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VETERANS FOR PEACE NEWS

MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL VETERANS FOR PEACE, CHAPTER 27

Veterans For Peace News is published quarterly by Mpls./St. Paul Veterans For Peace, Chapter 27.

Veterans For Peace works to increase awareness of the costs of war, restrain our 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 non-violent 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)



Veterans attending the national VFP convention in St. Paul march to the Landmark Center for the closing ceremony commemorating the 90th Anniversary of the signing of the Kellogg Briand Pact which outlaws war and is still International and U.S. law today. The Reclaim Armistice Day banner was designed by Chapter 27 member Bruce Berry.

Intersecting Perspectives: VFP Joins up with The Poor People's Campaign

by Joan Johnson

During our national VFP convention, Veterans for Peace Chapter 27 collaborated with The Poor People's Campaign to put on a Friday night program, open to the public, at St. Paul's Central Presbyterian Church, which was a half mile from the VFP convention site. Moderated by Michael McPhearson, national executive director of VFP, participants confronted issues of systemic racism, poverty and inequality, the plight of immigrants, ecological devastation, gun violence, militarization and the war economy. Entitled "Intersecting

Perspectives," this event brought together many different groups and individuals, who shed a light on important subjects through a variety of creative presentations: speeches, poetry, songs, instrumentals, and slideshow.

Monique Cullers-Doty gave us an update on the ongoing work of "Black Lives Matter," which has been extremely active in the Twin Cities area, bringing so many racial issues to our attention. I recall a key sentiment she expressed, and that is this: Most black citizens in the U.S. view police as being here to protect

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Notes from the President

by Dave Logsdon

"There can be no compromise with war; it cannot be reformed or controlled; cannot be disciplined into decency or codified into common sense."
Jeanette Rankin

Whether you agree with Ms. Rankin (I do) or not, the Veterans for Peace statement of purpose states: "to abolish war as an instrument of national policy." At the just-concluded Veterans For Peace National Convention, which our chapter hosted, a diverse group of dedicated peace advocates conspired and inspired toward this lofty goal of world peace!

The slogan for the convention was "Reclaim Armistice Day," which was a logical choice given the approaching 100th anniversary of the end of World War I (this November 11th) when soldiers on both sides of this senseless slaughter laid down their weapons and went home. The convention ended one day before the 90th anniversary of the Kellogg-Briand Treaty that outlawed war. The late Wayne Wittman, who six years' ago volunteered us to host this convention, would have been proud of how the week unfolded!

Chapter 27 members should be proud of the hard work they put in to make this, according to some attendees, among the best VFP conventions they ever attended. I was especially happy with the powerful contributions from the Native American community. We laughed, we cried, and for a long time after the week was over, we processed all the knowledge and all the many magical moments that transpired. The art room, put together by Bruce Berry and Mary McNellis was described as having "strong medicine" by one Native observer. Penny Gardner, Barry Riesch, and I got recognized for our work, but there was a lot of hard work put in by a lot of chapter members and big help from Women Against Military Madness. The list of folks to thank is a long one, including Michael McPhearson and Shelly from the National VFP office, the entire staff at the Intercontinental Hotel, and Judy Brooks at the Landmark Center. What an amazing journey! Now onward to the next challenge!

*You Don't Win the Derby without a Good Horse
"I am a leader by default, only
because nature doesn't allow a vacuum."*
Desmond Tutu

I feel I do a good job as a jockey for our group, but a

good jockey can only do so much. This great group of talented, dedicated and compassionate people in Chapter 27 keeps getting to the winner's circle of life and I do appreciate it. Our non-veteran associate members deserve a lot of credit for helping us dysfunctional veterans get things done. Even if you are not a veteran you too can join. We treat our non-veteran members with equal respect. For more information please go to veteransforpeace.org or e-mail me at dlvfp27@gmail.com.

*"We all deserve respect, man or woman,
black or white. It's our basic human right."*
Aretha Franklin

With that, let's go riding on the freeway of love in our pink Cadillacs! Peace out!

Were the founding fathers,
the creators of our
Constitution, legal immigrants?

Support Mayday Books

*Find a wide range of books and periodicals at 15%
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301 Cedar Ave., West Bank
(downstairs under the bike shop)

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, have a cup of coffee and talk with whomever happens to be there. Find that book you have been looking for.

**Hours: M-F noon to 7 p.m, Sat. noon
to 6 p.m.**

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the lives and interests of mainly white folks, and not themselves. What a sad commentary on race relations in our country. I can only imagine the kinds of fears and struggles that our black brothers and sisters face every day. As a white person, I am motivated to become more aware of their everyday feelings, experiences, struggles, and be a part of the awareness-raising and culture-changing solutions.

Austin Berger of Students Demand Action MN gave an impassioned speech against gun violence. He lamented the recent loss of his peers' lives in U.S. schools' mass shoot-



ings specifically, and stressed the importance of working to ban assault weapons, recognize red flags/early warning signs, and require background checks for starters. The audience erupted into an enthusiastic standing ovation after his final exhortation: "If people of conscience speak out and band together, there IS hope!"

Thomas LaBlanc, a.k.a. Strong Buffalo, recited his poetry in a duet with cellist Jacqueline Ultan. Her beautifully haunting and flowing cello improvisations intertwined with LaBlanc's heart-wrenching musings of a very young child being torn from his family, then placed in an orphanage and later a boarding school. Through LaBlanc's poetry, we could all feel the intensity of this child's confusion and agony at being ripped away from his loved ones and everything familiar; of being expected to conform to white cultural norms and speak only English, a foreign language to him. As he spoke, people and scenes from the boy's past flashed on a screen behind him. Living his life apart from his own family, culture and all things familiar, he laments about how "The white man said I look like the enemy; he beat me up and he tied me in a chair." Sadly, this small window into a tortured life of forced removal, indoctrination and corporal punishment was the unfortunate and very devastating experience for thousands of Native American

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A workshop on working towards a nuclear-free world

by Joan Johnson

The Golden Rule, I learned at the VFP convention, is more than a guide for living. It is the name of a beautiful boat, with a giant peace symbol and "Veterans for Peace" on its sails and has a rich history of being used to protest nuclear weapons and nuclear testing. Built by the Quakers in the 1940's, its brave crew sailed towards the Marshall Islands, putting their lives on the line in an effort to stop the insidious nuclear testing that the U.S. government was conducting there. They were arrested and jailed, but as a result, brought much attention to the environmental devastation, the people effected, and just the sheer immorality of the testing.

