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VETERANS FOR PEACE NEWS

MINNESOTA VETERANS FOR PEACE, CHAPTER 27

Veterans for Peace News is published quarterly by Minnesota Veterans for Peace, Chapter 27.

Veterans for Peace works to increase awareness of the costs of war, restrain government from intervening in the internal affairs of other nations, end the arms race, reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons, seek justice for veterans and victims of war, and abolish war as an instrument of national policy.

We pledge to use democratic and nonviolent means to achieve our purpose.

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"There won't be any trumpets blowing come the Judgement Day — on the bloody morning after, one tin soldier rides away..."
(Potter & Lambert)



Participants in the die-in at the main gate to Ft. Benning at the SOA protests.

Ch. 27 leads large contingent to SOA protests

by David Culver

On Nov. 16-19, the weekend before Thanksgiving, I had the privilege of co-leading (with Wayne Whitman) a bus trip with 71 dedicated peace activists. We were traveling to Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga., to join a throng of rights activists, torture survivors, anti-war veterans, students, families, union workers, nuns, artists, and others from across the world to demand the U.S. Army close the School of the Americas (SOA), now known as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC). It was one of the largest contingents that our chapter had sponsored in recent memory.

SOA/WHINSEC is an unholy euphemism for a school for terrorists, a school of assassins actually, run by the U.S. Army at Ft. Benning. The continued operation of this "school" ensures that the evils of power, greed, racism, sexism, and militarism are kept alive and

active throughout Latin America. "Graduates" of this school are responsible for the death squads that martyred Catholic Archbishop Oscar Romero; four Maryknoll missionary nuns in El Salvadore; labor union leaders Isidro Gil and Adolpho Murners in Columbia; six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper, and her daughter; and literally hundreds of thousands of known and unknown, unnamed others.

We were senior citizens, young adults, college and high school students, workers, housewives, nuns, retired, veterans and civilians. We came from as far away as Aberdeen, SD; from St. Benedict's and St. John's in Collegeville, MN; from St. Thomas and St. Catherine's universities, Cretin-Derham Hall High School, St. Martin's Community, and Veterans For Peace in the Twin Cities. Some of us were seasoned protesters, and many were not. What held us together in solidarity was our belief that the School of the Assassins

SOA protests, cont'd page 4

Melting weapons of war into bells for peace

by Larry Johnson, President, Chapter 27

Though we think we never do enough, Chapter 27 is a leader in the country. In August we were asked to sit on a panel at the national convention on "Creating Successful Chapters." When I sat down before a large group of people who were saying things like, "We're very small. We only have two or three active members," I departed from my notes and began: "Jesus said, 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'"

I'm not talking about the popularly portrayed Jesus. I'm talking about the leader who spawned a movement where people refused to participate in the violence of warfare for 300 years.

But if that thought does not work for you spiritually, there's Margaret Mead's comment: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world." Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. Then I went on to talk about how and why we do things in Chapter 27, especially our long commitment to the original spirit of Armistice Day.

Many know that over 20 years ago, a small group led by Steve McKeown, began to observe Nov. 11 as it was originally observed, after the Armistice was signed on the 11th hour of the 11th day on the 11th month of 1918 to end World War I. We've gathered in various places, with speakers and music, and then, just before 11 a.m., we've read a statement describing the horror people felt in 1918 over what the war had done to soldiers and civilians around the world. At 11 we've rung bells 11 times and paused to consider our own commitment to peace, as the day was observed around the world back then.

Four years ago Bob Heberle and other local members got a National Resolution passed, encouraging other chapters to join in. Some did, as did a number of churches in this

area, as we began calling and encouraging them to join with us in their own way and their own place.

Then this year, just before the national convention in early August, Mike Ferner, former national president, called

and said David Cobb of Move to Amend (www.movetoamend.org) was interested in partnering with us on Armistice Day and promoting it nationally. I said we would, thinking, "This is perfect. What better way to commit to peace than a concerted national effort to get big money out of politics, because that's what drives the infrastructure that keeps us in perpetual warfare." In a matter of weeks, our effort was

being promoted nationally by Move to Amend, our national Veterans For Peace, and David Swanson (www.davidswanson.org) who wrote the books *War Is A Lie*, *The Military Industrial Complex at 50*, and *When The World Outlawed War*.

