only

hope that we don't have to get sent to Vietnam, or back to Vietnam." We got pieces of that kind of information all week long, plus this overwhelming support of people just coming with food, and money, and donations.

It [Dewey Canyon III] was overwhelmingly successful in several different ways. We had the five o'clock follies, which was our take on press conferences in Vietnam. These news media people lapped this all up, because we did this parody of a military news conference. One of those evenings, at five o'clock, this guy comes over to me, hands me this thing, and he says, "This is what Walter Cronkite is going to be reading tonight at six o'clock." It was very positive and made this a major nationwide and international news story, because the Cronk was it. Cronk says, Take notice of this, America. This was the guy who had written what the Cronk was to read, and he rushed over there to hand it to us. At that point, I knew that the White House had lost the public on this issue.

There was a *Time* magazine retrospective that said this was probably the most memorable or most important demonstration of the peace movement. Everybody had forgotten that that kind of statement was made

about it. But I think that it had that effect because the peace movement by this time was exhausted.

SR: CBS had a truck down there. Cronkite has us on every single night. We had a logo [VVAW insignia] on the back of his head every single night for the rest of that week. It all changed, just like that. Look how far we had to go to get any kind of credibility at all. A reporter from a news service collected our cards, and suddenly we're real. What the hell's been going on all this time? Nobody's been wanting to believe it!

JB: At some point after that, I did get some feedback from a friend of mine who still was in the military as an officer. He said that in the Pentagon, VVAW's demonstration shook the whole place up. Captains and majors were screaming at colonels and generals that they better fucking wake up: "Those veterans out there were right." People who did two or three tours were not going to go back again to save the assholes of these people who screwed it all up. It set off within the military establishment, apparently, this vicious debate.

What impact did Dewey Canyon III have on the organization?

JB: There were groups that came out of this that decided that what they wanted to work on was the legislative aspect of making things happen. Other groups decided what they wanted to work on was the psychological—what became the rap group direction. Other groups decided they wanted to work on community organizing when they went back to where they were going back to. Other people decided that what they were going to do was to go back into the academic world, get that degree that gave you the credentials; and they went and did that. Other people, like John Kerry, decided that politics was where they wanted to go. They went there and they got there.

They turned mainly conservative guys into radicals overnight with the way the government reacted. These guys came here thinking they were going to talk to their congressman and be listened to. That was the original intention. We'd go to Congress and lobby them like everybody else does and get listened to. When they slammed doors in our faces and threatened us everywhere we turned, these guys got radicalized.



Copies of Winter Soldiers can be purchased through Haymarket Books at www.haymarketbooks.org/books/859-winter-soldiers.



Dewey Canyon III, April 1971.

Decades Later

The wounds lay open
Although not seen.
The memories are dead
The pain and agony fed.
The paranoia circulates
Like gonorrhea.
Destroying a momentary peace,
One obsesses with death.

As a result
Of so many wasted;
The window is
Draped in callus.
One is stripped
Of the ability to mourn,
But we're left
With the ability to scorn.

No one is
Allowed to close,
For fear
They will become ghosts.
No matter
How whole the day
One obsesses with riding the ray.

—Daniel E. Rihn



Dewey Canyon III, April 1971.

Recollections: Nearly 50 Years as a Member of VVAW

MIKE WOLOSHIN

It has been nearly 50 years since I joined VVAW. Here is the timeline: I got the "Early Out" from the Navy on March 1, 1971. A week later, the "Citizens' Commission to Investigate the FBI" burglarized the Media, PA. FBI office, during the night of the Ali-Frazier "Fight of the Century," revealing COINTELPRO. It took the 1975-76 Senate Church Committee to reveal the scope of FBI surveillance and suppression of anti-war dissent. The details of the burglary were revealed in Betty Medsger's book *The Burglary: The Discovery of J. Edgar Hoover's Secret FBI* (2014). On June 13, 1971, the *Washington Post* began publication of *The Pentagon Papers*, revealing that the real history of the war, including diplomatic duplicity, from Truman to Nixon, was hidden from the public.

In the months before I got out, I was TAD to AMD (Aircraft Maintenance Division, NAS Cecil Field, FL.) See my *Brainwashing Busts Out at NAS Cecil Field in The Veteran, Fall/Winter 1999*. While

TAD, I received an order to attend an Awards Ceremony at the Base Theater, where my Squadron Division Officer was to be awarded an Air Medal for hitting a truck on the Ho Chi Minh Trail during our recent Westpac Cruise, September 3, 1969-July 1, 1970. I had better use of my time than to watch that obnoxious moron receive a medal, but I had no choice. I thought I saw him later as a pilot for the now defunct Midway Airlines, when I flew to DC a few days before Veterans' Day, 1982 for dedication of the wall.

I used to watch an occasional first run flick at the Base Theater, but after a day of work resented having to stand for the National Anthem before the flick began. As a joke, I began to yell "Play Ball" after the lights went down, before the flick began. The "Flies (Lifers, because they ate shit and bothered people)" ignored it until it began to draw laughs. On occasion, they demanded that whoever yelled (me), step forward and when I didn't, threatened to close the Theater and end the flicks. I suppose that if they had

played the Jimi Hendrix Woodstock rendition, I would have shown some respect.

I did other things to piss off the Flies, such as writing "Free The Chicago Seven," rather than just "Free" on my outgoing mail during the cruise and having a "don't give a shit attitude" about Uncle Sam's Canoe Club, a.k.a the world's second largest nuclear Navy, or the war. Back at Cecil Field, I made a stencil for civilian protesters with the words, "the war" and a five pointed star, thus allowing turning Jacksonville Stop signs into "Stop the War" signs and red topped US Mailboxes into NLF flags.

On becoming a civilian, I spent the first few months stoned and then in the summer, took two courses at Wright College of the City Colleges of Chicago. In September, I enrolled full time, meeting Chris, Danny and a former Air Force Medic, whose name I can't recall, becoming one fourth of the Wright College Chapter of VVAW. We met in empty classrooms as the College wouldn't

recognize us as a campus organization, and when Chris dropped out, the Chapter dissolved. I was inducted into Phi Theta Kappa, the Honors Fraternity of Community Colleges and completed my Associates degree. Then I transferred to the University of Illinois and completed my BA at the end of 1974. Later I completed my Law Degree and worked as an Assistant Public Defender for Cook County until retiring.

I was invited back into VVAW by the late Bill Davis in 1980 and was then saddened to see him pass away September 4, 2007 after the 40th Anniversary, followed by Dave Cline, 10 days later. We had lost our best organizers and leadership. I missed the 50th Anniversary, nearly 4 years ago, but if my health holds out, I hope to be around for the 60th in 2027.



MIKE WOLOSHIN, AMH-2, USN, ATKRON 86, ONBD USS CORAL SEA (CVA-43), VIETNAM (YANKEE STATION) 1969-1970.

From 1971 to Today's VA, My Little Buffet

JIM WOHLGEMUTH

I looked at the assignment on what to write for this coming Memorial day and felt a bit lost. What could I possibly contribute to these topics? So I put down some thoughts about each. I hope this contributes just a little to this wonderful paper that I have looked forward to for years.

Fifty years of VVAW. Well in 1971 I was still in the Navy floating off the coast of the Mekong Delta and Bo De River. I was still watching as we would refuel and rearm attack helicopters and swift boats for their excursions into the countryside, that peaceful countryside. That country side that our captain would periodically throw 5 inch shells into for who knows what strategic or tactical purpose. So I did not know what VVAW was doing. I was out of the loop and unaware. However a couple of years later I heard about VVAW and all the good that you all were doing on so many issues from Agent Orange, to the Wall, to sharing the truth about Vietnam and I sent in my first check. So now it is my turn to just say THANK YOU ALL. Thank you for having the courage and fortitude that I did not. We are such a better country for all that you have done.

Concerning resistance to unlawful orders on my ship, there was none of that. My ship the Westchester County LST 1167 was home ported in Yokosuka and I am thinking because we were not home ported in the states that maybe we were just not as aware of what was going on or maybe I was just asleep at the wheel. I know that I was so upset by the Kent State shootings the year before, that I had written a letter to the editor of my hometown *Butler Eagle* in Butler PA condemning the National Guard. That generated three letters back from residents condemning me and saying the guard should have killed more. I was shocked and dismayed that adults in my home town could think that way and so I asked myself if I was wrong. Years later I realized no, I was not wrong. Those students demonstrating were just trying to bring me and all of us home. As for the rest of my shipmates we all concentrated on how many days until our service would be over. I believe that most of us thought the war was stupid, but there was no real movement to resist. When I got back to the states, in 1972, I started to hear about resistance, of course, I was not brave enough and too consumed with

going back to college, but it was then that I knew that my inner questions, concerns, trauma (moral injury) about what I had just done were shared by thousands of others. I was not crazy.

About the VA. I continue to get the best care and by the time this is printed I will have had both of my Covid vaccine shots. I can, however, relate a disturbing story. I go to the VA in Nashville; I used to get care at Vanderbilt but switched so that I could actually be cared for and cared about. Nevertheless, the doctors I am seeing at the VA are Vanderbilt residents. It is amazing how they change their mindset from the production line service at Vandy to the caring service at the VA. So I had an appointment for a general check up and a shot (they never let me leave without getting some sort of shot) and the resident was wonderful and caring. He said he wanted his supervisor, a VA doctor, to stop by and talk to me. We had a nice conversation and I mentioned how grateful I was with the service provided despite the VA's lack of funding and staff. He mentioned about the mission act and the resources available that should be the way to go. I was shocked and so I countered that my limited experience

at private sector doctors under the mission act was at best disappointing. Then I mentioned that if the VA was privatized where would that young resident go to get the experience and further training he needs to become a great doctor. I do not believe he had heard that argument before because he had no comeback. I mentioned that many VAs are co-located with medical schools and are key to the continuing education of our doctors. What happens if the profit motive takes charge. I said do you really think this resident is here helping me if the VA is privatized. He smiled and said something to the effect of take care of yourself and have a great day as he left. The resident then without saying a word looked at me and smiled.

So there is my buffet of reflections; I hope I contributed just a little. Thanks for sharing the platform.

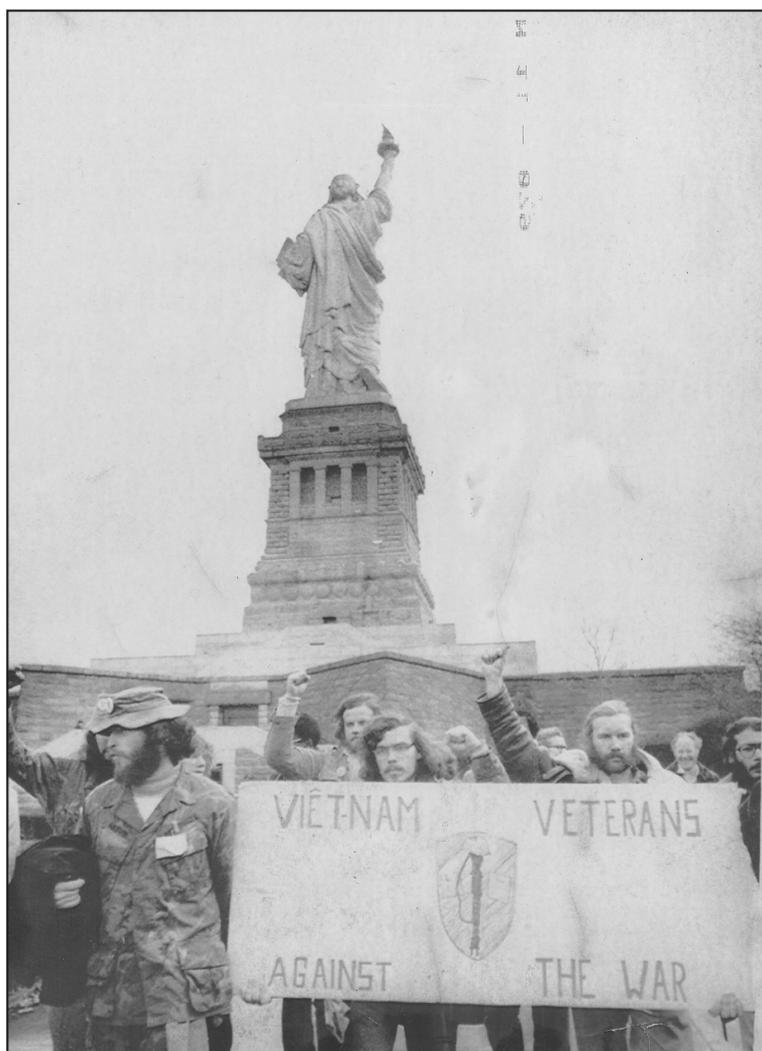


JIM WOHLGEMUTH, USN 68-72. RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEE AND SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER. CO-HOST VETERANS FOR PEACE RADIO HOUR ON WRFN 107.1/103.7 FM/LP, NASHVILLE.

First Week

In monsoon rain we trudge to the wood line
A growling deuce and a half prowling behind.
Past no-man's-land,
Past the comforting sight of sand bag bunkers
We call out, hear the muted password reply.
See them step like deer from the green thicket—
Now, step back, see for yourself the kindness
Of soldiers that I will never forget:
A sweated quartet, one man posted
To each loose limb,
See how gravity tugs at the flung back neck
The jolly flopping head. Drags the sad
Torso down, down. In the beating rain
Two lines form between the dead man—
The purring truck.
In the wordless muck we pass the warm corpse
Hand to hand, as if he were a fire brigade bucket.
Look at him:
Behold foul steam rising from jungle fatigues.
Rain bitten, the large brown eyes, unblinking.
See this handsome man, slender, black
Thrust into the truck, lugged back to base,
His last day in Cambodia.

—Marc Levy



Statue of Liberty takeover, December 1971.

Veterans Day, 1971

PETER P. MAHONEY

I came home from Vietnam in March of 1971 a changed man, disgusted and disillusioned. My patriotism had been spent like chump change in a penny arcade, wasted on a futile effort in a dirty war where survival was the only measure of success. I had survived, but felt no pride or sense of accomplishment from my ordeal. I was simply glad it was over.

I stepped off the plane in San Francisco, and after a few hours flurry of processing and paperwork, I was discharged from the Army. In less than four days, I went from being a combat soldier in Vietnam to being a civilian on the streets of the United States. Needless to say, the transition was abrupt and disorienting, but I suppose I had it better than many. Since I had no particular place to go, I flew to my parent's house which was then in Massachusetts. I had no real idea about what I wanted to do or what my plans were. I had been totally focused on surviving one year in Vietnam, with little thought about what I would do afterwards if I did survive. When I said I had no real plans when I came home, that's not quite true. I had one overriding goal for when I got out of the military. I wanted to be a hippie (Gimme a head with hair...). I had watched from afar all the iconic moments of the baby-boom generation: Haight-Ashbury, Woodstock, long hair, peace, love, dope, good vibes. The thought of somehow surviving Vietnam and coming back to join my generation in its distinctive life-affirming lifestyle choices was something that kept me going through the crew-cut, authoritarian, life-negating military experience. By 1971, a lot of the "good vibes" had long since dissipated—drowning under the weight of drug abuse, rip-offs, egotistical excesses, and the ever-present lure of the American materialistic society—but there were still enough remnants of hippie culture for me to immerse myself in and try to catch up on what I missed.

As that summer of 1971 wore on, I was feeling the need to "go straight", or at least develop some sort of acceptable direction to my life. Going back to college seemed like the natural step to take. This fulfilled two needs. The first, of course, was that I now could claim direction, and put to rest all the fears—both my own and my parents'—that I was on the verge of spinning out of control. The second was income. What seemed like a large

pot of funds when I returned from Vietnam was quickly dissipating, and enrolling in college would give me access to GI bill money. By the time I became eligible for this education benefit in the fall of 1971, the monthly stipend was at \$175; in 1972, the amount was raised to \$220. This, of course, was nowhere near sufficient to cover all costs associated with getting a college degree, and did not take into account that many education expenses such as books and tuition need to be paid up front.

Tuition costs at state schools in those days were somewhat manageable. I decided on attending Louisiana State University at New Orleans (LSUNO, or UNO as it became known), and I paid a little over \$500 in tuition and fees for an academic year. Initially, my housing cost me \$90 a month for a studio apartment on Royal Street in the French Quarter (another bucket list check-off: to live in the Quarter), but soon moved with two other students I had met into an apartment on Amelia Street off St. Charles Avenue where we split a monthly rent of \$150. I picked up a part time job pumping gas at a service station close to the campus, so I wasn't rolling in dough, but I had enough to pay expenses and purchase an acceptable amount of recreational drugs each month.

A few weeks into my first semester at UNO, I spied a leaflet on a bulletin board announcing the formation of a chapter of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, with a time and place for the first meeting. My anti-war opinions were not particularly well-formed at that time, consisting of thoughts something like "The war is bad. It should stop." I had seen on the television the huge amount of publicity that VVAW had received for Dewey Canyon III the previous Spring. I had even been in DC during the time that the demonstration was taking place. I drove around the city of Washington for about an hour, passing by the mall trying to get a glimpse of the protesting veterans and trying to screw up the courage to join them. In the end, I was too scared, or too shy, or just wasn't ready to participate at that time. Participation in anti-war activity, however, was a necessary component of the hippie lifestyle I was attempting to adopt, and VVAW seemed the natural way for me to get my feet wet.

There was another reason for my attending this meeting. I was



Dewey Canyon III, April 1971.

feeling distinctly alienated from most of my classmates. These were kids mostly freshly graduated from high school, younger than me, and most definitely worlds apart from me in life experience. I didn't feel comfortable around them, and didn't want to talk to them about what I had been through. Vietnam had turned me into an adrenaline junkie, and there were few fixes in everyday campus life that satisfied my craving. I took to doing things like sucking on razor blades during classes, or leaning out the open passenger door of a car and dragging my lengthening hair along the pavement as the car sped at sixty miles an hour down the highway. More than anything else, I was attracted to VVAW because I wanted to be around other vets, who could understand the things I was going through.