I recommend watching the film on their website (vfpgoldenrule.org), which tells the story of where The Golden Rule has travelled in the past and after its resurrection by VFP members in California. In addition to sailing with their message of peace, crew members also do cross-cultural outreach and speaking engagements. To date, they have given over 36 presentations, reaching about a thousand people, including hundreds of school children.

The Golden Rule needs our help; they are looking for sailors, promoters, other kinds of help and of course, monetary donations, as they plan their routes in the coming year. Stops will include Hawaii, the Marshall Islands, Guam, Okinawa and possibly the Korean Peninsula. Helen Jaccard and Gerry Condon gave an excellent presentation on their mission as they plan to set sail on the Golden Rule "for a nuclear-free world and a peaceful, sustainable future."

John LaForge, another workshop presenter, isn't sailing these days, but is working hard towards the same goal of a nuclear-free world. From Luck, WI, he's been using a Paul Bunyan-sized pen for 40 years to make his own kind of waves as publisher of the quarterly publication "Nukewatch," which provides news and information about the dangers of nuclear weapons, power, and waste. He and his cohorts regularly confront the powers-that-be with nonviolent resistance.

As an E.L.F. Protest organizer, he reminded us that

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Dancing on the riverboat.

young people, whose parents had no choice in the matter. As he grows older, the young boy hears the words of his Dakota Sioux mother saying, “Be proud of who you are,” reassuring him that “ancestral knowledge is inside of you.” He clings to these words and the memory of her saying, “Your Mama loves you.”

Rose Whipple brought to light some of the current issues faced by Indigenous people on the White Earth Reservation in northern Minnesota. A member of the Santee Dakota and Ho-Chunk nations, she is the Twin Cities organizer for “Honor the Earth.” As a 17-year-old, she is one of the “13 Youth Climate” interveners who fought the Line 3 pipeline permitting process. The wisdom of this young woman is remarkable as she described what needs to be done to prevent the destruction of land, air, and water—our precious Mother Earth. “In the end,” she concluded, “it doesn’t matter what color we are—this degradation affects us all.”

Daniel Romero, who represents the Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee, gave us much food for thought on the current immigration situation. One fact he stated really stood out to me, especially in the face of our president constantly referring to all undocumented immigrants as “criminals.” Romero said that only seven percent of undocumented immigrants have a criminal history, while 19 percent of the general population does. Let’s put this in

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our regular vigils may have had a hand in shutting that operation down. My husband and I attended those vigils, and since then, we devour the information John and writers provide through the Progressive Foundation’s newsletter.

One article caught my attention in this summer’s “Nukewatch” issue. It describes the “Akademik Lomonosov,” a Russian “12-story-tall teetering barge” carrying two nuclear reactors which left St. Petersburg on April 28th of this year, and will travel 3,000 miles in the pristine Arctic Ocean, reaching the city of Pevek (Siberia) some time in 2019. At its stop at the city of Murmansk, it was loaded with nuclear fuel for the remainder of the journey. LaForge writes, “This presents such an obvious and appalling risk to sea life and sea coasts, that even ‘Newsweek’ magazine said in an April 30th headline, ‘Russia’s Nuclear Titanic Raising Fears of Chernobyl on Ice.’” This is the kind of news we do not see on the front page of our city paper, but it should be there. We rely on John, his staff and volunteers to bring us this very important news. I encourage all our readers to subscribe and/or send



Ring the bells for the closing ceremony at the national convention.

in a donation to “The Progressive Foundation & Nukewatch” at 740A Round Lake Road, Luck, WI 54853.

Ellen Barfield, VFP Member of the Baltimore Chapter, and U.N. Representative for VFP, spoke about the recent nuclear-disarmament Ploughshares Action at King’s Bay Naval Base in Savannah, GA, which is the largest submarine base in the world. Seven Catholic Ploughshares activists entered the base on April 4th, 2018, to make real

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the prophet Isaiah's command to "beat swords into ploughshares." They carried hammers to pound on weapons, and baby bottles of their own blood to pour at the site. She explained how some people accuse them of being "violent," but "actually we are hoping to SAVE the victims (REAL PEOPLE) from the destruction by these weapons (INANIMATE OBJECTS)," adding, "they have no right to exist!"

Marie Braun, Chair of the End War Committee, consisting of members from WAMM and VFP, spoke about their efforts to support the U.N.'s "Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons," which was passed in 2017 by 122 nations; it awaits ratification by 50 nations to become international law. Some of her committee's activities have included speaking to groups in churches, collecting petition signatures supporting the ban, and meeting with staff in Congressional offices to affect legislation. They have also participated in various community outreach venues, including parades, festivals and other events. Braun also mentioned how they met with three Minnesota State Senators, who have introduced a bill to support this same treaty. She left us with a few sobering thoughts: instead of abiding by the 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which is still legally binding, the U.S. government instead has chosen to spend over a trillion dollars to modernize/upgrade our nuclear arsenal, which, of course, means that other nations will follow suit. Right now 15,000 nuclear warheads are held by nine nations, with the U.S. and Russia at the top of the list. How can our government say, "You can't own nuclear weapons," (to other nations), when they have one of

the biggest arsenals themselves!

Minneapolis VFP Chapter member Steve McKeown, also a member of the End War Committee, reminded us of a joyful moment in 1990, when Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev, with wife Raisa, came to the Twin Cities. So many people were jubilant over this visit, because it meant the end of the Cold War, with the olive branch of peace being extended to our people. Sadly, our government has digressed in relations with other nations, especially under this current administration. McKeown spoke about the committee's petitioning efforts, having acquired close to 14,000 signatures from 472 towns and cities in Minnesota (there are 856 total), with the goal of getting signatures from every single town/city. Steve reminded us, that even when there is only 1 signature from a town, that would be more than the number of who may be left behind in the event of a nuclear war. He contrasted his large map of Minnesota with pins representing cities/numbers of residents who have signed, and he compared this to the Pentagon's maps of nuclear targets, which outnumbers his signers by a long shot. The Golden Rule provides a similar contrast, he reminds us, with their peace-promoting sailboat, compared to the threatening, war-producing nuclear-armed submarines.

John LaForge closed his segment by saying that, "No matter where we are, or what we are working on, as we stay on the the path to nuclear disarmament, ALL of our work is important. We don't have a choice but to stick to it, no matter what the outcome may be." Helpful ways to "stick to it" may involve supporting and/or participating in the efforts of "Nukewatch"/Progressive Foundation, The End War Committee, Ploughshares' Actions and The Golden Rule.