For a while it was crazy here, as we fielded phone calls and emails from VFP chapters and Move to Amend groups all over the country who wanted to do something like what we've been doing in Minnesota. Then Casey Steinmetz at National assigned an intern to call chapters and make connections, which took some of the load off of us. This led to more than 60 cities creating their own way of celebrating the spirit of Armistice, many of them also reaching out to nearby churches.

There were events in Selma, Alabama; Homer, Alaska; Cambridge, Massachusetts; San Francisco and L.A.; Iowa; New Mexico; and all points surrounding and between. VFP Chapter 71 in Sonoma County marched the main street of their town, banners flying and bells ringing all the way. Kansas City created an electronic link to bells chiming, for those who had none. A Rotary President in San Francisco wrote to us, looked at our materials and responded, "I like this. I'm going to incorporate it into what we do here on

Continued next page



Nov. 11.” Jeanne Spray in L.A. wrote, “Thank you so much for this action. It’s brilliant. I am so IN. Every step we take matters, and this is a fabulous one we can all participate in.” Central Florida managed to get extensive media coverage on their Armistice work, including an interview with Steve McKeown, as founder of our local effort.

Again, many Minnesota churches joined in, including St. Luke’s Presbyterian and St. Joan of Arc, where VFP members, David Bishop, Charlie Bloss, and Dave Culver rang bells in the service. John Varone, past president, spoke at Trinity Lutheran in St. Peter. Dave Logsdon and Bruce Berry rang bells at Brit’s Pub, and Steve McKeown and Doug Drews did the ceremony at Sisters of St. Joseph at Carondelet with Joan Johnson leading the music. I was at Community United Methodist in Columbia Heights and at St. Cloud State University, and then joined Steve McKeown and Dick Foley to speak with students at Hill-Murray school Nov. 13. Steve and I also spoke to the Every Church a Peace Church gathering November 12.

We can be proud, and we have been thanked profusely for our service in this area. The last time I spoke with David Cobb, he said, “Promise me we will get started with this much earlier next year.” We will, because look what happened in the short time we had this year, partnering with VFP National, David Swanson, Move to Amend, The Minnesota Peace Project (www.minnesotapeaceproject.org) and Minnesota Arms Spending Alternatives Project (www.mnASAP.org). Our small, committed, persistent group has helped create an infrastructure of small, committed groups all over the country, standing by to help many more dare to say what they truly believe, things like:

Why do we let companies get away with selling the Pentagon equipment it doesn’t even want, let alone sub-standard materials at inflated prices.

I can’t believe you are screaming, “Rah, rah, support the troops” while you cut veterans’ benefits and hope no one notices.

If the weapons you are selling are really necessary, show the same sacrifice asked of soldiers. Pay the workers but don’t allow CEOs or shareholders to profit.

Don’t teach us “just war” theory in church, or the

Geneva Conventions in the military and keep killing civilians if the documents don’t mean what they say. Stop lying.

I know it’s “just a story,” but everyone in Sleeping Beauty’s castle was asleep and totally out of it for 100 years. We signed the Armistice in 1918, saying war was too horrible to ever participate in again. Ten years later the Kellogg-Briand

Pact made it illegal. We’ve let those who profit from perpetual warfare keep us sleeping, singing the hideous lullaby: “Don’t worry. Killing people and fearing your own safety forever, keeps you alive and safe.”

In 2018, 100 years will have passed, and that is none too soon to wake up and give everyone jobs melting down weapons to make bells for joy and bowls for food for everyone.

This War Business: Time for apologies

by Tom Dooley

In the debate over whether the Japanese should apologize for Pearl Harbor or the Americans for Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or both or neither, there is an alternative: those responsible in both countries should apologize to the dead of both countries and to their survivors.

But this is not enough. The ruling elements of both countries should apologize to their victims, dead and alive, for the murders and torture and starvation and hardship caused by their decisions. And these leaders should search their souls to try and understand why they have done what they have done. This will be difficult because leaders by nature are ambitious and aggressive and action-oriented, not inclined to introspection. But they should try.

Finally, every citizen in the world should apologize to every other world citizen for allowing themselves to be duped into participating in or allowing or ignoring the terrible things that happen everywhere in the world.

***“A bayonet is a weapon
with a worker at each end.”***

SOA protests, from page 1



Chapter 27 contingent in the VFP-sponsored march to Ft. Benning.

