



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.

To subscribe to this newsletter, please call our office:
612-821-9141

Or write:
Veterans For Peace Ch. 27
4200 Cedar Ave, S. #7
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Or e-mail:
vfpchapter27@gmail.com

Our website is:
www.vfpchapter27.org.

Newsletter committee:
Frank Fuller, editor;
Jennie Downey, Jean Heberle, Joan Johnson, Mike Madden, Steve McKeown, Mary McNellis, Barry Riesch, Paula Staff, Ron Staff, Craig Wood

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

Petition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons Update



Steve McKeown and Craig Wood spent three days driving the VFP Chapter 27 peace bus around northern Minnesota highways and gravel roads in early September, collecting nearly 150 signatures and welcoming residents of 24 new towns to a Minnesota collaborative effort that seeks to ban nuclear weapons.

This picture is of two artists, Marlys and Terri (next to Craig), signing the petition for nuclear disarmament at the Ely Art Festival. We asked them if they wanted to be in our newsletter, and they said yes. Ironically, Terri's father was a Marine who became ill after being ordered into Nagasaki right after the bomb was dropped.

by Steve McKeown

Historic Williams Arena, located on the University of Minnesota campus and where the Minnesota Golden Gophers play basketball, seats approximately 14,000 people. This is about the same number of nuclear weapons worldwide.

The most the world ever had was in 1986 when there were 66,500. That is very close to the seating capacity of the Minnesota Vikings Stadium.

We hear all the time that nuclear deterrence works to keep us from blowing each other up. But couldn't it also be said that nuclear reduction would do that, but in a better way: Remove from the arenas the number of nukes that the United Nations Treaty to Abolish Nuclear Weapons requires. All of them. There are 122 nations that have signed this Treaty. Twenty-five nations have now ratified it and more are slated to do likewise.

When the ratified number reaches 50, it, in

effect, becomes international law and the nine nuclear nations, the United States, Russia, China, England, France, India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Israel would have decisions to make.

Here in Minnesota, the End War Committee of WAMM and VFP Chapter 27 have been trying to influence that decision in advance by gathering signatures petitioning our Representatives and Senators. The plan has been to gather signatures from all 851 incorporated towns and cities statewide, present all these petitions to them, and get their commitment one way or the other regarding where they stand and what they plan to do about this Treaty.

As we go to Press we now have 21,367 signatures from 799 towns and cities. Towns and cities with 20 or more signatures are as follows:

Petition, Continued on page 3

Notes from the President . . .

All hands on deck

by Mike McDonald

All hands on deck.

In Navy terminology this means... all sailors come on deck to help navigate a storm or emergency. All of us have only one Earth home and need to meet this climate crisis head on.

Noam Chomsky recently said, "Trump's climate policy may literally be a virtual death knell for the species." Our government's Transportation Administration, in a 500-page environmental assessment, estimated a four-degree centigrade rise in temperature by the end of the century. What would this mean? Much of the cities of New Orleans, Houston, Boston, San Diego, New York, Seattle, and multitudes of other cities, will be underwater. A predicted 20-foot rise of sea levels would mean no more Florida!

In 2006 a Green New Deal task force was the first to really signal these dramatic warnings of the changes coming our way. Fast forward to January, 2019; over 600 organiza-

tions sent a joint letter to Congress supporting policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A month later Senator Edward Markey and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez brought a 14-page resolution to Congress. The resolution included not only environmental concerns but also called for universal healthcare, increase in the minimum wage and preventing monopolies. What has Congress done? Nothing.

What can we do as individuals to combat climate change? Common suggestions include: driving less and using mass transit, switching to a green energy provider, changing what we eat (the third leading group after China and the U.S. emitting greenhouse gasses are cattle), buy an electric car, fly less and use trains, eat and buy local. The point being we can all be more aware of our footprint.

Our actions will influence the planet for decades - for better or for worse.

OUR VERY SURVIVAL DEMANDS ACTIONS NOW!

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.**

Petition, from page 1

Ada-21; Albert Lea-59; Andover-33; Anoka-52; Apple Valley-106; Arlington-21; Austin-74; Belle Plaine-26; Bemidji-50; Blaine-75; Bloomington-514; Blue Earth-27; Brainerd-106; Brooklyn Center-68; Brooklyn Park-126; Buffalo-35; Burnsville-119; Cambridge-54; Champlin-32; Chanhassen-40; Chaska-53; Columbia Heights-57; Coon Rapids-91; Cottage Grove-41; Crystal-59; Detroit Lakes-28; Duluth-259; Eagan-175; Eden Prairie-163; Edina-390; Elk River-27; Excelsior-47; Fairmount-29; Faribault-80; Farmington-39; Fergus Falls-37; Forest Lake-34; Fridley-88; Glencoe-21; Golden Valley-97; Grand Rapids-49; Ham Lake-20; Henderson-20; Hopkins-165; Hugo-40; Inver Grove Heights-61; Isanti-23; Jackson-26; Jordan-20; Kenyon-29; Lakeville-56; Little Falls-52; Mahanomen-23; Maple Grove-94; Maplewood-98; Mankato-207; Marshall-64; Mendota Heights-27; Minneapolis-7,566; Minnetonka-214; Montgomery-24; Moorhead-28; Morris-31; Moundsview-24; New Brighton-73; New Hope-46; New Ulm-107; Northfield-180; North Mankato-25; Oakdale-37; Owatonna-66; Pequot Lakes-25; Pine River-25; Pipestone-51; Plymouth-122; Princeton-53; Prior Lake-50; Ramsey-24; Red Wing-23; Richfield-647; Robbinsdale-64; Rochester-213; Rogers-31; Rosemount-46; Roseville-148; St. Cloud-133; St. Francis-20; St. Louis Park-331; St. Michael-30; St. Paul-2,088; St. Peter-68; Sandstone-35; Sauk Rapids-33; Savage-53; Shakopee-80; South St. Paul-43; Stillwater-86; Thief River Falls-36; Vadnais Heights-25; Waconia-39; Wayzata-32; White Bear Lake-69; West St. Paul-54; Wilmar-52; Windom-26; Woodbury-99; Zimmerman-21; Zumbrota-21