The Nuns, the Priests and the Bombs

In a new documentary, nuclear disarmament activists challenge the security and legality of America's nuclear weapons when they break into two top-secret facilities: The "Fort Knox of Uranium" and a U.S. Navy Trident nuclear submarine base.

Are they criminals or prophets sending a wake-up call



to the world?

The film *The Nuns, the priests and the Bombs* profiles the people involved in this movement and follows two federal criminal cases triggered by these breakins. It was a 2018 Global Peace Film Festival selection.

Further information at nunspriestsbombsthefilm.com

2018 flotilla to Gaza illegally boarded

by Craig Wood

Another year, another attempt to breach a 12-year naval blockade on Palestinians holed up on the west end of the Mediterranean Sea.

For eight years flotillas packed with international activists and humanitarian supplies have failed to reach destination ports on the impoverished Gaza Strip where two million war-scarred people are basically marooned on their own land. Without exception, all boats have been stopped by Israeli Occupation Forces, who contend the blockade is legal.

While critics point to a UN panel's ruling that claims the blockade is illegal, Israeli policy makers show no signs of listening. Those who are aware that Israel has a long history of cherry-picking laws are not surprised. They know Israelis are second to none when it comes to interpreting and arguing laws (including old Ottoman, Jordanian and British laws) that justify their expansionistic agenda and despicable treatment of Palestinians and their supporters.

Perhaps it is to be expected that any cabal of litigious nitpickers operating an apartheid government would play fast and loose with any law that might favor their way of doing things. Be that as it may, on July 29, last summer the Norwegian-flagged fishing boat Al Awda was intercepted about 42 nautical miles off the Gaza coast by members of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) who did more than play legal word games; they beat the hell out of crew members and passengers for no good reason.

The Al Awda, which means "The Return" in Arabic, was one of four boats that left Scandinavia in May bound for Gaza. The 22 people onboard hoped to raise international attention to the plight of beleaguered Palestinians and deliver around \$15,000 worth of medical supplies.

According to passenger and consulting orthopedic surgeon Dr. Swee Chia Ang, who founded the Medical Aid for Palestinians charity, masked soldiers from five Zodiac speed boats wearing body cameras and carrying machine guns boarded (politely speaking) the Al Awda in international water without an invitation.

Although the crew along with passengers were participating in a non-violent humanitarian mission, Dr. Ang reported that soldiers were quick to reach for tasers, twist arms, manhandle and throw punches. Apart from cuts,

scrapes and bruises, Veterans For Peace (VFP) member Ann Wright posted on Facebook that four people were tasered, one person ended up with a broken foot, three others suffered broken ribs and the captain was beaten and given a death threat.

Shortly after, the Al-Awda was commandeered to Israel, where everyone was jailed except two journalists. Those taken into custody were later released. Many reported being humiliated on a regular basis, denied medical prescriptions or reasonable access to medical care. The Israelis kept the boat, and at least six flotilla participants went home without credit cards, \$4,000 in cash and their personal belongings, according to Anne Wright in a recent MintPress News article.

So far, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) Attorney unit doesn't believe an investigation is warranted. Apparently, accusations of group theft, repeated humiliation or even cracking a couple ribs on an 80-some pound physician met the Israeli criteria for reasonable treatment and proportionate force.

Unfortunately, this sort of behavior is not out of the ordinary for hard-case Zionists who continue to believe it is OK to deny hundreds of thousands of Palestinian children drinkable water and enough food to prevent malnutrition. Mistreating a boatload of humanitarians under the pretext of protecting Israel is business-as-usual for them. It fits easily into their "right to defend themselves" paradigm, like kicking peaceful activists out of the country, recklessly bombing civilian areas in Gaza or grabbing Palestinian land and resources with impunity.

Although Israel continues to operate a brutal, apartheid regime that specializes in lame excuses and autocratic rule-making, there may be some hope. 2007 Nobel Peace Prize nominee and member of the Israeli Parliament (the Knesset) Aida Touma Sliman recently cited a few signs of encouragement. Speaking at the VFP National Convention this year she mentioned that talks between the Israeli government and Palestinian members of Hamas are taking place through Egyptian intermediaries. The 171 Palestinians who were executed during this year's "Right of Return" rally along with the 16,000 Palestinians who were injured, not only raised awareness, it got a conversation going. She also

Although the crew along with passengers were participating in a non-violent humanitarian mission, Dr. Ang reported that soldiers were quick to reach for tasers, twist arms, manhandle and throw punches.

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Eleven ways to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the WWI armistice

by Larry Johnson

The Armistice was signed, ending THE WAR TO END ALL WARS, at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, 1918. In that moment, spontaneous joy, bells ringing, dancing in the streets, broke out worldwide. This evolved into an annual November 11 Armistice remembrance, with bells ringing out commitment to peace. As late as 1929, the President of the U.S. could make a speech at Arlington, saying, "We're gathered to remember those who sacrificed all, and we can pay no greater tribute than to do everything in our power to prevent future wars."

Sadly, years ago those November 11 BELLS FOR PEACE faded away, especially the U.S., where veterans are now honored with the firing of weapons. That is, until Veterans for Peace Chapter 27 began turning that around, becoming central in the nationwide move to reclaim the original Armistice of 1918. Want to join in?

1. Get the attractive, comprehensive brochure we created, telling the history of bells calling for peace. It explains how Chapter 27 began ringing bells again, Nov 11, 1991, inviting churches to join in 2008, and helping to make it go national in 2013. Get a brochure at a VFP meeting. Email the office or me at larryjvfp@gmail.com to have them sent.
2. Take the brochure, and invite your church, temple, synagogue, or even "secular" organization to join in, and TELL US WHO IS RINGING BELLS. The brochure contains a statement to read and/or print in a bulletin as bells for peace are rung. Patricia Mucha arranged a gift for this year's high school peace essay scholarships to honor the memory of her husband, Ed (former member of Chapter 27). Why? To encourage young people to work for peace. That's how she heard about our Armistice brochure. She ordered 92 and is out talking to her list of 92 churches in Tennessee. That's what we want here. Three people talking to 92 churches, or 92 each talking to three.
3. Write a letter to the editor. Tell, from your heart, why you as a veteran, want war to end.
4. Tell the story to friends and family, children, grandchildren. In the 50s, when much rhetoric was "Kill a Commie for Christ," my grandfather told my brother and me, "Boys. War is horrible. I was in World War I, and my brother died there. I hope neither of you ever

have to participate."

