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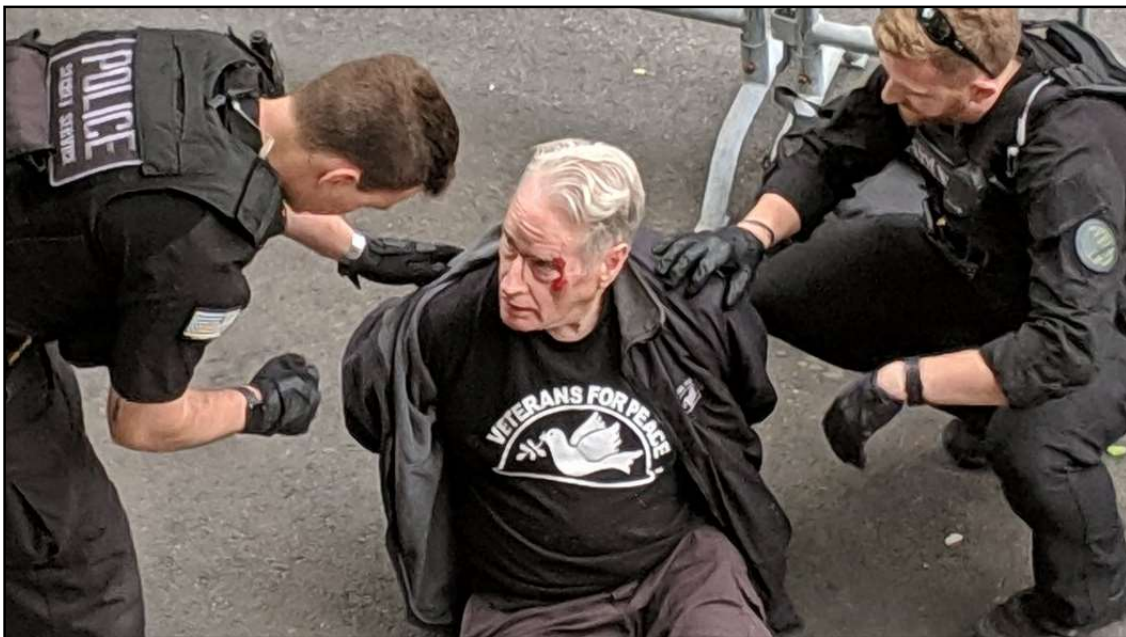
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*"There won't be any trumpets blowing come the Judgement Day — on the bloody morning after, one tin soldier rides away..."*  
(Potter & Lambert)



*Gerry Condon, president of Veterans For Peace, was one of the protesters arrested in May trying to pass food to activists inside the Venezuelan embassy.*

## VFP president among those arrested at Venezuelan embassy

Compiled from Internet news sites  
by Frank Fuller

Gerry Condon, president of VFP, was beaten and bloodied while being arrested May 8 outside the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington DC after trying to pass food to protesters inside the embassy.

Some protesters were charged with throwing "missiles" at the embassy, which were actually loaves of bread and other foodstuffs.

The protesters, organized by CODEPINK, Popular Resistance and the ANSWER Coalition, entered the embassy April 10 at the invitation of the Venezuelan government after the visas of the embassy staff expired and they had to leave the U.S. It was expected that supporters of the Venezuela opposition leader Juan Guaido would take over the embassy with the support of the US, an illegal act that

protesters feared would increase the possibility of war between Venezuela and the U.S.

Calling themselves the Embassy Protection Collective, the protesters went into the vacant embassy. About 50 activists slept there regularly and came and went freely.

Then on April 30, Guaido supporters surrounded the building and would not allow anyone to enter, even with food or medicine. In the first week of May, the first CODEPINK protesters were arrested trying to get food into the embassy. This is when activists were first charged with "throwing missiles," or food.

In addition, the power and water were shut off, even though CODEPINK states that all bills had been paid.

Initially, the Washington DC police handed out a trespassing notice to protesters, which

Embassy, Continued on page 5

## Notes from the President . . . The Peace Bus rolls

by Mike McDonald

*"There is no way to peace - Peace is the way."  
Thick Nhat Hanh*

### ***Peace Bus***

I am looking forward to rolling out the peace bus more often this summer. After getting some mechanical work done, she is running well and ready for action. Plans include being part of Open Streets in Minneapolis, and visiting some county fairs and festivals to get anti-nuclear signatures and share our thoughts with folks.

One of our main goals this year is to keep in touch with our legislators. We have met with the staffs of Rep. McCollum, Rep. Phillips, Sen. Smith, and Sen. Klobuchar. We have met directly with Rep. Omar twice.

### ***Peace Bridge 20th Anniversary***

The 20th anniversary of the Peace Bridge brought close

to 200 people out on April 24 to share our displeasure with our country's war machine. We hope many will join us this summer along with WAMM members and supporters on Wednesdays from 5-6 p.m. on the Marshall/Lake St. Bridge.

### ***Kiwanis Club in Roseville***

Dick Bernard, Larry Johnson, Elaine Wynne and I were invited to the Golden K Kiwanis chapter in Roseville to talk about our group. Here is a response from their leader Norm.

"On behalf of the Golden K Kiwanis chapter, I want to thank you and your colleagues for a tremendous program and the reflections on military service and the use of military force this afternoon. As you saw, the presentations generated lots of questions, many of them rather emotional, relative to their own experiences in the military service and particularly during the Vietnam War. I noticed that many Golden K members were still talking to all of you long after your presentations had ended which reflected their great interest in what you and your colleagues had to say."

Thanks to Dick Bernard for setting up this very meaningful gathering.

## Support Mayday Books

*Find a wide range of books and periodicals  
at 15% off cover price. All the time!*

**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.**

## President Mike McDonald's letter to the *Tribune* editor, published in early May

We must act now to save ourselves.

The recent U.N. Report on biodiversity points out that human society is in jeopardy from accelerating decline of the Earth's natural systems. The health of those ecosystems is deteriorating more rapidly than ever, and future forecasts indicate negative trends will continue in all scenarios except those that embrace radical change across society, political, economics and technology.

So what is our hope going forward? I believe that our war-torn world has only one option. The U.S. can be a hero now by leading the world in cutting military spending drastically and going to work on saving our fragile Earth.

There is no Planet B.

# Forty-nine years later, a Kent State Massacre win

by Laurel Krause

On May 22nd I learned we scored a people's victory against the administration of Kent State University and I had to share it with my colleague Mary Ann Vecchio. You may remember Mary Ann. She was the girl in the Pulitzer Prize-winning Kent State picture taken by John Filo.

Even though Mary Ann and I were both born the same year, on May 4, 1970 our experiences of the Kent State massacre were like night and day. Mary Ann was a runaway caught in the extreme chaos of what so many of us thought was the beginning of the revolution at Kent State. I was with my parents learning my older sister Allison Beth Krause was killed by Ohio National Guard gunfire at a noontime rally against the Vietnam War at Kent State University.

