

Documents Reveal
Nixon Against
Vietnam Veterans
page 5

20 YEARS
ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION
pages 22 & 23

VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR



THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

50¢

VOL.17 No.3 & 4

FALL ~ 87

Casualty in the Cause of Peace

NAVY MAIMS VET

SPECIAL
VIETNAM
SUPPLEMENT

VVAW
TOUR

ANSWERING QUESTIONS
POW-MIAS
p9

AGENT
ORANGE
p12

FROM 6months TO 5yrs
CHILD
CARE
p11

FACTORY
LIFE
p13

VISITING A NEW ZONE
COMMUNE
p17

Plus, Jogging in
Hanoi ; Foreign
Affairs ; Cu Chi
& Much More



Brian Willson is attended to by friends after being critically injured by Navy train.

VVAW as a national organization expresses outrage and sorrow at the actions of the U.S. Navy at the Concord Naval Weapons State in California where Vietnam veteran Brian Willson, protesting U.S. arms shipments to Central America was struck by a Navy train resulting in the loss of both his legs.

All evidence both from eye-witnesses and as recorded on video tape shows a complete

disregard for the lives and safety of the demonstrators. Duncan Murphy, a fellow demonstrator and veteran, stated: "That train that ran into us ... was a death train. It was quite obvious there was no intent to stop." Murphy stood beside Brian Willson when the train struck.

Willson, 47, a Vietnam veteran and member of VVAW, is a respected part of the national veterans movement for peace in Central America. His sacrifices during the long hunger strike of 1986 as one of the four participants in the Veterans Fast for Life drew national and international attention to the U.S. war in Central America. His work with Veterans Peace Action Teams in Niagaria earned the respect of vets and non-vets across the

country.

The activities of the Veterans Peace Action Team in the Nuremberg actions-Concord began this year on June 10 and have been on-going since then. With an emphasis on non-violence the activities at the Concord Naval Weapons Station are based on the philosophy of the 1950 Principles of International Law recognized in the Charter of the Nuremberg Tribunal. Key in the covenant of nonviolence for the Concord Actions which consisted of 10 points is point #4 which states: "We will not run, use threatening motions, or jump suddenly on or off the tractor roadways."

The initial Naval statement charged that the participants, specifically Brian, threw



Vietnam Veterans
 Against the War
 National Office
 P. O. Box 408594
 Chicago, IL 60640

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Nonprofit Organization
U S POSTAGE
PAID
 Permit No.1425

Please Turn To page 3



FRAGGIN'

Sp5 Willy(Ret.)

A.K.A.
Bill Shunas



Now don't get me wrong. I'm perfectly objective in my thoughts about the likes of Ollie North. I even went to the barber to get an Ollie cut. The barber couldn't do it. Said I'd have to go to a hair stylist. "Where?" I asked. He said he didn't know exactly, but I'd have to go to a place where they got plenty of plants growing in the windows. After a search I found a place. Unfortunately they couldn't give me an Ollie cut. Said I didn't have enough hair on top. Made me feel un-American.

But I did get an Ollie T-shirt. Yessir. I wore it proudly. Unfortunately, I spilled some catsup on my Ollie T-shirt. So I threw it in the washing machine. Alas and alack! The damndest thing happened. It came out of the wash shredded. Oh well, Ollie, I tried.

Seriously now, everyone wants to know what really happened with the Iran-Contra affair. North. Poindexter. Schultz. Meese. Weinberger. Which of them is lying. All of them? Some of them? And how much are they lying? Well, I shall reveal the truth on these pages.

How do I know? I've never revealed this before, but I've got a pipeline into the White House. For obvious reasons I cannot reveal my contact, so we've given him/her/it an alias. We call him/her/it, "Sore Throat."

The key evidence is a tape Sore Throat made of a high level meeting between Reagan, Ed Meese and White House Chief of Staff Howard Baker. This occurred just after Ollie North made his appearance before the Joint Committee. This was at the crucial point of the whole affair and where the coverup was finalized. The important part of the tape started out with the President fuming and fussing.

Reagan: "It's a disaster. Everything's coming apart."

Meese: "It's not so bad Ronnie. Ollie didn't reveal your involvement in the thing. He said he didn't know. He just assumed you gave the order. You're still safe. They can't prove anything from his testimony."