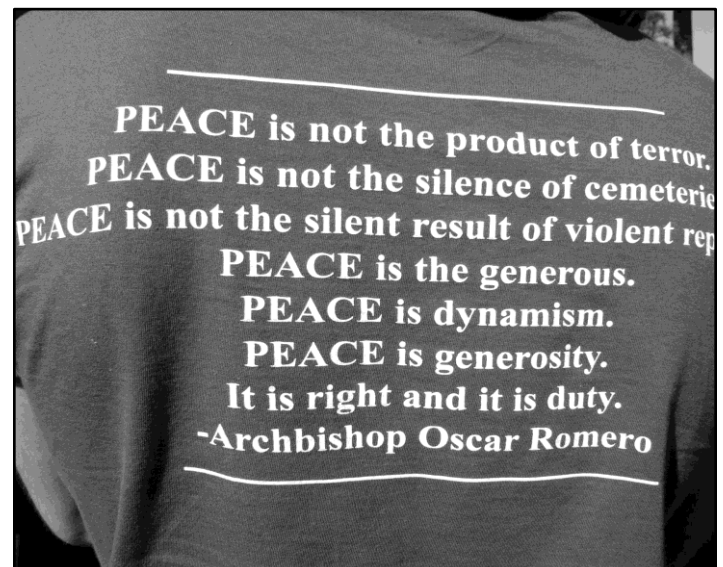
must be shut down, peace and justice must be restored to Latin America, and we could make a difference.

This year there was a celebratory tone to the proceedings. In the past year significant progress had been made toward our goal of closing the school. Six South American countries (most recently Nicaragua and Ecuador) will no longer send troops to be trained at the school. After protests and nonviolent direct actions, thousands of petitions, and letters from religious leaders and members of Congress, the White House finally sat down with an SOA Watch delegation to discuss the school.

The protest included a VFP-sponsored mile and a half march of well over 125 of my fellow veterans and supporters to Ft. Benning and a climactic funeral procession of all demonstrators that commemorated all the victims of SOA/WHINSEC. Each protester carried a makeshift wooden cross hewn from rough lumber painted white with the name of a person victimized by SOA/WHINSEC. As each person's name was sung in a litany from the stage, we would all raise our crosses and shout "Presente" (present), here, at least in our memories. As the march continued, the crosses were placed in a chain-link fence in front of the

main gate. At the end of the procession the fence was festooned with the thousands of crosses representing the victims of SOA/WHINSEC atrocities.

The people who got off the bus on our return home the evening of Monday, Nov. 19, were different from those who had boarded the bus a mere 80 hours earlier. Our trip was a





Crosses are placed in the chain-link fence in front of the main gate at Fort Benning.

life-changing experience for all of us. May it also be a life-changing experience for those whose pain and suffering we dare to voice: the victims of SOA/WHINSEC and their families.

More information, including video and descriptions of this year's protest, can be found on the web at www.soaw.org.

The day following our return we were saddened to learn that the Vatican has dismissed from the priesthood and from his religious order, the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, our movement's leader, Father Roy Bourgeois, because of his stands for gender equality in the Catholic Church. Father Roy has served with great courage and commitment for 45 years. He has dedicated his life to serving the poor and oppressed, those whose human rights have been violated by

dictators, assassins, torturers, bullies, and racists.

Please sign the petition supporting Fr. Roy at www.soaw.org/news/organizing-updates/4003-stand-with-father-roy-bourgeois.

The War Crimes Times

*Read what "THEY"
don't want you to read.*

*Know what "THEY"
don't want you to know.*

www.warcrimestimes.org

**War depravation has never caused a
single case of post traumatic stress.**

-David Swanson..

"When plunder becomes a way of life for a group of men living in society, they create for themselves, in the course of time, a legal system that authorizes it and a moral code that glorifies it."

Frederic Bastiat, French writer and economist

Iran in the Crosshairs: Stop the March to War

by Joan Johnson

On October 19, I attended a public forum on Iran. The topic discussed was Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's declaration that Iran must not be allowed to have nuclear weapons and his subsequent pressure on the U.S. government to support an attack on Iran. At a recent hearing, he had displayed a sketch of a bomb with a big red line drawn on it, to dramatically emphasize what he deemed to be Iran's imminent nuclear bomb capability.

Kate Gould, legislative associate for Middle East policy for the Friends Committee on National Legislation, quickly debunked the lies upon which Netanyahu bases his "red line" bomb-making theory. She explained what it would take for Iran to achieve a "high" level of uranium enrichment, and how utterly impossible it would be for this to happen within such a short time frame, "by spring, 2013," as Netanyahu claimed.

