



VETERANS FOR PEACE NEWS

MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL VETERANS FOR PEACE, CHAPTER 27

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

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

We pledge to use democratic and non-violent means to achieve our purpose.

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

Save Our VA gets national backing, continues collaboration with unions



Save Our VA and the American Federation of Government Employees rally to stop the privatization of the VA. Pictured above are VFP members Barry Riesch, Tom Dimond, Mike McDonald, Andy Berman, Dave Logsdon, Tom Bauch, Craig Wood and Jeff Roy and a number of AFGE union members. Photo from Union Advocate.

by Arlys Herem and Jeff Roy,
VFP SOVA Action Committee Minnesota

The Save Our VA (SOVA) and American Federation of Government Employees rally on October 29th at Hiawatha and Hwy. 62/Crosstown was a great success. Though the SOVA National Campaign team remains small, we are recruiting more VFP Chapters, independent members and activists from other organizations.

A big change within VFP National happened in late July when the National Board approved our request to move from a Working Group to a VFP project with expected increase in Board support and promotion across the nation. The group is now the SOVA National Campaign Committee so we can use the National's mailing lists, website and tools to

expand our efforts.

The Campaign's Outreach Sub-Committee contacted over 200 past SOVA activists and is working to build a national network of local VFP Action Groups. The Steering Committee hosted a workshop presentation at the VFP national convention that gathered 140 registrations.

Why is all this important? In spite of the coronavirus pandemic and election year politics, efforts continue in Congress to move more of veteran's health care to the private sector. Concerned Veterans of America (CVA), the Koch brothers' Veterans Service Organization, pushed to reverse VA Secretary Robert Wilke's COVID-19-based decision to stop referring veterans to the private sector.

SOVA, Continued on page 3

The Prez says. . .

by Mike McDonald

It has been my honor to represent chapter 27 of Veterans For Peace for two years now. We have a committed group of both veteran and associate members working on many issues. Although slowed by the pandemic, we stay engaged virtually and in person when possible.

Our Statement of Purpose states that our responsibility is to serve the cause of world peace. We work with others to increase the public awareness of the costs of war. On that point a recent Brown University study showed the average American has spent \$8,000 on the Iraq war alone.

Whatever your reaction to the election results, it's time

to hold our representatives' feet to the fire on many issues. Only one Minnesota Representative voted to cut military spending by 10 percent recently, Ilhan Omar.

We continue to meddle in foreign countries' affairs with impunity. Fifty countries have signed the United Nations treaty banning nuclear weapons. The U.S., United Kingdom, Russia, China, and France have not signed on.

The SOVA (Save Our VA) fight continues over the attempts to privatize.

We will continue to work on abolishing war as an instrument of national policy.

Peace to you all,



Armistice Day gathering of Chapter 27 members and supporters, with a banner created by WAMM, at the WWI Memorial on East River Road in St. Paul on Nov. 11.

SOVA, from page 1

(Note: Secretary Wilkie is no friend of veterans, but the optics forced his hand to protect veterans in this instance.) SOVA sent an alert to VFP activists and allies to counter the CVA effort.

Health care in rural areas is already challenged by COVID-19, and many clinics and hospitals may not exist by the time the pandemic ends. Efforts need to be made to bolster VHA care for veterans in rural areas rather than spending the funds sending them to overburdened systems that may cease to exist and whose quality of care is often not as good as it is at VA facilities.

A beneficial outcome of the pandemic has been hiring staff at VHA facilities bypassing some laborious bureaucratic delays and the hiring freeze that has been in place. This offers an opportunity to advocate for continued hastening of the hiring process (49,000 unfilled staff positions) and for making these hires permanent rather than temporary.

Another benefit is the adoption by the private sector of Telehealth visits, something pioneered by the VHA that was quickly expanded during the pandemic. An added benefit of Telehealth is that it is improving VHA outreach to rural veterans.

Several suicide prevention bills have been put forward in the last months as well. Most move VHA funds to unproven interventions with little accountability or reporting. Veterans in the VHA system commit suicide at a lower rate than for all veterans. Veterans with PTSD from wartime experiences requires specialized interventions not available in the private sector. SOVA watches this closely and will respond.

The costs of war must include the cost for care of those who go to war. The VHA provides this care with a system that ranks higher than the private sector in many metrics. Veterans using the VHA want it continued and problems within it solved. Join us to help make that happen.

To get involved by joining future actions (weather permitting), helping us expand our network or to donate funds to support outreach and organizing efforts, please contact us at arlyshere@yahoo.com or royjeff48@gmail.com.

Thoughts on the election

by Steve McKeown

I don't know how many saw Trump's spiritual advisor Paula White calling on the angels from other parts of the world to sway the election while she was performing gyrating shoulder movements and spoke in tongues. I am wondering if that isn't the evidence that his lawyers kept promising to bring forth.

Surely this must be what the Senate packed the Supreme Court for. But his ace in the hole was in the latter part of the campaign in North Carolina when he said twice, that if Joe Biden was elected "there will be no God." Sounds like his supporters are going to have an issue to run on: the return of God.

Frederich Nietzsche, the German philosopher who proclaimed God is dead over 100 years ago, would no doubt run as a third party candidate if he were living today.

The wacko man doesn't appear to be done yet as he is pumping out pardons for crooks, pushing for executions, and depleting the public treasury and lands more quickly.

And while his golf game may not be improving because he has concentrated so much on the pandemic, he has assured us with a one-minute press conference that he has achieved the sacred number of 30,000 on the DOW.

As the cliché goes...you can't make this up. In the musical "Fiddler on the Roof," the Rabbi was asked if there was a blessing for the Czar. He said, "May the Czar be blessed and kept far, far away from us."

May it be so.