I showed up at the appointed time and place, and found a room with about twenty people in it. The meeting was chaired by a guy named Don Donner, who identified himself as the regional coordinator for VVAW for Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana, who had come down to New Orleans from Arkansas to try to get things going down here. He said that it was being planned that our first action as a chapter would be to march in the annual Veterans Day Parade in New Orleans. The organizers of the parade—the traditional veterans organizations such as the VFW and American Legion—had put out a call that all bona fide veterans groups were invited to join the parade. VVAW was a bona fide veterans group, so we had applied to march in the parade. To say the least, the older veterans groups

were not enthused about this idea, and initially rejected our application. Some local lawyers got involved, and we eventually got a begrudging agreement that we could march.

Thirty-three of us showed up on the night of the parade at the spot designated by the organizers, and we watched and waited as the parade passed on by, all spangled high school bands and motley groups of cunt-capped older veterans. Finally, our group's leaders demanded to know when we would be allowed to march. The parade organizers then sprang on us the news that the Grand Marshall of the parade—Congressman F. Edward Herbert, recently selected as chairman of the House Armed Services Committee—had decreed that no anti-war groups were going to march in his parade. We tried to negotiate some sort of alternative, like marching down the sidewalk rather than in the street, but were told that if we marched anywhere as a group that night, we would be arrested. Our response was Fuck It! We marched; we got busted for parading without a permit. The police held us overnight, then released us in the morning without bail. The case never went to court; the purpose of the arrest was to get us off the street so we wouldn't spoil F. Edward's parade.

So, the first time in my life I was ever arrested was for trying to march in my first Veterans Day parade after I got back from Vietnam. It was not to be the last.



PETER P. MAHONEY WAS ONE OF THE GAINESVILLE 8.

Tucker Carlson Criticizes Women in the Military

SO THIS IS THE JERK WHO SAYS THE ARMY IS BEING FEMINIZED?





THE VETERAN

SECTION C

Volume 51, Number 1

Spring 2021

In Loving Memory of Candida "Candi" Mestayer-Culp

JOHN LINDQUIST

Candi was one of the strong, wonderful VVAW women. She started in VVAW in late 1972 in the St. Louis chapter.

In April 1973 she moved to Wisconsin and became a very active member of the Milwaukee chapter.

She was active in VVAW's food collective with Louis Stickford and Kelly. The VVAW food collective was on the corner of N. Fratney St. and E. Clarke St in Milwaukee.

Candi also helped out at National meetings, VVAW campouts and most of our demonstrations.

When we "Declared war on the VA" in 1973 Candi was at all the demos. She bravely grabbed a VA police officer by the waist when we were attacked in front of the Milwaukee VA hospital. The photo was on the cover of *Winter Soldier* in February 1975.

She was active with our Agent Orange struggle and always had time to help veterans in crisis and others in our PVS rap groups.

Her Agent Orange work, along with other women in VVAW helped us in our fight for "Decent Benefits for all Veterans" and "Test, Treat and Compensate for Agent Orange."

She was a tireless VA hospital volunteer even into her retirement.

Candi loved her plants and flowers. She started work with the city

of Milwaukee Forestry Department then transferred to Milwaukee County and worked at the Mitchell Park Domes for over twenty years. Her work saving endangered plants got her recognized far and wide.

The Government of Madagascar came to Milwaukee because of her work. She also went to London on her plant and flower work.

Candi's work, along with veterans and family members across America, has helped us get to the point we are at now. We have 178 PTSD Veteran's centers around the USA and the VA now recognizes 15 presumptive disabilities for defoliant exposure.

Candi's husband Brad Culp and their children will miss her terribly. They were all together at home when she passed in her loving husband's arms.

Candi, you will live on in our memories. VVAW members are proud to have known you. You touched our lives and our hearts.

Goodbye Candi
Semper Fidelis
John A. Lindquist



JOHN LINDQUIST IS A LONG-TIME VVAW MEMBER FROM MILWAUKEE, NOW LIVING IN ENGLAND.



Candi grabbing a VA police officer at Milwaukee VA, 1975.



Candi watering the Madagascar plants at Mitchell Park Domes.



Candi Mestayer-Culp.



Operation Bosom Buddies.

Candi Mestayer-Culp Memories

From Candi's entry in the VVAW 50th Anniversary Guest Book

Candi Mestayer-Culp

I first heard of VVAW in 1972 in St. Louis, MO, at a local community college. I was 17, and knew immediately that this was the anti-war group for me. The St. Louis chapter hosted the Milwaukee VVAW Chapter, friendships were made, and I soon moved to Milwaukee. The Milwaukee Chapter was the social and political center of our lives; it was the glue that held (and helped) a diverse group of people unite and survive. A shout out to John Lindquist and Annie Bailey who gave their time and money, as well as opened their home, to the many vets who sought refuge, compassion and understanding. I am not a veteran, but have always been

proud to stand beside my VVAW brothers and sisters, the true anti-war patriots.

Nancy Grider

Candi once decided to help Madagascar by having the president of that country bring some plants that were going extinct in his country. She planted them in the Mitchell Park Domes, where she worked as a Horticulturist and cared for them. She invited him to her house where they cooked dinner together for some VVAW member friends.

Candi volunteered at the VA and set up a little shop area in the VA for women vets/soldiers. She and her sister-in-law Kim, accepted clothing donations and toiletries to give to the women veterans. She also found out while working there, that big

breasted women soldiers had a hard time procuring bras that fit them. Like size 54 DDD size! She called some stores and manufacturers who make bras in large sizes and soon had a plethora of bras for them. She called on other female VVAW members and sympathizers, to help her organize and get the bras to the women in need. It was like a party and she called it Operation Bosom Buddies.

Candi always had us help her organize gift bags at Xmas for the vets in need. Especially the ones that were shelter challenged. Items included, good soap, tooth brushes, combs, lotion, sox, gift cards to fast food places, eye drops, and treats.

Oh, I thought of another really important contribution Candida made to our world. She was very knowledgeable about how to do

historical research. She helped many people find their historical roots. She was very keen on the military service of the people in various families and how their service impacted history. Her dedication was tenacious and her research incredibly complete with photos and records.

Annie Luginbill

Candi's dad, who was born in Managua, Nicaragua, was in the US Marines from 1952-54 and died in a Missouri veterans' home.

Candi really was an exceptional person and an outstanding contributor to the world.



Memories of Dennis Kroll

PAT LISI

I met Dennis Kroll in Madison, Wisconsin in the late 70's at a VVAW rally one evening, held on a corner of the famous Madison "square" just below the capitol building. I had been out of Vietnam 10 years and was adjusting as best I could to life on the outside. At the time I did not know the extent to which Vietnam had adversely affected everything about me. Kroll sensed that I was a F'd-up burned-out Vietnam vet so he introduced himself and explained what VVAW was all about and how the organization could help me. I liked him right from the get-go. Then he invited me to participate in fund-raising and to get involved in some of the programs and events the group sponsored.

One of the projects I helped Dennis and the other members with was a weekly television show we produced on community access public TV in Madison. We got to use a studio for free but had to provide all the labor. The name of the show was simply, "The Vets Hour." We would have a guest or two come into a very small studio located near the UW campus, on Sunday mornings, and just sit and chat about things relevant to Vietnam veterans. For example, one of our guests one time was Madisonian Lonnie Cooks, a black Vietnam vet who had the unpleasant experience of being captured by the NVA. After gouging one of Lonnie's eyes out they put him in a hole upside-down in camp for the night. The very next day Lonnie managed to escape and was subsequently rescued. The show would air every Tuesday evening on public TV.

We took turns running the cameras and mics and interviewing the guests. Every aspect of the show was conducted by a member of

VVAW. Dennis Kroll, also known to us as "The Emperor," was by far the best interviewer and host. He was always calm and collected and he knew just what to ask a veteran to get the discussion headed in the right direction and then keep it on track. I aspired to be like him in that regard. Intelligent, knowledgeable, honest, direct, focused. That was Dennis Kroll.

A year or so after I joined VVAW I mentioned to one of my very good friends, "Red" Paynter, who served in the 101st Airborne in Vietnam, that I knew this guy named Dennis Kroll and did Red know of him. Small world, because Paynter served in the same unit as Denny. Obviously, I asked Paynter what kind of soldier Dennis was and he told me about Kroll losing a finger in an explosion. I was always kind of sheepish about asking Dennis that question myself. Paynter also told me that Kroll was a fearless "ground-pounder" and squad leader, and that he had his shit together in Nam which is one reason why Dennis made it back alive.

After that I had a better idea of who Dennis was and why he was so passionate and steadfast about promoting VVAW and its goals. I was saddened to learn on this date, October 27, 2020 that The Emperor died recently and that his life on earth and his devotion to Vietnam veterans had come to an end. Knowing Dennis, he's probably up in the clouds somewhere still fighting for every Vietnam Veteran down here who is still struggling.

Dennis, I leave you with the war cry of the early "Screamin' Eagles:" "Geronimo!"

And, from a former Marine: "Semper Fidelis, Warrior."



Dennis Kroll (standing, 2nd from left) at Dewey Canyon IV, May 1982.

I was born and raised in Madison, Wisconsin. I graduated from LaFollette High School class of 1967. February, 1968 found me in Marine Corps Boot Camp, San Diego, and by mid July, I was in Vietnam with Echo Company, 2nd Battalion/5th Marines, 1st Marine Division. I was WIA May 15, 1969 and left Vietnam in late August of the same year.

I got involved with VVAW because of my great disillusionment in the government that fabricated the need to involve us in what would later be termed by the people of South Vietnam as "The American War in Vietnam".

Dennis Kroll introduced me to VVAW in the late 70's and it was my pleasure to work with him and other

great veterans who supported the cause.

In 1991, I became a Wisconsin Game Warden and was stationed in Bayfield County where I met my second wife, Marjorie. I retired from the warden force in 2006.

Marjorie and I moved to St. George, Utah the same year mainly because of the tremendous hiking opportunities in the red rock hills surrounding our city. We established a charitable organization called, "Southern Utah Veterans Aid" in 2007 and our mission is to find shelter for homeless veterans in our part of the state. The vast majority of our 'clients' have been Vietnam vets. The need is still here, 50 years later, so the fight continues.

Fighting Sleep: The War for the Mind and the US Military

JOE MILLER (REVIEWER)

Fighting Sleep: The War for the Mind and the US Military
by Franny Nudelman
(Verso Books, 2019)

On November 24, 2017, Barry Romo and I met with the author at a small Mexican restaurant in Chicago. Professor Nudelman, who teaches English Language and Literature at Carleton University in Ottawa, asked for the meeting to discuss her ongoing project on sleep and war veterans. VVAW's actions in Dewey Canyon III in April 1971 were significant to her thinking. As she puts it in the opening pages,

"The VVAW sleep-in speaks powerfully in no small part because it flies in the face of a clinical and cultural record of war trauma that is rife with scenes of troubled sleep; the sleepless soldier and the insomniac veteran are protagonists of an evolving narrative of trauma and its aftermath that spans the course of the twentieth century."
(p. 3)

In this slim volume, Professor Nudelman recounts a long struggle over war veterans and their sleep in the postwar world. Through a series of episodes, from World War II through to the war in Iraq, the topic of sleep became instrumental in the development of professional psychiatry, military strategy and tactics, and anti-war activism.

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, military research into sleep aided efforts to train more efficient troops. The use of sleep-related therapies was commonplace in efforts to reprogram soldiers' minds where the trauma of war hindered their

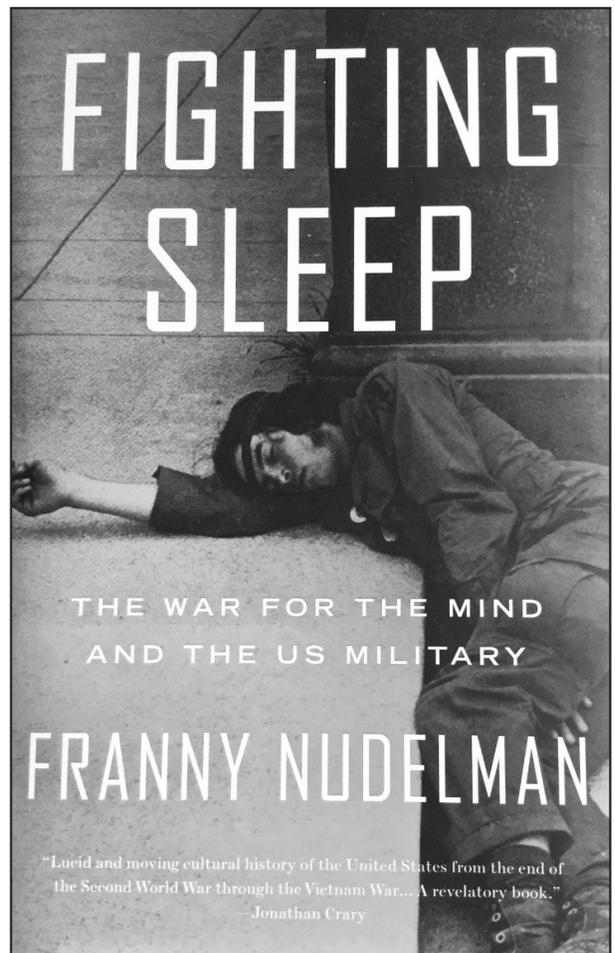
performance of duty or obstructed their effective reintegration into society at war's end. Nudelman provides a long, exhaustively-researched history of the many methodologies in these efforts.

She includes a detailed history of the production and limited distribution of John Huston's 1946 film *Let There Be Light* and its effects on popular understanding of the returning veterans, though it was ultimately repressed by the military. The scenes of encounters between the calm, almost monotone, therapists and the half-asleep, slurring veterans would be too upsetting to the public.

Intense therapy sessions that used sleep-deprived soldiers were soon intensified by the use of narcoleptic drugs to control the sleep cycles and, at some point, even plant scenarios into the unconscious "consciousness" of these veterans. They were the guinea pigs for military efforts, first to "understand" what happened to these traumatized soldiers, then, to find ways to better control the behavior of troops in the field.

The section on the "sleeper agent" provides a deep look at the post-Korean-era popular culture that developed around the "brainwashing" of US prisoners in North Korea. Nudelman points to the importance of the 1962 film *The Manchurian Candidate* as a reflection of what the military and the CIA derived from their study of these returned prisoners of war. She describes the insidious nature of government efforts at mind control within the military, and she highlights the use of sleep in this process.

Nudelman points to the character of Major Marco in the film as a precursor and a "prototype,"
...if a peculiar one, of anti-war Vietnam veterans who use the



process of self-interrogation to unearth war crimes that they might prefer to forget. As the creative dissent of the VVAW will demonstrate, the techniques used by the military psychiatrists to explore, heal, and injure the mind were reclaimed by activist veterans to document and oppose the war in Vietnam." (p. 81)

The final section of the book, "Experiments in Activism," covers in great detail the development of the VVAW rap groups with Robert J. Lifton, the organization and testimony at the Winter Soldier Investigation of 1971, and finally, Operation Dewey

Canyon III. This is not merely historical reportage. These "events" serve to make the point that what was used for repression by the military and the government could also be used for liberation. Sleep on the Mall in DC in 1971 was a liberating event.

There is so much more packed into the 150 pages of this book I highly recommend a close reading.



JOE MILLER IS A NAVY VETERAN, 1961-68. NAVAL SECURITY GROUP, 1961-64. USS TICONDEROGA (CVA14), 1964-66. HELTRARON 8, 1966-68. HE IS A VVAW NATIONAL BOARD MEMBER.

The War Against Ourselves

SUNNY MILLER

VVAW friend and supporter Doug Rokke passed away January 15, 2021. Here is a reprinted interview with him that ran in the Spring 2003 issue of *The Veteran*.

An Interview with Major Doug Rokke

Doug Rokke has a PhD in health physics and was originally trained as a forensic scientist. When the Gulf War started, he was assigned to prepare soldiers to respond to nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare, and sent to the Gulf. What he experienced has made him a passionate voice for peace, traveling the country to speak out. The following interview was conducted by the director of the Traprock Peace Center, Sunny Miller, supplemented with questions from YES! editors.

Question: Any viewer who saw the war on television had the impression this was an easy war, fought from a distance and soldiers coming back relatively unharmed. Is this an accurate picture?

Rokke: At the completion of the Gulf War, when we came back to the United States in the fall of 1991, we had a total casualty count of 760: 294 dead, a little over 400 wounded or ill. But the casualty rate now for Gulf War veterans is approximately 30 percent. Of those stationed in the theater, including after the conflict, 221,000 have been awarded disability, according to a Veterans Affairs (VA) report issued September 10, 2002.

Many of the US casualties died as a direct result of uranium munitions friendly fire. US forces killed and wounded US forces.

We recommended care for anybody downwind of any uranium dust, anybody working in and around uranium contamination, and anyone within a vehicle, structure, or building that's struck with uranium munitions. That's thousands upon thousands of individuals, but not only US troops. You should provide medical care not only for the enemy soldiers but for the Iraqi women and children affected, and clean up all of the contamination in Iraq.

And it's not just children in Iraq. It's children born to soldiers after they came back home. The military admitted that they were finding uranium excreted in the semen of the soldiers. If you've got uranium in the semen, the genetics are messed up. So when the children were conceived—the alpha particles cause such tremendous cell damage and genetics damage that everything goes bad. Studies have found that male soldiers who served in the Gulf War were almost twice as likely to have a child with a birth defect and female soldiers almost three times as likely.

Q: You have been a military man for over 35 years. You served in Vietnam as a bombardier and you are still in the US Army Reserves. Now you're going around the country speaking about the dangers of depleted uranium (DU). What made you decide you had to speak publicly about DU?

Rokke: Everybody on my team was getting sick. My best friend John Sitton was dying. The military refused him medical care, and he died. John set up the medical evacuation communication system for the entire theater. Then he got contaminated doing the work.

John and Rolla Dolph and I were best friends in the civilian world, the military world, forever. Rolla got sick. I personally got the order that sent him to war. We were both activated together. I was given the assignment to teach nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare and make sure

soldiers came back alive and safe. I take it seriously. I was sent to the Gulf with this instruction: Bring 'em back alive. Clear as could be. But when I got all the training together, all the environmental cleanup procedures together, all the medical directives, nothing happened.