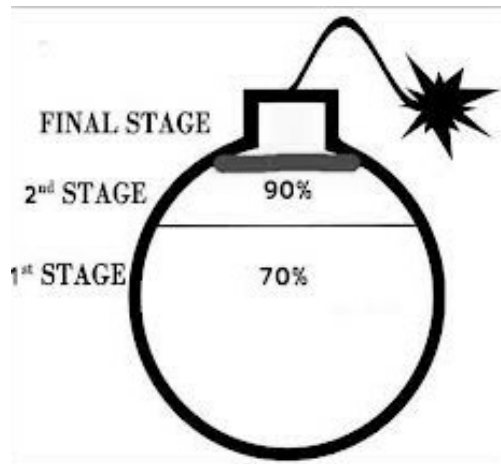
She said that Iran possesses "low" or "medium" grade enriched-uranium, only used for electricity and medicines. She urged us to repeat the following three facts to friends, family and co-workers:

- 1) Iran does not have nuclear weapons;**
- 2) Iran is not building one;**
- 3) Iran does not have plans to build one.**

Unfortunately, right now, thanks to lamestream corporate media, most Americans are brainwashed to believe otherwise.

Rep. Keith Ellison also punched holes in Netanyahu's "red line" theory, explaining how they are currently at 20 percent enrichment capability, and that it would take years to reach the level of 98 percent needed for nuclear weapons. He asked his colleagues, "Are we going to let a foreign leader draw the red line for us?" Most of them sadly ended up buying into Netanyahu's fear-mongering tactics. Gould calls Congress one of the biggest obstacles to peace in the Middle East.

Both Ellison and Margaret Sarfehjooy (WAMM Middle East Committee) spoke of the war that is already being waged on Iran. Sarfehjooy described crippling sanctions that have adversely affected the citizens of Iran, especially



Netanyahu's bomb graphic, with his line at the top.

children, resulting in the lack of medicines, an increase in viruses and other illnesses, skyrocketing food prices, and severe water and oil shortages. Ellison, who had voted against sanctions, told us that Iran's currency has already lost 30 percent of its value, causing "significant damage" to its economy. He personally knows people who are enduring untold hardships: for example, U.S. citizens can no longer send support funds to desperate relatives in Iran; a child was denied his much-needed surgery; and the list goes on and on. Sound

familiar? Our sanctions against Iraq killed over 500,000 children before bombs even fell.

Sarfehjooy pointed out that Iran is surrounded by 45 U.S. military bases, yet Iran has had an open-door policy for weapons inspectors at uranium-enrichment facilities, while our ally Israel, the sixth largest nuclear weapons nation which receives \$3 billion in military aid each year from us, has refused inspections and has not signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, WHICH Iran has signed. Sarfehjooy and Ellison described how the U.S. has already undertaken a covert war in Iran, with unilateral military actions, cyber attacks, the funding of terrorists to bomb mosques and assassinate scientists, which is also a little-known fact in most circles.

Meredith Aby of the Anti-War Committee revealed the ultimate in U.S. arrogance and hypocrisy by expecting that only those countries approved by our own rogue state may possess nuclear weapons. She described in detail the terrorists that we have become: how we have carried out hundreds of drone attacks terrorizing, killing and maiming innocents in Pakistan; have used torture in Iraq and Guantanamo (to name a few locations); murdered adults and children at wedding parties and families sleeping in their homes in Afghanistan and Pakistan; and to top it off, we possess the largest military budget and nuclear arsenal in the world. Sarfehjooy described the long-term effects of depleted uranium poisoning (DU) from our bombs in Iraq, and how one of every six Iraqi babies have deformities now, due to DU contamination of air, water, soil, and food.

William Davnie, a retired Foreign Service officer, said that Iran's been no saint, but "neither are we." He said that

Iran, continued next page

*In memorium***George McGovern, a true candidate for peace**

by Steve McKeown

"All rise for our national anthem...and, men, take off your hats!"

This was and is what happens at the start of Minnesota Gophers games, and no doubt, it is replicated at sporting events across the country. My friend (and conscientious objector during Vietnam) Bill Barnett and I rose to stretch our aging backs, but we did not remove our hats. I did after the anthem was over.