**"When we Glorify War,
we are not honoring the dead,
we are enticing the living to
join them."**

**Smedley Butler
Four-Star USMC General**

Who will tell the children?

by Larry Johnson

I've been national chair for the OGP (Old Gardening Party) since 1979 when the Cleveland Plain Dealer nominated me for President because of the OGP tax platform I wrote in Organic Gardening's "Organic Living Almanac". The OGP believes no one should pay taxes until their income exceeds that of Congress members, thus forcing leaders to get money from those who have it. Those who pay no taxes are then expected to provide decision makers with careful spending wisdom, like growing your own food with no pesticides to control burgeoning health care costs. I told the Plain Dealer I wouldn't run, but would walk, and we lost to a Reagan landslide.

The OGP never disappeared, but it sort of went underground because opposing multimillion dollar "truth is optional" campaign media blitzes hampers one's ability to compete politically. Our system easily generates massive amounts for elections and to kill families all over the world, but fails to provide funding to prevent veteran suicide, end systemic poverty and racism, and much more. The main mission of the OGP has always been to keep the world safe for children, gardening, and storytelling, and the state of the world forces me to accept the things I cannot change. Wisdom to change what I can leads me right back to what I've always done, tell important stories to children.

So, what stories teach the children in our lives, amidst a polarized, polemical pandemic? For December? Shooting at the Stars is a John Hendrix children's picture book about the Christmas truce of 1914. If you don't have it, or can't get it, use your own emotion and experience to tell the story of intense trench warfare ending almost spontaneously on

Christmas Eve as a German soldier sings Silent Night ("Stille Nacht"). Exhausted "enemies" lay down their weapons and gather to eat and drink, play games, and share stories of home. Sing the song with your children or grand-kids, or play it on harmonica or guitar. Even if all the details aren't accurate, the story is true as you tell it, because it happened, and it should happen more. While you're at it, go ahead and read or tell Johnny Breadless – A Pacifist Fairy Tale. My entire Summer 2020 article was a review of this story, recently re-issued by Jack Zipes, but originally written by Paul Vaillant-Couturier, a French soldier who participated in the 1914 truce.

Given the world's ability to start wars because we can't even get along in the neighborhood, another good one is Paul Galdone's picture book version of an old folktale, The Wise Fool. A man stops daily on his way to work, delighting in the smells of the local bakery, but he never buys donuts. The struggling baker notices, storming out to demand "You have to pay for my baking smells". Astounded, the man argues, "What? You can't charge for smells. Doesn't matter how good they are." Trouble is brewing, and someone calls for the "King's Fool" who ambles in and assesses the situation. When the Fool orders the alarmed "customer" to give him a coin, the baker is thrilled that he's about to be paid. Deliberately dropping the coin 3 times on the sidewalk, the Mysterious "Judge" tells the Baker, "You've heard the sound of this man's coin. That is payment for his enjoyment of your smells. Case dismissed." Reading or telling this story to children has potential to inspire them to much needed Peace Diplomacy careers.

Another choice is the old Buddhist/Hindu parable, Blind Men and the Elephant, available as a picture book. Three friends, all blind, encounter a strange animal, an elephant, and begin to discuss, then argue, what it is. One, grabbing a tusk, insists it's a spear. Another, with the trunk, calls it a snake, and a third, holding the ear, claims it as the side of a tent. The intensifying argument threatens long standing friendships, until a seeing person tells them the story of the elephant. They are missing the big picture by pontificating on their own small perspective. Would that children of all ages, everywhere, could hear the story and assemble the pieces that EVERY LIFE MATTERS, EQUALLY AND UNEQUIVOCALLY, NO MATTER THEIR COUNTRY OR SKIN COLOR. Please tell these stories to the children. Live the stories in their presence.

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/

Thanksgiving: Sacred and Profane

by Steve McKeown

On Thanksgiving Day in 1965 I went to my grandparents' house, which was my mailing address, and picked up my draft notice for induction into the Army. The letter, as anyone who has been drafted knows, began: GREETINGS: The President of the United States hereby orders you to report to the Minneapolis Federal Building on December 6th. This wasn't an invitation for Thanksgiving leftovers, and at the bottom of the letter it said if I didn't RSVP in person I would be subject to a certain number of things one might not be so grateful for.

At the time, I was 19 and six months before that I had received a letter stating that my classification (1A) meant I would be among the first category to go, but "not to be alarmed as we are currently selecting men over 22 years of age." That was so considerate, given the voting age was 21. The next Thanksgiving I had been in Vietnam for two months, having arrived on my 20th birthday.

Fast forward to 1991 when President Bush the elder felt so moved after the first Gulf Massacre to say, "We kicked the Vietnam Syndrome in the ass," and that "sometimes we have to have a war to end war."

This former CIA Director had, a little over a year earlier, ordered the Christmas slaughter in Panama. Some believe this was a testing ground for our weapons used in the Gulf. He didn't mention the emerging Gulf War Syndrome that some soldiers and their families weren't so grateful for. Nor were there any recruiting posters of soldiers' children in the years to come who were born with birth defects. But Generals who proudly displayed their medals were honored in parades and had "so much to be thankful for."

Parades of adoration were held on Thanksgiving for our returning troops. In Minneapolis this included armored personnel carriers downtown. Before that, there was another parade in Iraq that came to a stand still; the retreating Iraqi Army that resulted in the highway of death.

Vietnam Veteran and author Tim O'Brien has said "if you come away feeling good after hearing a war story, you have been manipulated." I would add that the media failed in a big way by not calling out Bush's lie prior to that massacre that we were there for defensive purposes only. It became profane when they were embedded and served the manipulation.

Before this, I had been active in resisting nuclear

weapons with the Honeywell Project, and with Central American issues before joining and helping to form our Veterans for Life group in 1986. This later became a chapter with the National Veterans For Peace.

The definition of Vietnam War Syndrome is the public aversion since the Vietnam War to American overseas military involvement. And although Central America was not across the seas we had such a bad case of this malady that the lies that were being told to push war by our government were so outrageous that we plunged headlong into resisting in a major way.