More than 100 American soldiers were exposed to DU in friendly fire accidents, plus untold numbers of soldiers who climbed on and entered tanks that had been hit with DU, taking photos and gathering souvenirs to take home. They didn't know about the hazards.

DU is an extremely effective weapon. Each tank round is ten pounds of solid uranium-238 contaminated with plutonium, neptunium, americium. It is pyrophoric, generating intense heat on impact, penetrating a tank because of the heavy weight of its metal. When uranium munitions hit, it's like a firestorm inside any vehicle or structure, and so we saw tremendous burns, tremendous injuries. It was devastating.

The US military decided to blow up Saddam's chemical, biological, and radiological stockpiles in place, which released the contamination back on the US troops and on everybody in the whole region. The chemical agent detectors and radiological monitors were going off all over the place. We had all of the various nerve agents. We think there were biological agents, and there were destroyed nuclear reactor facilities. It was a toxic wasteland. And we had DU added to this whole mess.

When we first got assigned to clean up the DU and arrived in northern Saudi Arabia, we started getting sick within 72 hours. Respiratory problems, rashes, bleeding, open sores started almost immediately.

When you have a mass dose of radioactive particulates and you start breathing that in, the deposit sits in the back of the pharynx, where the cancer started initially on the first guy. It doesn't take a lot of time. I had a father and son working with me. The father is already dead from lung cancer, and the sick son is still denied medical care.

Q: Did you suspect what was happening?

Rokke: We didn't know anything about DU when the Gulf War started. As a warrior, you're listening to your leaders, and they're saying there are no health effects from the DU. But, as we started to study this, to go back to what we learned in physics and our engineering—I was a professor of environmental science and engineering—you learn rapidly that what they're telling you doesn't agree with what you know and observe.

In June of 1991, when I got back to the States, I was sick. Respiratory problems and the rashes and neurological things were starting to show up.

Q: Why didn't you go to the VA with a medical complaint?

Rokke: Because I was still in the Army, and I was told I couldn't file. You have to have the information that connects your exposure to your service before you go to the VA. The VA obviously wasn't going to take care of me, so I went to my private physician. We had no idea what it was, but so many good people were coming back sick.

They didn't do tests on me or my team members. According to the Department of Defense's own guidelines put out in 1992, any excretion level in the urine above 15 micrograms of uranium per day should result in immediate medical testing, and when you get up to 250 micrograms of total uranium excreted



Doug Rokke speaking at VVAW's Memorial Day event in Chicago, May, 2003.

per day, you're supposed to be under continuous medical care.

Finally the US Department of Energy performed a radiobioassay on me in November 1994, while I was director of the Depleted Uranium Project for the Department of Defense. My excretion rate was approximately 1500 micrograms per day. My level was 5 to 6 times beyond the level that requires continuous medical care.

But they didn't tell me for two and a half years.

Q: What are the symptoms of exposure to DU?

Rokke: Fibromyalgia. Eye cataracts from the radiation. When uranium impacts any type of vehicle or structure, uranium oxide dust and pieces of uranium explode all over the place. This can be breathed in or go into a wound. Once it gets in the body, a portion of this stuff is soluble, which means it goes into the blood stream and all of your organs. The insoluble fraction stays—in the lungs, for example. The radiation damage and the particulates destroy the lungs.

Q: What kind of training have the troops had, who are getting called up right now—the ones being shipped to the vicinity of what may be the next Gulf War?

Rokke: As the director of the Depleted Uranium Project, I developed a 40-hour block of training. All that curriculum has been shelved. They turned what I wrote into a 20-minute program that's full of distortions. It doesn't deal with the reality of uranium munitions.

The equipment is defective. The General Accounting Office verified that the gas masks leak, the chemical protective suits leak. Unbelievably, Defense Department officials recently said the defects can be fixed with duct tape.

Q: If my neighbors are being sent off to combat with equipment and training that is inadequate, and into battle with a toxic weapon, DU, who can speak up?

Rokke: Every husband and wife, son and daughter, grandparent, aunt and uncle, needs to call their congressmen and cite these official government reports and force the military to ensure that our troops have adequate equipment and adequate training. If we don't take care of our American veterans after a war, as happened with the Gulf War, and now we're about ready to send them into a war again—we can't do it. We can't do it. It's a crime against God. It's a crime against humanity to use uranium munitions in a war, and it's devastating to ignore the consequences of war.

These consequences last for eternity. The half life of uranium 238 is 4.5 billion years. And we left over 320 tons all over the place in Iraq.

We also bombarded Vieques, Puerto Rico, with DU in preparation for the war in Kosovo. That's affecting American citizens on American territory. When I tried to activate our team from the Department of Defense responsible for radiological safety and DU cleanup in Vieques, I was told no. When I tried to activate medical care, I was told no.

The US Army made me their expert. I went into the project with the total intent to ensure they could use uranium munitions in war, because I'm a warrior. What I saw as director of the project, doing the research and working with my own medical conditions and everybody else's, led me to one conclusion: uranium munitions must be banned from the planet, for eternity, and medical care must be provided for everyone, not just the US or the Canadians or the British or the Germans or the French but for the American citizens of Vieques, for the residents of Iraq, of Okinawa, of Scotland, of Indiana, of Maryland, and now Afghanistan and Kosovo.

Q: If your information got out widely, do you think there's a possibility that the families of those soldiers would beg them to refuse?

Rokke: If you're going to be sent into a toxic wasteland, and you know you're going to wear gas masks and chemical protective suits that leak, and you're not going to get any medical care after you're exposed to all of these things, would you go? Suppose they gave a war and nobody came. You've got to start peace sometime.

Q: It does sound remarkable for someone who has been in the military for 35 years to be talking about when peace should begin.

Rokke: When I do these talks, especially in churches, I'm reminded that these religions say, "And a child will lead us to peace." But if we contaminate the environment, where will the child come from? The children won't be there. War has become obsolete, because we can't deal with the consequences on our warriors or the environment, but more important, on the noncombatants. When you reach a point in war when the contamination and the health effects of war can't be cleaned up because of the weapons you use, and medical care can't be given to the soldiers who participated in the war on either side or to the civilians affected, then it's time for peace.



SUNNY MILLER'S INTERVIEW WAS ORIGINALLY BROADCAST ON WMFO (BOSTON) IN NOVEMBER 2002 AND IS AVAILABLE FOR RE-BROADCAST AT WWW.TRAPROCKPEACE.ORG

The Age of Illusions

JOHN KETWIG (REVIEWER)

The Age of Illusions: How America Squandered its Cold War Victory by Andrew Bacevich (Metropolitan Books, 2020)

When Joe Biden was elected president, I wrote to him and suggested Andrew Bacevich for Secretary of Defense. Of course, that suggestion went nowhere, but I remain convinced that Bacevich should be more involved in steering our country.

Andrew Bacevich is professor emeritus of history and international relations at Boston University and president of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft. That sounds stuffy and scholarly, but Andrew Bacevich writes with clarity, and his insights are profound. He is a graduate of both West Point and Princeton, a Vietnam veteran, he spent twenty-three years in the army and retired as a colonel. Again, he sounds stuffy, but trust me on this one. He has emerged as one of the most prominent critics of the "war on terror." Bacevich describes himself as a conservative, but he is equally adept at skewering both Republicans and Democrats. "Americans deserve choices that go beyond Trump vs. Clinton or Republicans vs. Democrats or what currently passes for conservative vs. what gets labeled progressive," he writes near the conclusion of the book, but perhaps I am ahead of myself.

The Age of Illusions is a history and analysis of America since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. Bacevich begins with a brief look at our country's social history in the years following World War II, using the movie *The Best Years of Our Lives* and its depiction of three WWII veterans as a basis for his examination. Al, Fred, and Homer show up throughout the book, returned vets whose "sweet taste of victory is beginning to give way to the vexations of everyday life." Their expectations are not extravagant. They

are looking for a good job, peace surrounding a little house big enough for a wife and family, and the movie shows them relentlessly striving to achieve stability, predictability, and normalcy they had known before the war. Sound familiar?

Ahh, but "members of the policy elite were already insisting that the United States could ill afford to rest on its laurels." Bacevich rightly assigns blame to John Foster Dulles for creating the unnecessary Cold War and fashioning a hometown America that discreetly inhibited the establishment of real peace and prosperity by adopting an antagonism against Communism, especially as practiced by the Soviet Union, and an ideology and economy based upon militarism and war. President Eisenhower bought into the fear-mongering, ignoring the fact that the Soviets had lost 26 million in World War II, and had played a very major role in defeating Hitler. That the Soviets might not want another war was never considered! Preparations for war were good for business, and all Americans should accept their patriotic duty to oppose godless communism wherever it might occur. This path of thinking, of course, ran parallel to the comfortable life we accepted as "normal" until our comforts were disturbed by Sputnik, Yuri Gagarin, Fidel Castro, Martin Luther King, Jr., Vietnam, Bob Dylan, and the Beatles. Many of us lived through the turbulent sixties and seventies and came home from our individual wars and struggles hoping to achieve stability, predictability, and normalcy as we raised our children in the glow of television sets. Barry Goldwater's run for the presidency had been solidly defeated in 1964, and America had resisted the strange phenomenon known as conservatism. Ronald Reagan saw America as a "city upon a hill," casting its light upon all creation. The "Great Communicator" assured

(white, heterosexual) Americans that prosperity was their birthright. Bacevich admits to "playing a bit part in the US Army's efforts to shed various afflictions picked up in Vietnam." "I voted for him twice," he says. "So did most other soldiers." In 1987, Donald Trump spent \$100,000 to buy full-page ads in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Boston Globe*. Addressed "To the American People," Trump suggested we should "Make Japan, Saudi Arabia, and others pay for the protection we extend as allies." Times were not yet ripe for his message.

Reagan was succeeded by his vice president, George H.W. Bush, a former head of the CIA. "We know how to secure a more just and prosperous life for man on Earth," he declared. Bacevich does not make much of the Savings and Loan Crisis that highlighted Bush's efforts to make a certain group of his well-heeled friends "more prosperous," and which probably led to his failure to be re-elected. Certainly, the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 was the more important historic event of the Bush presidency. "Leading members of (the baby boom) generation did not doubt America's destiny to bring freedom closer to perfection, even as the nation accrued still more power and wealth." Another movie, Vietnam veteran Oliver Stoner's *Wall Street*, declared that "greed is good." Donald Trump delighted in playing the role.

Young people in Berlin destroyed the iconic wall with sledgehammers. The Cold War was over! America was at a crossroads. Bacevich quotes Francis Fukuyama as observing, "In watching the flow of events over the past decade or so, it is hard to avoid the feeling that something very fundamental has happened in world history."

"I don't believe a word of it," wrote Irving Kristol, founding father

of neoconservatism. Saddam Hussein chose this moment to invade Kuwait, and America shook off any vestiges of "Vietnam syndrome" and invaded Iraq. Bush's approval rating hit 89 percent, an accomplishment that seems incredible today. He sent troops to Panama and deposed strongman, and long-time ally, Manuel Noriega. Still, George H.W. Bush prophesied about a "new world order" but seemed dazed and unable to chart a path forward for the United States. When election time rolled around, America chose Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton.

At this point, Andrew Bacevich is at page 52 of his 236-page book. The story he tells will remind you of people and events that seemed hugely important at the time, but have slipped from view in the glare of all the history that has happened. Of course, Donald Trump has never slipped away from the spotlight, and hence the title of this book. Illusions have been central to American politics in recent years, and none so clever or deceitful as the tricks played by Trump. *The Age of Illusions* is not a thick book, but if I might borrow an old sixties term, it is "heavy." The writing is accessible, and the explanation of history is illuminating. How did we come to this point in history that we see today? Perhaps, if we can understand how we got here, we might gain some insight into where we are going. Or, we might even be able to nudge our country in another direction. I highly recommend you become familiar with Andrew Bacevich, his views of history and his outlook for our future. This book is a great place to start!



JOHN KETWIG IS A LIFETIME MEMBER OF VVAW, AND THE AUTHOR OF TWO CRITICALLY-ACCLAIMED BOOKS ABOUT VIETNAM, ...AND A HARD RAIN FELL AND VIETNAM RECONSIDERED: THE WAR, THE TIMES, AND WHY THEY MATTER.

Vietnam Veterans Unbroken

RG CANTALUPO (REVIEWER)

Vietnam Veterans Unbroken: Conversations on Trauma and Resiliency by Jacqueline Murray Loring (McFarland, 2019)

This is a difficult book for a VVAW member to review. It isn't so much the content—although I have issues with the way the content is presented (seemingly unedited interviews with Vietnam Veterans), but the underlying politics which are antithetical to what most VVAW members represent.

First there is the cover: a large photograph of a grey bearded veteran in full Army dress greens and green beret being celebrated for receiving a purple heart in some "purple heart" ceremony in Springfield, Massachusetts in 2017.

Now I've received three purple hearts, but I can't imagine being honored at a ceremony honoring those awards from a war I feel and have felt since 1970 was criminal and wrong. In fact, I threw those same medals over a fence in 1972, (along with my Bronze Star), at a VVAW anti-war protest at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. So I can't imagine putting on dress greens and honoring those medals, or the American War in Vietnam now. Wrong message, wrong time.

Then there is the book description on the back cover that really struck me as an attempt at revisionist history. Though the book portends to be about the "trauma and resiliency" of Vietnam Veterans, the book description states that these veterans "wonder what their lives would be like if they had come home to praise or parades."

Now maybe there are some

Vietnam Veterans who believe that. But I doubt if you're going to find many among VVAW members. What we wanted and needed wasn't parades or praise, (I still feel uncomfortable when someone says to me "Thank you for your service"), but rather a Veterans Administration that acknowledged my PTSD, or the harmful effects of Agent Orange, or a 1970s culture that didn't blame me for what the US government ordered me to do.

Section 4—Still Twisted: Resiliency and Outreach.

I'm not sure how the editor came up with these section titles or what she was trying to accomplish with them. They seemed a bit arbitrary and inappropriate to the stories themselves. For instance, what does "Crosses", or "Still Twisted", or "Language of a Single Tear" have to do with trauma and resiliency. The subject matter and the stories are too

strong understanding of trauma and resiliency. Of the seventeen veterans interviewed, I don't remember any telling of crisis interventions, suicide attempts, drug addictions, or all the other problems and challenges war trauma sufferers often experience. Remember, only a few years ago, it was commonplace knowledge that war veterans were committing suicide at a rate of twenty veterans per day. And PTSD is not cured by the six sessions and a Zoloft that the VA often recommends—as presented in the book. It is an arduous road to recovery even with some of the newer treatments like EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), PE (prolonged exposure therapy), or Cognitive Processing Therapy, and often is persistent decades after the traumatic experience.

If you can get beyond the unfortunate messaging of the cover, and the idiosyncratic section titles, I would recommend the book for anyone who wants to know the experiences of veterans who suffered war trauma and were able to overcome it.

If however, like me, you expected more, you probably will feel the same frustration and disappointment I felt.



RG CANTALUPO (AKA ROSS CANTON) IS A POET, PLAYWRIGHT, FILMMAKER, NOVELIST, AND DIRECTOR. HIS WORK HAS BEEN PUBLISHED WIDELY IN LITERARY JOURNALS IN THE UNITED STATES, ENGLAND, AND AUSTRALIA. HIS BOOKS CAN BE PURCHASED THROUGH NEW WORLD PUBLISHERS OR THROUGH THE AUTHOR AT AUTHOR@RGCANTALUPO.COM.

What we wanted and needed wasn't parades or praise, but rather a Veterans Administration that acknowledged my PTSD, or the harmful effects of Agent Orange, ...

If you get past that, you'll find 17 veterans with engaging and compelling stories of combat, service, and their subsequent struggles with PTSD. Their stories are interesting, even if you've heard it all before, simply because they are real and often tragic. As a reader, you feel compassion and pain, and are sometimes relieved that the PTSD didn't do more harm to their lives.

These interviews are divided into four sections: Section 1—It Mattered To Me: Growing Up In America and Arriving In Vietnam; Section 2—Losses and Crosses: Coping With Coming Home; Section 3—Language of a Single Tear: Post-Traumatic Stress and Self-Imposed Silence; and

serious and somber to endure such sarcastic or mirthful titles. I realize war trauma is not an easy subject to understand for someone who has never experienced war or combat, but I just wish the editor would've stuck with simple, more cogent titles than to stick on some catch phrases that diminished the content inside.

War trauma and resiliency are difficult and complex subjects on their own, so I'm surprised a well-known publisher like MacFarland would've published it with an editor whose only credentials seems to be a poetry chapbook. Certainly, an editor with professional credentials in psychology or psychiatry would've wanted the book and the interviews to express a

Battle Green Vietnam

TOM GERY (REVIEWER)

Battle Green Vietnam: The 1971 March on Concord, Lexington, and Boston

by **Elise Lemire**

(University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021)

Operation POW, a Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) protest, occurred fifty years ago this Memorial Day weekend. Professor of Literature Elise Lemire has documented the historic three day operation in a book, *Battle Green Vietnam: The 1971 March on Concord, Lexington, and Boston*.

The Vietnam War spanned a period of time when the post WWII generation was coming of age, as was student activism. The early "boomers" were turning draft age in 1964, the same year the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution made US military involvement official. By April 1968 troop build up reached more than a half million. It was the first televised war. Nightly news brought the destruction and horror into the American living room. In 1967 a group of Vietnam veterans turned ideas into actions so that by 1971 a non-profit organization, Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) had the resources to conduct peaceful, impactful anti-war activities. Lemire's work has focused on one of those staged events: Operation POW.

The writer has compiled a

detailed description of the May 1971 protest march while imparting a rich background of Revolutionary War history. Paul Revere rode from Boston to Concord to alert the Colonials of the British Army's move to destroy munitions; the symbolism of liberty and freedom sounding the alarm of the danger of war and imperialism. Through a creative interface of literature and history using Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem *Paul Revere's Ride*, a heroic narrative, the writer aptly describes how the protest planners developed the fundamental message they sought to communicate. "Capitalizing on the mythology built around the silversmith's famous mission, . . ." namely the idea that warning the American people is the greatest of patriotic acts. . . ." the reader is alerted to the courageous commitment the veterans are making to inform the public of the true nature of the Vietnam War.