VFP Black Hills Report

by Dave Cooley

I apologize for the delay life threw in the way of the timeliness of this report on the August 22 - 25 "Stories and Songs of The People" gathering in the Sacred Black Hills. Like many stories coming from Native land this won't likely conform to the two or three small paragraphs requested, my last apology.

This story didn't begin or end in August. Nor did it begin on that early December morning in '16 driving down that winding, backlogged road to the Oceti Sakowin camp at Standing Rock. Seeing with eyes that said, you're right where you're supposed to be, a savior to none but being present and at service to the Native people of this land and on their land, as a white colonizing settler. We, white, black and yellow people, have to own that as a basis for potential, individual and organizational growth, collaboration and service.

Our interNational, Native lead gathering was a continuation of the decolonizing process of mind, heart, body and spirit going on since Oceti. It was focused on the rights of the earth and all living and existing on it. Simultaneously, in Tamera, Portugal, was a second attended by Lakota elder and people from Europe, India, Columbia, Brazil, New

Zealand, Portugal, Africa, the Middle East and more. There was also another gathering occurring in Palestine.

In this country VFP has been a friend in this process along with many in the UU community. Several VFP members worked in close collaboration with VFP Executive Director Garret Reppenhagen to secure the acquisition and transport of a specialized generator to run sound equipment. Special thanks are in order to the VFP brothers and sisters of Colorado for their financial generosity and generosity of heart to make this particular effort come together. Deep gratitude is offered to all involved for your supporting actions on behalf the the INITC sponsored gathering.

A place has been made to exist for the possibility of collaborative service for and with the national organization of Native veterans in the U.S. should they have need of our service. This could be called on at any time or never, but it exists. Native veterans, not unlike dominant culture VFP veterans, may have little reason to trust the government or us for that matter. Trust is built by showing up and being there in a good way, not "your way." As it is said, "It is not what you do but, how you do it" that matters. My hope is that more VFP members show up next time around, it could

Black Hills, Continued on page 10

Eleven Ways to Demonstrate Armistice 101

by Larry Johnson

The Armistice ending THE WAR TO END ALL WARS was signed on November 11, 1918. That makes this year ARMISTICE 101, the terminology used, e.g. ECONOMICS 101, when something is described as a basic, beginning course. Armistice did begin 101 years ago, and it did evolve into an annual November 11 day of honoring veterans by working for peace. Sadly, years ago, ringing bells of peace 11 times was replaced with honoring veterans by firing weapons. In many ways we are beginning again, so here are 11 ways you can teach Armistice 101.

1. Be on the State Capitol grounds November 11 when City of Bells celebrates the Armistice, ringing the LIBERTY BELL 11 times at the 11th hour. Watch their website at www.cityofbells.com for details. They have taken on the task of locating, or when possible, restoring bells in twin cities churches, encouraging them to remember the original intent of the Armistice. Many church bells here, and worldwide, were melted down to make weapons of war.

2. Invite your church, temple, synagogue, or even “secular” group to join in, either on November 11, or on the closest day of worship. Here is a statement to read and/or print in a bulletin.

The Armistice of 1918 ended the horrendous slaughter of World War I, called THE WAR TO END ALL WARS. When the Armistice was signed, exuberant joy broke out around the world. For many years bells rang 11 times at that 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. Then it slowly faded away, especially in the U.S.

Now we ring bells again, many bells, many places, 11 times, at that sacred moment. With a moment of silence, we remember the soldiers and civilians killed in warfare in every era and every country. With this, we commit to work and pray for Peace, until this assault on the Will of the Creator of us all is finally over.

3. Write a letter to the editor. Tell, from your heart, why you as a veteran, or civilian, want to end war, and specifically, how you think that can happen. I believe the bells should have ended all war long ago, but if I say END ALL WAR NOW, 90 percent of the population stops listening. I try to make people think, so the

Star Tribune recently printed my letter, “As a veteran, I ask that we end the sacrilege of defense contractors generating enormous profits selling weapons systems. A company should not be allowed to sell war materials unless they show the same sacrifice as us when we were drafted or enlisted. No contract unless they adopt a ratio of 10:1 CEO pay to lowest paid worker, roughly matching the military ratio of General to Private – as opposed to 270:1, the average corporation CEO to worker pay ratio. I want us to figure out how to solve international differences without sending scores of young men and women to kill or be killed, but until we do that, I vote for eliminating the profit motive, including all profit for shareholders. It’s right for business to make profit. It is wrong to profit from killing.”