5. Find your own bell and "ring out love between our brothers and our sisters, all over this land." In 2013, a State Arts Board grant allowed 11 of us, nine veterans and two civilian activists, to work with sculptor Gita Ghei to design and cast our own Peace bells. We use them everywhere.

6. Pray, or meditate, for Peace, every day at 11:00.

7. Send the brochure to out-of-town friends. Connect them with the nearest VFP chapter, which may already be doing a November 11th Armistice celebration. If they're not, encourage your friends to lean on them to do so. National Vets for Peace can help.

8. If you're in a church that tells people "Go in Peace," get in a discussion with your leaders. Yes, of course, peace within ourselves and with those around us. But, also, encourage them to speak out, like the Old Testament prophets, calling for beating our weapons into windmills and ways to feed the hungry around the world.

9. Celebrate November 11th also as St. Martin's Day, which it has been called far longer than it has Armistice or Veterans Day. In the fourth century, Martin was a soldier converted to Christianity. He put down his weapons, saying, "I can no longer kill in the name of Christ," as the early Christians did, until Constantine made Christianity the Empire religion, and made it OK to kill in war.

10. If you can't be in a formal ceremony on November 11, ring a bell 11 times at 11 wherever you are, and read the statement in the brochure with those around you.

11. If you can, come to our Chapter 27 ceremony at 10:00 November 11th in the theatre at Landmark Center in St. Paul. Then stay for the afternoon. Our peace partnership with Landmark has them creating an afternoon of events reflecting peace in the neighborhood and peace in the world.

Many thanks to our newsletter printer Wallace Carlson Printing in Minnetonka. They have provided us with quality printing and outstanding service including the printing of the program for this year's National Convention.

Hiroshima Day

by Ron Staff

On August 6th, Veterans For Peace, Chapter #27, cooperated with Women Against Military Madness, the Saint Paul-Nagasaki Sister City Committee and the Minneapolis St. Paul Hiroshima Nagasaki Commemoration Committee presenting a Hiroshima Commemoration at the Lyndale Park Peace Garden in Minneapolis.

On this day in 1945 the United States of America took the title as the only country in the world to kill thousands of people with one atomic bomb. It was 73 years ago, and few still note its passing. Jo Bolles sang and played guitar to open the Ceremony of Cranes at the Spirit of Peace site. JoAnn Blatchley, master of ceremonies, introduced Karl Dettmann, a student at Hamline University, who related his pilgrimage to the blast site in Hiroshima. Such tellings herald new generations of knowing about our nation's title.

Can remembrance inform a public humility about leadership in some useful manner? His learning suggests positive currents of understanding and insight. After his talk, Elaine Wynne and Sage CurryWynne spoke about the Legend of Sadako and the 1,000 Cranes. Such nuclear disease tales seep all around the end of World War II.

The bomb itself was bad enough. Resulting human physical injuries have continued to manifest far beyond the day the bomb exploded. And the responsible parties are here in our national history. These ceremonial acts humbly remind those with reason and stomach to handle non-fake and ignored history.

Once Jo Bolles musically put a period on the events, Veterans For Peace rang bells 11 times as a fitting recollection of the end of World War I, which had supposedly been "the war to end all wars."

This portion of the ceremony brought a transition to a procession to the Peace Garden Bridge. After crossing the jogged bridge, created to distract bad spirits, we blessed new growth in trees with water, bringing hope in future life into the sad history of the bombing, which did not end at one.

The celebration was quiet, while park vehicles rumbled past and planes flew overhead, reminding the small gathering of our wider social denial and perhaps embarrassment with our own national history.

Later conversations with public workers at restaurants and other community service providers revealed the total lack of awareness of the significance of August 6th and 9th. Dates deeply marked on the world but not here. Humanity struggles on.

Nuclear petition update

by Steve McKeown

The End War Committee of Women Against Military Madness and VFP have collected 13,854 signatures on paper from 472 towns and cities in Minnesota in support of the International Treaty to ban Nuclear Weapons. We plan to meet with our Senators and Representatives after the elections, when we know who is who, to turn in another round of petitions to encourage them to speak out publically in favor of this Treaty. Our goal is to collect signatures from all 856 towns and cities in Minnesota. Help is still needed to do this. Towns where we have gathered 20 or more signatures are:

Andover-24, Anoka-41, Apple Valley-87, Blaine-55, Bloomington-353, Brainard-43, Brooklyn Center-46, Brooklyn Park-84, Burnsville-72, Cambridge-20, Chanhassen-25, Chaska-37, Columbia Heights-38, Coon Rapids-72, Cottage Grove-21, Crystal-47, Duluth-197, Eagan-127, Eden Prairie-116, Edina-328, Excelsior-34, Faribault-40, Farmington-25, Fergus Falls-21, Fridley-64, Golden Valley-72, Grand Rapids-37, Hopkins-150, Inver Grove Heights-40, Kenyon-25, Lakeville-40, Little Falls-37, Maple Grove-61, Mankato-146, Minneapolis-5,502, Minnetonka-165, Montgomery-22, Morris-30, New Brighton-62, New Hope-38, Northfield-142, Oakdale-21, Owatonna-29, Plymouth-87, Prior Lake-37, Ramsey-21, Richfield-436, Robbinsdale-54, Rochester-52, Rosemount-32, Roseville-114, Saint Cloud-83, Saint Louis Park-267, Saint Paul-1,571, Saint Peter-67, Sandstone-34, Savage-35, Shakopee-54, Shoreview-56, Stillwater-44, South Saint Paul-31, Vadnais Heights-20, Waconia-26, Wayzata-26, West Saint Paul-35, White Bear Lake-28, Wilmar-42, Woodbury-59.

WORLD BEYOND WAR

VFP members Leah Bolger, Bruce Gagnon, and Paul Chappell are among the impressive International Speakers Bureau headed up by David Swanson.

It is worth CHECKING out and
SUPPORTING this bureau.

www.worldbeyondwar.org/speakers/

State of Minnesota v. Madden, Michael J.

by Mike Madden

On January 19, 2017, I was arrested at the Twin Cities international airport while protesting the Muslim Ban on immigration. I submitted to arrest because, prior to being ordered to leave, I had violated no law, broken no airport rules, and done absolutely nothing wrong or disruptive. I was merely walking through the terminal, holding a small placard that read “Muslims Welcome.”