Forty-nine years later, Mary Ann and I are celebrating Kent State good news for the first time ever. Over the phone we appreciated the folks who participated in an email blast delivered, and how a top CIA operative was no longer Chair of the 50th commemoration of the Kent State massacre.

Remembering I had been invited to write this piece for Steve McKeown, I asked Mary Ann if she had a message for the Veterans for Peace. Mary Ann said, "I worked at the VA hospital for five years as a registered respiratory therapist" and added, "For years I was afraid to talk to Vets. Working at the VA I got over it, made amends and realized we're all casualties of war."

Jeffrey Miller, Sandra Scheuer, William Schroeder and Allison Krause were the four students and protesters killed in the May 4, 1970 Kent State massacre. On May 4th Allison stood unarmed for the cause of peace and was gunned down by Ohio National Guardsmen as she protested the war in Vietnam and Nixon's Cambodian invasion.

Immediately following the 49th anniversary on May 4, 2019, we learned Kent State President Beverly Warren hand-selected an accomplished, retired CIA operative with 25 years at the agency to chair the commemoration of the killing of four student protesters and wounding of nine. We felt Smith's CIA career was inappropriate to lead planning to commemorate a peace rally gone deadly by military and covert forces. Mike Alewitz, a witness and survivor of Kent

State, agreed, saying, "Ms. Smith's appointment and career background is a travesty and an insult to all those that seek peace and social justice."

We knew we had to do something.

KSU President Warren had already recruited and hired Dr. Mindy Farmer of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library & Museum to oversee the May 4 Visitor Center from a Nixon point of view. Eric Mansfield had been named Executive Director of Media at Kent State and for the 50th, with a career spanning more than 20 years fighting wars around the world for the Ohio National Guard.

Mary Ann and I saw way too many government, military and intelligence careerists leading and planning the Kent State 50th. They were also managing a \$2 million budget. We wondered, who at the 50th will stand for peace?

On May 14th we launched an email campaign in opposition to President Warren's appointment of Smith. More than 250 requests for instructions to participate came in reply. Our instructions asked participants to share the blast with their friends so it became exponential. Within a few days we learned Warren had received hundreds of emails against Smith, and Kent State

leadership was under pressure and annoyed.

On May 22nd I woke up to facebook, reading a message from another Kent State witness/survivor, "She's out."

It didn't take long to find the statement Stephanie D. Smith wrote explaining her decision to step down: "Out of respect for the profound concerns held by some members of Kent State's May 4 community about my former work in national security, I am stepping down as university chair of the 50th commemoration. I will continue to encourage my students to join me in active inquiry about how the events of May 4, 1970, are relevant today and especially to ponder the dangers of polarization and the power of reconciliation. Long live the spirit of Kent and Jackson State."

We continue our efforts for Kent State peace and for the protection of protesters in America. Join us as we bring peace to the Kent State 50th on May 4, 2020.

*Laurel Krause, sister of Allison, is co-founder of the Kent State Truth Tribunal and makes her home at the Allison Center for Peace.*



*Mary Ann Vecchio (left) and Laurel Krause*

# National VFP perspective

by Dave Logsdon

*"Once you make a decision  
the universe conspires to make it happen."  
Ralph Waldo Emerson*

After five years as president of VFP chapter 27, I am now tackling a new job on the National Veterans For Peace Board. It's like going from being a governor to being a freshmen senator. You are the new kid on the block, trying to find where you fit in.

For my part, as the lone board member in "flyover country," I feel like I need to bridge the communication gap between an organization that is now international and its member chapters. To that end, I have been reaching out to chapters in the upper midwest and acting as a listening post, finding what they are doing, and offering suggestions to help them build their chapters. Of course, in honest company, most of my success at Chapter 27 was due to an extraordinary group of men and women as much as anything I might have done.

## *New Executive Director*

After many years as the Executive Director of National Veterans For Peace, Michael McPhearson is stepping down. Our big task as a board when we met in St. Louis was to hire a replacement. Michael is a hard act to follow. His marvelous skill in handling people with patience and sensitivity was a gift much appreciated by anyone working with or for him. He'll still be a part of VFP. After weighing all the possible candidates we spent the afternoon grilling, I mean questioning, Garrett Repenhagen. He addressed everyone's concerns and the board unanimously approved him. I think Garrett will do a fine job.

## *Venezuela and Ireland*

As the U.S. military-industrial monster turns up the heat on the democratically-elected government of Venezuela, the Venezuela government pulled out of its embassy in Washington. They invited activists from Code Pink and other activists to occupy the deserted embassy. At our conference in St. Louis our National VFP President, Gerry Condon and board member Maurice Martin decided to fly to D.C. to join the "Embassy Protectors." In an effort to bring food for to the embassy occupiers, he was thrown to the ground by the Secret Service police and sustained a cut

above his eye. He was arrested and subsequently released. This thinly disguised coup attempt by our government and its crony allies is a brazen violation of international law. Whether you like Venezuelan President Maduro or not, what gives our government or any government the right to name another country's president? Meanwhile, draconian sanctions are resulting in the deaths of thousands of innocent children. Because we are the most powerful military power in the history of mankind, and we go anywhere and do whatever we want to anyone with absolutely no accountability!

Elsewhere, two long-time VFPers, Ken Mayer and Tarak Kauff took upon themselves to do an action at the Shannon Airport in Limerick, Ireland. Shannon Airport is a stopping off place for U.S. troops headed to the Middle East. **According to the Neutrality Act that Ireland has signed, only troops, no weapons or armaments, are allowed to pass through Irish airports.** By trespassing onto the tarmac to inspect the transports, Ken and Tarak found themselves in the Limerick jail. As veterans, they knew by personal experience that U.S. soldiers did bring arms with them in direct and explicit violation of the Neutrality Act. They are out of prison and await trial, but they cannot leave Ireland, because their passports were confiscated. They are hopscotching around Ireland getting lots of media attention and shining a bright light on this issue!

## *VFP Convention in Spokane*

On August 15-18, the National Veterans For Peace convention will be held in Spokane, Washington. Spokane is located in western Washington, a progressive oasis in the middle of cowboy country.

The Spokane chapter is working hard to make this a special event. I am on the convention committee, helping the host chapter navigate the challenges of putting one of these events on. The theme is "Sacred Lives...Sacred Lands" and pays tribute to the strong First Nation presence in Spokane. Native Elders from the local tribes will participate fully.

The banquet speaker is a powerful indigenous voice for Hawaiian Native rights named Ruth Aloua. The Friday night off-site event will feature Danny Sjursen and Brittany Debarros. This year, Danny will be speaking at Peacestock so you can have a preview. (See Peacestock notice on page 16 for details.) Book your travel in the near future, we'll see you there.