4. Tell, not preach, your own story of why you’re a peace activist, or veteran for peace, to friends and family, children, grandchildren.

5. “Ring out love between our brothers and our sisters all over the world.” Several of us rang Bells of Peace at the annual August Hiroshima Remembrance at the Lake Harriet Peace Garden. For that event, Ron Baumbach gave me a box of 1,000 peace cranes, and the day before I picked them up, I found a letter to the editor by Ron’s son Aaron. He said, “I want to speak about being different, because I am. I have Down’s Syndrome, and I don’t understand why we continue to teach children to live in fear of people who are different, whether it’s religions, race, being gay, or having some disease.” Aaron is talking about bullying back home, but “DIFFERENT” IS HOW THE MILITARY TEACHES US TO THINK, TO DEHUMANIZE AND TO MAKE US DO THE UNGODLY WORK OF KILLING. Too often that training comes home. STOP THAT, AND RING OUT LOVE.

6. Pray, or meditate, for Peace, every day at 11 a.m.

7. Connect out of town friends with the nearest VFP chapter, which may already be doing a November 11th Armistice celebration. You can find cities now celebrating Armistice again at our national organization, www.veteransforpeace.org. Click on TAKE ACTION for additional resources for celebrating Armistice,

Armistice 101, Continued on page 7

Danny Sjursen: U.S. Military's "Golden Boy" Wakes Up

by Joan Johnson

Retired U.S. Army Major and current activist and author Danny Sjursen was “the golden boy of the U.S. military,” in his words. At age 17, he joined the Army, expecting to fight wars for a government that he was convinced was a force for good in the world. Back then, he said that he never would’ve believed any of VFP’s statements about the fallacy of war, corruption of the military and the greed of the military industrial complex. He would’ve scoffed at VFP’s assertions about how the U.S. is an empire, bringing death and destruction to all corners of the globe, and how it is definitely NOT a defender of democratic values.

As Danny explains, “I carried water for the Army for 18 years.” After graduating with honors from West Point, he would go on to earn glowing reports from combat in Afghanistan and both Iraq wars. He taught at West Point, and had a good shot at becoming a General. But, slowly, as he immersed himself in book-reading and studying during his down time, he began to see the light about the wrongness of war and the lies told to him and his comrades about why they had been sent into combat. After his awakening, he first made the decision to stay and “fix the system from the inside,” but later realized



Retired Major Danny Sjursen

the impossibility of such a task. As time went on, he felt like a fraud continuing down that path.

During the second Iraq war, he decided to go public with his discoveries about its wrongness and the evil perpetrated by our empire. Five soldiers under him had died in combat, and three had committed suicide. Having to look their parents in the eyes and explain why their children had to die weighed heavily on his heart and conscience. He had to tell the truth about American imperialism, and in doing so, his life would never be the same.

In July at his Peacestock presentation, Danny told many more details of his personal journey. He also described what he had discovered

those many years ago when he was a seeker of truth through study and book-reading. He talked about many of the greed-motivated interventions our government has carried out towards other nations; how we have 800 military bases in 80 countries right now; how the U.S. military budget is larger than the next five countries combined; how we have dropped bombs on seven different countries; how we continue drone attacks in sovereign space; how we’ve used assassination to take out democratically elected leaders; and how we’ve sowed most of the crises that have brought immigrants to our borders/shores. I could’ve listened to Danny speak for hours. The information just flowed from him, as did his heartfelt story and the strong convictions he holds. He has written a book about his time in Iraq, entitled “Ghost Riders of Baghdad: Soldiers, Civilians and the Myth of the Surge.”

He also recommended a website which I’ve found to have some excellent talks by vets who comment on current events and debunk myths. FortressOnAHill.com.

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/

The business of criminal prosecution

by Mike Madden

Asylum is a human right. The United States has an obligation to asylees. Especially since it is our foreign policy that has caused their displacement.

That principle drew me to the airport on January 29, 2017, where I was arrested for protesting the Muslim ban on immigration. I carried a simple placard that read “Muslims Welcome.” More than two years later, I have not lost sight of the people who flee their homes to escape the chaos created by American intervention, or the subsequent denial of their human rights at the hands of xenophobic leaders of the supposed ‘free world.’ However, with this article, I wish to share my experience with the criminal justice system.

I have no quarrel with the arresting officer. He had orders to evict demonstrators from airport property, and he did his job professionally. As a citizen, I also had a job to do. That job was speak out on an issue of national importance, in the place where harm was most likely to occur, at a moment of urgency. We didn’t see eye-to-eye, so rather than surrender my First Amendment rights, I submitted to arrest. I was cited with a misdemeanor, Failure to Comply.

I contacted the National Lawyers Guild and was connected with civil rights attorney Jordan Kushner. He went to work immediately reviewing police reports and obtaining airport surveillance video. That video showed clearly that I had arrived after the orders to disperse were issued, and had done nothing wrong. At my first court appearance in February, 2017, Mr. Kushner entered a plea of ‘not guilty’ on my behalf. Instead of dismissing the charges as I had anticipated, the prosecution, led by Christopher Renz of the law firm Chestnut Cambronne, played the intimidation card and upped the ante to a gross misdemeanor: Criminal Trespass at a Critical Public Service Facility.