Reagan: "No, no, it's not that. That's not the problem. That's the least of it. I'm proud that this all happened under my administration. We bought freedom for some hostages and got some money for the Contras."

Baker: "If you're worried

about the Contras, Mr President, let your mind rest. They let Ollie talk all he wanted about the Contras being "freedom fighters" and didn't even ask any hard questions about our "freedom fighters" running drugs or killing babies and pregnant women."

Reagan: "I like the sound of that."

Meese: "That's right. The Contras came off looking good."

Reagan: "No, I mean I like the sound of Howard calling me 'Mr. President.' My own Chief of Staff. It has a nice ring to it. But, nevertheless, I'm still upset."

Baker: "It's my pleasure, Mr President. But I don't understand why you're upset. We're winning the propaganda battle."

Reagan: "It's that damn Ollie North. He's become a hero. He's getting all the publicity that should be mine. And he's only a second lieutenant colonel who works in the basement. I'm the commander in chief. I should play the lead role. I mean, I don't wish any bad luck on Ollie. I wouldn't mind if he won an Oscar for best supporting role, but he's stealing the script. Listening to Ollie, you'd think that he was responsible for the Contra terrorists...."

Meese (interrupting): "Freedom Fighters, Ronnie. We call them "freedom fighters." The rebels in El Salvador are the terrorists."

Reagan: "Sorry, Ed. It gets so confusing at times, which is which. Of course, they're "freedom fighters" and Ollie speaks so well of them. He's taken my lines, and I'm the one responsible for the . . .uh . . .uh . . .whadiyacallits . . . "freedom fighters" or whatever. He makes them sound so good. It's an Oscar performance. He seems to forget who's the leading man in this here script." And all the reporters and fans are going along, glorifying him."

Meese: "That's true."

Baker: "I suppose it's understandable. Any man that can sit at attention and look misty eyed for four days of answering questions deserves an Oscar."

Meese: "Well, I think we'll do some image-making of our own. We need some scapegoats. I got together with some of the boys and we came up with a plan."

Reagan: "Oh good; let's hear it."

Baker: "That's the spirit, Mr President. Be decisive."

Meese: "At first we were thinking about some outright

character assassination on Ollie."

Reagan: "That would be good. We assassinate his character and no one would vote for him. Just make up a few lies."

Baker: "No need for that, Mr President."

Meese: "Right, Ronnie. All we'd have to do is release some of Ollie's past secrets to the press. It can all be verified. Like the time he went nuts and was running naked through the streets carrying a .45 and yelling 'I'm no good, I'm no good.'"

Reagan: "Sounds like a scene from 'Naked in the Streets.'"

Baker: "But we decided we couldn't do that. Not after he did such a good job of painting the Contras as heroes. We don't want to destroy his intellectual credibility. We had to come up with a more sophisticated plan."

Reagan: "That sounds good."

Meese: "Okay. Here's the plan. Poindexter testifies next. Right?"

Baker: "Right."

Meese: "The man has a photographic memory."

Reagan: "Oh no. We're doomed. I need a drink. Send out for some drinks."

Baker: "Easy, Mr President. Remember the last time you had a drink. You got potted and the press started calling you senile."

Reagan: "Damn press."

Meese: "That's right, Ronnie. We'll get through this all right. Just listen up. The admiral with his photographic memory gets up there and does

his 'I don't remember' routine. Then he takes responsibility for the whole thing. Makes him look stupid and guilty at the same time. He tells them, 'The buck stops here.'"

Reagan: "I remember that line. Who said it? Spencer Tracy in 'The Last Hurrah?' No! No! James Whitmore playing Harry Truman in 'Give 'Em Hell Harry.' That was it great line. I love it."

Meese: "No, Ronnie. Harry Truman the President said it. He was serious."

Reagan: "He had good writers."

Meese: "Have a drink, Ronnie. Let me continue. So the Admiral takes credit for everything. Him and North and Casey are responsible for everything in the eyes of the American public. Casey's dead so he can't connect you. North says he reported only to Poindexter and Poindexter says he acted on his own. Beautiful."

Baker: "And that leaves only one problem. Ollie North's Errol Flynn image. People relate to that. They think we're out of control and they need these heroes."