# Nuclear weapons abolition update

by Steve McKeown

Jay Kvale, a member of VFP and the End War Committee, recently returned from Washington, D.C., where he had been meeting with our Minnesota Congressional Delegation. Jay was one of nine people with The Minnesota Peace Project that went there to discuss Peace issues. Jay said that Reps. Omar and McCollum support the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons pledge. Rep. Jim McGovern has introduced Resolution 302 for our representatives to sign.

As reported in our last newsletter we (VFP and WAMM members) from the End War Committee had met with Minnesota State Senators Marty, Pappas, and Dibble. They now have informed us that their resolutions have been stalled by the Republicans not allowing a hearing. They were going to circulate a Pledge of Support to their colleagues; calls from our readers to their State Senator in regard to this would be welcome.

Regarding our Federal Petition supporting the UN Treaty, we now have 17,184 signatures from 560 towns and cities in Minnesota. Contact WAMM for your own petition to fill. Towns and Cities with 20 or more signatures are:

Andover-27; Anoka-44; Apple Valley-92; Blaine-69; Bloomington-415; Blue Earth-23; Brainard-64; Brooklyn Center-60; Brooklyn Park-113; Cambridge-25; Champlin-27; Chanhassen-29; Chaska-44; Columbia Heights-52; Coon Rapids-82; Cottage Grove-30; Crystal-54; Duluth-227; Eagan-150; Eden Prairie-140; Edina-368; Excelsior-39; Faribault-44; Farmington-30; Fergus Falls-23; Fridley-83; Forest Lake-24; Golden Valley-90; Grand Rapids-39; Hopkins-159; Inver Grove Heights-51; Kenyon-26; Lakeville-48; Little Falls-43; Maple Grove-74; Maplewood-83; Mankato-181; Marshall-35; Mendota Heights-20; Milaca-28; Minneapolis-6,845; Minnetonka-190; Montgomery-22; Morris-30; New Brighton-69; New Hope-44; Northfield-171; Oakdale-26; Owatonna-29; Plymouth-107; Pine River-23; Pipestone-21; Princeton-35; Prior Lake-44; Ramsey-24; Richfield-531; Robbinsdale-61; Rochester-70; Rosemount-41; Roseville-131; St. Cloud-102; St. Louis Park-317; St. Paul-1,864; St. Peter-68; Sandstone-34; Sauk Rapids-20; Savage-47; Shakopee-71; Shoreview-64; Stillwater-65; South St. Paul-39; Vadnais Heights-22; Waconia-30; West St. Paul-47; Wilmar-44; Woodbury-76.

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## Embassy from page 1

stated that the Trump Administration recognized Guaido as the leader of Venezuela and protesters in the embassy were trespassing. But after discussions with protesters, the police gave up on the trespassing charges.

Instead, on May 16, they returned with warrants and arrested those in the embassy, charging them with “interference with certain protective functions.”

A CODEPINK news release states: “D.C. police officers illegally entered the Venezuelan embassy in Washington D.C. in the Georgetown neighborhood and arrested four activists lawfully living in the building since April 10, as guests of the legitimate Venezuelan government.

“They are charged with ‘interference with certain protective functions.’ It is notable that they were not charged with trespassing, which makes it perfectly clear that the US government does not want to be in the position of having to

explain who is lawfully in charge of these premises,” says the Embassy Protection Collective’s attorney Mara Verheyden Hilliard. “What we are seeing today is the most extraordinary violation of the Vienna Convention. The fact that the State Department has broken into a protected diplomatic mission to arrest the peace activists inside is something that will have repercussions the world over.”

The deputy foreign minister of Venezuela added, “We denounce these arrests, as the people inside were there with our permission, and we consider it a violation of the Vienna Conventions. We do not authorize any of the coup leaders to enter our embassy in Washington DC. We call on the US government to respect the Vienna Conventions and sign a Protecting Power Agreement with us that would ensure the integrity of both our Embassy in Washington DC and the US Embassy in Caracas.”



# Madonna wishy-washes apartheid Israel at Eurovision

by Craig Wood

Art-washing is a PR tactic that uses famous artists in ways that divert attention away from bad behavior. An ad designer who combines a Monet water lily image with an oil company logo is one way.

Recruiting an international pop icon like Madonna to sing at a music festival in the creepy political climate of Tel Aviv is another. Zionists uncomfortable with the growing Boycott, Divest and Sanctions movement (BDS) are always on the prowl for a new gimmick that will put a fun or progressive face on their deplorable government.

In the past, Israeli apologists have tried redirecting calls to restore Palestinian human rights by pointing to the gay-friendliness of Israel. This is called pink-washing. Others have suggested that treating Palestinians like second-class citizens is justified because of the disproportionate number of contributions Jews have made to the worlds of art and science, a rationale that seeks to justify one group mistreating another group because the former has had more of an opportunity to develop innovative ideas. This is a form of white-washing.

Last year, Israeli Netta Barzilai won The Eurovision Song Contest. Her win meant Israel would not only get to host the world famous festival in 2019, it also might have a chance to spruce up Israel's image for major print media and a wide audience of television viewers.

And who better than Madonna "The Queen of Pop" to put on the dog and send a global message that it's OK to play apartheid Israel? Everyone already knew she's a megastar with a history of doing outlandish things — what would the surprises be on stage? Surely curiosities like these would help distract music fans and others from thinking about the unlawful and shitty things the Israeli government does to Palestinians. Promoters needed someone with her star power to stand up to BDS, so they bet heavy on her persona and offered her a million bucks to sing a couple songs.

Madonna isn't just a performer; she's also a shrewd businesswoman and advocate/student of the Kabbalah (a form of Jewish mysticism). Although she doesn't consider herself Jewish, she observes Shabbat and had a bar mitzvah for her son. Sometimes she'll wear a Star of David, or a cross if she's feeling sentimental about Jesus getting nailed



*A large group showed up to protest Israel hosting the 2019 Eurovision festival.*

to one. Other times she might put on a Moroccan Berber head dress and mix and match ethnic jewelry.

Being hard to pin down is one of her strong suits. When fans thought she was through acting out sexually on stage, she offered to give anyone who voted for Hillary Clinton a blowjob in 2016. A while later, she was off on a pilgrimage to visit the tomb of a Sufi mystic in Turkey. Who knows what she'll do next — keep 'em guessing is her modus operandi.

She's super rich, too. Guinness World Records has her as best-selling female artist of all time after selling 300 million records. Plus, she's the richest female singer in the world with \$800 million in assets. Lady Gaga comes in tenth with \$275 million.

With money like that, Madonna the "material girl" and seeker-of-esoteric-wisdom, can be as spiritually eccentric as she wants. Spending \$10,000 a month on Kabbalah Water or throwing a Kabbalah cocktail party at one of her lavish homes in New York, Beverly Hills, London or Tel Aviv is within her budget. It's rumored she once tried filling up a house radiator system and swimming pool with the blessed \$5 a bottle water.