Dr. Lemire has provided something special in this story, a rare element of the Vietnam anti-war movement: the perspectives of veterans who participated in that conflict; who had received wounds, ribbons and medals. Their histories and experiences serve as a thread winding through the narration of the three day demonstration for peace. Her research is exhaustive in uncovering the planning of the event, the advanced preparation

implemented by the leaders and in the study of how the operation unfolded. Included is the distillation of hours of personal interviews which affords the reader the equivalent of a front row seat at an Oscar winning movie. Lemire has blended the history of our nation's founding with period literature, monuments and sacred ground to explain the strategy and tactics of the Connecticut, Rhode Island and Northeast chapters of VVAW. At the onset Daniel Chester French's 1875 citizen soldier monument models modern day VVAW citizen-veterans coming to the defense of peace by stepping forward to counter the message of the Nixon Administration war machine. Authors of giant stature, Longfellow, Emerson, Thoreau are seen as rendering historical blessings on the mission of 1971. Thoreau's essay, *Civil Disobedience*, is a script for the veterans' peaceful resistance to Lexington Selectmens' Bivouac Injunction prohibiting an overnight camp out on the Battle Green.

Throughout the six chapters, to me, the writer displays the diligence of the historian combined with the skills of a novelist. Events depict drama, actions build tension, outcomes yield understanding as illustrated by a description of the British Army's march from Boston to Concord, the deaths of Minutemen and the King's men, the Regulars subsequent retreat.

Use of Guerrilla Theater, a form of acted out political protest, explodes in the town of Concord on the first day. Saturday morning shoppers are shocked to see toy M-16 toting, jungle fatigue garbed men reenacting an American search and destroy mission drawing comparison to British soldiers' behavior. The essence of what the battle tested veterans are doing is captured by the author during one of her more than 100 interviews. A reluctant veteran realized reenactment ". . . released an incredible amount of patriotic energy in both the participants and those observing them." People begin to join the march in support of the protest. A sub plot of civilian mobilization develops demonstrating the effectiveness of the VVAW intention to alert society to the immoral war. The vets are joined by hundreds including parents with children, senior citizens and clergy some of whom later are arrested, along with the veterans, for trespassing on the Lexington Green. There is real drama and tension as civilians and veterans align against the intractable political leaders; the use of local and state police to enforce the law adds to the tense situation.

The story is introduced with a gut wrenching reference to the My Lai massacre during which 504 Vietnamese, among them 182 women, 17 of them pregnant, and 173 children, 56 of them infants, were killed by American soldiers. Having touched an evil low point Lemire resets to a journey toward the good. At the heart of this literary trip is an explanation of how place and performance, sacred historic battlefield space and the reenactment of an immoral war mission are used by a band of ex-soldiers to enlighten the country about the war. The book honors these men while paying tribute to VVAW for its determination to right a horrible wrong. It is also a contribution of major significance in the way it describes a unique and unprecedented aspect of American social protest. *Battle Green Vietnam* documents for posterity acts of conscience by veterans who honorably served and were willing to die in the very war they are protesting. Dr. Lemire's work is worth reading for the history, the abundant details of the event and most importantly for the message of hope one can receive. Truth can prevail in a country where there is liberty that allows for its expression.



TOM GERY US ARMY; VIETNAM 1968-69; RETIRED SOCIAL WORKER; MARRIED, 2 CHILDREN, 2 GRANDCHILDREN; VOLUNTEER WITH LOCAL VETERANS TREATMENT COURT.

"*Battle Green Vietnam* is a vital piece of America's national history, written with passion and care."

—Gerald Nicosia, author of *Home to War: A History of the Vietnam Veterans' Movement*

"Powerful and beautifully written, this is one of the most important books to come out of the Vietnam War."

—Ron Kovic, author of *Born on the Fourth of July*

Battle Green Vietnam

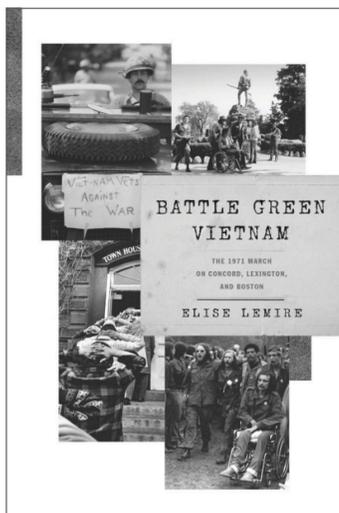
The 1971 March on Concord, Lexington, and Boston

Elise Lemire

Based on more than one hundred interviews with participants and accompanied by nearly forty photographs and maps, *Battle Green Vietnam* tells the story of the 1971 antiwar protest by Vietnam veterans that resulted in the largest mass arrest in Massachusetts history.

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Brothers in the Mekong Delta

BART HOUSE (REVIEWER)

Brothers in the Mekong Delta: A Memoir of PBR Section 513 in the Vietnam War

by **Godfrey Garner**

(McFarland, 2020)

As the title states: This is a memoir.

From the book synopsis: "following the Tet Offensive, 1967 to 1968 (he) saw increased policing of the canals and tributaries of South Vietnam aboard patrol boats riverine (PBR)'s: unarmored, heavily armed and highly maneuverable vessels designed to operate in shallow waters: by uses of jets instead of propellers."

This memoir recounts the experiences of the author and his shipmates as they cruised the VC occupied backwaters of the Mekong delta.

The author served two tours in 1967 and 1968. After a lengthy break from military service, he rejoined the US Special forces and retired from the 20th Special Forces Group in 2006.

He is a faculty professor at Mississippi College and an adjunct at Tulane University and Belhaven University.

The author and his shipmates were from the South and being US Navy, all enlisted. He does not take a political view of the war in Vietnam. The book is a memoir of this time in his deployments.

The author describes his social life and non-combat experiences as well as a few combat recollections. He recreates some dialogue in some specific experiences and remembered incidents. In the latter part of the book,

he also covers his efforts to reconnect with his shipmates after their service and ends the book with details of their personal lives after Vietnam.

These Riverine units worked with SEAL teams: providing insertion and extractions and were assigned two Huey Seawolf gunships per river section. The book includes some details on the duties and tactics of these PBR's. He details his training and path to his assignment to his unit: PBR River Section 513: Sadec, near Vinh Long.

He provides details of his base at Sadec, life there and some details of the Vietnamese supporting their base as well as bio and social details of the crew he served with. He gives insight into their duties, their equipment, deployment, combat missions, and

recollection of some specific combat actions and the group's reactions to the events.

I found this book to be long on details of drinking bourbon and talking and a bit short on his combat and actual in country service. However, I would say he does well in most aspects of describing the whole milieu of his experience; both combat and non combat life in his tour of duty.

I would give the book 4 of 5 stars.



BART HOUSE, USN MMFN, VIETNAM DEC 72 TO FEB 73, USS MILWAUKEE (AOR-2), CHRISTMAS BOMBING CAMPAIGN, OPERATION LINEBACKER 2.

A Very Different Book About Vietnam

ED WHITE (REVIEWER)

Pulp Vietnam: War and Gender in Cold War Men's Adventure Magazines

by Gregory A. Daddis
(Cambridge University Press, 2020)

This military historian has written a book like no other about the cultural influences during the Vietnam War: Pulp adventure magazines. Do names like: *Male; American Manhood; Battle Cry; Man's World; Man's Action; For Men Only; True Men; Man's Illustrated*; ring a bell when you were in Vietnam?

Gregory Daddis retired from the Army as a Colonel five years ago after serving in Operation Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom. He has written three books on Vietnam: *Westmoreland's War; No Sure Victory*; and *Withdrawal*. In an interview with his publisher, Daddis admitted that he wanted to explore another area other than military strategy. And boy did he!

The historian started his own research by reflecting on the consequences and impact of popular culture on American soldiers. His context centered on the fears created around international communism and postwar consumer culture in the United States. This cultural context created a publishing empire that was eager to depict the ideal man as both heroic warrior and sexual conqueror. Yep. This theme became the publication's surface storyline. As the cold war developed during the 1950's and 1960's so did the adventure magazines. Stories developed on the theme of militarized masculinity and sexual conquest. At the same time feminism created anxieties among working class males that made them feel castrated in relation to females. Stay with me on this.

William Whyte's *Organizational Man* and Arthur Miller's Willy Lohman fanned male anxieties. Magazines from *Cosmopolitan, Playboy*, to *Man's Action* played up the idea that wives dominated in a marriage. The pulps catered to the white male. Blacks, Latinos, Asian, and Native Americans were not considered real or full men. The storylines portrayed working-class men as unable to take full advantage of the postwar consumer culture. And then came the Vietnam War...

Historian Gregory Daddis researched these adventure magazines. He discovered a warehouse in Tampa, Florida containing a mother lode of back issues. I also researched adventure magazines in my local comic retail store. The store owner told me: "No we do not carry them, but keep checking back someone might bring them in." After the Vietnam war pulp adventure magazines went out of favor and out of business. With money from other research projects, Gregory Daddis purchased the lot and began his research. Before going into the weeds let me say that Daddis holds the highest place for historical research. I would even go so far as to say that his new book is an example of TMI—"too much information." The book is 237 pages, together with lots of visuals and with an additional 100 pages in footnotes. But, reader, these are not your ordinary footnotes. Generally speaking, when you see a number and refer to the back of the book you find one source. This is not the case with Gregory Daddis. He provides as many as five sources for one comment. I kid you not. This book must be one of the most researched books on the subject, bar none. Daddis is a true and thorough scholar. We are

talking about historical research into adventure magazines, as well as the larger picture of cultural relationships of the warrior and sexual conquest. I applaud him handily for reading these thousands of stories.

There are five actual chapters with an extensive Introduction and a Conclusion. In the book Daddis develops the history of World War II veterans coming from the "Good War" and the Korean War. As the story line went Vietnam veterans wanted to be the heroes fighting the Nazis and winning. The veterans of World War II raised their sons to value service in the military uniform. The Korean veterans began an era of questioning whether there is a limit to US power overseas. The pulps encouraged the idea of becoming a man as a result of going to war. Good triumphs over evil. Stories of medal winning soldiers and Marines pervaded the magazines. Exploits of Medal of Honor bravery stories flooded the pages from both wars. Along with this there were narratives of racial hatred of Asians, particularly the Japanese in the Pacific, and Korean communists. The adventure magazines always showed the strong man conquering all along with female conquest as a reward of his military might.

In all of these magazines the cover illustration tells it all. "A picture is a thousand words": Women scantily dressed, exploited, tortured, and then rescued by the American fighting man. Stories were made up to emphasize that heroism was part of being a man and that the reward was sexual conquest. At the same time women were also represented in some of the magazines as strong, devious, but receptive, submissive to the warrior. In the book the author elaborated

on various women spies, Oriental seductresses, exotic and erotic Asian women, etc. I think you get the picture. The magazine's story line does not change much when soldiers get to Vietnam, though the stories create the image that Vietnamese women are expendable.

In 1967 in the Vietnam Post Exchange (PX) 13 of the top 20 best-selling magazines were men's adventure magazines. Not surprising *Playboy* topped the list. The annual magazine sales total was \$12 million in the Post Exchanges in Vietnam. This stuff sold well. However, after 1975 the overall world-wide sales dropped. The pulp publishers could not sustain the story line any longer.

According to Gregory Daddis reading these magazines in Vietnam did not lead to rapes of Vietnamese women, but he wrote that crimes occurred and were not taken seriously. This treatment was considered part of the culture of the time. As recent reports in the military indicate sexual harassment is alive and well. It continues to not be taken very seriously.

In an interview, the author related that serious research attention must be paid to the underlying issues of gender and power. In the past men's adventure magazines, which catered to working class males, were not considered worthy of research by serious historians. At long last Gregory Daddis has certainly changed that whole dynamic.



ED WHITE IS A MARINE VIETNAM COMBAT VET WITH MEMBERSHIPS IN VVAW, VFP AND VVA. HE HAS TAUGHT COURSES ON THE VIETNAM WAR AT TRITON COLLEGE IN ILLINOIS.

Taking Fire

TOM GERY (REVIEWER)

Taking Fire!: Memoir of an Aerial Scout in Vietnam

by David L. Porter
(McFarland & Company, Inc, 2020)

Taking Fire captures a part of the Vietnam War saga little known outside of a small circle of US Army combatants who fought from the air. Colonel David L. Porter, retired, has changed that with his recently published memoir. The writing is crisp, giving the reader a complete context and plenty of detail. Referring at the start to his great-granddad's American Civil War experience he lets the reader know part of his purpose is to share his memories with family. By doing so the writer has laid down some valuable historical information for anyone who is a student of the nation's military history or interested in the war fighting that took place in Southeast Asia. The Colonel has also opened a portal into the past for those who put boots on the ground.

Porter was an Army aviator. The narrative begins in earnest with flight training. Any helicopter aficionado will enjoy the technical details. It is here the OH-6, a light observation helicopter (LOH), is introduced. The new army pilot with orders for Vietnam and the \$19,800 (1969 dollars) machine would become part of a new tactic for fighting the enemy. The young Lieutenant would go on to log 375 combat hours in what reminded him "of a large green Easter egg with a rotor blade, tail rotor and skids attached".

The narrative develops with a foundation of details orienting the reader to Porter's tour of duty. He was assigned to the 11th Armored Cavalry, an 8000 man unit, known as the Blackhorse Regiment. Within the Regiment was Air Cavalry Troop

Thunderhorse. It consisted of Cobra gunships, Huey transport helicopters and the Scout platoon of "loachs", officially named OH-6 Cayuse. Porter's year began with flying a Huey before becoming an aerial scout. His time in the scout platoon is the setting for the danger, courage and heartbreak forming the story's core.

The reader is pulled deeper into the personal story of this aviation-soldier with his Scout platoon orientation and on the job training. As a commissioned officer the Lieutenant is assigned one of two scout platoon sections. With increased experience in the OH-6 Porter begins flying Visual Reconnaissance (VR) missions as part of a Hunter-Killer team. It is at this point where one can envision the action literally feeling what is happening. The pilot's accounts of action in various Areas of Operations (AO) range from uneventful days to tracking, seeing and shooting enemy soldiers. The title of his book takes on meaning. Lives are taken, lives are lost. From October '69 to February '70 a description of what the Thunderhorse troop and Lieutenant Porter did around Quan Loi, Loc Ninh and the nearby Cambodian border is gripping.

The story line dramatically builds to a peak of terror met with courage in the last month of flying with the scouts. The Regiment tangles with a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) division. The writer is literally the very tip of the spear spotting and taking fire three different times in order to fulfill the mission of a scout; identify the location of the enemy. Porter is awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his heroics.

A memoir has a subjective voice. Colonel Porter's effort is on the mark. He reveals his thoughts and feelings about the soldiers and situations in the

war zone that is his world.

You get his reactions and reflections on the events, the good times and tragedy. Something is learned about life in a time and place of danger and uncertainty from these pages depicting Porter's life for 364 days. His fear is palpable during the final pass over the NVA division when AK-47 tracers come up from the trees a few feet below his skids. Steel-like resolve comes through as he recalls the 23rd Psalm during the same NVA engagement. Tenderness, joy and love too, are a part of his saga as he describes R & R for five days in Hawaii with his wife, Susie. Respect and admiration for the young enlisted men, the scout observers in the left seat of the LOH, is evident. Their skills at picking up enemy signs, old camp fires, or fresh footprints, are recognized as well as the hazards of fighting from the air. During his time with the unit three were killed in separate combat actions. Sorrow is shared with the unabashed description of "crying like a baby" when a pilot friend in the Cobra platoon was shot down and killed.

Colonel Porter tells the reader about his friend Brev, a 2 tour Special Forces sergeant turned warrant officer (WO) aviator, exemplifying another feature of the memoir, relationships. Brev is described as having "a bearing that exuded confidence and professionalism". After the narrator came to Brev's assistance during a racial incident the two bonded. The more experienced WO offered advice. They talked about many things. The big man was deeply religious. One evening with several pilots talking about home and visiting each other Brev spontaneously and very explicitly told Porter, "... you will never come ... White people do not come

to that part of South Carolina". Porter took offense, he didn't understand, he wanted to smooth things over. The next day Brev, who had 6 days remaining in-country volunteered for a mission with the short handed Huey platoon. He took a round in the throat, the helicopter crashed, the crew incinerated.

Back at the Thunderhorse pad the recovered bodies, in body bags, were awaiting transport to Bien Hoa and graves registration processing. Inexplicably Porter unzipped his friend's body bag, looked at a horror of war, zipped it back up, "... and cried unashamedly until there were no more tears left". Had the writer through this experience in the closing hours of his friend's life been given a hint of what institutional racism resembles as seen from a Black man's perspective?

The author set out to record his memories which he has in great detail and in so doing has written an insightful, riveting story. Moreover, his work has provided a unique view of a very specialized part of the war, although the Hunter-Killer team tactics are probably obsolete in the era of drones, satellites and hand held heat seeking munitions. Finally the Colonel also gave anyone who is a Vietnam veteran a look back in time as if the reader spent time in the left seat of the OH-6 Cayuse holding a red smoke grenade while concentrating on the earth a few feet below. *Taking Fire* is not only an interesting story, it is one that will fill in some of the memories eroded by time.



TOM GERY US ARMY; VIETNAM 1968-69; RETIRED SOCIAL WORKER; MARRIED, 2 CHILDREN, 2 GRANDCHILDREN; VOLUNTEER WITH LOCAL VETERANS TREATMENT COURT.

Patriotic Dissent

JOHN KETWIG (REVIEWER)

Patriotic Dissent: America in the Age of Endless War

by Daniel A. Sjursen

(Heyday Publishing, 2020)

Patriotic Dissent is not a big book, but it is an important one. Danny Sjursen is a retired army Major, a West Point graduate, and a former American History instructor at that institution. He is a member of About Face, formerly known as Iraq Veterans Against the War, and he is an advisor to Veterans for Peace and Antiwar.com. Sjursen was granted early retirement from the army due to his "PTSD," a convenient diagnosis after he began to write articles critical of American foreign policy, the military, and the "forever wars" in the Middle East and Africa. Hey, to the military, anyone who finds fault with our "beautiful" forever wars must be a little bit mentally fucked-up, right? Danny Sjursen's writing has appeared in *TomDispatch*, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Salon*, the *Nation*, *Truthdig*, and *The Huffington Post*. He is also the author of a previous book critical of the war in Iraq, *Ghost Riders of Baghdad: Soldiers, Civilians, and the Myth of the Surge*. Sjursen is also co-host on a progressive veterans' podcast, *Fortress on a Hill*.