To show our ingratitude, some of us, along with members from WAMM and the Central American Resource Center, gathered at the home of John and Cher Fields on that 1986 Thanksgiving Day to fast and strategize our resistance, and we acted. We acted in such a way that it led to a number of actions that continue to this day.

When we became involved in this resistance the Minnesota National Guard was sending aid to the Contras via a base in Honduras, a country that recently became the 50th nation to ratify the UN Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons. It is rumored, and not without foundation, that the U.S. wants countries to withdraw from this, as the Treaty becomes International Law on Jan 22 of this next year.

One could write endlessly how the "support the troops" slogan since the First Gulf massacre still plays into shutting off talk on most issues of War and Peace. So many troops and military equipment get dragged out everywhere before most everything to gather their pinch of incense that it seems the Pentagon budget needs to be raised to wage war to make up the shortcoming. It is sufficient to say that a lot of sacredness has been lost because of this slogan, mainly the dialogue regarding Truth.

I am thankful for a lot of things, including many of the common ones such as family and friends. The one thing I am extremely grateful for regarding the whole human family and the very earth itself is the UN Treaty: the people that brought it about and those that continue to make it a reality.

Our VFP chapter will be celebrating the Treaty on Jan. 22 by distributing nonperishables to area food shelves that we will be collecting in the weeks before that. Details will be on our website in late December.

Word from the wise: Creating a kinder, gentler nation

by Joan Johnson

When Joe Biden takes office, I am hopeful that, not only will he listen to his own conscience, but also to the many voices of those who advocate for implementing more diplomatic and peace-promoting solutions to address the pressing issues in the world right now. Of course, I would love to see our new president turn our nation's role from that of No. 1 World Bully to that of No. 1 World Peacemaker!

A good starting point would be to heed the advice of Medea Benjamin, founder of Code Pink, and Nicholas J.S. Davies, independent journalist and Code Pink researcher, who have come up with a list of 10 things for Biden to begin working on right away "to create a safer and better world."

In their Salon.com (Nov. 22) article, they propose ways in which he can undo a lot of Trump's very disastrous foreign policies, many of which have been conducted by executive order. The following is their list of priority actions:

"End the U.S. role in the Saudi-led war on Yemen and restore U.S. humanitarian aid to Yemen.

Suspend all U.S. arms sales and transfers to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Rejoin the Iran Nuclear Agreement (JCPOA) and lift sanctions on Iran.

End U.S. threats and sanctions against officials of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Back President Moon Jae-in's diplomacy for a "permanent peace regime" in Korea.

Renew New START with Russia and freeze the U.S.'s trillion-dollar new nuke plan.

Lift illegal unilateral U.S. sanctions against other countries.

Roll back Trump policies on Cuba and move to normalize relations.

Restore pre-2015 rules of engagement to spare civilian lives.

Freeze U.S. military spending, and launch a major initiative to reduce it."

Regarding the first two items, which would end our support for the war in Yemen, this is a situation that has been gnawing on my own heart and conscience for a long time, and I am in total agreement that our government's shameful role in this appalling humanitarian crisis needs to end immediately. On February 13, 2019, Congress had passed H.J. Resolution 37, which said, in part, "This joint resolution directs the President to remove U.S. Armed Forces from hostilities in or affecting Yemen within 30 days unless Congress authorizes a later withdrawal date, issues a declaration of war, or specifically authorizes the use of the Armed Forces."

Sadly, Trump vetoed that bill, and he also vetoed two other bills which would have cut off military aid to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, major players in the assault on Yemen. Biden could revive these bills, Medea and Nicholas say. They go on to spell out ways in which the U.S. needs to immediately bring food, health care assistance, and other essential aid to Yemen.

Basically, our country desperately needs leadership that accepts responsibility for what has become one of the biggest disasters of our time.

Seeing pictures of these lethargic, skeletal children and babies crying out in hunger makes me ill, especially when I consider that my tax money helped to create their and their families' dire predicament. We need an administration of compassionate people who have integrity, who can immediately address these and other very grave concerns —both in our own nation and in other nations. Predicaments here at home and around the world weigh heavily on ALL of our hearts right now.

Until then, as of this writing, I pray that our current Brute-in-Chief concedes without fomenting civil war, which, disgustingly (at this point in time), he seems very hell-bent on doing. Keep your letters, emails, petitions and phone calls pouring in, now and after Biden is in office regarding the issues that are important to you. I end with a quote —an admonition— from a simple song with a powerful message, that I recall singing with vigilers at Alliant Tech protests each Wednesday: "Who will speak if we don't?"

The authors give an explanation for each priority.

Thoughts on the election 2020

by Barry Riesch

Let me start by stating that the following words in no way reflect Veterans For Peace; they are merely my thoughts.

While the process is not over, I must say that when the word came that Biden won the election, I had a huge sense of relief and was momentarily filled with a joy I don't often experience.

As the feelings subsided, I became aware of the reality of a deeply divided country in which over 70 million people voted for a person who, in my opinion, was unfit for the office he holds. Alarmed is a word I would use to describe my feelings. Also anger and disgust. You get the point.

I'm wondering what Trump supporters are thinking. To take a man who has criminally mismanaged the country, enriched himself at the expense of its people and his donors, helped enable a quarter-million Americans to contract Covid and die due to negligence, leading to the greatest economic collapse since the Great Depression, and not even bother to have a campaign platform because neither he nor his party care about issues anymore, and he gets 10 million more votes than the last time? Go figure.

I realize that there is not a single answer to the question of what is happening in our country. Much of this vote comes from a majority white population. This began with Columbus dominating the Indian population, a movement which I feel is now on its last legs as folks are feeling threatened by the changes in our culture, particularly in cities (interesting to note that the Native vote helped flip to blue South Dakota and Arizona, plus Natives were elected to more political offices and their voices heard more than ever before). There are also many single-issue folks heeding calls from their churches. Of course, some felt left out for years from the Democratic process, and there is no question that Trump knows how to stir them with lies and demagoguery. Plus he enables anger, hatred, racism, etc., to be expressed openly.