This would prove to be the prosecution’s own undoing. The trespass charge included an element not found in the original citation: refusal to depart. While the arresting officer insisted that I leave by way of light rail transit, I did not,



Mike Madden (illustration by Andy Singer)

in fact, refuse to depart. After failing to convince the officer that I should be allowed to continue my protest, I told him that I was willing to leave by the means I had arrived; curbside pick-up at the baggage claim area. This exchange was contained in the police report which the prosecutor himself submitted as evidence. It was a prosecutorial blunder of sufficient magnitude that any First Amendment arguments were probably no longer necessary.

If the prosecutor was aware of his blunder, he was still bluffing at a pre-trial conference in November, 2017. To settle

the case, Prosecutor Renz offered a Stay of Adjudication. In exchange for a plea of guilty and payment of some prosecutorial expenses, my record would be cleared after one year if I committed no similar offenses. To bolster his bluff, he said the offer was good for one day only. His once-in-a-lifetime offer was not difficult to refuse.

The defense countered with a Continuance for Dismissal. It required no plea or court costs, and, if no similar offenses were committed in a year, the charges would be dropped. Mr. Renz missed the off-ramp. He declined the offer.

Taking nothing for granted, Mr. Kushner pursued every avenue for acquittal, and his Constitutional arguments were clearly of concern to the prosecution. In April 2018, two weeks before the scheduled trial date, the prosecution floated a Hail Mary, filing seven motions to limit evidence, character witnesses, and testimony presented at trial. The most desperate of these motions sought to exclude any “mention or testimony of any sort that tends to call into question the constitutionality of the Defendant’s arrest.” The court denied the motions.

Meanwhile, Mr. Kushner succeeded in arguing for jury instructions that included consideration of “constitutional provisions,” and that a “claim of right” is not limited to that of property. In other words, possession of an airline ticket is

not the only valid reason to be at the airport; the First Amendment might also be construed as a “claim of right.”

The trial began on June 4, 2018 and lasted five days. The jury responded keenly to constitutional questions with one juror taking the opportunity to recite the First Amendment from memory. In the end, it wasn’t close. The jury deliberated for less than an hour before delivering a verdict of not guilty.

After the trial, I sought to better understand why a non-offense would be so aggressively pursued, and to amend the airport policy manual on First Amendment assemblies. I filed two Data Practices Act requests, addressed a meeting of the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC), and met with two commissioners and general counsel.

The documents I received were heavily redacted. Still, I was able to determine that Chestnut Cambronne billed the MAC approximately \$14,000 for the prosecution. It was also apparent that Prosecutor Renz considered the MAC to be his client rather than the people of the State of Minnesota, as is proper in a criminal prosecution. His emails with MAC police and legal staff were familiar and jovial, he offered occasional public relations advice, and he



Jordan Kushner (illustration by Andy Singer)

took a couple of side-swipes at defense attorney Kushner.

Curiously, in the same month that Chestnut Cambronne lost in court, they extended a \$5,000 professional courtesy discount to the MAC. It makes one wonder if a bonus would have been awarded had they won a conviction.

I made little headway in my final meeting with the commissioners and legal staff on June 18, 2019. After suggesting that the airport policy manual could be amended to instruct police to act only against protesters who are causing disturbance, leaving others free to exercise their free speech rights, Commissioner Richard

Ginsberg said he did not wish to limit the police in their discretion to deal with protesters.

As for the prosecution, Mr. Ginsberg said he had “no problems,” wouldn’t “micro-manage,” and found “nothing malicious.” Asked if he was satisfied with Chestnut Cambronne’s handling of the case, Mr. Ginsberg curtly responded, “If you’re making the case to terminate, I’m not going there.”

General Counsel Cameron Boyd said that Chestnut Cambronne’s contract with the MAC expires in 2023.

Armistice 101, from page 4

many of them from our local chapter, as we worked with the National VFP in 2013 to help the Armistice effort expand throughout the U.S.

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, like the Old Testament prophets, calling for beating our weapons into windmills, woks and waffle irons.

9. Celebrate November 11 also as St. Martin’s Day, a much older remembrance than Armistice or Veterans

Day. In the 4th 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 believed.

10. If you can’t be in a formal ceremony on Nov. 11, ring a bell 11 times at 11 wherever you are, and read the statement in #2 with those around you.

11. Watch www.vfpchapter27.org for details on our twin cities Armistice celebration on Nov. 11th this year.

VFP ACTION At Fairchild Air Force Base

by Barry Riesch

One of the highlights of this years national VFP convention for me took place on the last day when a number of actions were undertaken. One was a protest at Fairchild Air Base in Spokane. At this base the 92nd Air Refueling wing uses the Boeing KC-135 Stratotanker to refuel Saudi Arabia bombers that kill people in Yemen!

Over 5,200 active duty Air Force, Air National Guard, and tenant organization military and civilian employees work at Fairchild, making the base the largest employer in Eastern Washington. Fairchild's annual economic impact on the Spokane community is approximately \$427 million, constituting 13 percent of the local economy.