The prosecution went on for 17 months and ended on June 8, 2018. After a week-long trial, the six-person jury delivered a unanimous verdict of not guilty on the gross misdemeanor charge of Criminal Trespass at a Critical Public Service Facility.

Had pretrial prosecutor Christopher Renz of the law firm Chestnut Cambronne not been so overly zealous and vindictive, the state might have prevailed. I was originally cited for Failure to Comply, and it is true that I refused to leave the airport in the specific manner, via light rail transit, as directed by the officer. The only avenue to acquittal on that charge would have been to demonstrate that the arrest violated my constitutional right to free speech. Because the airport is designated a “non-public forum,” where free speech is permitted but has additional restrictions, it would have been an uphill battle.

When I declined to plead guilty to the misdemeanor charge at my first court appearance, prosecutor Renz played the intimidation card by upping the ante to gross misdemeanor criminal trespass. That turned out to be the prosecution’s undoing. There were additional elements to the trumped up charge that the prosecution simply could not prove. Specifically, it would have had to prove that, not only did I disobey the order given by the officer, but that I refused to depart when ordered to do so.

I did not refuse to depart. I told the arresting officer, and it is contained in his report, that I was willing to leave if allowed to do so by the means I had arrived; pick up via car at the curb of the baggage claim area. In my testimony, I told the jury that I have no problems with LRT and that, second to bicycling, public transportation is my favorite way to get around. However, on that day, my primary purpose was to peacefully demonstrate my views on the Muslim Ban. I explained that the act of walking back to the terminal and standing at the curb waiting for my ride while holding my sign, would have furthered my purpose while still satisfying

the order to depart. It was a slam dunk for the jury.

Even as my attorney, Jordan Kushner, hammered at the failure of the prosecution to prove the ‘refusal to depart’ element of the charge, he also raised constitutional questions at every opportunity. During jury selection, trial prosecutor Jennifer Crancer was concerned that jurors might acquit because they were sympathetic to the cause of a just immigration policy. She asked one juror if he could set aside any views he might hold on the subject and convict if it were shown that the defendant had violated the law. Mr. Kushner asked to approach the bench, and after a brief conference, prosecutor Crancer returned to pose the same question with

When I declined to plead guilty to the misdemeanor charge at my first court appearance, prosecutor Renz played the intimidation card by upping the ante to gross misdemeanor Criminal Trespass.

the added caveat “and that law does not violate the Constitution.” That juror seized the opportunity to stress the importance of constitutionality and went on to recite the First Amendment from memory.

He set the tone for the remainder of the trial.

Mr. Kushner also argued forcefully against a motion filed by the prosecution “prohibiting any mention or testimony of any sort that tends to call into question the constitutionality of the Defendant’s arrest.” Judge Susan Burke denied the motion. He also persuaded Judge Burke to go beyond standard jury instructions and instruct the jury that they may consider “constitutional provisions” in their deliberations. It is for his fierce defense of our civil rights that I am most grateful to Mr. Kushner.

There is still work to do. Since the acquittal, I have written twice to the Metropolitan Airports Commission to find out if they were aware of, and are satisfied with, the handling of the case by attorneys at Chestnut Cambronne, and how much the firm billed for their services. I also hope the Commission will review its policy on First Amendment assemblies so that police deal exclusively with wrongdoers and leave law-abiding protesters alone. Having received no substantive response, I recently filed a Data Practices Act request to compel release of relevant documents.

Finally, we should recognize that prosecution under the law can, in and of itself, be punitive. I could not have seen this thing through without the financial and moral support of so many good people. I would like to extend a special thank you to VFP Chapter 27, the Anti-War Committee, Women Against Military Madness, and kyong juhn, Minnesota’s own walker for hope and peace, for support above and beyond all expectations.

High school peace essay winner

Daisy Leonard won this year's peace essay contest and we are printing her essay here.

The contest has been made possible by a gift from Ed Mucha, a member of our local VFP chapter. When Ed retired from the Navy, he became a pilot for Northwest, first flying out of Boston, and then Minneapolis/St. Paul. When off duty in the Twin Cities, Ed took Peace and Justice classes at the University of St. Thomas, mainly from Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer and Marv Davidov. After joining Veterans for Peace, Ed became active in the national move to close the School of Americas (SOA), a U.S. military training school, frequently linked to human rights atrocities, especially in Latin America.

Ed died of cancer April 21, 2014, but his legacy of advocating for nonviolence lives on in this gift through Veterans for Peace Chapter 27, to young people wishing to do the same.

Becoming comfortable with being uncomfortable

by Daisy Leonard

I once described peacebuilding as “creating connections and understanding among people—working to alleviate injustice, suffering, ignorance, and hate,” but my unexpected journey of discovery taught me that true peace-building goes far beyond the words describing it.

I was born in China, my younger sisters were born in India and Ethiopia, and my parents are Caucasian Americans. We grew up in a Christian church in a kind-hearted, “white” community where people embrace diversity (even though there isn’t much of it), host peace-rallies, fundraisers, and Feed My Starving Children events for poor children in Africa. By middle school however, my parents decided we needed to understand the world beyond our town, so we embarked on an unconventional, cultural learning adventure.

Every year for the past five years our family has connected with a different religious group in Minnesota. Not to judge or to join, but to better understand the values, beliefs, histories, and traditions of others, and find commonality as humans. Honestly, I was utterly uncomfortable doing this. If my parents didn’t force me, I wouldn’t have gone. But from the Hindu mandir to the Buddhist Sakya Center to the Ethiopian Orthodox church to the Jewish synagogue, and currently the Islamic mosque, while everyone was always surprised by our request to spend a year with them, they welcomed us with open arms. Every week we participated in their services, learned their languages, danced at their celebrations, and cried at their funerals. We’ve celebrated Diwali, Losar, Passover, Ramadan, Iftar, Orthodox Christmas, among other holidays. As we became part of their extended families, my peacebuilding perspective

began to change.

Hearing about neo-Nazis in Charlottesville or bomb threats to synagogues feels different when you’re sitting in the middle of a synagogue next to the ones being threatened. Threats toward them were now threats toward me. Literally. Hearing about Muslim bans and Islamophobic comments feels different when sitting in the middle of a mosque watching the tears of the people being targeted. Their grief about atrocities being committed against Muslims in Syria, Myanmar, Iraq and Palestine became my grief too. Joining them week after week, shoulder to shoulder in prayer, song, and even coffee hour let them know that we weren’t just with them—we were really “with them,” and the stories of our kinship were shared throughout their extended families, communities, and even countries.