Patriotic Dissent starts with a

realistic look at American society today. "Americans today live in an age of vapid overadulation of their soldiers," he writes. "They don't, the vast majority of them, want to actually join the army, the navy, the air force, the marine corps, or even the coast guard. That'd be hard, inconvenient, and, after decades of indeterminate wars, potentially dangerous!" President George W. Bush is quoted as saying, soon after the 9/11 attacks, that the American citizenry should "get down to Disney World in Florida... Take your families and enjoy life, the way we want it to be enjoyed." What an easy, comfortable approach to expressing "patriotism!" About 1% of Americans feel some obligation to join the military, especially as some kind of an act of "repentance" for the way Vietnam veterans were treated upon their (our) return, even though Sjursen recognizes that those reports were exaggerated. Others soothe their conscience with the act of enlisting, which they, and society, see as the right or, at least, the requisite thing to do. They have not chosen to avoid service in the all-volunteer military, and are serving as perhaps their ancestors did. When two hundred thousand of these American soldiers were deployed to combat zones at the height of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, income taxes

were never raised, the draft was never considered, and instead the volunteer professional "warriors" simply served tour after tour in harm's way. "This," Sjursen writes, "is what generally counts for 'patriotism' these days: 'thank' the troops, 'love' America (or at least its gilded symbols), pay your historically modest (despite the conservative hype) taxes, and – here's the key – keep your mouth shut. Nothing is being asked of you, materially or physically, so just politely champion the soldiers, wave a flag, and support the foreign policies of what's obviously—compared to those evil 'terrorists' over there—a reasonably well-intentioned government."

Sjursen dared to step outside those lines; he questioned both the necessity of the war and its conduct by the American military leadership. He was called "hippie," "un-American," "traitor," and "Russian asset," and was told: "Hey, quit complaining, you volunteered, remember? Finally, outside the army, Danny Sjursen has written *Patriotic Dissent* not to make excuses for his distinguished military experience, but to challenge each and every American citizen to see the tawdry history of our 20-year war, and all the other wars our troops are waging without the slightest recognition by the news media. Then to think:

Is this activity really in America's best interest? Finally, when you are informed and you have reached a conclusion Danny Sjursen expects will be very similar to his, he dares you to speak out about it! Tell your family, your friends, and neighbors, the editor of your local newspaper, your Senators and Congressman. "Without prompt and widespread citizen action, this cult of vacuous patriotism constitutes, slowly but surely, an existential threat for the health of the republic. In the pages that follow," Danny Sjursen writes, "this middling but not so secretly idealistic soldier-officer will seek to explain why that is, and what can be done to reframe dissent, against empire and endless war, as the truest form of patriotism." The book that follows is compact and concise, just 140 pages, but it is powerful, authentic, well-thought-out, and it is patriotic. I came away from it thinking of Danny Sjursen as a modern-day hero! Highly recommended!



JOHN KETWIG IS A LIFETIME MEMBER OF VVAW, AND THE AUTHOR OF TWO CRITICALLY-ACCLAIMED BOOKS ABOUT VIETNAM, ...AND A HARD RAIN FELL AND VIETNAM RECONSIDERED: THE WAR, THE TIMES, AND WHY THEY MATTER.

Elsewhere Than Vietnam

STEVE KRUG (REVIEWER)

Elsewhere Than Vietnam: A Story of the Sixties

by David Schwartz

(Sticky Earth Books, 2019)

The title of the book comes from a 1971 article in the *Armed Forces Journal* in which the state of the US forces is talked about, which bears repeating: "The morale, discipline and battle worthiness of the US Armed forces are, with a few salient exceptions, lower and worse than at any time in this century and possible in the history of the United States. By every conceivable indicator, our

army that now remains in Vietnam is in a state approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having refused combat, murdering their officers and non-commissioned officers, drug-ridden and dispirited where not near mutinous. Elsewhere than Vietnam, the situation is nearly as serious."

The book is presented as a work of fiction, even though the author's bio looks amazingly like the main character: Steven. Steven, in the first chapter (spoiler alert!) takes part in a gang rape, while he is conscious of his wrong doing, he does it anyway. He

feels he cannot stop his friends from raping because he is "not his friends keeper". So he knows what he is doing is wrong and permits his friends to do wrong. This becomes the theme of the character Steven throughout the book. Even as he becomes more politically aware and active, he rarely stands his ground or suffers any consequences. Steven says of himself that he is not a hero, in the telling of the story he has difficulty rising to even anti-hero status. When he finally does stand up to the war by going AWOL, he is still given the opportunity to renege on his actions and get an Honorable

Discharge.

I am not sure what we are supposed to expect from works of historical fiction. If I view this book as a story, it is well enough told. It is, in part, a love story: can finding love in wartime over shadow a character's other shortcomings?



STEVE KRUG IS AN EQUALLY PROUD OF BEING A MEMBER OF VVAW AND A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR.

TAPS: The Silent Victims of the Vietnam War

BONNIE CARACCILO (REVIEWER)

TAPS: The Silent Victims of the Vietnam War: The Families Left Behind

Reflections of an Army Casualty Notification & Survivors Assistance Officer

by George M. Motz

(self-published, 2019)

Born to an upper middle-class family in New York, George Motz' happiest day in his young life was in June of 1963 when he was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the US Army and awarded a BA from Georgetown University in Washington, DC. Motz opted for a student deferment to attend Fordham University Law School. After his first year at Fordham, Motz decided to get out of his deferment and enter active duty for his two-year commitment.

"The Army was happy to bring me on board and I was ordered to report to the Quartermaster School at Ft. Lee in Petersburg, Virginia in late December of 1964."

A great deal had changed from the time Motz graduated and the beginning of his active-duty stint. Racial tensions had escalated nationwide, President John F. Kennedy had been assassinated and US involvement in Southeast Asia had begun to escalate.

At the end of his eight weeks at Ft. Lee, near Petersburg, VA Motz expected to hear Vietnam but instead when his name was called he heard "Charleston, South Carolina". Something he in no way expected. Of the class of about 60, a half dozen went directly to Vietnam, another half dozen to Germany and the rest to stateside posts around the country.

Three-quarters of the class did end up receiving orders to Vietnam.

Rather than being given the position of Quartermaster for which he trained, he was tasked to be the Military Personnel Officer at the Army Dept. in Charleston. This included being the Special Services Officer along with a dozen other duties.

One couldn't imagine a more cushy job in the Army at that time if they had tried, however a part of his sixteen or seventeen assignments included Casualty Notification and Survivors Assistance officer which is at the center of this memoir.

I found this book to be interesting and very humane. Motz reveals that the motivation behind this story—the retelling of his short Army career—was the murder of nine innocent churchgoers in the beloved Mother

Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC in 2015. As a Casualty Notification officer, he informed many black families about their loved one's deaths in Vietnam. Part of his duty was also to assist the families in any ways he could, to help with memorial services and military burial protocols. He worked with several lay persons at "Mother Emanuel" and remembered them fondly.

This is the story of a pocket of our country that many may never visit or even know about. Joining the military was a ticket out of poverty and a certain bleak future in a south still fraught with terrible relations between the races. It is a touching look into the humanity that exists between us.

Motz knew how fortunate he was; never took it for granted. He did his job to the best of his abilities, despite having been thrust into such a difficult, life-altering position with no experience. His dealings with distraught families is a tribute to all who died. Although Lieutenant Motz had a couple of close calls, he avoided being sent to Vietnam which, by the time he was granted an honorable discharge, had begun to escalate. Motz went on to finish his law degree.

Definitely a worthwhile read.



BONNIE CARACCILO IS A SUPPORTER OF VVAW AND A LONGTIME THORN IN THE SIDE OF THE EMPIRE. SHE LIVES IN BOSTON, MA.



Dewey Canyon III, April 1971.

Then the Americans Came

JOHN KETWIG (REVIEWER)

Then the Americans Came: Voices from Vietnam
by Martha Hess
(Rutgers University Press, 1993)

What, you may ask, am I doing reviewing a book that was published in 1993? Well, I was on Twitter one day recently, and I found a tweet from Christian Appy. Chris Appy is a Professor of History at the University of Massachusetts, and the author of three excellent books about the Vietnam War. His most recent book is *American Reckoning: The Vietnam War and Our National Identity*. All are highly respected books, and Christian Appy is considered one of America's leading historians, recording and measuring the ongoing impacts of the Vietnam War on hometown America and combat veterans.

Getting back to this review, the tweet from Christian Appy included an enthusiastic recommendation for a book with which I was totally unfamiliar, and I investigated it and found a treasure! *Then the Americans Came: Voices from Vietnam* is a devastating book. I had to read it in dribs and drabs. I suspect it will be a welcome book for VVAW members, and for all Vietnam vets who are possessed with a conscience. Still, it is very troubling. I wore the uniform, and spent a year participating. I never saw the atrocities described in this book, but I don't hesitate to believe that they happened. Far too many young American men were kidnapped from their communities by the Draft, subjected to "training" that was really a form of re-education not unlike what is done in concentration camps, and then they were sent to far-off, primitive Vietnam. They were given weapons and ordered to patrol "free fire zones" where they held the power of life and death over the Vietnamese peasants. Some could cope with that responsibility, and some became so hardened by the tragedies happening all around them every day that they came to hate the Vietnamese and kill whenever the opportunity presented itself. Yes, the very people we were sent to help! That idea quickly

evaporated in the fury of combat. It was a guerrilla war, and you never knew if a Vietnamese person, man, woman, or child, might be an enemy. It was extremely easy to hate them all, to become cruel and unfeeling. The enemy forces were also cruel, so the death and destruction just kept ratcheting up to incredible levels. That is, veterans realize, the nature of war.

Then the Americans Came: Voices from Vietnam is a collection of statements by Vietnamese civilians and veterans affected by the war. It is an oral history, collected in 1990 and 1991, by the author and her translator and friend Nguyen Van Tuyen. Those are unfamiliar names. I am unable to find any indication that either of them have published any additional books. After reading this one, chances are you will remember their names for a long while.

Perhaps the best way to describe the contents of *Then the Americans Came: Voices from Vietnam* is to open the book at random, and whatever page I come to, reproduce the contents here. In this case, I quote page 147, from the chapter South of the 17th Parallel. The subject of this page is Mr. Le Van Ky, of the Dien Duong village. He says: "Most of the people were kept at Cam Ha and Thanh Thuy, the concentration camps, including my family, and I stayed here to fight. I was in command of the local guerrillas. My wife was arrested many times, beaten, tortured, and spent six years in prison. Villagers looked after our children. In 1967, the Americans and South Koreans killed thirty-four people in one hamlet, forty people in another, seven people here. In one day they killed 140 people in Dien Duong. When they came to destroy the crops the people used whatever they had—tree branches, sticks—to beat off the soldiers. At that point they would be shot. The Americans and South Koreans raped women. They put them in houses and set the houses on fire. After the massacres we buried the dead."

Every page of this book contains similar material, although there

are also a few black-and-white photographs of the people as they appeared in 1990. The war ended in 1975, so these testimonies were made 15 years after. The evidence here is overwhelming. Gut wrenching!

We were mostly young when we were sent to the war. Supposedly, our mission was to help the poor Vietnamese throw off the brutality of communism. Most of us had absolutely no idea what we were getting into, although some had fathers who had been to World War II or Korea, and warned them about the horrors of war. We thought we were going to an impoverished and primitive country, and we were shocked at the resistance the peasants could mount against us. Even more, many of us were amazed at the awesome weapons of war our government sent against those peasants. We were young, but our eyes were wide open. We saw the effects of napalm, agent orange, cluster bombs and 750 lb. bombs dropped from B-52 bombers. We saw howitzers and tanks, Huey and Chinook helicopters, mini-guns capable of putting a round into every square inch of a football field in one burst, and hand-held weapons like the M-16 rifle and the M-79 grenade launcher. The damage all of those weapons did to human bodies was horrible, and many of us were moved to remember the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The thought was frightening. We did what we had to do to survive, and became terribly angry when our buddies were hurt or killed. We struggled to act in a manner that would make our parents and the folks back home proud, but we were on the other side of the world, and life and our military superiors had moved the goalposts so far away we could barely recognize them anymore.

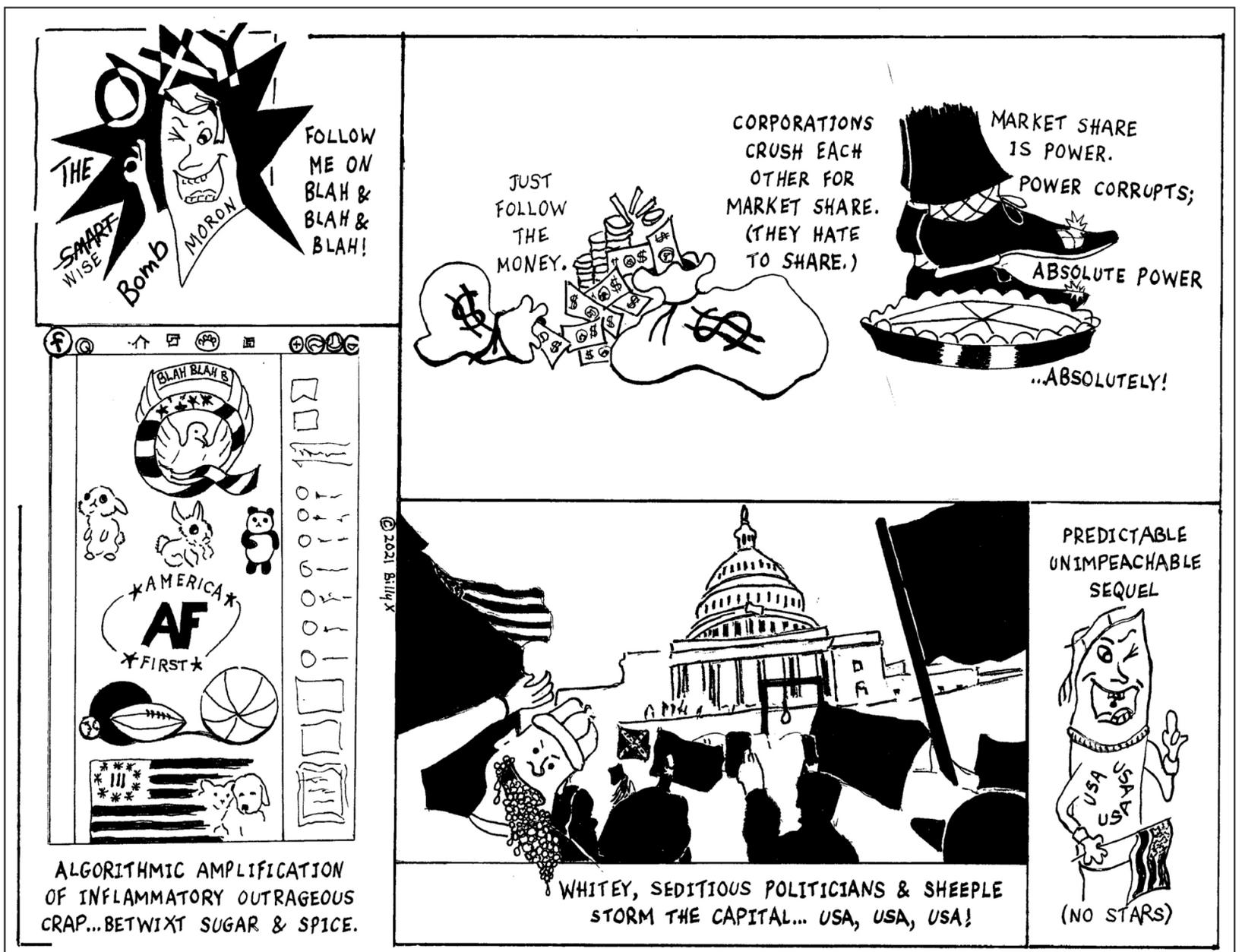
And now, half a century later, we grieve. Holding grandchildren on our knee, we are not the same people we were back in Vietnam. Except, we are! To one degree or another, we were part of it. We were powerless to stop it. We were young, and scared shitless, and intimidated by a system designed

to make us shed our humanity and decency. We couldn't speak to Mom or Dad, to our religious leaders, or anyone else. Every person around us was in precisely the same situation. Some were having a better day today, but they might feel exactly this way tomorrow. Our goal was to survive and come home, to watch our buddies' backs, never imagining that we would still be questioning the whole filthy thing half a century later. Then, we stumble across this nondescript little book from thirty years ago, and it is devastating to read this history because we know all too well that it's true. We go to bed and hide in the dark, grieving for the people we became, the people who suffered as a result, the lost, the maimed, those burned to death, punctured, maimed or exploded. We grieve that the whole thing happened, so unnecessary. We grieve because our government lied to us, and it has continued to lie for all these years. We grieve, and it is all too easy to forget that grieving is an expression of grief. Then, at the morning's light we get up and get dressed, and notice the tag sewn into the neck of a t-shirt that says it was made in Vietnam. And we walk out to the kitchen and greet the wife with "What the fuck?!"

Then the Americans Came: Voices from Vietnam is long out of print, but ABEbooks.com has 31 used copies available for prices ranging from \$5.00 to \$91.04. I have purchased used books from ABEbooks for twenty years or more, and have never had a problem. I highly recommend ABEbooks, and I hope you will take a chance on this very unusual book. It's not very nice, but it's all too true. These are the scenes most of us never saw while we were in Vietnam, and we can take comfort from that. Especially when our conscience bothers us. It could have been worse. Much worse.



JOHN KETWIG IS A LIFETIME MEMBER OF VVAW, AND THE AUTHOR OF TWO BOOKS ABOUT THE VIETNAM WAR.