Much as I don't like to think of the fact that we liberals are considered to be "others too" along with our changing demographic, the Trump supporters would rather listen to a bigot, pathological liar, sexist, xenophobe (you name it)

rather than uppity liberals. So we do play a part in this division.

The question before me now is what to do with this information? My church has challenged its members to take a pledge "From Malice Towards None," borrowing from Abraham Lincoln's words, and challenged members to commit to this pledge, no matter whether our candidate wins or not: "Regardless of the outcome I will not hold hate, disdain, or ridicule for those who voted differently from me. Whether I am pleased or upset about the outcome, I will seek to understand the concerns and aspirations of those who voted differently, and will look for opportunities to work with people with whom I disagree."

A large order indeed. I understand the motivation to do this, but part of me just does not want to get around the fact that Trump supporters are willing to do just about anything to win the election, including trashing what is left of our Democracy and our right to a free and fair election. Basically, they are throwing our voting process down the toilet. And for a President to be so trivial and childish as to not accept defeat in any mature responsible manner is truly distasteful. We can analyze and be sympathetic to the causative factors, but that does not mean we have to be sympathetic to the actions of those who support fascist rulers.

This pledge is calling us to honor the inherent worth and dignity of every person and to have compassion in human relations. It also asks us to conduct a free and responsible search for truth and to respect the right of conscience and the democratic process in our society. There is a lot to unpack here. These principles do not say they are applicable only to one type of person and not others. We have diversity of political beliefs. Let us not lose that diversity.

So we need to listen to poor whites, beleaguered farmers, and uneducated youth. We must find ways to loosen the grip that white supremacists and corporate fascists have had over people in red states since Vietnam. The city-countryside divide is real and we ignore or attempt to run over it AT OUR PERIL.

Maybe we at Veterans For Peace, being peace people, ought to make a similar pledge in order to bring those "others" into our space.

The national perspective

by Dave Logsdon

*"Non-violence is a powerful and just weapon,
which cuts without wounding and
enables the person who wields it!
It is the sword that heals!"
Martin Luther King Jr.*

As we put an end to the historical year that 2020 has been, we at Veterans For Peace have our work cut out for us, locally as well as nationally. My time on the national board of directors may come to an end if I lose this election, but I still plan to be an active part of the membership committee that I currently chair. I am excited to be working with the younger vets on this committee as we build a stronger, younger organization. Anyone who participated in the virtual National Convention had to be impressed by what our young leadership team and staff put together.

"Ding Dong, the Witch is Dead"

The national reign of terror is over, but we must continue to be vigilant as the new Biden-Harris administration starts staffing their cabinet. Our Empire and its aggressive geo-political strategies will continue. We need to have our voices heard. The proposal to cut the defense budget by ten percent was voted down! Both our senators and every representative, except for Ilhan Omar, voted against this modest reduction! Yes, we should celebrate our electoral victory, but the struggle continues. Let's keep our eyes on the prize.

Lutheran Duality?

At their latest National Convention passed a peace resolution. They should be lauded for that as it echoes a strong liberal tradition of this denomination. However, can someone explain the financial arm of the church, Thrivent, making a killing (appropriate word) investing over \$285 million in companies like Northrup-Grumman and Raytheon? Peace resolutions become empty words in this context. Code Pink and VFP are strategizing to bring these facts into the light of day. Thrivent is in our own backyard and it would be remiss of us to ignore them.

Happy New Year??

Well, I think we can all agree that 2020 really sucked!

There is a lot of work to be done and locally and nationally VFP is in a strong position to make our contribution through Arts, Education, and Action. We now have thirteen post Cold War veterans in this chapter and six of them are women. As a predominately older white men led group, it's time to create a functioning, respectful place for everyone's voice to be heard. We have in place a national code of conduct now and we need to be mindful of it as we do this good work. Peace at home, peace abroad is great slogan, but needs to be heeded in our words and actions. Enough of my preaching, to the streets!

Bipartisan corruption commission

by Ron Staff

Who would oppose looking in our democratic mirror. I look in my shaving mirror each morning. It's never hurt me. Shouldn't our public governing structures reassert their transparency now and again; especially with all the fluff and motes of distraction lifted in the current clatter about what is true and what is false or fake.

Don has reported lots of fraud and fakery. I would think it a service to "his base" and him to begin the clarification of fact and fiction to help him and his tribe out. It just seems like the next right thing to do. Clearing the air that he has so consistently complained about might be a nice, parting service to him.

Resiliency, being the hallmark of healthy mental fitness, for victims of trauma echoes in human organizations also. The human endeavor itself appears to be a fraught case of trauma for the whole species. Divide and conquer has been the hallmark of colonialism where ever expressed. Politics remains the greatest user of the technique currently.

If we retain awareness of that fact as we look in our own governing mirror, we will be well served in any assessment each of us makes of the structure facing us.

Some might come to think of it as being hoisted on one's own petard.

Armistice Day Remembrance 2020

by Paula Staff

A snowy morning was not a deterrent to people gathering at Shadow Falls Park on East Mississippi Boulevard. Members from Veterans For Peace, WAMM, WILPF, and other guests were in attendance.

Mike McDonald opened the Armistice Day remembrance by observing the beauty of the day and how we can bring a new day into our lives and community. He commented on the statue which was funded and promoted by the Daughters of the American Revolution to honor those who participated in the World War.

Mike McDonald introduced Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, a retired St. Thomas University professor. He started by talking about a murder mystery he had written that was set in the very place we were meeting.