Reagan: "Yeah, Errol Flynn. The boy deserves an Oscar."

Meese: "We'll have George take care of that."

Reagan: "George who?"

Baker: "George Schultz. Secretary of State."

Reagan: "Oh yeah. Where's George been lately?"

Meese: "He's been laying low, trying not to get tainted by this whole damn affair. We'll have him testify about how Casey and Poindexter and North had run amok. Then he'll emphasize the good points of your foreign policy. We can talk about Grenada."

Baker: "You think we should tell everyone about how North ran the Grenada operation and got it all botched up? Got some of our boys killed because of it?"

Meese: "No, we'll just say that we struck a blow for freedom. And he'll talk about Libya."

Reagan: "Yeah, and Lebanon."

Meese: "No Ronnie. People might remember all the Marines we lost there. No. George will talk about the great job you did in Grenada and Libya."

Reagan: "So you think George is the one to get us out of this? He acts too much like a stuffed shirt."

Baker: "Well, it's either him or Cap, and we're afraid Cap will start talking about using nukes for Armageddon again. That's not too cool for the Secretary of Defense."

Meese: "It goes over big with the Fundamentalists, but that's only one fifth of the country."

Reagan: "So it's George that will bail us out of the wilderness."

Baker: "George will lead us out of the wilderness, Mr President. Easy on that drink. And after George testifies, then we go about trying to build up your image again."

Meese: "Yeah, so put away that drink. We don't need a potted President at this time. We have to plant the image of a sober leader, ready to steer this nation for two more years."

Baker: "Potted . . . Plant . . . That's it. You're not a lame duck, helpless because of this scandal. You're not a potted

Turn To Next Page 3

CENTRAL AMERICAN PEACE PLAN

--Evan Douthit
Editor, Central
America News
Update

The most spectacular recent event in Central America has been the signing of the peace plan for Central America by the presidents of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras during their summit meeting in Guatemala August 6-7. The treaty, which was based on a plan proposed last spring by Costa Rican President Oscar Arias Sanchez, is a desperate attempt by the Central American presidents to avoid total "Lebanonization" of the region, and its signing is probably the most serious diplomatic defeat even inflicted on the U.S. in Latin America. This defeat is even more humiliating in that the Reagan Administration proposed its own "peace" plan on the very eve of the Central American summit. Not only did President Ortega of Nicaragua embarrass the U.S. by immediately proposing to meet with the U.S. to discuss the U.S. plan (causing Secretary of State Schultz to run away shrieking that they did not mean to discuss the plan with Nicaragua!) but President Arias of Costa Rica refused even to allow the Reagan plan to be put on the agenda for the summit meeting.

The Reagan Administration

Continued **FRAGGIN'**

plant on the shelf. You're a leader."

Reagan: "I like that line. Potted plant. I can say that real well. Send it to the speechwriter."

According to Sore Throat that was the meaty part of the tape, the part relating to the coverup of the scandal. The rest of the conversation deteriorated into fifteen minutes of reminiscences of Reagan's days in Hollywood. As far as what this tape says and what happened at the hearings, well, as they say in the movies, "The rest is history."

Note: I am eternally indebted to Sore Throat for passing this information to me at great risk to him/her/itself. Should he/she/it have been caught, there is no telling what they would have done to him/her/it. Maybe a month's rehabilitation with Jerry Falwell at the PTL playground. And by the way, to any reporter from The New York Times, The Washington Post or the National Enquirer, forget it. Don't even call. I won't reveal the identity of Sore Throat. No way!

wasted no time in making its attitude clear. While "welcoming" the plan, Reagan made clear he would not accept it unless he thought it was in the interest of the U.S. and that he

has not intercepted a single arms shipment from Nicaragua to the Salvadoran guerrillas since 1981). But the fact is that if the treaty is implemented, the Contras are dead while the

reached the point in El Salvador that the Army has to send out 10,000-man columns into the main guerrilla areas, while the FMLN guerrillas have been extending their traffic stoppages into the capital San Salvador itself. More American soldiers are also being killed. Six U.S. advisors died when their helicopter "accidentally" crashed as they were on their way to pick up an American soldier "accidentally" shot by a Salvadoran sergeant during a clash with the guerrillas.