FTA! Behind the Scenes on the Anti-war Show Tour in Asia

ELAINE ELINSON

After being trapped in a vault for decades, FTA!, the documentary about the FTA Show tour in Asia in the winter of 1971, is being rereleased this year. Here are some of my memories of that journey.

Flyers in English and Japanese were posted in store windows, tacked on telephone poles and passed from hand to hand. GIs stationed all over Okinawa had heard about the traveling show with Jane Fonda, Donald Sutherland and a cast of Hollywood actors and singers called FTA!. Excitement had been running high for days beforehand and that evening's performance was sure to be packed.

But that morning the military struck back. A "Condition Green" command was issued, ordering all soldiers confined to barracks after 6 pm. What were we to do? The hall we had rented for the evening show was a municipal building and not available during the day. We had come too far to abandon the show, so we conferred with our Okinawan allies. The Ichikawa Bullring is not too far from the base, they explained, can we move the show there?

Hollywood stars in a bullring? At the height of the Vietnam War, with the bases on strict curfew? Sure, no problem. Was there a stage? Not yet, but they could quickly build one from wooden pallets and oil drums. Was there a place to hang the backdrop and curtain? They would rig up sturdy metal frames. Juice for the sound system? Someone's electrician father could connect us to a nearby office building.

The seating was open air, on grassy slopes surrounding the dusty bullring. As soon as the venue change was announced on the radio, people began pouring through the gates—GIs in and out of uniform, Okinawan grandmas dressed in traditional kimonos with children in tow. Within minutes after taking the stage, folk singer Len Chandler had the whole crowd singing, "We Will Not Bow Down to Genocide."

That unforgettable November afternoon in Okinawa embodied the spirit of our show: resistance to the war, solidarity with the people of Asia whose lands the military occupied, and respect and support for the GIs who refused to be part of the repressive military machine or killers of people in Vietnam.

As the Advance Coordinator for the show, I was brought on to work

with local GI groups—coffeehouses, newspapers and organizing teams—and anti-war organizations in Hawaii, Japan, Okinawa and the Philippines who supported our efforts. Though I was only about the same age as most of the GIs, I had cut my teeth as an organizer for the United Farm Workers.

My task was facilitated by Pacific Counseling Service and the National Lawyers Guild, two progressive organizations that already had ties with both the GIs and Asian activists. With a list of the technical needs for the show in hand, we had to scout out suitable venues, secure equipment (everything from a piano tuned to A 440 to 25 lb. sandbags to weigh down wires, stands, etc.), arrange lodging (not always easy to find a cheap hotel that wasn't a brothel in the gritty base towns) and ground transportation, print and distribute publicity, enlist stagehands and security teams, and, perhaps most importantly, set up meetings for the cast and crew with GIs and political groups.

At the last minute, we learned that FTA director Francine Parker was also bringing a film crew. We groaned upon hearing the news—knowing we would have even more complications bringing elaborate equipment in and out of several countries. Little did we suspect how prescient Parker's decision was.

At every stop, GIs worked hard to prepare for the arrival of the troupe and spread the word, so the shows were always standing room only. People packed in to hear Jane Fonda and Holly Near do a vaudeville rendition of "Nothing Could Be Finer than to be in Indochina... makin' money!," Rita Martinson sing her moving ballad, "Dear Soldier, We Love You," a tribute to a Black GI who was behind bars because he "took a stand, and refused to fight in Vietnam," and see Pamela Donegan and Michael Alaimo ham it up in a skit about the lack of decent medical care for enlisted people. Yale Zimmerman pounded away on borrowed pianos to accompany songs like "Resistance," "Set the Date," and "I'm Tired of Bastards Fuckin' Over Me!"

One of the key missions of the FTA Show was to forge solidarity between the anti-war GIs and the people whose lands their bases occupied. We always included local performers as part of the show. The Okinawan leg of the tour began with a folk trio singing a song of defiance



Every venue was packed with active duty service men and women, like these sailors at Yokosuka Naval Base, despite government surveillance and wounds of war. Photo by Steve Jaffe.

against both US and Japanese occupation of their island. When Zengunro, the militant base workers union asked us to join their picket line to protest low wages and poor working conditions, members of the FTA cast and crew donned red headbands and sang "We Shall Not be Moved" at the gates of Kadena Air Base.

In a bar in Olongapo, the town outside of Subic Naval Base in the Philippines, several cast members sat around a table with a dozen US sailors. Fonda encourages the GIs and Filipinos to seek common ground in their opposition to the US military and imperialism. The sailors found it hard to imagine how that mutual understanding could come about. Melinda Paras, an activist with Kabataan Makabayan (KM), a revolutionary Filipino youth group, grinned and reassured the GIs, "If you talk to your people, we'll talk to our people."

The "Condition Green" in Okinawa was not our only obstacle. Some challenges became downright hilarious. In Angeles City, outside Clark Air Base in the Philippines, our only possible venue was Yap Park, a privately owned grassy oasis on the edge of town with a little zoo, picnic tables and an artificial lake popular with GIs. Mr. Yap was eager to host a show with Jane Fonda and promised to build a stage that fit our technical specs. When the big day came, we saw that he had built a stage—shaped like a giant swan in the middle of the lake, connected to the shore by a narrow rope bridge. Entrances and exits from the fast-paced skits were very precarious.

When the troupe arrived in

Tokyo, they were barred from entering the country. The government insisted we had the wrong category of visa. Our impromptu press conference at the airport brought a wave of publicity, generating outrage and support from around the country, like this telegram from soldiers stationed at Misawa AFB: "FTASisters and Brothers: "Stop the Pigs Not You. We hope to have anti-war show at Misawa. Power to the People and Give Peace a Chance." The Japanese peace group Beiheiren recruited lawyers who were able to convince the Ministry of Justice to change our visas to performing visas.

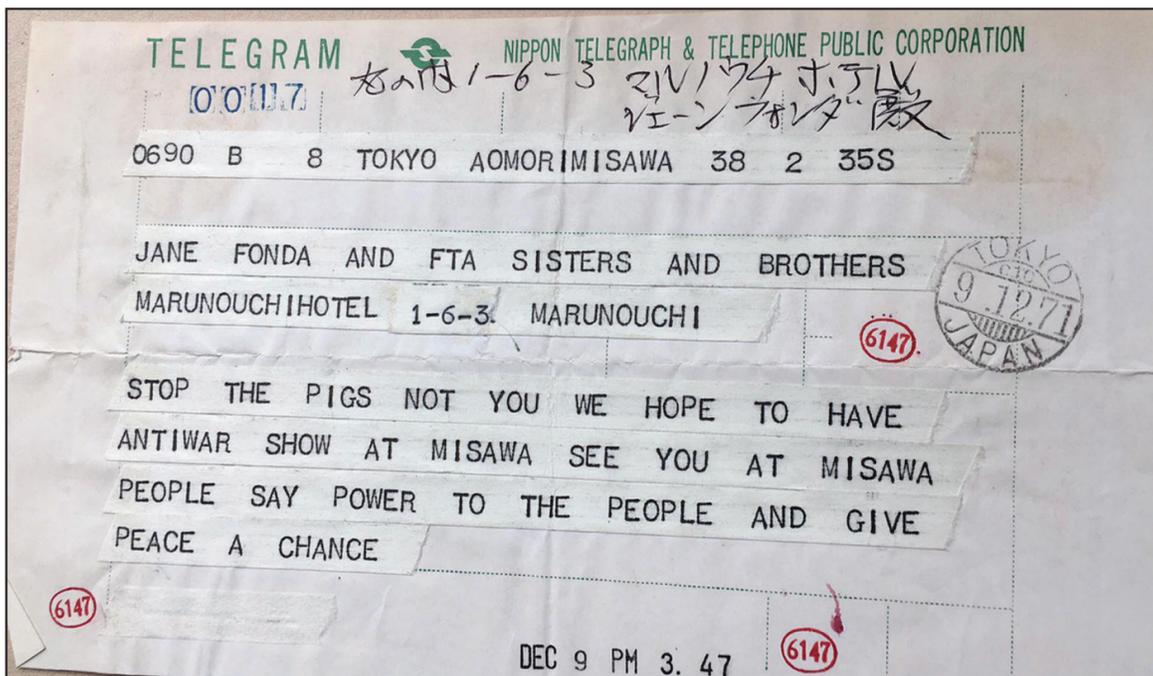
Since President Ferdinand Marcos was a staunch ally of Nixon, we were also worried that we might be barred from performing in the Philippines, home of the two largest US bases in Asia. The ingenious Kabataan Makabayan organizers arranged for the apolitical Philippine Amateur Swimming Association to be our official sponsor. The only hitch was that Fonda would have to present medals to the winners of the swim meet. Undaunted, she readily agreed, showing up in a muggy swim center just hours after getting off the plane from Hawaii. We also were obligated to have lunch with the Minister of Tourism, at a rotating restaurant tower overlooking huge signs advertising Texas Instruments, Goodyear Tires and Coca Cola—and the tin and cardboard shanties along the Pasig River.

The film documents powerful conversations among GIs—Black Marines who denounce racism on their base and declare they have no hostility toward the Vietnamese people, white sailors from small rural towns in Kentucky and Oklahoma who emphasize that their people back home agree with their anti-war stance. These bold soldiers spoke with brutal honesty on camera, even knowing they were taking great risks for their outspoken dissent.

The FTA! film was censored just weeks after it opened. Now, 50 years later—thanks to the vision of Francine Parker, who died in 2007, and all who worked on the show—audiences will be able to see these historic moments in the GI movement for themselves.



ELAINE ELINSON IS CO-AUTHOR OF THE AWARD-WINNING *WHEREVER THERE'S A FIGHT: HOW RUNAWAY SLAVES, SUFFRAGISTS, IMMIGRANTS, STRIKERS AND POETS SHAPED CIVIL LIBERTIES IN CALIFORNIA.*



When Japanese officials originally refused entry to the troupe, support poured in from GIs stationed at bases throughout the country, like this telegram from organizers of the Owl, the GI coffeehouse outside Misawa AFB.

Talismans

E. C. STREETER

Not long ago I happened to be in a supermarket when I heard the song "We Gotta Get Out of This Place" played on the public address system. For a commercial establishment presumably intent on encouraging its customers to remain long enough to make at least a few impulse purchases, it would seem an odd musical choice, but I guess the nostalgia factor of its having been a hit in the 1960s tends to override such concerns. While I distinctly remember the version by the British band the Animals when it came out in 1965, it did not make that much of an impression on me. It was not until the year 1970 that I began to enjoy it in its more, shall I say, literal sense. At that time I was a medic serving with an infantry platoon in the northern part of Vietnam, and I would occasionally hear it played on the transistor radios that some of my fellow soldiers carried in their rucksacks.

Armed Forces Radio was one of the few sources of entertainment available to those of us "out in the bush" as we referred to the wilderness areas where we spent most of our time. The disk jockeys played the same songs as the "Top 40" radio stations back home, but there was one regularly noticeable difference: Whenever they identified themselves, they would always give their ranks as well as their names. Every so often they would play older songs, and that's how I became reacquainted with "We Gotta Get Out of This Place." Its popularity was, of course, hardly a surprise, given the circumstances of every single one of the station's listeners.

Our favorite radio show by far was The Sergeant Pepper Hour (pretty much the only instance of wit on the part of a military institution that I encountered during my entire hitch). It featured the music of some of the more alternative bands like Pink Floyd, The Jimi Hendrix Experience, and Emerson, Lake, and Palmer, and what we particularly liked about the show was the feeling it gave us of being connected, if only in a tenuous way, to what we imagined was the underground culture "back in the world," as we referred to home. The only problem was that the show aired on Sunday nights, which meant that I had to share an ear bud with someone who carried a radio because we had to

be as quiet as possible in the evenings to avoid revealing our location.

I didn't carry a radio because my rucksack was already stuffed with things like glass bottles of saline solution for intravenous injections, tubes and jars of medications, scissors, rolls of adhesive tape, and a variety of bandages, of course. "Make sure you always keep a supply of these," my sergeant at the 101st Airborne Division base in Phu Bai, a town near the city of Hue in the northern part of what was then South Vietnam, said to me somewhat cryptically as he handed me a half dozen tongue depressors in the course of preparing me to join my platoon shortly after my arrival in the country. My training as a medic had not covered the use of tongue depressors to determine the health implications of the color of the rear of the mouth, but I was in no position to disregard any of the suggestions of someone who clearly had more experience in these matters than I did.

I also didn't carry a hunting knife. Most of my fellow grunts did, though, in spite of the fact that they had very little occasion to use them. There wasn't too much we could do in the way of accessorizing our outfits, and hunting knives in leather sheaths on their belts were one of the more glamorous options in that area. It might have also had something to do with the fact that carrying a knife helped them imagine that they were on the kind of camping trip where they might be required to do a little whittling, perhaps, rather than the one they were actually on that required carrying a gun to protect them from other people carrying guns.

The guys who did use their hunting knives on a regular basis were our two squad sergeants who had the unenviable job of preparing mechanical ambushes, as they were known. Each night they would set up trip wires attached to claymore mines on the paths leading into and out of our encampment. They used their knives to cut strips of metal from empty C-ration cans that they then bent around tongue depressors and somehow stabilized with cloth adhesive tape that I also provided. When the pieces of metal were pulled together by someone activating the trip wire a circuit would then be created. It was an absolutely terrifying situation. Each claymore



E. C. Streeter against a backdrop of elephant grass near the Demilitarized Zone.

mine was filled with thousands of tiny ball bearings; "If you get in the way of one of those things, you'll be turned into instant hamburger," was how one of my platoon mates put it. When the sergeants left with these contraptions at night and then retrieved them in the morning were by far my least favorite parts of the day.

I also carried a Kodak Instamatic camera, but only for a short while toward the end of my tour of duty. Most of the shots I took were of my platoon mates when we were guarding the fire bases that were scattered around the region that we were patrolling. About once a month we would be helicoptered to one of them, and we would spend a few days living in sandbagged lookout stations along the fire base's perimeter. This was our opportunity to take showers and to eat hot meals. The rest of the time we would eat canned C-rations. One fire base had quite a large underground room, and I remember being shown the documentary film "Woodstock" one afternoon by way of a 16-millimeter projector and a bed sheet.

We all carried wristwatches because we had to do guard duty each day and needed to keep track of the time. Mine had a second hand so that I could take pulses. I bought it at the Anchorage airport during a stopover on the way to Cam Ranh Bay, our destination in Vietnam. I also chose it because the dial had a small window that showed the date. First thing each morning I would look at it and then pause for a moment of solace at the sight of a new number; our tours were for exactly a year, and the number of days you had left in-country was never far from your thoughts. Just before I was scheduled to leave, I gave it to a friend who still had some time to go and haven't worn one since.

We were not allowed to keep diaries, ostensibly because of the possibility of their falling into enemy hands and revealing information about our recent movements. We still did a lot of writing, though, but in the form of letters home, of course. One platoon mate was starting one to his girlfriend when another guy happened to look over his shoulder and notice the words "Dear Sugar..." From that moment on, he was never called anything but Sugar.

I disobeyed the diary rule, but only to the extent that I would occasionally jot things down in a small green loose-leaf binder that I'd kept since boot camp. One of the pages contained a list of some of the paperback books I read. Cutting paths through the jungle was slow work for the point men wielding machetes, and so the rest of us had regular opportunities to read, when it wasn't the monsoon season, that is. I remember passing "The Godfather" on to a number of my platoon mates, but the book that was read by almost everyone was "Love Story" by Erich

Segal. It was the ideal medicine for anyone yearning for his girl back home or for someone like me who only imagined being in that situation. One of the books whose title I particularly regret not recording was a large format paperback sent by my father that had photographs of music festivals. The Woodstock and Isle of Wight festivals had happened the year before, and there was also a section on the 1968 Monterey Pop festival. When I began passing it around, my platoon mates poured over it with even more eagerness than the centerfold in *Playboy*, the reason being, of course, that it was the perfect complement to The Sergeant Pepper Hour.

There was also a page in the green binder with a list of some of the places I hoped to visit if I managed to survive this particular travel phase of my life. Ironically, none of the dozen or so destinations—Paris, Rome, and Vienna were some of the highlights—were nearly as exotic, as where I was right then.

More interestingly, there were notes I'd made of some of the sights along the route to An Khe. This day-long drive was my first mission with the platoon. Our transportation was a truck with an open-air bed known as a deuce and a half, and we sat on a layer of sandbags, awkwardly reclining on our rucksacks. I noted, for instance, that the houses all had corrugated metal roofs, most had plywood walls, and very few had doors, and that there were quite a few bicycle repair shops. One thing I didn't write down was that on the side of the road just outside of Phu Bai I saw what appeared to be two large sacks of rice. I briefly wondered why anyone would abandon something edible until I realized that those two ovoid shapes were, in fact, bodies. They had clearly been lying there for some time because they were horribly bloated from the heat and were covered in brown dust kicked up by the traffic.

That was the last time we traveled anywhere by truck. About a week later, helicopters took us north to an uninhabited region near the Demilitarized Zone where we remained from then on.

I kept the loose leaf pages but discarded the binder to save space when I was packing for the flight back to the States. I also left the camera behind. I kept my dog tags after my discharge but eventually lost them in the course of multiple moves over the decades. All I have now is a handful of yellowing sheets of paper, a few photographs, and a lingering memory of a song.