Nelson-Pallmeyer covered four points. The first point was to honor and remember your sacrifice, that of your family and other soldiers. The second point was to remember to put an end to war and the absurdity of its sanctity. The third point was a reckoning of the cost and consequences of war. He described the Global Peace Index, which

gave the USA a low rating. The USA ranked near last in every measure of social well-being. The fourth point concerned opportunities and dangers. He identified one of the dangers as the talk of getting back to "normal." He emphasized, "I don't want to get back to the normal of an imperial state." He added, "I don't want to get back to the normal of dominating the world." He said, "I want an opportunity for a fresh start." He proclaimed, "Not only does the emperor have no clothes, but the empire has no clothes." He generously thanked those present for their work for peace.

Steve McKeown followed by describing an Armistice Day Peace Walk in 1987 in which approximately 100 people walked from Little Crow's grave in Flandreau, SD, to Pipestone, MN, a distance of 22 miles. Twelve people had come from the Twin Cities. Participants walked differing number of miles. Thirty people circled around in Pipestone.

Steve McKeown introduced the bell ringing before the top of the hour. Bells were rung 11 times at 11 a.m. and the celebration was concluded.



Yes Sir, Yes Sir, 3 Bags Full! (Volumes I & II) By Jerry Hall

Reviewed by Ronald E. Staff

Ever since I came back from Vietnam any book written by another in-country veteran has had pull. No matter the quality of the writing, I must read them. Even the most chauvinistic. Some present marginally coherent thought processes and sentence construction. The participant gets wide leeway to say whatever they want.

When I know about the person or area in which they served, I seek details I can confirm or question.

How any individual survives warring holds me. How does the damage manifest? What have they done with the rest of their lives? Denial shows up as people drop their eyes in the middle of a conversation, wait for the person talking to finish a point and suddenly need to be somewhere else. Perhaps a word, thought, memory has arisen and dragged them back to some “in-country” experience which remains unresolved for them.

In his books Jerry, who died six months before Volume 1 was published, takes the reader into what it was for him to join the United States Air Force, learn to fly and then go to Vietnam. In-country he flew as a Forward Air Controller in support of ground troops around Saigon in 1969 and 1970. The small, slow-moving observation planes he flew were a magnet for ground fire.

His job was to bring in the big, fast movers with heavy ordnance of many varieties and sizes, but his plane was highly vulnerable. Once he and his friends recognized that exposure, they tried the common military solution to anxiety. They drank and partied until the next time they had to go out and became targets again.

His language pulls the reader into that experience. First it is the challenges around learning to fly. Then there is all the stuff of military propriety. In Vietnam the reality of dying while flying hits home as other pilots do not return from missions. All the activities bristle with gritty detail jerking one into Jerry’s personal tour like a life co-pilot. He does all the flying; you just get to ride, smell, hear and come to know the dangers everywhere. His writing is compelling.

Women fill nearly all his non-flying time in his pool of alcohol. Deep terror seeks an out and alcohol provides a shared bond with others who survive their daily flying providing protection to ground forces, who were always grate-



ful. Ground pounder praise got matched with their personal survival escapes in swirls of opposing emotions. Such vortices produce holes that draw down all caught up in the whirling swirling currents of combat.

Prostitution sows the conquerors’ seed or, in the second place finish of the American war on Vietnam, merely the invaders’ seed. Lives were marked forever in both camps. Horrors seep and slither around. As we, veterans of that muddle, die off, revenge withers off into dust. For many of the brightest and most engaged revenge was the only game. Winning hearts and minds ran an out-of-sight last.

Read his telling of this tale, if you have the stomach for it.

They Dare To Speak Out

Book review by Craig Wood

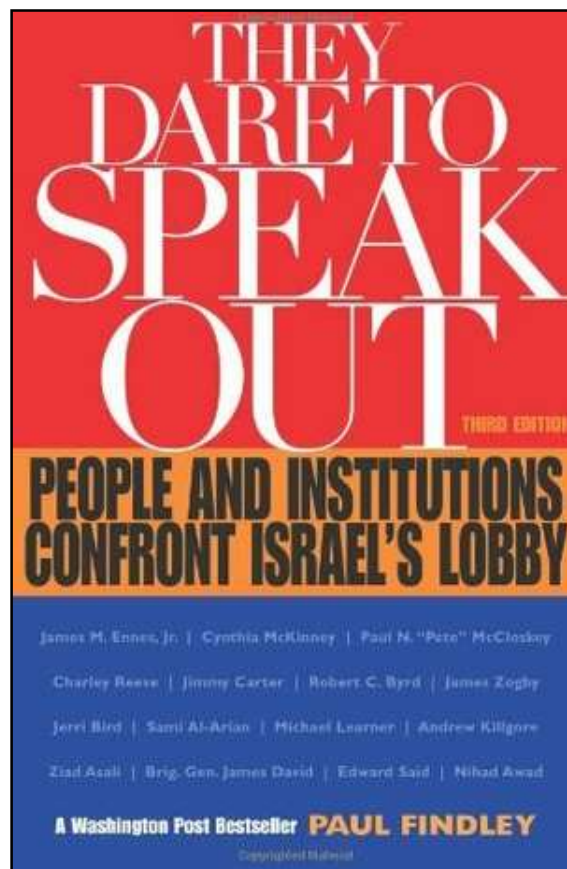
With the encouragement of friends and after serving 11 terms in the U.S. House of Representatives (1961-1983), Congressman Paul Findley (R-IL) wrote a book about influences and pressures inside the Israeli lobby.

His was the first book to point out ways the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) along with pro-Israel affiliates, use recruiting inducements and propaganda to steer political candidates toward a favorable view of Israel. It also exposed how Zionists in Israel and the U.S. get away with surreptitiously funneling money and perks to political allies while smearing its detractors, something the author had firsthand experience with.

Findley took an interest in Middle East politics in 1974 when he returned home from a humanitarian mission in the south of Yemen where he secured the release of an imprisoned American. His perceptions of the region changed after reading books and talking with area experts. "Gradually, Arabs emerged as human beings," he recalled.