Given this level of notoriety, her audience was no doubt on tenterhooks wondering what her show would be like on closing night. She did tell Reuters "I'll never stop playing music to fit someone's political agenda nor will I stop speaking out against violations of human rights wherever in

Madonna, Continued on page 15

# Save Our VA Campaign still needs your help!

by David Cooley and Jeff Roy,  
veterans and members of Chapter 27

As this newsletter was being printed, there was no news whether the Congressional Committee on Veteran Affairs would accept or revise the flawed standards proposed for veterans to access community healthcare under the 2018 MISSION Act. So let's hope that, as you read this, Congress did not accept those standards.

Though we believe it is essential for veterans to have access to community healthcare nationally when they live far from a VA hospital or clinic, the devil is in the details. Chances are, the Save Our VA (SOVA) Campaign will still need your help influencing Congress to do the right thing to protect veteran's healthcare. The deadline for Congress to act on this was June 6.

For those not fully aware of the controversy surrounding the MISSION Act and how veterans would get access to the Veterans Community Care Program (VCCP), the following is a brief background.

In 2018, Congress passed the MISSION Act that consolidated seven programs allowing vets to obtain private or community health care coordinated by the VA, created an integrated network for the department and community care, provided hiring incentives for health professionals, expanded a financial assistance program for caregivers of veterans and created an infrastructure commission on modernizing VA facilities.

One of the purposes and intent of Congress last year was to expand VA care to rural areas by paying for private healthcare that would decrease the wait times for veterans. Congress did not ask for or want "one-size fits all" access standards (the drive time and wait time criteria); Congress wanted the VA doctor and the veteran to decide whether Community Care was appropriate. So veteran access standards were developed, but in secret by VA Secretary Wilkie and staff, without the customary input of Congress and Veteran Service Organizations (VSO's). Unless these proposed standards were withdrawn and revised, they went into effect June 6th.

Here are problems we see with the proposed standards that will negatively affect VA care in the long run.

First: No additional funds were provided under the MISSION Act, so funds to operate the VCCP will be taken

from already underfunded VA hospitals and clinic budgets. As then Rep. Tim Walz (of Minnesota) noted during 2018 MISSION Act deliberations: "This means current programs investing in VA infrastructure, direct patient care, suicide prevention, medical research, job training and many more vital veterans programs could face cuts in funding in order to pay for care in the community under this new plan, something the Veteran Service Organizations have warned against. **This paints a clear picture of a VA forced to cannibalize itself in order to pay for care in the private sector. Unfortunately, multiple amendments offered by my fellow House Democrats and me to fix these funding issues were voted down by Republicans.**"

Second: Under the proposed standards, no additional staff will be provided, so current doctors, nurses and staff will have to manage the scheduling & follow-up of the VCCP.

Third: Under the proposed standards, the quality of VCCP healthcare may be affected because private-sector doctors and nurses do not need the same training or meet VA standards of care, especially affecting PTSD, TBI & MST. And the quality of care may be affected because there is no system to monitor care provided nor to resolve problems/complaints vets have.

We see three impacts:

Erosion of VA care from funding loss to the private sector healthcare.

Diversion of staff from direct care with resulting longer wait times, loss of continuity of follow-up & complaints of poor care.

Potential closing of VA clinics/hospitals with possible eventual full privatization of VA care.

So please continue to help us pressure our Congressional representatives to do what is necessary to protect and improve VA veteran healthcare.

Contact us at [SOVAMINN@GMAIL.COM](mailto:SOVAMINN@GMAIL.COM) to get on the list for periodic updates and call for action.

And if you are a member of a Veteran Service Organization and want one of our speakers to come to your monthly membership meeting to hear more about Saving Our VA, just contact us at the above address.

Join us in working to Save Our VA!

# War stinks and so do skunks, but at least they defend themselves without killing

by Larry Johnson

I've been enamored with flight from the first time I was in a plane, looking down at the clouds, and wondering how something so heavy could get up in the air and stay up for thousands of miles. Of course, that first time was connected to my work, in the early 60s, as a young evangelist with Minneapolis Youth for Christ, which sent me to the Book of Revelation and the second coming of Jesus verse: "Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye shall see him." Today I'm more conscious of "looking at clouds from both sides now," and sadly, I'm pretty convinced that if Jesus returned physically "in the clouds," too many Christians wouldn't recognize the "Prince of Peace." They would order their military to shoot down this invader from space.

We've been amazed for thousands of years at the flight of birds, wondering "Can we also fly?" Scores of unsuccessful, some disastrous, experiments, and then in 1903, two young bicycle mechanics overcame wind resistance, using what they knew from bike racing, and made a flimsy craft fly and land successfully at Kitty Hawk. The difficulty was that development soon fell into the hands of the military, allowing us to go up in the air and drop bombs that killed civilians, in total violation of the 1500-year-old Just War Theory, developed by spiritual ancestors of the Wright Brothers father, a Christian minister.

Today, I wonder if we could study and emulate birds till we could fly ourselves, why can't we now do the same kind of study of animals like the skunk, squid, the conch snail, and Monarch butterfly, all of whom defend themselves without killing their attacker. The conch, living in its heavy shell, is like the old walled cities, designed to keep attacking armies out, though most of those walls were finally destroyed by World War II bombing. There are squid which slime their attackers, making them temporarily unable to move and/or see. The Monarch has a bitter taste, discouraging predators from wanting to kill and eat it, and I don't need to elaborate on the skunk's nonviolent, defensive prowess.

All around the world we have young, science-oriented activists, who have taken on the challenge of Climate Change, because they realize it is killing us. Many have not yet been able to connect the dots that those opposing Climate Change tend to be heavily connected to the system of oil-driven, planet-polluting militarism, articulated so clearly and comprehensively in Barry Sanders' *The Green Zone: The Environmental Costs of Militarism*. I believe our

job as older activists is to help young people capture Elder Wisdom on militarism, letting it bubble up thru the environmental work so many of them do.

Walled cities no longer work, but I believe brilliant, caring young people can discover scientific, mechanical means to defuse deadly weapons, before they cause illegal harm or death. Even better, that they develop the spiritual force to penetrate walled, older minds, with the vision of a green, verdant earth for all as superior to a musty storehouse of green wealth for just a few.

Leonardo Da Vinci was an early proponent of flight, but he also designed weapons of war. Apparently that's where the money was also back then. There were catapults and special ladders to get over those protective walls. There were early cannons, and perhaps most savage, a chariot with an overhead swinging scythe, designed to mow down the enemy in its path. Leonardo was the scientific, artistic genius we've always heard, but he was severely lacking in spiritual power. When we exploded the first, illegal, atomic bomb, Einstein referred to that missing force, saying, "All has changed, but how we think."