Personnel at Fairchild are quite proud of the work they perform, as can be heard in a few of the following quotes from their website:

"Team Fairchild's ability to support and train with aircrew from the 7th Bomb Wing ensures the delivery of effective warfighter effects at the right place and time, and is essential to sustaining Rapid Global Mobility."

"It's great working with other aircrews to accomplish training requirements."

"Being able to contribute to the successful continuation of the mission is a great feeling."

"The B-1B carries the largest conventional payload of both guided and unguided weapons in the Air Force inventory. It can rapidly deliver massive quantities of precision and non-precision weapons against any adversary, anywhere in the world, at any time."

"Air refueling aircraft such as the KC-135 provide the fuel for B-1s to get where they are needed. This arm of Rapid Global Mobility could not happen without Team Fairchild Airmen like those in the 384th Air Refueling Squadron."

Fairchild also hosts the USAF Survival, Evasion,



Resistance and Escape (SERE) School.

Fairchild is famous for the amount of pollution the base produces, not only from jet fuel but from the hazardous and dangerous chemicals they practice bomb suppression with. Not exactly helping to reduce climate change.

At one time, Washington state had the distinction of having more nuclear warheads than four of the six known nuclear-armed nations. These warheads were concentrated in two places: at Fairchild AFB and at the Kitsap Submarine Base across Puget Sound, on the Hood Canal. At Fairchild, 85 nuclear gravity bombs (25 B61-7 gravity bombs and 60 B83 gravity bombs) were stored in a reserve nuclear depot. Bangor's eight submarines have 24 Trident I missiles per boat

with eight warheads per missile, for a total of 1,536. These bombs were removed from the base by the end of the 1990s.

For anyone who observes the ongoing poisoning of our skies with Chem Trails, these jets originate from Fairchild.

For years members of Spokane chapter of VFP have been doing a great job of holding demonstrations to call attention to the crimes being committed at Fairchild. They even have a sign that meets DOT standards for holding a protest alongside the highway where the base is located. The sign reads "Caution—Rally Ahead." What these folks have been advocating for is "FRAC—Fairchild Regional Airbase Closure & Conversion. Some ideas put forth would be to convert the base to an area for alternative energy, Washington already being a large supplier of Hydro, wind and biomass. Another idea would be to convert the base to a Peace Campus which is particularly appealing.

I am thankful to have had the opportunity to visit the base and see it first hand and to lodge my disapproval of a place responsible for so much suffering in the world, right here in our country. I wish our members well in their efforts in Spokane to shut down this base permanently.

The VFP National Perspective

by David Logsdon

*“Skating away, skating away on
the thin ice of a new day.”*

Jethroe Tull

As the sole representative of the bread basket, the great expanse of flyover land in the diaspora of Veterans For Peace, and coming from the powerhouse that is Twin Cities Chapter 27, I hope I've provided a much needed voice in the bi-coastal dominance of Veterans For Peace. We did win “Chapter of the Year” for good reason! The myriad of activities that our local group is involved in is the envy of other VFP chapters. At the recent VFP convention in Spokane, Washington, Barry Riesch and I conducted a chapter building workshop along with Military Family Speak Out to share what has worked (and not worked) in our own chapter. Ironically, one of their presenters for MFSO was Dianne Piscotte-Habedank, associate VFP member of the Red Wing chapter! Minnesota in the house!

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

Veterans For Peace represents only a tiny fraction of the total veteran population in our country. So what we endeavor to do is leverage the hand we are dealt with by our logo and mission statement, using a gonzo spirit to build our brand, and to raise awareness of the true cost of war. We have done a great job of that locally and what I would like to accomplish in my time on the National VFP board is reaching out to the chapters in the greater Midwest, work with them to ferret out creative veteran voices, raise the intensity level and the reach of our message to create a healing environment, because the time has come for peace and we need to bring that urgency to the table.

“Anger is an acid that can do more damage to the vessel in which it is stored than on anything on which it's poured.”

Mark Twain

Chapter 27 had a nice contingent at the annual VFP convention in August. These conventions are such a terrific opportunity for VFP members to fully engage themselves in the important work going on here at home and abroad. Powerful testimony, workshops on a wide variety of sub-

jects, chances to sit down with folks from all over the world and participating in all sorts of bonding experiences, this is what these convergences are all about. The Spokane chapter did a great job of hosting. There are so many moving parts to consider, and as a member of the convention committee, I can attest, there are a lot of meetings via conference calls that are a necessary part of the process. Plans are already afoot for next years convention in Albuquerque

A big part of Saturdays' business meeting during the convention had to do with the addressing the way we as members of Veterans For Peace relate to each other. In particular, the conduct of Tarak Kauff, who is the managing editor of *Peace in our Times*, the wonderful paper funded by VFP. Tarak, as many of you are aware, is facing trespassing charges in Ireland around an action he and VFP member Ken Mayers conducted at Shannon Airport in Ireland. They cut the fence and approached a U.S. military transport plane with a banner calling attention to Ireland's violation of the Neutrality Act.

What to do with Tarak concerns his abusive behavior around a long list of incidents where he has yelled at other VFP members. At the Spokane meeting, we heard powerful testimony from former National Board members who quit the organization as a result of his losing his temper. Tarak had many defenders, who while admitting Tarak's lack of interpersonal social skills, praised his long history of important work. Compromise is still a work in progress as Tarak has promised to seriously consider dealing with his behavior. *Peace in Our Times* remains in limbo until this situation finally sorts itself out. The bottom line: this has been a gut wrenching experience, but I believe ultimately it will make our organization stronger going forward!