His trouble with the Israeli lobby began later in the 70s after he opened a dialogue with Chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) Yasser Arafat against the wishes of Israel and U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. While those conversations proved helpful to Americans with the freeing of American hostages in Iran, the U.S. refused to formally acknowledge the talks and Findley was tagged as an anti-Semite even though he was also against officially recognizing the PLO. In 1980 he said, "It makes sense for us to talk to the PLO, to communicate with them and try to influence their behavior. It would reduce tension and conflict in that area. We can't wish the Palestinians away — they're a fact."

Nevertheless, he was maligned by hard-case Zionists and shunned by colleagues in his own party for the rest of his career. President Ronald Reagan went so far as to avoid



any contact with him during a campaign stop in his district. Hollywood star Bob Hope backed out of an agreement to help Findley with his 1980 campaign after hearing stories he was a PLO sympathizer and a betrayer of Jews.

Two years later Findley lost his bid for re-election by less than one percent of the vote. AIPAC executive director Thomas A. Dine noted three days after the election that 150 students from the University of Illinois had been recruited to "pound the pavement and knock on doors" adding, "This is a case where the Jewish lobby made a difference. We beat the odds and defeated Findley." Despite both candidates raising similar amounts of money, Dine estimated that \$685,000 of \$750,000 raised by Findley's opponent came from people who were Jewish.

Among others who incurred the wrath of the Israeli lobby were reporters, educators and politicians from both parties. Former Illinois Governor, Senator and Ambassador to the UN Adlai Stevenson II (D-IL) received numerous honors from Jewish organizations before he became the target of a smear campaign when he criticized Israeli policies and called for a halt in settlement funding. This prompted Senator Rudy Boschwitz (R-MN) to say at a breakfast gathering in Chicago that Stevenson was "a very steadfast foe of aid to Israel." Dine would soon chime in again: "The memory of Adlai Stevenson's hostility toward Israel during his Senate tenure lost him the Jewish vote in Illinois and that cost him the gubernatorial election."

Like Stevenson, U.S. Senator and Congressman J. William Fulbright (D-Ark) was accused of being anti-Semitic for questioning aid to Israel and advocating an investigation that exposed an illegal scheme Israelis used to funnel \$5 million into the American Zionist Council. Before leaving the Senate he warned, "Endlessly pressing the

Speak Out, Continued on page 12

Speak Out, from page 11

United States for money and arms—and invariably getting all and more than she asks—Israel makes bad use of a good friend.”

Tentacles from the Israeli lobby put a stranglehold on campus, too. Curriculums focusing on Arab culture and history were investigated for possible anti-Israel biases, academic conferences were mercilessly scrutinized for speakers critical of Israeli policies and AIPAC created files on intellectual dissidents including Jews like Noam Chomsky. Not content with ostracizing critical thinkers and threatening to cut off academic grants, AIPAC and its ilk started training student activists in 1979 to increase pro-Israel influence on campus with the Political Leadership Development Program. Four years later over 5,000 students were onboard with the agenda.

Other Jews privately worried about blowback or even losing their jobs if they openly complained about Israeli injustice. First Amendment champ and Jewish writer Nat Hentoff frequently wrote about those fears in his New York Village Voice column. And radical Jewish journalist I. F. Stone noted the massive amounts of hate mail reporters received if they expressed “one word of sympathy for

Palestinian Arab refugees.”

In Minneapolis, journalist Richard Broderick used his weekly Mediawatch column in the Twin Cities Reader to point out media biases favoring Israel when it invaded Syria in 1982. This disturbed some readers including area movie distributors who threatened to pull advertising. Not wanting to lose a huge amount of revenue, the paper’s editor offered disgruntled advertisers space for a 1,000 word, unedited rebuttal. Broderick came under fire again that summer after calling out local media for not bothering to check a source Senator Boschwitz used to suggest Syria welcomed the attacks. After doing some fact-checking he discovered that Boschwitz’s source, the American Lebanon League (ALL) was not only in favor of Israel invading Syria in 1982, it was according to the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) “the unregistered foreign agent of the Phalange Party and the Lebanese Front. They work in close consultation with AIPAC, which creates for them their political openings.”

After Broderick made the information public, Senator Boschwitz got on the phone and balled out Broderick along with his editor, and, according to Broderick in a recent FB chat with me, the Chief of Staff in Senator Boschwitz’s office had gone so far as to inform the business association representing predominantly Jewish theater owners that the Twin City Reader had a “Nazi” on its staff. Broderick also mentioned he wasn’t anti-Israel or dissing Boschwitz; he was simply doing his job as a reporter and had no idea he’d be fired for that. Nonetheless, he was told not to write any more commentaries, which he refused to do, and was let go a few weeks later.

Lucky for Findley he didn’t have a boss who could get rid of him for checking sources or connecting pieces of information that might solve a puzzle. Although he had trouble with sources who were reluctant to go on record, he found enough who weren’t and collected more than enough surprising facts and underhanded strategies to keep readers turning the page. His narrative, which sometimes evokes the sinister cleverness of a spy novel, can also be a reference for those interested in how a foreign power, along with its operatives adversely affected so many Americans from the 50’s to the early 80’s.

The book is as timely today as it was when it was first published in 1984, because when it comes to trying to silence critics of Israel, with few exceptions, the Israeli lobby still gets its way.

They Dare To Speak Out is available to read for free at https://ia600307.us.archive.org/33/items/They-Dare-To-Speak-Out-Paul-Findley/They_Dare_to_Speak_Out_Paul_Findley.pdf.