Much of the reason young people are out in force on the environment is that, from the time of the first Earth Day in 1970, many dedicated educators were teaching them the importance of caring for the earth. Now we must teach them that caring for the earth includes the people who live there, the soldiers and civilians killed by war and its aftermath. Changing minds and systems to "defense without killing" maintains a pristine Creation, keeping more people alive to enjoy it. A most helpful effort in this area is PEACE LITERACY, [www.peaceliteracy.org](http://www.peaceliteracy.org), being developed by Captain Paul Chappell, member of the national VFP advisory, and author of books like *THE ART OF WAGING PEACE*. Stay tuned, as the Peace Circle at Minneapolis First Universalist Society has taken the lead on getting the peace literacy curriculum into the schools.

## 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/](http://www.worldbeyondwar.org/speakers/)



## The anti-recruiter

by Steve McKeown

Recently I listened in on one of the four classes VFP chapter member Dick Foley spoke to at Benilde St. Margaret High School in St Louis Park. He speaks at a number of schools, most notably at this one where his children had attended, and at Cretin Derham Hall in St. Paul regularly.

Dick started his talk by telling the class he was the anti-recruiter, and proceeded to tell why, with a story that comes from his experience and his heart. He said if one wants to join the military he respects that, but to use critical thinking in making that choice. Part of that thinking requires that you know that you are surrendering your rights as a human being if you do join.

“There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about the worst day of my life.” The Vietnam Veteran Army Sergeant then described to the students when his unit was overrun. There was no glamor in what he said nor was there any grandiosity. Dick also told them that he was in an artillery unit within the 25th Infantry Division, which was the same Division the movie *Platoon* was based on, and he related very well to how they threw bodies into a mass grave as that is what they did also. I have heard Dick speak before, and what he has to say is straightforward with a sadness, asking the students not to thank him for his service, but his sacrifice because the first thing to go in war is one's youth. Permanently.

Dick told the class that he volunteers at the VA and AMICUS to visit a vet in prison. He asked me how I thought he did after the class, and I told him that he told his story very well, but suggested that he leave more time for questions, because they kept coming until the bell rang. Over the years Dick has shared some of the written feedback he has received from students. He is willing to speak even more than he has, and for those that are in a position to have him do so please contact our office.

## Local VFP chapter passes Green New Deal Resolution

Our local VFP chapter passed the following resolution: “Be it resolved that Veterans For Peace, Chapter # 027, is in support of the basic tenets of the Green New Deal for the purpose of national security to better meet the challenges of climate catastrophe. We encourage members to notify their congressional delegation from whatever party of this support.”

## Did a thumb on the scale cost us \$7.5 billion?

by Frank Fuller

**H**ow much does corruption cost? It's hard to say but in one case of Pentagon corruption, it might come to about \$7.5 billion, which is the cost over 10 years of purchasing Boeing F-15X jet fighters.

This case involves the acting secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan, a former Boeing executive, possibly favoring Boeing over Lockheed Martin in the purchase of jet fighters. In fact, these charges have been holding up his confirmation hearings to become the Secretary of Defense.

He was investigated earlier this year on charges that he disparaged Boeing's competitors, he didn't remove himself from Boeing-related business, he tried to force a general to buy Boeing aircraft; and he threatened to cut air force programs if the Boeing F-15X purchases weren't supported.

Did he put his thumb on the scale to favor Boeing? The Inspector General investigated and, in what must be a record for completing a government investigation and report, cleared him of everything in about a month. Now the Senate will be able to confirm him as Secretary of Defense and the Department of Defense can spend \$7.5 billion on jets that nobody except Boeing and Shanahan seem to want.

So how could \$7.5 billion make lives better these days? Here are a few ways.

It could pay **88,000 elementary school teachers** about \$81,000 for a year.

It could provide about **800,000 Head Start slots** for a year.

Almost **700,000 vets** would get VA health care for a year.

**Two million adults** could get health care for a year.

It would pay for **96,000 clean energy jobs** for a year at \$74,000 each.

The country could get started on **infrastructure repair with 128,000 jobs** paying \$55,000 each.

And about **290,000 students** could get Pell Grants for four years.

# Women honored for peace work, and recognized by the Minneapolis Veterans Administration

by Joan Johnson

While at the VA for a routine medical visit in March, my husband Steve noticed a display of 12 women's portraits hanging on the wall of the busy hallway which connects the atrium to the cafeteria. He quickly learned that this group of women were this year's recipients of the Women's History Project award, sponsored by the National Women's History Project and the National Women's History Alliance. Each year, the Project has a different theme, and this year's honorees have been recognized for their work against violence, war and injustice, with a focus on how their non-violent work has helped change society. Steve remarked that this display, with its very clear emphasis on the importance of non-violence, was a welcome sight in his VA hospital!

Among the women pictured was Kathy Kelly, long-time VFP associate member, and founder/director of the organization Creative Voices for Nonviolence, based in Chicago. Many readers are familiar with Kathy's far-reaching and important, impactful work with people of war-torn and oppressed nations, and her many efforts to stop war and other unjust U.S. policies. She has been a frequent speaker at many VFP events throughout the years, including at Peacestock.

Another award recipient pictured in the display was



Alice Zachmann



Kathy Kelly

southern Minnesota native 93-year old Alice Zachmann. As a member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, she has immersed herself in peace and social justice work most of her life. She protested the Vietnam War and was founder and director of the Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA for 20 years in Washington DC. She also volunteered for ten years at the Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition, advocated for elderly people in St. Paul neighborhoods, worked with United Farm Workers for just wages, and continues to have a regular presence at weekly Wednesday war protests in Mankato, where she resides.

Sister Alice was featured in Mankato's "The Free Press" March 29, 2019 issue, which was brought to our attention at our April VFP meeting by Mankato resident Jim Brown (see [mankatofreepress.com](http://mankatofreepress.com) for the complete article). In it, she reflects on her involvements: "I never dreamt growing up on a modest 80-acre farm

that I would ever be working in Washington, DC. I'm so grateful I was called to this." As are the countless people impacted by her many years of dedicated service, I am sure.

What amazing women and role models these two are!

# Memorial Day 2019

by Barry Reisch

**D**etermined that the show would go on “rain or no rain” we were ready to set up our usual spot and hoped others would show up, even though things were not looking good.

The stars aligned for us as I noticed activity at the nearby Veterans Administration Building. On approaching to see what was up, turns out there was a group who were setting up to ring the Liberty Bell, on site, which had never been rung before. The group had been wanting us to join them anyhow, and I asked if we could set up in the same space as it was covered and had electricity. They agreed and their service concluded before ours and the show went on. Governor Walz was also on hand for their ceremony but things were too hectic to try and recruit him to say a few words to our group.

In spite of the cold, rainy and windy weather, we still had a good program and folks hung in there till the end. A hardy bunch. Our message always for Memorial Day is to not just remember the soldiers lost to war, but all casualties, which today are primarily innocent civilians and especially children. Our environment also suffers from our Military adventures, with it being one of the largest polluters and consumer of resources in the world.