Bill and I are roughly the same age and we both played basketball in South Dakota in the early sixties, but we have more in common than that. He had recently returned from a funeral in Sioux Falls for Sen. George McGovern, the last peace candidate nominated by a major party, who ran for President in 1972.

Bill ran his campaign office in St. Paul and chauffeured him around when he was here. At that same time, I was working in a machine shop, a rather right-wing place, to say the least. One day I was asked by the burly foreman, who resembled Yul Brynner, what I thought of that S.O.B. McGovern. I replied that he was a family friend and had greeted me shortly after I came back from Vietnam, telling me that he was glad I was back. I told the foreman that I knew McGovern meant it, and I probably said something to



the effect that he wanted others to come back as well.

I had just received a raise and a very good review for my work there. In a couple of days (I had just put a McGovern bumper sticker on my car) I was called into the office and told I was cutting steel wrong, although they couldn't show me one example. I was also suspected of being with the Teamsters and trying to start a

union. Soon I was fired from that job.

Sen. McGovern was real, and he knew what was necessary for our country. In regard to war and Vietnam, his campaign slogan was "Come Home America." However, America wanted a return to the "glory days" after World War II, and McGovern was soundly defeated.

Since then, Democrats have campaigned with Republicans against the dire threat that peace might soon break out worldwide.

George McGovern said he was tired of old men sending the young to war. And now the old have infected many of the young, and all will be well if only enough veterans are thanked for their service. But this isn't the handshake of George McGovern welcoming you back, for it does not say to America "COME HOME."

Iran, from previous page

the U.S. has again rebuffed many offers to talk with Iranian leaders. "Diplomacy is a two-way street," he reminded us, "but instead the U.S. government chooses to issue harsh ultimatums" (as was done with Iraq) "that accomplish nothing except to make Iranians feel backed into a corner and shamed. This does not foster a good response."

Gould said that Gen. Colin Powell, Secretary of State under President G.W. Bush, "regrets" supporting war with Iraq, and he is "staunchly opposed" to war with Iran. Ellison quoted Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta: "If Iran is attacked, the U.S. would be blamed, and there would be catastrophic effects from this." Sarfehjooy said that former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has also predicted "disastrous consequences" from a war with Iran, and that "it

would be a generations-long war, not short-term." Why are these voices being ignored?

Aby strongly urged our peace groups to mobilize to pressure members of Congress and the Senate to support a policy of non-intervention with Iran, and to **MAKE OUR VOICES KNOWN IN THE STREETS!!** Ellison made it clear that corporate lobbyists regularly put huge pressure on him and other members of Congress to vote "yes" to sanction bills and war bills, and he encouraged constituents to **KEEP ON MAKING OUR OPINIONS KNOWN** through letters, e-mails, visits and calls. A sign I held a few weeks ago at the Lake Street Bridge peace vigil (4:30 p.m. every Wednesday) sums it up: "**DON'T IRAQ IRAN!!**"

Occupy Homes and Occupy Minneapolis update

by Polly Kellogg

The Occupy movement was born when Occupy Wall Street named the richest one percent as the driving force behind the financial crisis, systemic political corruption, endless wars, and climate change. Inspired by the events of the Arab Spring, millions all across the country rose up and took action against the one percent who grow rich from our indebtedness and from the destruction of the planet. The occupy movement is based on the values of participatory and leaderless democracy, economic justice, solidarity, peace, respect and environmental sustainability. Many VFP members had spent years connecting the dots that led to Wall Street and were immediately a strong presence on People's Plaza in Minneapolis, expressing support and solidarity with Occupy Minneapolis. We thank you for your immense sacrifices. By all that you do, you have proven that another world is possible.

Occupy Homes evolved from the occupation of the People's Plaza. Occupy Homes used direct action and many other strategies to save seven homes from foreclosure. This is just the beginning!

Another Occupy project, the Whealthy Human Village, has created safe environments where democratic communication and respect for cultural and economic differences, are experienced at new levels. The Village works on issues from environmental sustainability to personal wellness, and meets Thursday nights in a Ger (Yurt).

Finally, Occupy Minneapolis is currently focusing on the battle against dirty energy through coalitions opposing the Tar Sands XL Pipeline and fracking. We are also supporting Occupy Sandy, the coalition between 360.org and Occupy Wall Street, whose organizational skills and solidarity has made a big impact on relief efforts in the most isolated areas on the east coast.