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

Gandhi

This year on November 15th the School of the Americas Watch will return to the gates of Fort Benning! For the last three years this annual gathering of the opponents of the school (now called WHINSEC) has shifted to Nogales, Arizona to call attention to the crisis at the border. Veterans For Peace, and in particular Chapter 27, has been a big part of this movement going back to the early 90s. Over the years we have sent buses filled with protesters to Columbus, Georgia, where Fort Benning is located. We probably will not send a busload down this year, but we definitely will be

National Perspective, Continued on page 10

Business meeting at the National Convention

by Ron Staff

The afternoon Business Meeting before the Banquet at the Spokane VFP Annual Convention did some throat clearing around issues of “white male privilege.” What was most amazing was the equanimity presented by the great bulk of white, male veterans in the audience, who listened, shifted uncomfortably in their seats occasionally, and struggled to understand. To some it was “old hat” but always useful.

Reorienting concerns from distaff members, also working for peace, were rung out in anguished searches for the exactly correct words to neither offend nor alienate. While preserving emotively accurate portrayals of anger outbursts, which stifle rather than invite alternative views, one presenter poured a full cup of outrage for all to sip from in addressing “the-war-made-do-it, PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder)” excuse for anger sliming members by a self proclaimed very important worker in the organization.

Having two women skype into the meeting due to concerns about safety, drew an important line for members to consider as our group seeks to challenge others to reach for similar work towards peace. How to model peaceful means,

Black Hills, from page 3

transform the culture of our organization positively. From stories I’ve had on the VFP convention the seven values of INITC could be of value aiding a paradigm shift within the organization locally and nationally. Recognizing, shifts don’t happen overnight but, with intention and good will, some pace could be created. Being in this place for two plus years has been and is transformative. I recommend investigating the two websites thoroughly: initc.net and storiesandsongs.org. At the latter site you can click on “presenters” to see a first name listing. Most importantly gaining a sense of how it all operates.

Lastly I want to say a VFP Circle can be created based on INITC that down the road could be joined by our Native brothers and sisters, a circle is a place where the gradual shedding a colonized mind begins and a paradigm shift may become possible. I would welcome interest by contacting me, David Cooley at dacooley@usinternet.com.

while working through whatever remains of war wounds; physical, psychiatric or moral, calls for deep personal measurements and honest looks in plain, flat mirrors.

Michael McPhearson’s endorsement of the effort likely helped the cause of decoupling the largely white, male veterans in Veterans For Peace from the privileged pedestal long given without bidding. Finding its outlines could be a near full time attention holder for the rest of our natural lives. Opposing such exploitive cultural rules demands their outlines remain clear and clarified as needed.

Recalling the old saying, “Let those with eyes, see; those with ears, hear; and those with voices, speak!”

National Perspective, from page 9

represented. This school has been and continues to be an ongoing training facility for Latin American governments to learn techniques used to suppress indigenous communities. Many of the myriad problems creating the immigrant crisis at the border can be traced to the long history of our interventions in the countries to our south.

Out of all the actions, vigils, protests, that I have been a part of, the Sunday procession and calling out PRESENTE for all those victims of crimes perpetrated by troops trained on that base in Georgia has been the most moving.

Larry Johnson to receive award from 2019 Veterans' Voices

On Saturday, October 5th at 6:30 PM former chapter President Larry Johnson will be honored in an awards ceremony by the Minnesota Humanities Center. The ceremony will take place at the Union Depot 214 4th Ave. E. St Paul, MN 55101 ...Contact Blake Rondeau, Minnesota Humanities Center 651 772 4248 blake@mnhum.org Congratulations Larry !

Zionist exceptionalism

by Craig Wood

It's tough to catch Zionist Expansionists because they're also good at making excuses for the things they do to Palestinians.

In 1887, the political movement Zionism started putting together a case that Jews are deserving of an exclusionary nation. Lucky for Zionists a UN Resolution gave them permission to establish one in Palestine after WW2.

Since then there have been rising levels of tension between those immigrating to Israel and others already living in the area. Zionists arguing a legal right to redevelop a place called Israel that existed two thousand years ago were soon joined by Jews and sympathizers around the world who claimed God had set aside the land for Jews anyway. They held up old books to prove it.

Many living on the land and surrounding countries questioned the UN authorities and/or the veracity of the books. Palestinians had deeds to their property from other officials and nobody asked them for permission to partition off a huge chunk of land so millions of people with a long history of not getting along with others could have a place to live. Pretty soon there was fighting and more fighting and the Israelis ended up usurping Palestinian homes, businesses, resources and building Jewish communities on land outside of Israeli boundaries.

Humanitarians and attorneys pointed to international laws governing military occupations however, the Israeli government contended the land was won fair and square in war. Others argued the occupied property was actually "disputed land" being used temporarily as a buffer zone to ward off existential threats or some such. Most occupations last about two years. A long occupation lasts for seven. This one has been going on for over half a century with Palestinians growing increasingly frustrated with getting treated like second class citizens while watching Israelis seize more land and resources year after year.