Our service began with Native drumming by brothers Thorne and Wakinyan LaPointe (Sicangu Lakota). Music and major set up help was provided by Bill McGrath. Words

from chapter 27 President Mike McDonald, along with Native smudging of the Vietnam Wall and attendees by John Varone. Also a part of the ceremony: a talk by Don Olson and poetry by Chante Wolf, Tom LeBlanc and Stefon Slevasik. Bruce Berry helped with incense lighting. The event concluded with bag pipe playing by Dick Hensold. Thanks to Carla Riehle who videoed the event (see [youtube/URNdUzPy6A](https://youtube.com/URNdUzPy6A), [vfpchapter27.org](https://vfpchapter27.org) or chapter 27 Facebook). Thanks to all who attended, helped set up, direct folks, and helped clean up.

The Veterans for Peace Full Disclosure campaign this year is focusing on the stories of War Resisters, and this year we honored this by hearing from Don Olson. Don is a member of what was called the “Minnesota Eight” during the Vietnam War, who were responsible for a break-in at the St. Paul post office, where they trashed thousands of draft records and probably saved many from being drafted and potentially losing their lives in Vietnam. This continued until a failed attempt on July 10, 1970, to break into government offices in three Minnesota towns, Little Falls, Alexandria and Winona, where they were confronted by the FBI and arrested. Don spent 20

months of a five-year sentence in a dank, antiquated federal prison in Missouri. Don continues his activism and hosts the radio program Northern Sun News on KFAI (90.3 FM & 106.7 FM) from 1-2 p.m. on Thursdays.

We appreciated all who attended and those who helped with another meaningful Memorial Day event.



*President Mike McDonald speaks on Memorial Day.*



*Tom LeBlanc at the microphone.*

# Honoring all those scarred by war

by Cynthia Orange

History tells us that the two major events we observe in May—Memorial Day and Mothers' Day—are both linked to the Civil War. In 1868, May 30 was originally called "Decoration Day," a day to decorate the graves of soldiers who lost their lives in that bloodiest of our nation's wars. And in 1870, five years after the Civil War ended, Julia Ward Howe conceived Mothers' Day as a day in which mothers could come together and protest their sons killing other mothers' sons. It seems our wise ancestors gleaned how important it is to acknowledge the inevitable grief, loss, and cries of women that burst forth in the wake of war. Any war.

Each Memorial Day, I am reminded of the famous lines from Archibald MacLeish's poem, "The Young Dead Soldiers:"

*The young dead soldiers do not speak. . . .  
They say: Our deaths are not ours; they are yours;  
they will mean what you make them.  
They say: Whether our lives and our deaths were for peace  
and a new hope or for nothing we cannot say;  
it is you who must say this.  
They say: We leave you our deaths.  
Give them their meaning.  
We were young, they say.  
We have died. Remember us.*

MacLeish's words remind me of our family's first visit to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. when our daughter was in high school. It struck me as a large, dark, wing of death carved into the earth. We walked together down the gradual slope to read the names of dead soldiers, etched into the smooth granite in the order in which they died. Jessica and I stood at each end of 1969-1970, Michael's tour of duty, and I was taken aback by the enormity of the loss as I ran my fingers over the grooves of letters that formed the names of all those "young dead sol-

diers."

These losses are tragic, but they are tangible, even touchable when you have a memorial, a cemetery marker, or an urn. A physical death can be mourned through ritual and in community, and the grief of those who mourn runs deep as family and friends gather to shed tears and memorialize their lost loved one. But what about Michael and the multitude of wounded warriors who didn't die but who carry their trauma and emotional scars deep within?

What about Michael's best friend in Vietnam who appeared so "well adjusted" and successful in the decades

following his service? Yet, some 30 years after coming home from that war, he committed suicide by dousing himself with gasoline, tying himself to the steering wheel of his car, and lighting a match

after leaving a 14-page suicide note for his wife and sons. Page after heartbreaking page spoke only of his combat experience—an experience he never talked to her (or anyone) about. A casualty of war whose name will never be carved on the memorial we visited.

Or what about Kevin and Joyce Lucey, who sign their emails with their names, adding, the line: "The proud parents of Cpl. Jeffrey Michael Lucey, a 23-year-old USMC reservist forever. Succumbed to the hidden wounds of PTSD on 06/22/04." When Jeff came back from Iraq, they watched their son fall apart and tried everything to help him. Like so many loved ones, they became as hyper-vigilant as trauma survivors. But even their fierce love could not quell the horrors of war.

I worry about our young veterans, like our friend with vacant eyes who served one tour of duty in Afghanistan and three in Iraq. He came home, like so many other young soldiers, with a heart filled with pain and a head filled with ghosts. Two of his buddies were killed in action in Iraq and five others committed suicide when they came home. He also came home with four purple hearts, a traumatic brain injury, and a raging case of PTSD.

When Michael and I facilitated a discussion about the grief and loss from war, we asked those in attendance,



“What does war take from soldiers, veterans, and those who love them?” Their responses included things like: Innocence. Patriotism. Love. Relationships. Money. Jobs. Sanity. Security. Tranquility. Trust. Courage. Loyalty. Feelings. Self. Purpose. Laughter. Family. God. Country. Dreams. Future. Youth. Friends. Pride.

When trauma strikes a loved one, or when the effects of trauma build to a crescendo over time, family and friends are thrust into the role of caregiver—a role they probably aren’t prepared to assume. I remember telling a friend that I felt lost in the “bewilderness” when Michael was finally diagnosed with PTSD.

It is normal—and sometimes necessary—to put our lives on hold and focus on a traumatized loved one. Yet it is important to acknowledge how dramatically their trauma has changed our lives, making it our trauma too. We may choose to give up our time and a piece of ourselves to tend to their psychological or physical wounds, but there is still loss in the midst of that choice.

It took many years (and many therapy sessions) to understand that I, as the caring spouse of a Vietnam veteran with PTSD, had a need—and a right—to also grieve what I have lost. Being given permission to grieve was a gift that helped me cope with, then emerge from, the intermittent yet chronic depression I tried to ignore for such a long time. Grief is a messy process, and despite all the books and discussions about “stages,” it is usually a non-linear process in which feelings can wash over at unexpected times. Like when I read the MacLeish lines, or visit a memorial, or try to comfort my husband when he wakes shaking from a nightmare.

War changes us forever—all of us: veterans, spouses, children, healers, and citizens. I know the trauma and ghosts

of war will always be with Michael—which means they will be with me too. Vietnam will always sleep between us. We will soon celebrate our 46th anniversary, and each year our marriage continues to grow sweeter, more solid, and more realistic because we know what we almost lost. As a wise friend told me, “trauma is always with us; we just learn to carry it differently.” Ernest Hemingway wrote, “The world breaks everyone and afterward, many are strong at the broken places.” I give thanks that we are two of the lucky ones.