Overall, despite the constant police harassment, surveil-



Members of Occupy Minneapolis, Occupy Homes and Whealthy Human Village were featured at the Nov. 13 Minnesota Alliance for Peacemakers meeting and spoke about their actions described in this article.

lance and brutality (arrests of peaceful protesters), the Occupy Wall Street movement has created an international network among many different political organizations, all working on a myriad of separate yet interconnected issues. It is a base for political consciousness and community actions all shared through direct democracy. It is a catalyst for building a collective mass movement and much more. We are asking that you join us once again and help us build a common vision towards a better world for all!

Occupy Homes meets every Saturday at the Living Table Church, 4001 38th St. E., 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Occupy Minneapolis meets every Wednesday at 4200 Cedar Ave. S., 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., for an open intergenerational dinner and meeting. Everyone is welcome.

If you can not make it to the meetings, you can contribute to Occupy Sandy and the Tarsands Blockade by visiting the following websites:

<https://www.wepay.com/donations/tsbdonate>

<http://interoccupy.net/occupysandy/donate/>

***Strib* prints member's letter exposing media coverup**

by Bob Heberle

Dear reader, please read the news article below that was printed in the October 24 *StarTribune* and then explain what you read:

"CIA agent sentenced

"Former CIA officer John Kiriakou will be going to prison for revealing the name of a covert agent, the agency said this week. Kiriakou, 48, pleaded guilty to violating the Intelligence Identities Protection Act, and is expected to serve two and a half years in prison, the first to do so for this crime in 27 years. Kiriakou, who led the team that captured al Qaida leader Abu Zubaydah in Pakistan in 2002, emailed the agent's name to two journalists in 2007 and 2008. His sentence parallels that handed down to I. Lewis Libby Jr., former aide to Vice President Dick Cheney, in connection with the disclosure of the identity of agent Valerie Plame Wilson. President George W. Bush commuted Libby's prison term. CIA Director David H. Petraeus called the Kiriakou case 'an important victory' for the intelligence community."

Confused? You should be because it is probably written to confuse. That's one way our media are misleading and covering up the truth.

I would not have realized what this article was about had I not spent a short time with Coleen Rowley, who alerted me to Kiriakou's conviction.

Here's the real story: A CIA officer, Kiriakou was sent to prison for two years and fired from his job because he had the integrity and courage to publicly reveal a crime by some of his CIA colleagues! Note that the word "torture" is NOT even mentioned in the above news article!

Also the *Strib* article does NOT reveal that Kiriakou's colleagues had been waterboarding a prisoner who had not yet been to trial! Perhaps with this clarification you will be able to understand why my letter below was recently printed in the *StarTribune*. Most *Strib* readers will not have the opportunity to read the above clarification.

Printed in the *Star Tribune* October 25, 2012

Dear Editors:

It's frightening to face four more years of Obama's charging and jailing courageous and honest government employees for blowing the whistle on crimes by government officials. Fourteen-year CIA officer John Kiriakou revealed the U.S. officials who had committed the crime of

waterboarding.* (*StarTribune* October 24) Most likely Kiriakou could have been charged with abetting and cover up had he remained silent. However, your October 24 news article did not identify waterboarding as a crime.* Especially frightening is the imprisonment and loss of jobs to those thousands of honest law enforcement officials like Kiriakou who will be silenced from revealing governmental crimes.

Obama has now charged more than seven people under the 1917 Espionage Act for alleged mishandling of classified information, more than all past presidents combined. Prior to Obama, there were only three such cases in 95 years of American history!

The U.S. executed WWII Japanese officials who had ordered waterboarding of U.S. prisoners, and U.S. and international law have classified waterboarding as torture and supported those laws ever since.

*Georgetown University Law Professor Jonathan Turley also outlines how torture is a war crime. It is a crime under Torture Act, 18 U.S.C. § 2340. Torture is expressly prohibited by the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, a "binding law" that President Reagan signed. He outlined how the "status of waterboarding as torture was established by the United States." Maj. Edwin F. Glenn, who used waterboarding in the Philippines in 1898, argued waterboarding was "justified under the necessities" but those arguments were rejected. Maj. Glenn was "court-martialed and convicted of the crime of torture." (Sept. 22, 2010)

President Barack Obama said in 2011: "Waterboarding is torture. Anybody who has actually read about and understands the practice of waterboarding would say that that is torture. And that's not something we do, period."