Meanwhile, back in the USA, not many Americans knew how bad Palestinians had it. Fewer still, ever heard of a strategy hatched by Zionist founder Theodore Herzl to rid the Holy Land of Palestinians — in part, by constantly encouraging them to "fold their tents" or "silently steal away." His idea was the beginning of a surreptitious plan that eventually turned into a ruthless campaign to cleanse the area of Palestinians. Even Winston Churchill wrote that Zionists "take it for granted that the local population will be cleared out to suit their convenience."

Throughout the 20th Century support for Israel grew largely due to sympathies for Holocaust victims and Jewish

influence throughout academia and across media venues. This ultimately shaped a public narrative which left much of the Western world with a pro-Israel agenda.

That said, Americans weren't thinking much about Palestinians being abused and kicked off their land. Yanks and certain allies were tingling with goosebumps after listening to "Exodus" — and in their heads, saw dispossessed Jews trudging through the desert to a new homeland sprinkled with fig trees and inhabited by goats.

Author and professor of economics at Northeastern University M. Shahid Alam points out Westerners went along with Zionist ideology for other reasons. Among them were strong beliefs Jews ought to have special considerations because of a lengthy string of persecutions and that they'd been deprived of a home land for too long. An exceptionalism to this day - helps the Israeli government get away with ignoring international laws, pass unfair legislation and recklessly slaughter Palestinian civilians.

Many interested in Israeli/Palestinian issues are not fully aware of the abusive conditions and restrictions Palestinians are forced to live with. And more unfortunately, the excuses Zionists sometimes use to justify the abuses are only surpassed by their tendency to ignore the abuse. So, when the subject of Palestinian human rights comes up - it's usually time to change the subject or freshen drinks.

No surprise then, most Zionist-Jews and their apologists are more eager to discuss the possibility of a nuanced slur buried in a legitimate comment, than Israeli snipers actually killing clearly marked Palestinian medical personnel, journalists and unarmed protestors. Even though the Israeli government continues to brag about having the most moral army in the world, it still refuses to admit possessing any nuclear weapons, sign the Convention Banning Biological Weapons or the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Talk about exceptionalism — if only equal amounts of diligence were given to the life and death concerns of Palestinians.

The growing number of Jews inside Israel and beyond calling for an end to the occupation isn't enough. Government policy makers and political candidates (especially in the US and Israel) need to up their game and insist supporters of Israel not only acknowledge the plight of beleaguered Palestinians, but demand equal rights be restored to non-Jews. Anything else is certain to be a new kind of baloney repackaged as another dangling carrot.

As Palestinian scholar Edward Said once remarked "Israel is unique in the world for the excuses made on its behalf."

He was right.

World's Largest Dedicated Peace Site?



This is a drawing of the Riverton/Maya Commons located just north of the U. of M. Campus, and it may now be the world's largest dedicated Peace Site. Thanks to Dave Logsdon and Gary Ellis, Veterans for Peace was invited to take part in the ground-breaking ceremony of the converted grain silo on Sep. 11, 2019. It had been vacant for many years and will now be converted into an affordable housing project. At the event, VFP members Steve McKeown, Dave Logsdon, Bruce Berry, Mike Madden and Mike McDonald rang bells and presented a copy of the Kellogg-Briand Pact to the Executive Director Gary Ellis of the Riverton Housing, who will prominently display it there. VFP member and musician Larry Long invited the audience to join him in singing "Last Night I had the Strangest Dream," which closed the ceremony.

“Save Our VA” Actions Continue at the VA



Veterans and union members join together to save the VA in weekly protests outside the VA.

by Jeff Roy

The Save Our VA (SOVA) Committee of VFP Chapter 27 has been organizing monthly informational picketing actions on a freeway bridge near the Minneapolis VA hospital. We have successfully carried out these actions as the SOVA MINN action group, which includes members from VFP, AMVETS and DVA, over the past four months. We hope to continue until the snow arrives.

The purpose of these actions is to raise public awareness about the continuing threat posed by the Trump Administration, Republicans and the Koch Brother funded - Concerned Veterans of America (CVA) to dismantle, defund and privatize the Veterans Administration (VA).

The actions are also intended to show public support for besieged VA workers who are in nationwide contract negotiations with Trump-appointed, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. The workers are represented by two VA unions: American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) local 1969 and Professional Local 3669.

In a step forward on August 7th, the SOVA MINN

action group joined in a public rally called by both unions (see photos). At the rally, over a couple dozen VA “off-duty” employees were present with signs and chanting. Due to the Federal Hatch Act, on-duty employees can not picket. These workers are incensed that VA Secretary Wilkie is trying to gut employee protection elements from the new national contract being negotiated at this time.

The two union locals have been hesitant to this point to speak out publicly, since they are concerned about retribution from the VA Administration. In spite of this, our SOVA MINN action group informational picketing actions near the VA have had some participation from AFGE members.

So this is a step forward for our Chapter's ability to support and collaborate with AFGE and the local professionals. Additionally, we made contacts with veterans from other unions at this rally, and have been invited to speak at a Railroad Machinist Union meeting and a State District DFL gathering. Progress is being made in broadening the circle of resistance. For more information or to participate, contact SOVAMINN@GMAIL.COM.