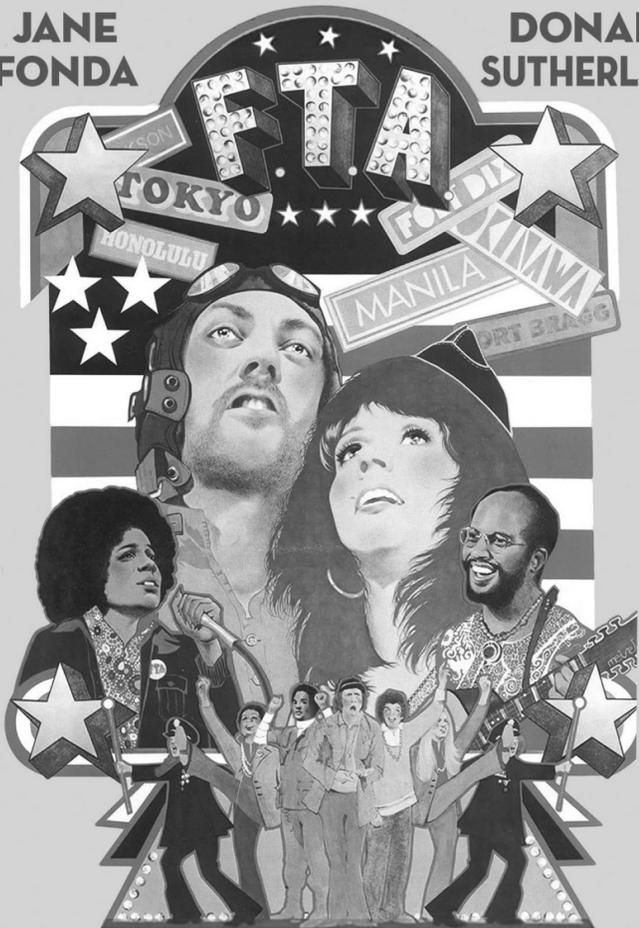


E. C. "MIDDY" STREETER TEACHES ENGLISH AND IS THE AUTHOR OF "SOLVING THE SOLAR ENIGMA." HE SERVED IN VIETNAM FROM JUNE 1970 UNTIL MAY 1971.

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A Day in the Gulf of Tonkin: 1972 Christmas Bombing Campaign

JOHN BARTON HOUSE

I don't remember the exact date, but it was between November 72 and January 73.

I was a new MMFN on the the USS Milwaukee (AOR-2). USS Milwaukee (AOR-2) was a Wichita-class replenishment oiler.

During the Vietnam War USS Milwaukee participated in operation Vietnam Ceasefire from 12 November 1972 through 20 February 1973. Milwaukee earned one campaign star for Vietnam War service

We were all called to quarters at 0300 or so...

It seems to me now we were on the line, in the Gulf of Tonkin: Yankee Station: during the "Christmas Bombing"/Operation Linebacker 2, as I recall it.

I only knew the blue jackets in the Engineering Dept.

However, I was already aware of the SOS guys on the ship.

For those of you who don't know, SOS was supposed to stand for either Save Our Ship or Sabotage Our Ship... it depended on who you talked to.

The Stop Our Ship (SOS) movement, a component of the overall civilian and GI movements against the Vietnam War, was directed towards and developed on board US Navy ships, particularly aircraft carriers heading to Southeast Asia. It was concentrated on and around major US Naval stations and ships on the West Coast from mid-1970 to the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, and at its height involved tens of thousands of anti-war civilians, military personnel and veterans. It was sparked by the tactical shift of US combat operations in Southeast Asia from the ground to the air. As the ground war stalemated and Army grunts increasingly

refused to fight or resisted the war in various other ways, the US "turned increasingly to air bombardment". By 1972 there were twice as many Seventh Fleet aircraft carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin as previously and the anti-war movement, which was at its height in the US and worldwide, became a significant factor in the Navy. While no ships were actually prevented from returning to war, the campaigns, combined with the broad anti-war and rebellious sentiment of the times, stirred up substantial difficulties for the Navy, including active duty sailors refusing to sail with their ships, circulating petitions and anti-war propaganda on board, disobeying orders, and committing sabotage, as well as persistent civilian anti-war activity in support of dissident sailors. Several ship combat missions were postponed or altered and one ship was delayed by a combination of a civilian blockade and crewmen jumping overboard

There was a lot of scuttlebutt about the USS Constellation. The Constellation was the focus of media attention when black members of her crew protested what they saw as systemic racism in the Navy, leading to what some saw as an aborted mutiny in late 1972.

The Constellation (CVA-64) returned to the United States on 1 July and prepared to return to the western Pacific in early 1973. Replacement personnel reported aboard while Constellation was in the United States until the ship had 250 more men than the ship's berthing could accommodate. Constellation's commanding officer ordered administrative (less than honorable) discharges for five black sailors he considered troublemakers.

He planned to give early discharges to another 250 men whose enlistments would expire while Constellation was overseas. While Constellation was conducting exercises off the California coast, a rumor started that the captain was going to give 250 less than honorable discharges to black sailors. On 1 November, black sailors waylaid a white mess cook in a passageway and broke his jaw. The captain scheduled an open meeting for 21:00 on 3 November to clarify the 250 planned discharges. At noon 3 November a group of 50 black sailors began a sit-in on a portion of the mess deck. On the night of 3-4 November 60 black sailors took control of the scheduled meeting, refused to leave the mess deck, and threatened to "tear up the ship." Constellation returned to San Diego on 4 November to offload 130 men, including 12 white sailors, before returning to sea. Constellation returned to San Diego on 7 November and the offloaded sailors were transported back to the dock on 9 November, but only 8 boarded the ship. The remaining sailors sat down on the dock to be filmed by television crews and were ultimately transferred to shore stations for mast. Twelve received general discharges, 35 were honorably discharged but not recommended for reenlistment, and 73 received punishments ranging from loss of pay and reduction in rate to warnings, prior to being reassigned to sea duty.

In summary, we, the enlisted men, snipes, BT's, MR's, etc, were very aware of the general anti-Vietnam sentiment in the US Navy at the time.

Another thing about the Constellation: they actually petitioned their Captain, to allow Jane Fonda

and Donald Sutherland's Show: FTA (Fuck the Army) to perform on the Carrier. We all thought this was both ironic and funny.

Anyhow, this night/morning, we were all called to quarters on the cargo deck below the weather deck: sort of like the hanger deck on an Aircraft Carrier.

We got lined up by division.

We wondered as they came around to each group, in succession.... we talked.

We were there because someone had broken into a munitions locker and taken a cage of hand grenades. He then called the bridge over the IC and threatened to blow up the ship.

We learned this as we waited.

They came around with a special flash light and looked at each sailor's hands: every sailor...I don't think they checked any Officers.

Finally they seemed to ID one guy.

As it turned out the perp had some kind of invisible dye on his hands that only showed up under black or ultraviolet light.

We were dismissed.

The next morning, a small boat pulled up to the ship.

I didn't see where it came from.

I remember seeing the master at arms and his assistants taking the guy off in a straight jacket.

I never found out who he was.



JOHN BARTON HOUSE, ENLISTED IN 1972 TO AVOID THE DRAFT AFTER BEING DENIED C/O STATUS 2 TIMES. DRAFT NUMBER 4. NOW RETIRED FROM THE STATE OF OHIO AND FEDERAL SERVICE.

US Troops Stationed *Inside* the Capitol



Silent Scream

PAUL GIANNONE

I feel it in my body. Like a parasite bouncing around looking for something to eat or an exit. This is the by-product and the flotsam and jetsam of traumatic events. I believe all who have witnessed war, natural disasters and disease control efforts such as COVID-19 have it in some form. The mind cannot help analyzing traumatic events and sometimes in utter cruelty the mind keeps replaying them in your head. An endless loop of pain. I look at my 40 years in international public health. I worked in 35 countries dealing with war, refugees, disease control programs, landmine removal projects, often on the fringe of war zones. I try to channel these mental replays into the positive. I think of all the wonderful people I have met the beautiful countries visited in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

But then the destructive mental analysis begins. My thoughts drift from Vietnam until now. What could I have done better? Did my decisions help or kill people? Should I have known more or studied more. In terms of disaster response, the Sphere manual had not yet been created. A helpful tool to specifically state minimum requirements for refugee or war/disaster victim's requirement for food, shelter, clothing and security.

The mental torque is amplified by the fact that I have not cried since 1970. I cried a great deal in Vietnam that year. I long for a soundproof room that I could walk into and scream until my throat bled and the simple pressure release of tears has denied me. But such things do exist. I tell people about my "war wound" and they do not seem to get it. The inability to cry hurts. I

worry if something bad happens to my wife or daughter I will not be able to cry and those around me will think I am a soulless shell.

The irony is that my inability to cry worked well for me in my professional life. I spent years in desperate situations in refugee camps, mined areas and war/disaster sites. Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, Sierra Leone and Rwanda were my work areas. But in my visits to these sites no victims need to see a crying public health advisor trying to come to their aid. You remain stoic and tough. Like in Nam, never let anyone see you afraid or scared.

I ask when will the tears come? When can I scream aloud?



Paul Giannone is a 40+ year career public health emergency responder, planner, director and author. He received a Bachelor of Science (cum laude) in Community Health Services from the State University of New York at Brockport in 1974 and a Master's Degree in Public Health with a concentration in Population and Family Planning from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor in 1976. His public health career began "under fire" as a two tour (1969 - 1971) Public Health Advisor with the 29th Civil Affairs Company in the Republic of Vietnam (Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal, and the South Vietnamese Public Health Medal).

Peaches

I don't know how she did it.
Her sure fingers
gripped the pink edge
of the gauze bandage
yellowed by pus and blood
and ripped
one after the other—
thirteen open wounds in all—
a quick tear
and they were off,
the new fresh blood
bleeding out my chest,
legs, and arms
as I bit down hard
on an imaginary bullet
and swallowed
a soundless scream.

She was twenty-two,
she said, volunteered
for the Army after finishing
nursing school,
would've been a doctor
if it weren't for the war,
and her brother.
He'd gone in 1967,
and returned, coffin
dressed in a flag.
That's when she decided.
Been in Saigon six months
when I got there,
waking from brain surgery
with no memory of home

She didn't know how long
she could keep on going.
"Tired", she said, "so tired
these days, so many
young boys with my
brother's face."

One afternoon,
her fingers touched mine
as they moved
over the gauze
near my heart
and I clasped them
in a lover's embrace.
When I left
a few weeks later
for a hospital in Japan,
her eyes teared up
as her lonesome hand
waved goodbye,
waved as if we were
secret lovers,
I imagined.

Every now and then,
I still see her,
her deep, brown eyes
studying mine
as I gritted through
the pain.
I saved the letters
I wrote her in Yokohama.
I never knew
where to send them.

—*rg cantalupo*

The Ducks On the Hoi An River

drift with the currents
pecking at insects
along the shallow reeds—
floating so gently
on the river's rippling surface—

oh, how I wish
I could glide so lightly
on the currents,
instead of forever
swimming upstream—

almost 50 years now
since mortars fell
and green tracers
sought out men
hiding here in the reeds—

beneath the surface,
silver minnows flash
and disappear—so like
the ones I caught
for bait as a boy—

and so, so many,
wriggling their tiny bodies
like earthworms
through the thick,
green water—

and now I see my face
in the ripples, gently
appearing in the failing
light before drifting back
to a stiller green—

so that I am, and I am not,
flickering in and out of light,
and time—

—*rg cantalupo*

Section 60 at Arlington

The Penetrated...

Evaporated... Disintegrated ... Eviscerated... Decapitated...

Mind and Soul Amputated... Burnt and Blown Up...

Brain Damaged... Bled Out and Heart Failed...

Are Here: In Section 60 at Arlington...

The Smashed and Trashed...

Who Survived the Blast, But didn't Last or...

Suicided at Home but were Killed Elsewhere also have Their Last
Deployment Here: In Section 60, or

Some Variation people "Respect and admire" But don't Aspire to (Ignoring
Those Who Mostly Survived and only Somewhat Died)

On Memorial Day most folks play while only a Few Caress the Tombstones
of the Angelfied. The majority know what to do: Stuff Your Mind with
Barbecue...

—*Horace Coleman*



Painting by Mark Hartford.

Memorial Day for the First Dead

"Americans are saddened this morning
with news that a life of a heroic service member
has been taken in our glorious fight against
the evil of radical Islamic children,"
President Trump said in a Reality TV statement.
In an alternative fact
the US flag has lost touch with history

William Ryan Owens who died Sunday
January 29, 2017 was promoted in rank
after his wasted death during a midnight raid
on a small desert village in Yemen

Innocent civilians were "likely" to have been killed
in a US commando raid in Yemen
over the weekend and
children may have been among the dead,
US Central Command said

Thirty civilians
two possible Al-Qaeda
foot-soldiers were killed
nine dead children including a baby

bitter wind dressed up like the future
with no place to go

there was no promotion in rank for the children

—*Larry Kerschner*

An Ally Confronts the Draft

JEFF KOON

My Situation in the 1960s

I began as a student at Berkeley in Fall 1959, finishing five years later. Every year I filled out the form to renew my student deferral with my draft board. After I finished my bachelor's degree in US History, I went to San Diego State College for one more semester, as a grad student undecided as to specialization—extending my deferral one more year. But I just wasn't ready to continue school. So I returned to live in the beckoning mecca that was Berkeley.

When I entered college, I was moderately conservative politically and thoroughly anti-communist. As my college years accumulated and the civil rights movement expanded, and as I learned more history, I slowly radicalized. Although I was in San Diego when Berkeley's Free Speech Movement (FSM) and sit-in occurred in Fall, 1964—to counter the University's new effort to suppress civil rights protests in the Bay Area—it was clear to me that the protesters were in the right.

Back in Berkeley, I was available to spend many hours at the largest-ever teach-in against the War on Vietnam, May 21-22, 1965. But even before then things were fishy: a Buddhist monk in a Buddhist-majority nation had immolated himself on the streets of Saigon; and an unpopular leader (Diem) was overthrown by South Vietnamese generals, leading to more of the same. In further reading, I found that the USA had supported the French recolonization of Vietnam after WWII instead of Vietnamese independence. After the French defeat, Eisenhower, knowing that Ho Chi Minh would easily win the election slated to occur per the peace accords, backed Diem who refused to allow those elections.

Support for Diem was carried on by Kennedy; and Johnson backed his successors too. Our government's anti-communist zealots disregarded our democratic ideals; its policies sacrificed millions of Vietnamese seeking to liberate their nation from foreign control or hegemony. The War ON Vietnam was wrong and immoral.

Yet by law, my government's institutions had the power to take me into the military and send me to fight against the Vietnamese. Even if my degree might have kept me out of the rice paddies and the doubtful redoubts in the mountains, and maybe even enabled me to avoid directly witnessing the PTSD-inducing deaths of comrades and civilians, I would have had blood on my hands for supporting evil.

Trying to Dissuade the Draft Board

The next deferment form arrived in Fall 1965. Now I had no way out. But I sent my draft board a letter explaining why the war was wrong and why I opposed it, making it quite clear that the army didn't want me. The letter included a copy of the words to Bob Dylan's "Masters of War." They summoned me to a physical in San Diego. I delayed the inevitable by having them transfer my physical to Oakland (near Berkeley).

Meanwhile, I tried to convey my exceptionality by sending the draft board a rolled-up paper scroll, by certified mail (to make sure they got it), on which was written, in large letters in orange pastel, "Why don't you get the fuck off my back." By then, I had become a letter carrier for the post office. Honorable work—free from any taint of the War on Vietnam. But after 6 months and 5 days on the

job, I was called into the supervisor's office and told to resign or I would be fired—because I had sent obscenity through the mail. Since I was 5 days into the period when I first had some appeal rights, I spent some money on a lawyer to see if there was any chance to fight it. The definition of "obscenity" at the time was that it appealed to the "prurient interest" of the reader—which my message did definitely not do—but the lawyer's answer was still "no." Oh yeah—and my forced resignation came with a 20-year ban on working for the federal government—not including the army of course.

The Grand Finale

The order to appear for the physical exam came with a health-related survey to fill out. I didn't have any physical health disqualifiers—not even "bone spurs." But on the item about whether I was addicted to drugs, I didn't check any of their boxes, instead writing "No, but I smoke marijuana all the time." I also modified another question that I have since forgotten. And I checked the "homosexual tendencies" box in that little section.

In the morning before the physical, I had my girlfriend print, all in large capitals, two messages on my back and one on my front: GET OUT OF VIETNAM; LEGALIZE MARIJUANA; and ABOLISH THE DRAFT. As most VVAW members know, much of the physical involves waiting around in lines in your undies, going to various "stations," where they do things like check your reflexes. I made no fuss whatsoever. But when I got to station #9, where one sees a real doctor, I said, "I want to see the head doc" (hoping I could find

someone who could see the problem here). The answer to my request was, "You need to."

That was promising. Might they be seeing me as likely to subvert the war effort? Or even as a quiet but dangerous rebel? But then it was on to the doctor himself. He looked at my survey answers and chose to ask about my homosexual tendencies response. I said, quite correctly, "well, everybody has homosexual tendencies." He asked me if there were any specifics. I said, "Yes, when I was younger." "How old?" "About 13" (while messing around a little with another boy scout in a tent). The doctor got out a stamp and used it on my papers: "Deviant sexual experience"—not qualified for induction (a 1Y classification).

In sum, my efforts to convey that the army didn't want me cost me a good job, a ban on federal employment for 20 years, a written record of (then largely-condemned) homosexual conduct accessible to god knows who all, and a lot of stress. But I didn't have to go through some variant on what VVAW members did. And I didn't have to flee to Canada (my next alternative?). And I could still easily join in some of the peaceful protests and activities against the war here in the heart of the beast.



JEFF KOON IS A RETIRED EDUCATIONAL SURVEY RESEARCHER, DATA ANALYST, AND EVALUATOR WITH AN EMPHASIS ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT LIFE. HE WAS ALSO A HOUSEHUSBAND WHO DID A LOT OF VOLUNTEER SCHOOL-COMMUNITY SERVICE. RECENTLY, HE WROTE "CULTURAL INSANITY: THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING OUR WORLD AND OURSELVES." SEE HIS WEBSITE AT JEFFREYWYNTERKOON.COM.

Chasing the Light

JOHN CRANDELL (REVIEWER)

Chasing the Light: Writing, Directing, and Surviving Platoon, Midnight Express, Scarface, Salvador, and the Movie Game

by Oliver Stone

(Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2020)

It is 9 pm here in the west, seven hours after closing time in Chicago, i.e. - the editor's deadline for this spring's edition of *The Veteran*. I've yet to read Oliver Stone's brief, closing chapter of

his memoir published last summer by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: *Chasing The Light*.

Nevertheless, as a brief, post-last minute micro review one can only say that Stone's highly literate, transformative, haunting and resonant script is an astounding achievement. One can't imagine a Peckinpah, a Huston, a Bogdanovich or Altman or Cassavetes or Leone or any of Hollywood's present writer-director's

producing such brutally honest and moving work.