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Mayday Books has been a 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’s 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.**

In Memoriam Peter Lawson

We were honored to ring bells at Fort Snelling Cemetery for VFP member Peter Lawson's commemoration. Peter served as a Russian linguist in Japan during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He was a professor of psychology and counselor at Lakewood/Century Community College. The following is one of Peter's many poems that was read at the ceremony by his son:

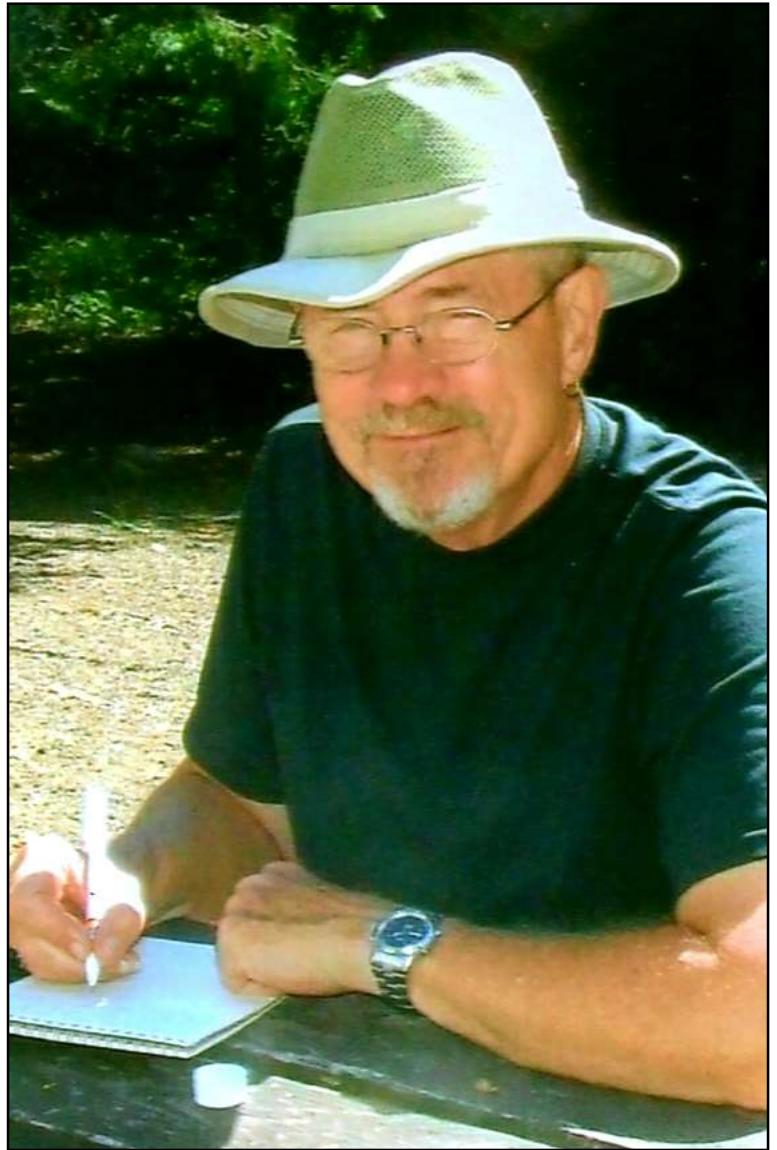
*Good times go fast, bad ones go slow
These times just flash by
They pass on the fly
A river run wild at the flood
Onward, onward, marvelous in its flow*

*We have so much fun
But it moves so darn fast
Like it's all on the run*

*Through ache of life's seasons,
We've learned the same lessons:
Love's pain always better
Than the uncaring fetter
Of avoiding all strife
By not loving, through life*

*Death comes to all.
What meaning can it have?
A mystery greater still than birth,
For we've learned o'er the years of the cost
Of care and more – love, through death lost,
And yet we are still choosing
To love, losing
And still, dare:
To care*

*Just what's ahead, we aren't given to know
I think what's behind sets a course,
For a future of love as forward we go.*



*Love is the use, as love is the source
Of all of the best in our show
This far and beyond – that's quite a force*

*Love for our origins, flawed though they be,
Love for the family we've launched in this sea
Of life, and ongoing care,
For them, yes, this we dare.*

Will any part of student loans be cancelled in Biden administration?

by Frank Fuller

The idea of cancelling student debt has been around for a long time but hasn't seemed doable until recently, and now even President-elect Biden is pushing to cancel \$10,000 of any student's debt.

At the bottom of this page are some of the facts about our nation's military spending, courtesy of WAMM's wallet-sized cards. This card does illustrate once again the stark choices we make when we finance war to the extent we do.

But what are some facts and arguments for moving some of that military money over to help make American lives easier? Why can't we use some of that money to not just forgive student debt but maybe make college education cheaper and maybe even free at state schools?

Here are some salient points about forgiving student debt:

- There are 44 million student loan borrowers carrying about \$1.5 trillion in federal loan debt. About three-quarters of these borrowers were unable to make payments, or they made payments but found their debt increasing anyway. And that was before COVID.

- More than 40 percent of borrowers never graduated.

- Economists say that cancelling student debts would increase the nation's GDP by about \$100 billion a year over the next 10 years. Some also say that it would increase the amount of money borrowed (for homes, cars, etc.) by \$1 trillion over the next 10 to 20 years.

- Student loans were stripped of bankruptcy protections in 2005, which had the effect of tripling student debt over the next decade. Biden, when he was Senator, was an enthusiastic supporter of the bill that did this. He also received hundreds of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from the banking industry.

- This program is a cash cow for the Department of Education. It makes money even on defaulted loans. If this department were a bank, it would be the largest bank in the world.

- Senators Warren and Schumer have proposed cancelling up to \$50,000 of any student's loan, considerably more than Biden's \$10,000.

Student debt, Continued on page 15

2020 U.S.A. MILITARY SPENDING NOW 35% OF THE MILITARY SPENDING IN THE WHOLE WORLD! We Are a Military Government. Just Follow the Money!