17th Annual Peacestock a great success



VFP members ringing bells: Steve McKeown, Mike Madden, Larry Johnson, Steve Gates, Dave Logsdon, and Bill Habedank.

by William Habedank

On July 20th the 17th annual Peacestock was held and was a huge success, in spite of the heavy downpours of rain all morning. That didn't matter because we were high and dry in the Hobgoblin Barn loft, which was filled to capacity.

Larry Dittberner started with a singalong right after the VFP bellringing. Ann Wright was the first keynote speaker and gave a great talk on the reach (and failings) of American Empire. She has seen it all over the world.

In the afternoon, Danny Sjrursen, who graduated from West Point and was then sent on tours to Iraq and Afghanistan, said he was "tired of carrying water for the

empire". He came to this realisation in Afghanistan when he realised we were not helping them and he could no longer tell a family why one of his soldiers had to die.

Danny was so good and people were so anxious to talk with him that he missed out on the burrito supper. He wants to come back for an encore. You can watch the entire proceedings at www.peacestockvfp.org or on YouTube.

Plans are already being made for Peacestock 2020 on July 18. The success of this year's event will attract more people. We might need a bigger barn. That has

always been the goal which is to get more to hear the message. See you there!



Korean War Veteran Became VFP Activist

by Roy Wolff

This eulogy was written by VFP member Roy Wolff at the request of Chess Campbell, widow of Korean War veteran Gary Campbell, who became a VFP activist in Maryland, and whose funeral was held on September 15 in Washington, D.C. The eulogy was read by a grandson of the Campbells at the farewell service for Gary. The Campbells became missionaries to Nicaragua and Gary was also a journalist covering the war years in that country (1970s into the 1990s).

In the 1950s both Gary Campbell and I spent more than a year in the U.S. Army in war-torn Korea. Gary was in the war from early on, including being part of the famous Inchon invasion exactly 69 years ago today: September 15, 1950. Gary was 18 years old at that time!

I arrived in Korea shortly after the most aggressive part of the so-called Korean Conflict had ended, and spent my time there trying to help South Korea put itself back together. Both Gary and I had been horrified at the devastation in that small country. Almost five million people were killed by the military forces of North and South Korea, China and the United Nations (mostly U.S.). More than 90 percent of those killed were CIVILIANS, and post-war conditions included disrupted families, poverty, disease and rampant hunger.

Gary and I did not know each other in the 1950s, but met when we were part of a peace conference held in South Korea in 1995. That conference was looking at ways to help end the Korean War. You heard that right: The Korean War has never been declared over, or resolved in any way, and as we all know, the tensions between North Korea, South Korea, the U.S. and China remain as a very threatening reality. Gary and I were roommates at the 1995 conference and also went together to Hiroshima, Japan that summer to be part of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombing of that city. In 2003 we repeated our roommate arrangement at another peace conference, this time in North Korea. At all of these events, we went as concerned human beings, but also we were representing Veterans For Peace, because we no longer believed in war as a means to end political differences. Nor do we believe in violence as a solution to conflicts of any kind. As one wise person wrote, "The only part of your history that is important is the difference between what you used to

believe in, and what you believe in now."

I believe that Gary and I changed our thinking and our actions due to developing a stronger Christian faith, and because of a greater desire to actually follow Jesus Christ.... in a nonviolent way.

So why did Gary and I return to Korea and Japan after our first times there 40 or 50 years earlier? Because we also believed in the Veterans For Peace motto: ABOLISH WAR! And we never stopped working toward such a possibility in Korea, the country we invaded and occupied in the 1950s.

EVENTS CALENDAR

ONGOING EVENTS

5-6 pm Weds. Lake Street/Marshal 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

6 pm, Sep. 25, Unity Universalist Church, 733 Portland, St. Paul. Light supper and voluntary donation. Kellogg Briand Pact presentation to follow.

Sep. 28, Line 3 protest, Duluth. FFI 203 9768.

Sep. 29-Jan. 5, Minneapolis Institute of Art, 2400 3rd Av. S.. Mpls. American Art and the Vietnam War, 1965-75, Veterans free. Call for times: 888 642 2787.

6:30 pm, Oct 5. Union Depot, 214 4th Ave. E., St. Paul, Veterans Voices Awards, including one to former chapter President Larry Johnson. 651 772 4248. Registration Deadline: Oct 3.

Nov 11, Armistice Day. Time and place TBD.

Nov 15-17. SOA, Ft Benning, GA demonstration.



Veterans For Peace Chapter 27
4200 Cedar Av. S., Suite 7
Minneapolis, MN 55407

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
Fall 2019 Newsletter

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TWIN CITIES, MN
PERMIT NO. 7675

SUPPORT THE TROOPS! BRING THEM HOME ALIVE NOW!

As of Sep. 12, 2019:

**At least 7,011 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.**

Activists protest military drones at Camp Ripley



These types of actions have been going on around Camp Ripley for at least 16 years, since the US invasion of Iraq. Since then, activist Robin Hensel of Little Falls and like-minded friends from across the state have held similar actions on a regular basis at the Camp Ripley main gate or in the area.

Women Against Military Madness (WAMM) in the Twin Cities and rural peace-and-justice activists in northern Minnesota in particular were credited with getting the word out. Hensel said the events are well attended and usually attract about thirty people. She serves homemade food and beverages during demonstrations and at a nearby park after.