On Memorial Day, we have a sacred responsibility to remember our soldiers and their sacrifices. But as we hold

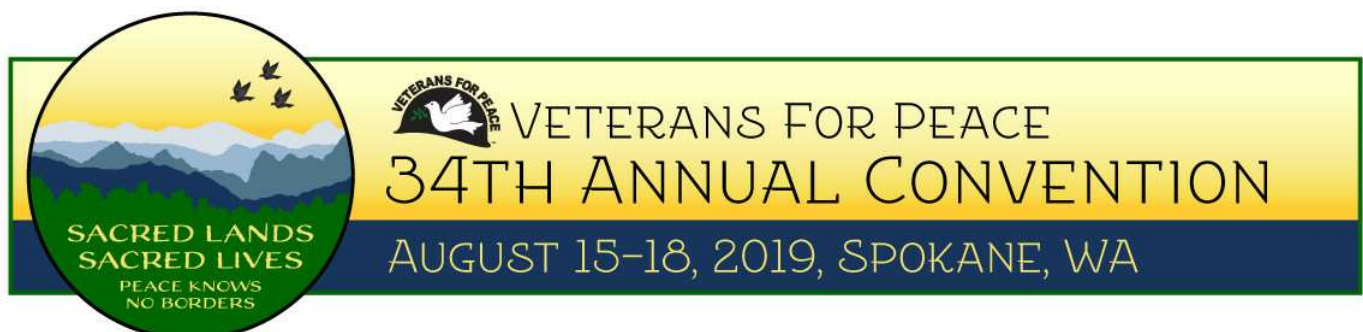
our “young dead soldiers” in heart and mind, let us not forget the other victims of war—those for whom the only escape was suicide, the loved ones like the Luceys who grieve in suicide’s wake; those with PTSD who forever

carry the weight of war, and those loved ones who struggle to help lift that heavy burden. It is our duty to give all these lives and stories meaning.

*Cynthia Orange is a writer, editor, and writing consultant. Her most recent award-winning books include *Take Good Care: Finding Your Joy in Compassionate Caregiving* and *Shock Waves: A Practical Guide to Living With a Loved One’s PTSD*. She has received awards for creative nonfiction, poetry, essays, and newspaper articles. ([www.cynthiaorange.net](http://www.cynthiaorange.net))*

*Orange co-facilitates a group for caregivers of a variety of ages and circumstances that was founded in 2010. She has written extensively about caregiving and post-traumatic stress disorder, and she and her husband Michael (a Vietnam combat veteran) often speak to audiences about the effects of trauma and war in their continuing involvement with veterans and veterans’ issues.*

*On Memorial Day, let us not forget the other victims of war: those for whom the only escape was suicide; the loved ones who grieve in suicide’s wake; those with PTSD who forever carry the weight of war; and those loved ones who struggle to help lift that heavy burden.*



# Simple Observations

by Ron Staff

In our local newsletter, “Veterans For Peace News,” and in the national publication, “Peace In Our Times,” understandings of war wander around in terms common to all veterans. In the effort to make more palatable our insights the national’s paper’s name was changed from “The War Crimes Times.”

Unfortunately, the message has not changed. The shock value of the first name did not draw readers. In order to get readers to it, we needed to soften the title in order to get out the message, which is carried in every story.

One thinks of Gitmo and what kind of a country would house people essentially for the rest of their lives just to cover-up the widely known fact that many of the them have been tortured. Who would want to pay to maintain that kind of a scheme? We have been told that the law stopped Al Capone from forcing businesses to pay “protection money” to him so their establishments might be crime-free. One guesses that “the law” didn’t like competition.

Are there parallels we might be observing without seeing?

When President Obama was inaugurated, the blossoming of hope for peace burst forth in a mad dash to get out of the warring-on-any-other-nation actions of the previous administration. It took him most of his presidency to recog-

nize that the country defaults to war.

This was a noteworthy insight. Unfortunately, it was towards the end of his second term and did not provide him with a path out of President Eisenhower’s insight into the existence of the military-industrial complex. Ike wasn’t able to turn the tide on the thing either, and only noted that at the end of his terms.

The public is now trying on President Trump, perhaps hoping for the card game “bridge’s” ability to trump otherwise winning hands for a win. James Clapper has identified Donald as the “disrupter.” If he were to shake the military out of our political clothes he might become the “disrupter-in-chief” when the public is so sick of the whole “whack-a-mole” game paraded as democracy and the non-voting public stands up on its back legs and votes at over 50 percent for the first time in many generations.

Purging voting lists might get swallowed in a tide of never-voting-but-voting-now citizens, and office-holders could be elevated into that place by more than a quarter of the citizens. (Since half of the public has not been voting, winning by half of half is one quarter.)

How might we engage that other half of the eligible voters? Without them, the scheming to shave voters from red or blue districts to ensure winners will continue as it has.

The times are very tough. Living in the most affluent, currently-thinks-it’s-the-toughest-guy-on-the block country in the world could give us pause for thought. But we may not have time to think. One wonders how the public is dealing with the Gitmo bone in our democratic craw.

Sick of it, yet?

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## Where is debate on defense spending?

by Barry Reisch

As congress begins to debate President Trump’s 2020 budget of \$750 billion (actually \$989 billion when including other war and military related expenses) imagine how the world would look today had we used all those funds to help create a better place for all those countries we have invaded and occupied. This is a staggering 69 percent of the budget, and it will be used to wage even more wars (Venezuela, Iran, etc.) and create more profit for the arms industry.

It is important,too,that this is paid for by stealing funds from Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, clean air and water regulation, education, and any number of other social needs here at home.

The 2020 discretionary budget also includes \$8.6 bil-

lion for the southern border wall.

Where is Congress? Where are the Democratic presidential candidates? Where is the debate on wasting this much money?

The gravity of the present situation – fourteen ongoing wars and drastic cuts in social services – should bring the military budget and war policy to the top of the national agenda this election cycle. But there is almost a total silence about all this, both in Congress and among the candidates of both establishment parties.

Rather than totally rejecting the obscene funding of this militaristic drive,the opposition party – the Democrats—is once again compromising the lives of the people in the the U.S. in exchange for some crumbs thrown at them by the Trump Administration. The desperate needs of society cannot be met as long as our national resources are poured into weapons and never-ending wars.



## VFP convention in Spokane Aug. 15-18

Sacred Land, Sacred Lives – Peace Knows No Borders will be the theme of the 34th annual Veterans For Peace national convention in Spokane, Washington at the Doubletree Hotel, August 15-18, 2019.

Veterans and supporters from all around the U.S. will converge on Spokane in mid-August, along with veterans from other nations. Veterans For Peace has grown into an international organization with chapters in over 100 U.S. cities, as well as in England, Ireland, Russia, Japan, Vietnam, Okinawa and Mexico.

The Veterans For Peace convention will open on Thursday evening with a Welcome Reception, followed by the powerful and popular Veterans Poetry Soiree.