As we all know, he humped with a rucksack long ago amidst the heat, humidity and horror of Vietnam. Having just finished his chapter describing location shooting for Platoon I'm moved to say that this one chapter—both in substance and in style—likely exceeds any written recollection to have come out of Hollywood, ever. Get this book for

this singular masterpiece of a chapter alone and treasure it.



A REGISTERED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT AND A VETERAN OF THE FOURTH INFANTRY IN VIETNAM, JOHN CRANDELL RETIRED FROM AN ENGINEERING POSITION WITH THE AIR FORCE IN 2014 AND NOW MANAGES "THE FARM" PLUS SIX FELINES, SOUTHEAST OF SACRAMENTO.

I Ain't Marching Anymore

JOHN KETWIG (REVIEWER)

I Ain't Marching Anymore: Dissenters, Deserters, and Objectors to America's Wars

by Chris Lombardi

(The New Press, 2019)

Many years ago, my wife and I relocated to exotic Aiken, South Carolina to seek our fortunes. Shortly before, I had returned to the Rochester, New York area from two years in Southeast Asia, where I learned that it doesn't snow up to your lower lip in all parts of the world. Alas, in western New York, a phenomenon called "Lake effect" brings the possibility of snow the majority of the year, and I had soon become eager to escape from shoveling snow. After becoming accustomed to the South Carolina lifestyle, we purchased a modest ranch home in a peaceful development inhabited mostly by retired older folks, and we soon became friends with many of our neighbors.

Our closest relationship was with the couple across the street. They had relocated to a warmer climate from western Michigan, where he had been a protestant minister. As time went on,

they became aware of my anti-war views, which were somewhat unique for a bedroom community located just a few miles from the Savannah River Plant nuclear weapons facility. Arnold had been a conscientious objector during World War II, and he made me aware of many of the ramifications of that courageous declaration at that time in our history. Arnold and Connie were dear people, and we maintained a treasured friendship with them long after we had moved away. In fact, years later when we lived in the vicinity of the nation's capital, Connie travelled to Washington with a group of lady friends to take part in a special protest against nuclear weapons, and we joined them as a family to be part of the Ribbon Around the Pentagon. When I was puking out the story of my experiences in Vietnam, I know my wife called Connie sometimes for moral support and understanding, and when my pile of papers became ...and a hard rain fell, we were contacted by one of my wife's high school classmates who had taken refuge in Canada after the shootings at Kent State. He and his wife have

remained in Canada ever since, in silent protest of the militaristic and empirical policies of the United States. "We didn't want to raise our children in that environment," he told me.

Reading *I Ain't Marching Anymore: Dissenters, Deserters, and Objectors to America's Wars* was like sharing a visit with Arnold again! Like most Americans, and especially in this era of ubiquitous "support" for all things military, I am familiar at best with the history of conscientious objectors throughout our country's many wars. Most of my attention has been drawn to "our" war in Vietnam, of course, and I consider David Harris' book *Our War and What It Did to Us* to be one of the finest documents to emerge from the Vietnam era. I've read VVAW member Gerry Gioglio's book *Days of Decision*, and David Cortwright's *Soldiers in Revolt*. In more recent times I've been inspired by Chelsea Manning and Reality Winner, and I regularly contribute to Courage to Resist, an organization that supports modern-day military resisters.

With a title taken from Phil Ochs' classic anti-war song, *I Ain't Marching*

Anymore is the history of America as experienced by the soldiers and resisters who dared to revolt against maltreatment in the military, against the treachery of Revolutionary War wealthy who expected the poor to fight and die without pay, food, or shoes to wear in the snow at Valley Forge. It is the story of resistance to American aggression throughout every war and military misadventure of our bloody American history, and it is a riveting tale. The incredible courage of these resisters is celebrated at last, but that celebration will no doubt be muted if you don't buy this book, savor every page, and then pass it on to the young folks who are daring to question America's militarism today.



JOHN KETWIG IS A LIFETIME MEMBER OF VVAW, AND THE AUTHOR OF TWO CRITICALLY-ACCLAIMED BOOKS ABOUT VIETNAM, ...AND A HARD RAIN FELL AND VIETNAM RECONSIDERED: THE WAR, THE TIMES, AND WHY THEY MATTER.

Sharing Experiences In Songs Is Helping Vietnam Vets to Heal

BILL CHRISTOFFERSON (REVIEWER)

An album of songs based on the experiences of Vietnam era veterans, titled *The Last Thing We Ever Do*, is nearing completion and scheduled for release in August by Warrior Songs, a non-profit helping veterans heal from the trauma of war. A number of VVAW members have been involved in the project.

The CD will feature 15 songs created by professional songwriters from the firsthand testimony of Vietnam era veterans, brought to life by professional studio musicians. Copies of the CDs are made available to veterans and veteran non-profits free of charge.

The stories behind the songs come from Vietnam veterans sharing their experiences, some at Warrior Songs retreats, which help veterans heal through the creative arts, others through personal conversations and interviews.

"This album is about healing, and also about reconciliation," said Jason Moon, an Iraq war combat veteran plagued by severe PTSD who founded Warrior Songs to help other veterans heal through the arts. He wrote one of the songs, "Seeds of Peace," in Vietnam in 2019 and recorded it with Vietnamese children as vocalists. It is about the importance of reconciliation in healing moral injury. The renowned conductor of the United Saigon Orchestra, Son Mach, completed recordings in Saigon and Da Nang.

The song was inspired by Moon witnessing a meal in Duc Pho shared by Vietnam veteran Chuck Theusch, founder of Children's Library International, and other US Vietnam veterans, with former Viet Cong. The two groups had fought against each other 50 years ago in that province.

The songs on the album run the gamut of topics, from dealing with the Selective Service to combat to coping with returning to the US, civilian life, and moral injury. A sampling:

Former VVAW member Watermelon Slim (Bill Homans) has created a song about losing one's humanity during combat. Actor/

writer/producer/musician Elvis Thao, a cast member of Clint Eastwood's "Gran Torino" film, is creating a song about the experience of a Hmong Veteran entitled "Bloody Mekong." Both will perform at the August 8 release party in Milwaukee.

Special Forces Vietnam veteran vocalist Larry Reed and instrumentalists John & Susan Nicholson of Frogwater teamed up with Vietnam veteran Charlie Walton, who had a fellow soldier die in his arms, to create a song about letting go of survivor's guilt, "Let It Go."

"Mark's Song," inspired by VVAW member Mark Foreman, a Navy corpsman with the Marines who spent five days lying severely wounded on a battlefield, was written and recorded by Katie and Jesse Frewerd, who perform as Canary Canyon.

"Conscription" is based on a poem by VVAW member John Zutz, who worked with songwriter Lisa Johnson. It tells about the experience of the draft, from nervously waiting to find out if your number is pulled in the birthday lottery, to not being able to find a job when you're in limbo, to seeing Vietnam on TV and wondering if you'll end up there, and if you do, wondering if you will come back again.

"Welcome To The World" is the story of African American veteran Calvin Wade, who came home to find he wasn't treated like a full citizen

Award-winning songwriter Kyle Rightley brings to life the story of Bill Martin, a magician and helicopter pilot. Bill used magic tricks to entertain Vietnamese children in between gunship missions. He went on to found The Veterans and Patriots Performance Group.

Songwriters Aaron Baer and Paul Wisneski teamed up to tell the story of veteran and author Brenton MacKinnon, as he prepares for the end of his life due to terminal cancer from Agent Orange.

"Disquieted Mind" by Jeff Mitchell tells the story of veteran Steve Gunn, who healed in part through the work of Dr. Ed Tick and Soldier's

Heart. This touching commentary on the need for healing from moral injury concludes the CD.

Cover art for the CD is by VVAW member Jim Wachtendonk, an Agent Orange victim, and Dinh Luc, a Hanoi wood block artist who was a North Vietnamese Army soldier. VVAW member Bill Christofferson met Dinh Luc on a Vietnam trip in 2000, and Jason Moon visited him last year, when Moon joined Chuck Theusch's Children's Library International on their 20 year anniversary trip to Vietnam, which inspired the "Seeds of Peace" song.

A release party is planned for August 8, the anniversary of the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, at the Turner Hall Ballroom in Milwaukee, with music by many of the artists on the CD. Details will be available at the Warrior Songs website, www.WarriorSongs.org, and on its Facebook page.

This is the third album by Warrior Songs. Volume 1, *If You Have To Ask*, was released in 2016 and features the stories from a wide array of veterans. *Women at War: Warrior Songs Vol. 2* was released in 2018 and represents the first time in the history of modern music that a full length CD was created from the testimony of women veterans. *Women at War* won the Wisconsin Area Music Award Album of the Year for 2019.

While Volume 3 nears completion and release, plans are already underway



for the next Warrior Songs album, *Veterans of Color: Warrior Songs Vol. 4*, with an anticipated 2022/2023 release date. Connie Hunter-Baptiste, an Air Force veteran who is vice president of the Women Veteran Social Justice Network and a member of the Warrior Songs board, will co-produce the album with Moon, an Army veteran.



BILL CHRISTOFFERSON, A FORMER JOURNALIST AND LONGTIME POLITICAL CONSULTANT, NOW RETIRED, LIVES IN MILWAUKEE. HE IS A MEMBER OF VVAW.



Young Vietnamese singers provide vocals for "Seeds of Peace" song of reconciliation.

A War Story Series:

**The Light Where
Shadows End**

3rd Award-winning Edition

rg cantalupo

How Do We Heal
From War?

Free books available from the author at
author@rgcantalupo.com



VVAW planting tree at the end of Dewey Canyon III, April 1971.

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, including active duty GIs stationed in Vietnam. Through ongoing actions and grassroots organization, VVAW exposed the ugly truth about US involvement in Southeast Asia and our first-hand experiences helped many other Americans to see the unjust nature of that war.

VVAW also took up the struggle for the rights and needs of veterans. In 1970, we began the first rap groups

to deal with traumatic aftereffects of war, setting the example for readjustment counseling at vet centers today. 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 still finances and arms undemocratic and repressive regimes around the world in the name of "democracy." American troops have again been sent into open battle in the Middle East and covert

actions in Latin America, for many of the same misguided reasons that were used to send us to Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, many veterans from all eras are still denied justice—facing unemployment, discrimination, homelessness, post-traumatic stress disorder and other health problems, while already inadequate services are 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 future generations 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. Anyone who supports this overall effort, whether Vietnam veteran or not, veteran or not, may join us in this long-term struggle. JOIN US!



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. The original MACV insignia also put forward lies. The US military was not protecting (the sword) the Vietnamese from invasion from the People's Republic of China (the China Gates), 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 over 46 years old. The insignia, VVAW® and Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc.® are registered trademarks belonging to VVAW and no other organization or group may use it for any reason without written permission from the VVAW Board of Directors.

Beware of VVAW-AI

This notice is to alert you to a handful of individuals calling themselves the "Vietnam Veterans Against the War Anti-Imperialist" (VVAW-AI). VVAW-AI is actually the creation of an obscure ultraleft sect, designed to confuse people in order to associate themselves with VVAW's many years of activism and struggle. They are not a faction, caucus or part of VVAW, Inc. and are not affiliated with us in any way. We urge all people and organizations to beware of this bogus outfit.

SUPPORT VVAW! DONATE OR JOIN TODAY!

Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc.
VVAW Membership
P.O. Box 355
Champaign, IL 61824-0355

Membership Application

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____
 Email address _____
 Branch _____
 Dates of Service (if applicable) _____
 Unit _____
 Military Occupation _____
 Rank _____
 Overseas Duty _____
 Dates _____

- Yes, add me to the VVAW email list.
- I do not wish to join, but wish to make a donation to the work of VVAW.
- Sign me up for a lifetime membership in VVAW. \$250 is enclosed.

Membership in VVAW is open to ALL people who want to build a veterans' movement that fights for peace and justice and support the work of VVAW and its historic legacy. 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 \$25.00 (not required of homeless, unemployed or incarcerated vets).

Signature _____
 Date _____
 Total Amount Enclosed _____

Make checks payable to VVAW. Contributions are tax-deductible.



Dewey Canyon III, April 1971.

RECOLLECTIONS

Rats

JIM RICHARDSON

Rats were a common thing where I was stationed during the Vietnam War. The place was called Chu Lai, once a small fishing village along the South China Sea, then the headquarters of the 23rd Infantry Division.

I had recently received a transfer to the rear area from Bravo Company, 1/6 Battalion, 196th Infantry Brigade, and was happy at not having to be a grunt anymore, humping the jungles for weeks at a time in search of the enemy. My memories of living on mountainous firebase Mary Ann were still fresh in my mind. Three of us, including my platoon's leader, Sgt. Daniels, and the platoon's medic, lived in a small bunker on the hill's southern perimeter for two weeks over the Christmas holidays. It was hardly big enough for us to turn around in. We slept in hammocks over a floor made out of wooden ammunition crates in order to keep ourselves safe from the rats that lived between the boxes. What I didn't know at the time was that Mary Ann, considered a relatively safe firebase, would be completely overrun by the North Vietnamese in the middle of the night only three months later.

Here in Chu Lai, I had a bed at night instead of the ground; clean fatigues instead of the same uniform worn three weeks running; hot food at the mess instead of C-rations; a shower; an enlisted men's club where I could drink beer and occasionally get drunk; electricity to run fans, record players, and radios; a volleyball court where I could exercise and have fun; and most importantly, a job that I really liked.

I was lucky. I was brought back to be an illustrator and photographer for the division's weekly rag sheet and a quarterly glossy magazine called *The Americal* that only the brass ended up seeing. It was a cushy desk job that fit my art training in college and was worlds apart from the danger and daily

exhaustion of living in the bush.

Although living in the safety of a rear area where our only fear was an occasional enemy rocket or two exploding in the middle of the night, the real hardship among its inhabitants was tedium. The WWI adage—"war is long periods of boredom punctuated by moments of sheer terror"—certainly applied to Chu Lai. One only had to consider the ferocious Tet offensive that happened the year before I arrived in country to understand how true that saying was. Among the worst things that threatened our lives now, however, seemed to be the bad coffee at the mess hall and the outdated B-rated movies we watched at the EM club at night.

Which brings me to my subject of rats. Chu Lai was like a small city, possibly with as many as a few thousand military personnel living within its confines. Like many small cities, it had its problems, problems such as garbage and waste removal. Areas that served as dumping grounds were fenced in with high chicken wire, but that was only a small inconvenience to the large Vietnam rats that lived among us. If there was ever a happy lot, it was them. They had no problem adapting to the tons of left-over American cuisine: rotten potatoes, old lunch meat and chicken parts, chunks of cabbage and left-over carrots. Many of the rats found the hundreds of ancient sand-bag bunkers scattered about the military complex an ideal place to call home when they weren't busy foraging.

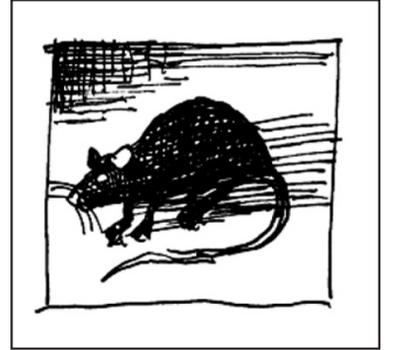
One evening, in the middle of another endless card game, one of the guys hit upon the idea of organizing a "rat patrol" that would try to limit the rats' population around the compound. Everyone thought it was a brilliant idea. Immediately, we broke up the card game and began preparing ourselves for the nocturnal hunt. The plan was to go out every

night until we successfully limited their numbers. Someone printed "Rat Patrol" in large block letters on pieces of paper that we each attached to our hard helmets with an elastic band. We then armed ourselves with metal soup plates and pans, large wood and metal spoons, machetes, baseball bats, and flashlights.

Now armed, we exited our hooch in semi-military formation and approached the nearest sand-bagged bunker in search of our prey. We knew that during the day, the rats preferred the inside of the dark bunkers to sleep and get away from the heat. As nightfall arrived, the rats felt safe to come out and look around for food scraps.

The plan was to have one member of our hunting party enter one of the bunker entrances while the others gathered around the opposite entrance to make havoc on any poor unsuspecting rodent that came out. For some reason, (I suspect it was the age-old hunter's anticipation of searching out his prey), I became excited and volunteered to be the one to enter the bunker and chase the rats to the other end. As I cautiously entered, bent over so as not to scrape my helmet on the low ceiling, I banged on my metal plate with a spoon, and at the same time tried to shine my flashlight down the inside of the bunker. I remember the inside was pitch black and the thought of being in such a dark place alone that might be home to dozens of rats was suddenly feeling like a bad idea to me. "What's the problem?" I tried to reassure myself as I slowly advanced inside the bunker, "They're only rats. Besides, I'm a trained combat soldier!"

As I anxiously progressed towards the middle of the sand-bagged tunnel, I could hear the frantic squeaking sounds of the rats running away from me and towards their impending doom. "We got 'em! We



got em!" I yelled out, still banging on my plate with gaining confidence. "Get ready! Here they come!" I warned my comrades. It was all working to plan.

Stopping momentarily, I was able to shine my light exactly on our rat pack at the far end. I saw seemingly hundreds of rodents, all of their red eyes suddenly turned towards me. It then occurred to me; they must have sensed more danger at the other end and wisely determined that my direction was by far the safer of the two. As I held my flashlight on them, I watched in horror as they suddenly reversed direction and ran towards me!

"Goddamn!" I yelled out. "They're coming after me!"

I never remembered running so fast. As I charged out of the bunker, I tripped and fell forward, my helmet flying off my head as I hit the ground. The rats clambered over me as they made their escape.

"Are you alright?" one of my buddies asked, bending over me and laughing uncontrollably.

"Yeah," I answered gasping for breath. "But I never thought rats could run so fast!"



JIM RICHARDSON RECENTLY PUBLISHED HIS FIRST NOVEL, *MIDDLE BLUE*, BASED ON HIS EXPERIENCES IN VIETNAM AS AN INFANTRYMAN. A SEQUEL NOVEL ENTITLED *THE SIGN MAKER*, IS SOON TO BE PUBLISHED.

Troops Take Up Defensive Positions in the Nation's Capital



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