Peacebuilding is getting “comfortable being uncomfortable” until it becomes a way of life. When we’re no longer aware that we are peace-building we become the most effective peacebuilders of all.

I also discovered that while their kids cherished their cultures, they understood little about others around them. They felt misunderstood at school, and their fear of discrimination kept them close to their communities and even more isolated. Reflecting on my “white church” days, I realized how hard it is to know what minorities feel like when you’re so entrenched in the majority. My new proximity helped me understand how so many world conflicts get started—and never seem to end.

Since I knew all these different teens I decided to create a platform where they could meet each other, correct misunderstandings, and support one another as friends. For months I drove to the different religious places and made presentations to the teens, youth directors, and parents, explaining how this union could help their children have a safer future. But while the teens were excited, the adults weren’t. Coaxing them out of their comfort zones was challenging. After a whole year I finally recruited a

Muslim, Christian, and Buddhist teen to the group, and I'm still working on the others. "Building connections and understanding among people" takes time, and peace-builders must be persistent.

This importance of "building connections" got me reflecting on a Feed My Starving Children event I once helped at. The team leaders shared statistics on poor children in Africa, and how the food aid would help them. They made us feel like heroes for helping. We were important. But now I wondered about those children who received the food. Did they feel grateful for what we did—or helpless because they couldn't care for themselves? Did they feel comforted by the aid of strangers—or reminded that they were the victims? If being "heroes" helps us feel important, how could we create peace if the African kids couldn't feel like heroes too? When "working to alleviate injustice, suffering, ignorance, and hate," peace-building needs to be inclusive.

Last summer, my sisters and I helped at a fundraiser that provided sponsorships for impoverished girls in Togo (West Africa) to attend school. This time, instead of just donating money for three girls to go to school, we decided to Skype with them monthly as well. (Luckily the organization could facilitate this.) During the first two Skypes, the six of us made small talk—favorite foods, activities, the weather—but my sisters and I noticed the Togo girls repeatedly thank-

ing us for helping them. Like once again, we were the heroes, they were the victims. But during our third Skype something changed. We discovered our shared love of reading, and this was a game-changer.

The six of us created a book club where each month my sisters and I buy books for their school library in Togo. (Unlike our school library, theirs only had four books). These books would connect us and expand our perspectives through reading and discussing together. Already we've covered everything from morality and personal integrity to the influences of the modern world on cultural traditions. We've discussed the role of elders and the rebellion of youth. We've discussed arranged marriages, dowries, women's independence, and even fortune tellers. No longer heroes and victims, we are now partners and peace builders—on both sides.

Peacebuilding is still "building connections and understanding among people," and "working to alleviate injustice, suffering, ignorance, and hate," but I learned that only by risking our own vulnerability and crossing into others' worlds can we possess a level of empathy where thoughts, prayers, and fundraising cannot reach. Peacebuilding is getting "comfortable being uncomfortable" until it becomes a way of life. When we're no longer aware that we are peace-building we become the most effective peacebuilders of all.

Watching over all humans

by Steve McKeown

During one of the plenaries at our National Convention a Native American named Deondre caught my attention. He was speaking about a trip to the Vatican with his classmates to try and meet with the Pope for the purpose of rescinding the 500-year-old Papal Bull that was instrumental in the exploitation and near extinction of Native Americans. In his gentle, but firm voice he said, "When speaking to the priests, I was not scared, because I know my ancestors are always watching over me, my family, and all humans." This same testament came up a number of times from indigenous people at the Convention. With ancestors pulling for all people this doesn't leave much room for plunder, pillage, war and its preparation when these ancestors are honored. I like these ancestors already. Maybe some of them are related to those who watched over No Man's Land during the Christmas Truce of 1914. Indeed, they may be related to the Holy Spirit.

Member in the news

Two lengthy and excellent articles on VA privatization by Ruben Rosario in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* (8/25/18) and Randy Furst in the *Mpls. Star Tribune* (8/26/18) featured interviews with Chapter 27 member David Cooley. He was interviewed about the issues surrounding VA privatization. The articles also show David interacting with the American Legion and VFW.

Challenging imperialism at the border



Protesters at the U.S.-Mexico border in Nogales last year.

by Maria Luisa,
SOA Watch Organizer at the first Border Encuentro

Over the past three decades, SOA Watch has grown to become the largest grassroots Latin America solidarity movement in the U.S. SOA Watch was born on the first anniversary of the 1989 SOA graduate-led massacre at the University of Central America (UCA), where 16-year-old Celina Ramos, her mother Elba Ramos, and six Jesuit priests were murdered in San Salvador. Through vigils and fasts, demonstrations and nonviolent direct action, as well as media, legal and legislative work, SOA Watch works in solidarity with the people of Latin America and the Caribbean. Currently, the ever-increasing militarization and violence in Central America and Mexico has led to an increase of asylum-seekers looking for refuge in the US.

The U.S. has long exercised control of Central America through political, economic and military interventions, including the financing, arming and training of local elites and their armed forces at places like the U.S. Army School of the Americas (SOA) (renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation in 2001). The SOA is a U.S. military training institution for Latin American soldiers and police, and now U.S. Border Patrol, that since 1946 has

trained torturers, death squads and military dictators throughout the Americas. SOA Watch answered the call for solidarity to denounce U.S. intervention in Latin America at the height of the dirty wars during the 1980s, and it is time for us to do so once again.

More recently, we have watched with horror as more and more migrants and refugees have been forcibly displaced and forced to flee their homelands, particularly from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. When it comes to forced displacement, migration from Mexico and Central America is nothing new; there is a well-documented legacy of U.S. intervention and imperialism that created refugees in the first place.

This is the story of Latin America: our brothers' and sisters' homes stop being their homes, and militarized borders have become places where the intersections of racist and xenophobic immigration and security policies exist at the cost of human dignity. The U.S./Mexico border reveals just one shameful example of this reality, and under the U.S.-funded Southern Border Plan of the Merida Initiative in Mexico, the U.S. has effectively expanded and exported its border policy and is worsening a humanitarian

Continued on next page

crisis; migrants are becoming increasingly vulnerable to death, disappearance, sexual assault and kidnapping in Mexico.