VFP Chapter 92 denied, then granted, parade permit

by Steve McKeown

In one of our country's largest Veterans Day parades, the city of Auburn, WA told VFP Chapter 92 they couldn't march in the parade, even though they have in past years. A city spokesman said they wanted only pro-military organizations. The chapter sued, and with the help of the ACLU, they won and marched. This was a step for us all! (see veteransforpeace.org for more information)

EVENTS CALENDAR

ONGOING EVENTS

Second Sunday each month, 6-8:30 p.m.:
VFP Chapter 27 general meeting, 1806 Riverside Ave.,
#3A. Executive meeting at 5 p.m.
FFI Larry Johnson at 612-747-3904

FRIDAY, December 28, 2012, 6:30 Candlelight Service
for the children of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan and
other child victims of war. Speaker: Steve Clemens who
traveled to Afghanistan in 2011 and to Iraq just recently.
St. Joan of Arc Church, 4537 3rd Av. S. Mpls.

For information on vigils, go to the VFP website
at vfpchapter27.org or call 612-827-5364
or visit www.worldwidewamm.org

Membership still supports impeach- ment, two-state solution in Mideast

by Bob Heberle

Delegates who voted at the 2011 national convention in Portland, Oregon, to support the impeachment of President Obama were vindicated by a 61 percent approval in the 2012 nationally balloted vote. This year's ballot asked for approval to rescind the 2011 vote. An overwhelming majority voted no, 186 to 117.

It should be noted that Chapter 27, after the votes in Portland were taken last year, voted as a chapter to disassociate itself from the national's choice. Comments and rationale for and against the chapter's vote are found on the chapter web site at vfpchapter27.org

Since this year's delegates in Miami voted to expand the opportunity for all national members to vote, the convention only held mock voting by attending delegates and sent regular ballots to all active members by mail.

The other 2011 vote of major contention was against a single state solution in Israel. It was also overwhelmingly defeated by a 215 to 58 vote.

Ballots were mailed to 2453 members and 552 opted to participate. Twenty of the ballots received were declared invalid.

Kellogg-Briand Pact update

by Steve McKeown

In our last newsletter we wrote about our starting a petition drive to make the Kellogg-Briand Pact a national holiday. Only 1 in 50 of those we approached with petitions know of its existence, much less what it means: the very same thing as stated exactly in our VFP statement of purpose, to renounce war as an instrument of national policy.

In his book *When the World Outlawed War* author David Swanson wrote that Ed McCurdy composed a popular folk song in 1950 with the lyrics: "Last night I had the strangest dream I'd ever dreamed before, I dreamed the world had all agreed to put an end to war. I dreamed I saw a mighty room, and the room was filled with men. And the paper they were signing said they'd never fight again."

It is true, as Swanson says, that scene had already actually happened; on August 27, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, ratified by the Senate and signed into U.S. law by President Coolidge.

As of Thanksgiving, we had over 3,000 hand written signatures. This action is endorsed by the Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers, and is going to be taken up by the St. Paul City Council as a proclamation. Additionally the 127-member East Suburban Chicago Church Coalition is sponsoring an essay contest with schools and others on the topic: "How can the U.S. comply with the Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawing war?" First prize is \$1000, and the best essays will be sent to Congress. Contact Frank Goetz at frankgoetz@comcast.net.

Please contact us at our office to join the choir in gathering signatures so Kellogg Blvd. in downtown St Paul is not believed to be named after the cereal, but rather after the only person from Minnesotan ever to win the Nobel Peace Prize. This was a time when the people told the politicians what to do, a time when peace groups and womens and labor organizations sprang up all over. They didn't think this was too idealistic, but rather the most practical response to the revulsion after World War I, the "war to end war," was over. Just as we honor the Armistice by ringing bells we honor the work done by these strong and brave people, and very well could save ourselves.

NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

Please let us know if you
want to receive our newsletter by email.
Contact: chantewolf7@gmail.com

What a wonderful opportunity we have!

by Chante Wolf

During my recent visit to Florida to visit my Mom, Hurricane Sandy ripped the Eastern seaboard a new orifice, right before the election. Before the sun rose in the aftermath, the right-wing TV sharks began to circle the presidential candidates hoping for the water to turn blood red, blasting President Obama for stopping his campaigning to go to those who lost homes and much more. Both sides slung their best, while the people of the North now have a taste of what the folks down South went through after Hurricane Katrina.