WORLD RANK	COUNTRY	ANNUAL MILITARY BUDGET
1.	U.S.A.*	\$738 Billion
2.	China	\$224 B
3.	Saudi Arabia	\$ 70 B
4.	India	\$ 55 B
5.	Germany	\$ 49 B
6.	United Kingdom	\$ 48 B
7.	Japan	\$ 47 B
8.	Russia	\$ 44 B
9.	France	\$ 40 B
10.	South Korea	\$ 39 B

*Compare U.S.A. (\$738 B) to the annual budgets of our "enemies":
Iraq-\$19 North Korea-\$8 B Iran-\$7 B

"...A nation that continues year after year to spend more on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."
- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King



HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

Over 1/2 (52%) of the \$1.43 Trillion 2020 "Discretionary" Budget will go to the Dept of Defense (Pentagon) (\$738 Billion) and the other 21 Depts/Agencies will have to split the remaining 48% as shown below:

Dept/Agency	2020 Allocation	% of Total
DEFENSE (Pentagon)	\$738 Billion	52%
Health/Human Services	\$ 90 B	12%
Dept of Education	\$ 62 B	8%
Housing/Community Dev	\$ 56 B	6%
Energy and Environment	\$ 28 B	2%
Dept of Justice	\$ 24 B	2%

"Discretionary" Budget. The portion of the Federal Budget acted on by the President and Congress every year.

This 2020 Military Spending Postcard is produced and distributed by: WAMM, 4200 Cedar Ave S, Suite 3, Minneapolis, MN 55407 USA 612-627-5364 • WAMM@mtm.org

womenagainstmilitarymadness.com
Information compiled by Tom White
tdwhite62@gmail.com

THE "HIDDEN" COSTS OF WAR!

The 2020 Pentagon Budget is \$738 Billion. That does not include the Dept of Veterans Affairs, Nuclear Weapons from the Dept of Energy, Homeland Security and Veterans Healthcare which brings the actual 2020 Defense spending to well over \$1 Trillion. In addition, the Defense Dept employs over 600,000 private contractors doing jobs that could be done much cheaper by civilian government employees. The Pentagon is one of the least accountable agencies of government, wasting Billions of dollars on needless bureaucracy. It has never passed an audit and cannot account for Billions of our tax dollars.

THE IMPACT OF MILITARY SPENDING ON DOMESTIC NEEDS

- U.S.A. ranks 37th in the world in overall healthcare, 29th in infant mortality and 17th in life expectancy.
- The average college loan debt per student is \$31,000. Yet the U.S.A. ranks 32nd in literacy, 31st in math and 23rd in sciences of all industrialized countries in the world.

Sources: UNICEF.org, nationalpriorities.org, CIAworldfactbook.us, costofwar.com, warresisters.org
For more sources, visit womenagainstmilitarymadness.org/militaryspending

"TRUMP'S "SHAMEFUL" 2020 BUDGET PROPOSAL

- \$1.5 Trillion cut to Medicaid over 10 years
- \$845 Billion cut to Medicare over 10 years
- \$220 Billion cut to Food Stamps over 10 years
- \$25 Billion cut to Social Security benefits
- \$21 Billion cut to Assistance to Needy Families
- \$207 Billion cut to Student Loan programs

*ALL THE ABOVE CUTS WILL TRANSFER TO MILITARY SPENDING OR TAX BREAKS FOR THE RICH!

THE CHOICE: UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE OR PERPETUAL WARFARE?

- U.S.A. is the ONLY industrialized country without Universal Healthcare.
- Annual spending on healthcare in the U.S.A. is now \$11,172 for every man, woman, and child, which is the highest in the industrialized world.
- Military spending by the U.S.A. is 16.9% of the GDP, also the highest in the world. Compare to: Russia-4% United Kingdom-2% Canada-1%.

More Wars OR Peace, Jobs, Education and Healthcare at Home; IT IS OUR CHOICE

This card describing U.S. military spending is available with an \$8 donation for each set of 100 cards (front side is on the left, back side is on the left). Mail a check with your return address and the number of cards you want (in sets of 100) to WAMM, 4200 Cedar Ave. S., Suite 3, Mpls. MN 55407. For many years, Tom White, VFP member and WAMM member, has made these cards annually.



About 25 VFP members and peace activists gathered in Mankato on Indigenous People's Day, Oct. 12, to remember the 38 Native Americans hanged at this location in 1862. We rang a bell every minute for each of the 38 victims while in a silent procession. Pictured is Mike McDonald, Chapter 27 president, and Barry Riesch with the drum.

EVENTS CALENDAR

ONGOING EVENTS

4-5 pm Weds. Lake Street/Marshal Ave. Peace Bridge vigil.

Monthly VFP chapter meeting, 2nd Sun., 6 pm. They are now virtual meetings. Contact VFP at 612-821-9141 for information on how to connect.

4:45 pm Weds., 50th and Halifax, Mpls. Grandmothers for Peace Vigil. (FFI call 612-927-7607)

3-4 pm Mondays. White Bear Lake peace vigil. Corner of 4th Street and Hwy 61.

Student debt, from page 14

- Most student loans are funded by the government and could be cancelled by executive order. No congressional action necessary.
- When President Johnson created this program, he said the loans would be interest-free. Today the Department of Education collects \$100 billion a year in interest payments.
- No one knows the exact amount of principal owed to the government, but estimates are that it is a small percentage of the \$1.5 trillion owed.

The Nuclear Fuel Chain with Leona Morgan: Virtual Event

Leona Morgan, an Indigenous community organizer and cofounder of the Nuclear Issues Studies Group, will speak about the Nuclear Fuel Chain from mining to labs and manufacturing plants to transportation and waste storage, and from there into the environment and the human body.

Saturday, January 9 at 11:00 a.m. Sponsored by WAMM committees: End War and Militarism and the Environment; VFP-Chapter 27; and Nukewatch. FFI: WAMM at 827-5364



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

As of Dec. 6, 2020:

At least 7,128 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.



Friend Eric J Garcia on facebook or follow at elmacheteillustrated @instagram.