On Friday morning, the opening plenary will set the tone for the convention, with greetings from local peace activists, local indigenous leaders and dignitaries. Morning and afternoon workshops will provide delegates with valuable information, motivation and organizing tools for the work going forward.

Three “mini-plenaries” will take place later on Friday afternoon, with notable speakers on U.S. military interventions around the globe, the history of antiwar organizing within the military, and the critical importance of reclaiming “sacred land for sacred lives.”

A community event on Friday evening will feature local musicians and guest speakers in a refreshing and inspiring

atmosphere.

Saturday is reserved for the annual business meeting of Veterans For Peace, but a surprise event may take place. In the evening a cocktail hour will be followed by a celebratory banquet, with a keynote address by an invited speaker.

Sunday calls for the “open mic” session, then the closing plenary featuring our local Spectrum Singers Choir.

Local actions promoting peace and justice are being planned for Sunday afternoon.

Please join Veterans For Peace in our work for peace and justice at home and abroad, removing the barriers between countries, cultures and the peoples of the world.

More information and registration can be found at [www.veteransforpeace.org](http://www.veteransforpeace.org).

## Madonna, from page 6

the world they may be.” Eurovision has a policy that prohibits performers from making political statements on stage. What would she do?

Her singing performance received mixed reviews, but she stumbled when it came to honoring her own pledge about speaking out against human rights violations. Her act that included a pair of hand-holding dancers briefly walking around wearing a Palestinian or Israeli flag didn’t add up to much. It said virtually nothing about war-torn Palestinians who have been denied human rights for over 50 years.

So Madonna, pick up your million bucks at the office and hit the road. Don’t forget your costume eye-patch and \$5 bottle of water. And good luck in Kabbalah school – maybe you’ll graduate after finding out life is a lot more than esoteric insights. You’re headed toward pop icon history now, but sitting on the fence and remaining wish-washy about human rights, puts you on the wrong side of it.

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### ONGOING EVENTS

**5-6 pm** Weds. Lake Street/Marshall Ave. Peace Bridge vigil.

**Monthly VFP chapter meeting**, 2nd Sun., 6 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

**Fri. & Sat., June 21 & 22, 9-4:30 both days.** First Universalist Church 3400 Dupont Av S., Mpls. PEACE LITERACY TRAINING with former Captain Paul Chappell of Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and Prof. Sharon Clough of Oregon State University. Free, but you must register at <http://tinyurl.com/PeaceLiteracy>

**Sat., July 20, 9 am.** PEACESTOCK (see p. 16)

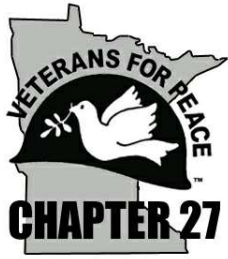
**Thur., Aug. 5, 6 pm.** Commemorative Tea Ceremony Lyndale Park Peace Garden at Lake Harriet.

**Fri., Aug. 6, 7:30 am.** Hiroshima Remembrance, Ceremony of the Cranes, VFP Bell Ringing, with Larry Johnson as keynote speaker. Lyndale Park Peace Garden, Lake Harriet.

**Sun., Aug. 8, 7 pm.** Nagasaki Commemoration, Global Harmony Labyrinth at Como Park,

**Aug. 15-18,** VFP National Convention, Spokane, WA (see article this page.)

**Aug. 27.** (TBA) 91st anniversary of the signing of the Kellogg Briand Pact



**Veterans For Peace Chapter 27**  
4200 Cedar Av. S., Suite 7  
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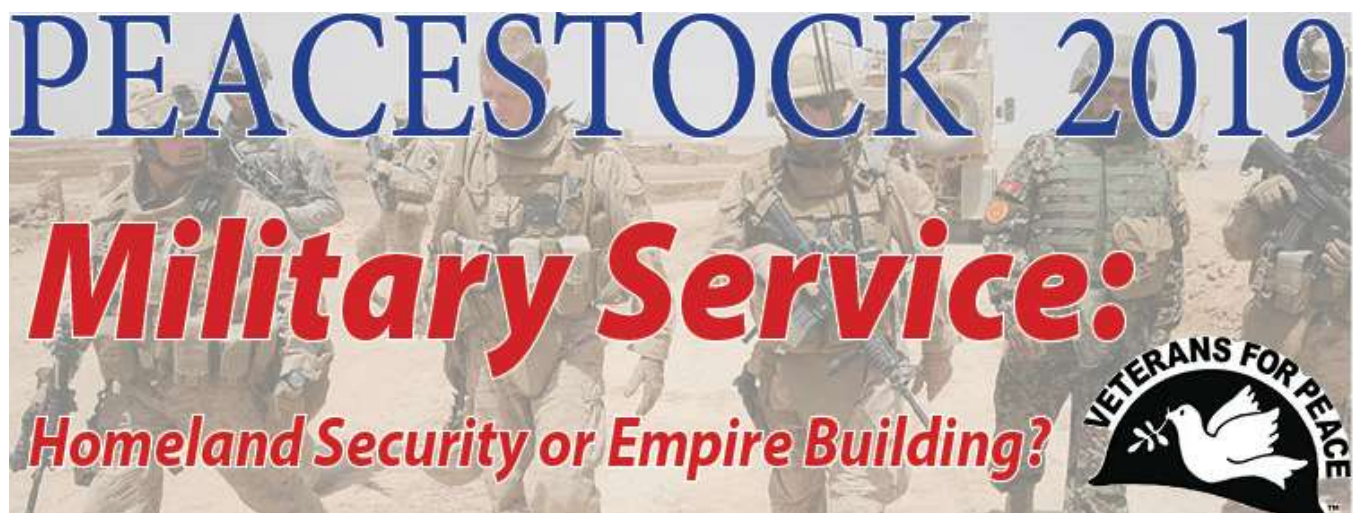
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## **SUPPORT THE TROOPS! BRING THEM HOME ALIVE NOW!**

As of June 7, 2019:

**At least 6,997 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.**



Peacestock 2019 will hold its 17th annual event on July 20th starting at 9 a.m. It will be held at the Hobgoblin Barn in Red Wing for the fifth time. (920 Hwy. 19 Blvd., Red Wing, [www.hobgoblin-usa.com](http://www.hobgoblin-usa.com)) The Barn holds up to 150 people, so get your tickets early. The event runs all day and ends with a complimentary supper.

There are two featured speakers this year: Col. Ann Wright and Maj. Danny Sjursen. Ann is a well-known peace activist and has traveled the world and is currently in Iran. Danny, just retired from the military, has been a prolific writer on American foreign policy and has insights on this topic which are very revealing. Music will be provided as well.

Tickets are \$30 in advance and \$35 at the door. \$10 for students/youth. No one is denied admission for inability to pay. Go to the website at [www.peacestockvfp.org](http://www.peacestockvfp.org) to purchase tickets.