The profit-mongering jackals pounced on the dazed folks from Virginia to New Jersey, looking for their next million dollars to make, while other citizens who cared more about helping their fellow Americans began shipping food, water, blankets and money to the Red Cross for distribution.

And so goes the monster consumer of capitalism. Things get destroyed and the jobs are there for reconstruction. People die and the business to bury them are there to oblige. Quick, make more babies to fill the houses empty of the lost souls, while consumers continue to believe TV and magazine ads, as if they are for real and sincere. Gobble up, trash up, blow up, destroy and then rebuild a new community of consumers, eating, growing, consuming, buying and destroying the very life system that sustains them.

In the meantime, our leaders hide behind "National Security" to seal our fate with lies, death, destruction, ego and shame, just like in *The Wizard of Oz*: Ignore the man

behind the curtain.

But what about the rest of the planet, animals, water, air, soil, worms, birds, and the poor starving dogs and humans in other corners of the world that have been poisoned and tortured for the resources they had the ill-fortune of being born on or next to? How convenient denial is. It reminds me of the three monkeys, "See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil." In reality, it is how I see most Americans these days, and it saddens me that Mother Earth is the one that pays. Or does she?

I see this as a wonderful opportunity to make one of many points about the true costs of war. When a boulder is tossed into the middle of a pond, all sides of the pond receive the waves, some more than others depending on the location of the bolder and the circumference of the pond of course. But the same goes for all the lakes, oceans, rivers and ponds. The work that really needs to be done is to show and educate people that the decades of shit humans have poured into those bodies of water, air and land have now reached beyond their capacity to take it any more. (Kinda like the boys and men in our torture centers around the world, they, too, are at their full capacity to take our U.S. inhumane arrogance).

We can not stop the wrath from our Mother Earth, no matter what cool computer devices scientists and specialists come up with. She will win.

The time is now to stop playing our nasty game of disassociation and fear and begin to work with everything and everyone with true community and love. Now is a wonderful time to be here, there is much work to do, and I believe we are all up for the task or we wouldn't be here now.

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Mayday Books has been a consistent and significant supporter of Chapter 27 for many years. The volunteer staff has provided help with mailings and has donated books for the use of our group. It is also a great place to drop in and have a cup of coffee and talk with whomever happens to be there and find that book you have been looking for.

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Veterans for Peace, Inc., Chapter 27
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Winter 2012-13 Newsletter

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SUPPORT THE TROOPS! BRING THEM HOME ALIVE NOW!

As of Dec. 3, 2012:
4,486 dead in Iraq and
2,161 combat deaths* in Afghanistan.

***247 suspected suicides among Army active and reserve
duty personnel in Afghanistan in the first nine months of
2012, which is more than died in combat that period.**

The drone caucus . . . and other drone news

by Frank Fuller

You may never have heard of the drone caucus, but it might be one reason drone use is increasing so fast.

Officially called The Congressional Unmanned Systems Caucus, its 58 members have received \$8 million from PACs affiliated with drone makers over the last four years. In addition, eight members of the House Committee on Appropriations, which has a lot of control over the federal budget, are members of the drone caucus.

The House created its drone caucus three years ago. The Senate created its drone caucus in the last few months.

Just before Thanksgiving, Leon Panetta spoke to the Center for American Security, a defense think tank, and basically said drone attacks are going to expand beyond Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia into Nigeria, Mali and Libya. He said the “cancer” of terrorism has “metastasized to other parts of the global body” and that the Arab Spring has allowed Al-Qaida to “gain new sanctuary, incite violence, and sow instability.”

Though he said a year ago that al-Qaida was weakened and nearly destroyed, we will now need to not only

expand the drone fleet, but also increase special operations forces by 8,000 over the next five years.

Micah Zenko, a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, in an interview posted on the Journalism in the Public Interest website Propublica, says we are now fighting counterinsurgency wars, not terrorists. The following quotes are from that interview:

“Most of the people who are killed (in drone strikes) don’t have as their objective to strike the U.S. homeland. Most of the people who are killed by drones want to impose some degree of sharia law where they live, they want to fight a defensive jihad against security service and the central government, or they want to unseat what they perceive as an apostate regime that rules their country.”

“[Official administration statements] will never say that the United States uses drones to fight local insurgencies. If they made that case, they would have to create a new bastion of justifications. The current stated justifications are very carefully thought out and very deliberate to loosely adhere to the post-9/11 Authorization to Use Military Force and principles of Article 51 of the UN Charter, governing the use of force.”