Under the current administration, we see new (and more blatantly violent) versions of old policies that guarantee the dehumanization, criminalization, prosecution, detention, deportation, family separation and in many cases death sentence of our migrant brothers and sisters. The family separation we see right now is a result U.S. imperialism and intervention. Children that have been ripped from their parents have been kidnapped by the state! We know that history has shown us time and time again that the violent and forceful separation of children from their family and community is deeply rooted in US history.

The U.S. has a moral, legal and historical responsibility to refugees. As long as U.S.-backed militarization in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico continues, the world will watch with horror what happens to thousands of refugees at the U.S. border. We will continue to see the creation of concentration camps for children and the caging of migrants in our for-profit system of mass incarceration. At the same time, as long as human rights violations con-

tinue unabated, we will continue to see the horrific impact policies of mass detention and deportation have on entire communities.

This year's Border Encuentro, from November 16-18 in Nogales, Arizona/Sonora, comes at a moment when attacks on refugees, immigrants and communities of color across the Americas and beyond are increasing. The Encuentro is a space to build grassroots analysis around, and resistance to, border imperialism driven by US security, political and economic interventionist policies.

This year, we will converge at the militarized border to challenge the increasing levels of state violence and demand: an end to U.S. economic, military and political intervention in Latin America, and the closure of SOA/WHINSEC; an end to Plan Mérida and the Alliance for Prosperity; the demilitarization and divestment of borders; an end to the racist systems of oppression that criminalize and kill migrants, refugees and communities of color, and a call for respect, dignity, justice and the right to self-determination of communities. We hope you join us in this urgent struggle!

The peace index

\$200 billion more . . .

compiled by Frank Fuller from the National Priorities Project at nationalpriorities.org.

Another year, another defense dept. budget increase. According to The Center for American Progress, the Trump Administration has added about \$200 billion to DOD spending since taking office. That covers the DOD budget over years 2017-2019. It began when \$15 billion was added to Obama's last budget and has grown since.

And as is becoming increasingly obvious, the funding for DOD is leading to cuts in domestic spending. War is our priority now, not the health and welfare of American citizens. So, the question comes up? What else could that \$200 billion buy over the next three years if it weren't going to the DOD? It would provide any one of the following:

It could pay 820,000 elementary school teachers about \$80,000 a year for three years. There are about 90,000 ele-

mentary schools, both public and private, in the U.S.

It could pay 1.2 million workers about \$55,000 a year to work on the nation's crumbling infrastructure.

It would fund 7.5 million head start slots.

It could also pay for the health care at the VA for 16.4 million vets, paying an average of about \$10,000 per vet per year. There are currently about 19 million vets in the U.S..

Eight million students could get scholarships to public universities, at an average annual tuition of \$8,300 for the next three years.

It could provide health care for about 18.6 million low-income adults over three years.

Forty-six million households could get free wind power for three years

Another successful Peacestock

by Bill Habedank

On July 14, 2018 Veterans For Peace, Chapters 115 and 27 held the 16th annual Peacestock event near Red Wing at the Hobgoblin Barn. This year's theme was American Empire: Who Benefits, Who Suffers. While most in the audience of over 100 know the answers to these questions, our hope is always to draw in people outside of our own circle who may be asking the same questions. We are educators and intend for Peacestock to reach out to those who desire to learn more about these issues. There are so many issues but they all are related to each other.

Peacestock opened with the reading of the VFP Mission Statement and then the always inspirational ringing of the bells for peace. Kyong Juhn gave a pictorial account of her 325 mile Walk For Hope and Peace and a very interesting recollection of the people she met along the way; people who were supportive of her efforts, which included VFP Ch. 27 with the VFP Peace bus.

The morning program finished with Chris Mato Nunpa, an Associate professor of Indigenous Nations and Dakota Studies at Southwest Minnesota State University, speaking on the deleterious effects of American Empire, which persist to this day. Professor Nunpa cited account after account of the harm done to Native American people. He spoke eloquently about the truth of these matters and was given a standing ovation at the end. He said he was honored and pleased to be given the opportunity to speak.

After a noon lunch break with good food offered by the Joan Wood and her Fox Wagon, the attendees were treated with old-time music by Bill McGrath and his Bonnie and the Clydes. Their rendition of old tunes was lively and allowed many to join in with singing and toe tapping. The only way we could improve on music for next year would



Chris Mato Nunpa, Wahpeton Dakota from the Upper Sioux Community near Granite Falls, MN, and U.S. Army Veteran, spoke on "Genocidal Aspects: The Doctrine of Discovery, Papal Bulls, the Great Commission, and the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas" at the VFP convention. He was joined by musician, activist and youth mentor Mitch Walking Elk and by indigenous youth from St. Paul GAP School's mentoring program. They talked about their amazing journey to the Vatican to talk to church leaders about the Doctrine of Discovery. (See VFP Winter 2018 Newsletter article for background info). Chris Nunpa also spoke at Peacestock, where this photo was taken.

be to invite the Bonnie and the Clydes back for an encore performance.

Next on the program were the winners of the Kellogg-Briand Scholarship essay contest here for Red Wing High

Continued on next page

Convention, from page 4

perspective, Mr. Trump! He talked about how DACA "dreamers," who were protected under Obama's administration, are now "fair game" for harassment and deportation. He made it clear that we need to stand up for our immigrant friends, because their voices are being silenced by our government. Romero encouraged all concerned people to join his group at 7:30 a.m. every Tuesday of the month, for a vigil in front of the Whipple Federal

Building, the five-state regional ICE headquarters, where multiple deportations happen every day. He also encouraged us to ask candidates running for office, "Do you support Minnesota becoming a sanctuary state?"

Throughout the evening, musicians Jayanthi Kyle, Larry Long and Tonia Hughes inspired us through their songs. Beautiful harmonies, poignant lyrics and rousing melodies filled every corner of the sanctuary. We all joined in on "Let It Shine" and rocked the church to its foundations!

Peacestock, from previous page

School seniors and the MAP essay winner. Both recitations were warmly received and made us excited to hear how young people propose to have a more peaceful world.

Up next were Sue Ann Martinson and Coleen Rowly who spoke of Dan Berrigan's "Hole in the Ground" essay, which is now offered in booklet form. They read excerpts from the booklet and copies were available for purchase.

The final event of the day was our second keynote speaker, Medea Benjamin, co-founder of Code Pink. Medea spoke of the failures of American Empire/Military ventures around the world, where she has witnessed firsthand the effects of these disastrous actions by the United States. She expressed dismay that the United States was continuing this behavior by tearing up the treaty with Iran. She has a new book entitled *Inside Iran* from which she described the ongoing disasters of diplomacy. Medea also got a well deserved standing ovation for her presentation and ongoing work.

Peacestock 2018 ended with a meal of burritos and desserts which were consumed heartily by those who chose to stay for the meal. We are already working on Peacestock 2019 which will be Saturday, July 20th. Be sure to put it on your calendar.

Flotilla, from page 6

feels hopeful by what she sees as an increasing global understanding of the Palestinian situation along with new and surprising invitations for her to speak in synagogues.

Not that this will stop the 1,000 new homes slated for West Bank settlements or Knesset members from trying to modify the newly approved Israeli Nation-State Law; it won't. But who knows, maybe these discussions will lead to something that both sides can live with and agree to in writing.

Until then, expect more litigious yammering, outright baloney and finger-pointing at injustice elsewhere from the Israeli government. The cluelessness and cynicism of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is evident when he says: "They send flotillas to Gaza, they don't send flotillas to Syria. It's amazing, this travesty of justice, this violation of truth."

EVENTS CALENDAR

ONGOING EVENTS

5-6 pm Weds. Lake Street/Marshall Ave. Bridge vigil.
Note: time changes Nov. 1: 4:30 to 5:30.

Monthly meeting, 2nd Sun., 6:00 pm, 4200 Cedar Av. S.

Every Tues of Month 7:30 am vigil in front of Federal Whipple Bldg south of Hwy 55 and 62 with the Interfaith Coalition on Immigration.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sep. 21, 6:30 pm. Intl Day of Peace celebration in the Great Hall at Carleton College, Northfield. Includes VFP Bell Ringing and talking about the Armistice.

Sep. 21-30, TEN DAYS FREE FROM NON-VIOLENCE at many different Twin City locations. VFP member Paul Chappell speaking, FFI: TWINCITIESNONVIOLENT.ORG

Sep. 30, 5- 8 pm. WAMM Silent Auction at St. Joan of Arc, 4537 3rd Av. S., Mpls.

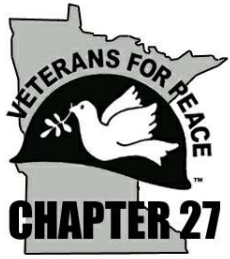
Oct. 12-13, VFP Journey to Pipestone, Mn via Mankato, the site of the 1862 hanging of 38 Native Americans, and to Little Crow's Grave in Flandreau, S.D. FFI: 612 869 2040.

Oct 20, 2 pm. "Nuclear Asia: Prospects for Peace," Metro State Univ.. Student Center, Room 101, 690 E. 7th St., St. Paul

Oct. 21, 1:30 pm. STOP ENDLESS US WARS. Gather at Mayday Plaza, 3rd St. and Cedar Av., Mpls.

Nov. 11, 10 am. Reclaim Armistice Day, Landmark Center, 75 W. 5th St., St. Paul.

Nov. 11, 6:30 pm. Evening Armistice Ceremony at Carondelet Church.



Veterans For Peace Chapter 27
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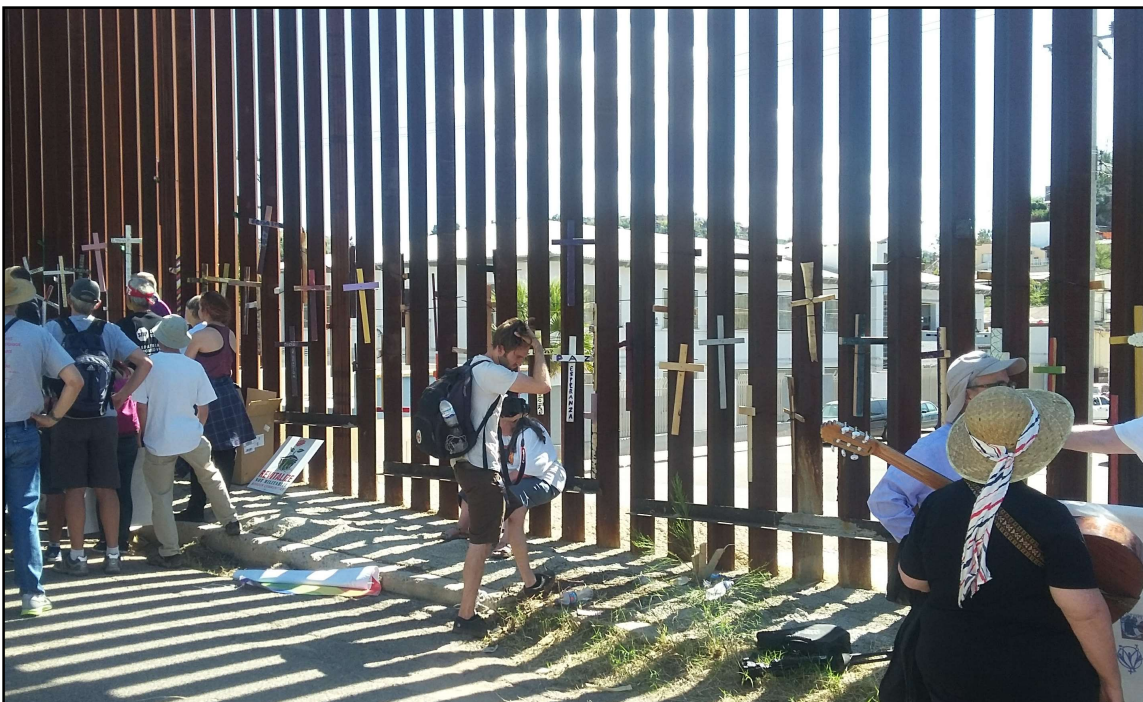
SUPPORT THE TROOPS! BRING THEM HOME ALIVE NOW!

As of Sep. 4, 2018:

**At least 6,958 dead in Iraq and Afghanistan;
over one million injured veterans.**

**An estimated 22 veterans die from suicide each day,
amounting to over 24,090 over the past three years.**

Encuentro at the border 2018



This years' Border Encuentro, "Dismantle Border Imperialism! Struggle, Create, Power to the People!", takes place November 16-18 in Nogales, Arizona/Sonora. It comes at a moment when attacks on refugees, immigrants and communities of color across the Americas and beyond are increasing. See article on page 12 for more information