Please Turn To page 4

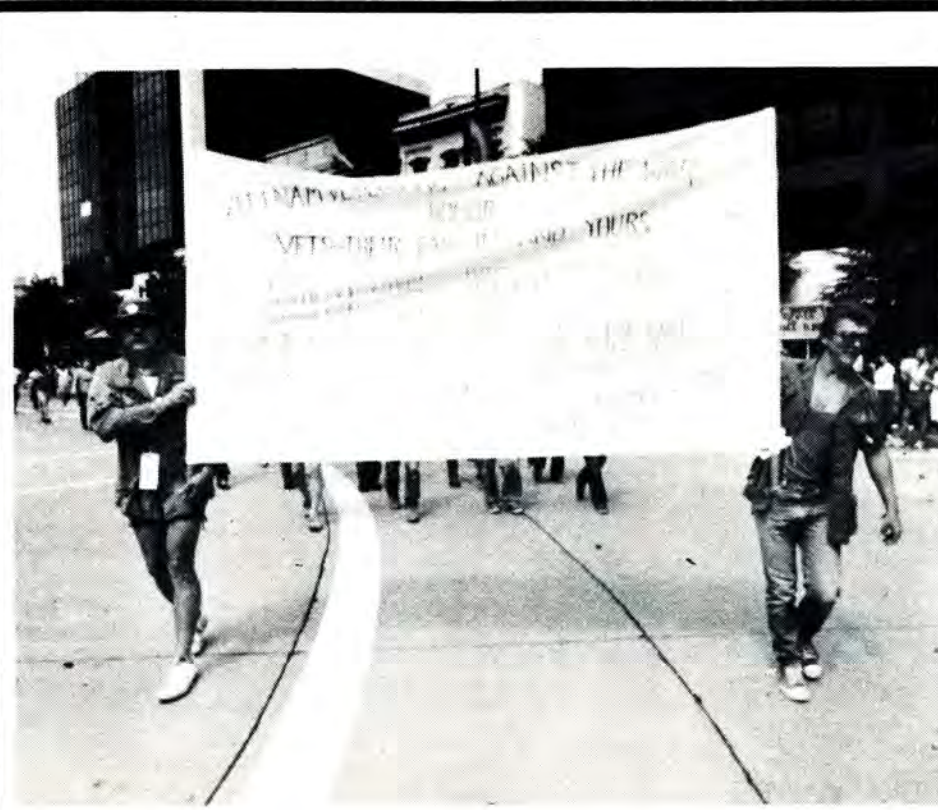
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 **WILSON**

themselves in front of the train which belies the months of activities and internal discipline of the peace activists. Further, that Brian had taken his wife and child along as part of the action means that he had no expectation of any such finale to the day's blockade.

VVAW charges the Navy with gross misconduct and criminal negligence. Apparently the Navy hoped to intimidate peace activists by attempting to take their lives. But this is the same Navy that has 38 of its own men killed by a supposedly friendly aircraft in the Persian Gulf.

We extend our sympathy and affection to Brian and his family, and wish him as full a recovery as possible. We look forward to joining him in future actions. We fully support the call for investigations by U.S. Representative Ron Dellums and other legislators. And we fully support continued activities at Concord as a part of our common fight to end U.S. involvement in Central America.

The reaction to attack on Brian Willson was nationwide. VVAW members participated in a large action in the Bay Area of California, and in other activities organized by the Pledge of Resistance in the Midwest and in New Jersey. In New York City VVAW initiated a memorial celebration that drew 300 people. But perhaps the greatest response was the kindling of activist fires in the hearts of many vets who have not yet joined the battle against U.S. activities in Central America. There will be many ready to march.



Wisconsin VVAW marches in Madison "Welcome Home" Parade. Warmly received, they protested war in Central America.

would not abandon the Contras. A week after the signing, U.S. envoy to Central America, Philip Habib, resigned, apparently in disgust with the Reagan Administration's determination to sabotage the plan. This is another blow to Reagan's plans, since Habib was probably the only reason U.S. policy did not blow up years ago. Who will Reagan send in now, Elliot Abrams?

The heart of the peace plan the Central American presidents adopted is that the countries of Central America agreed not to materially support "irregular" armed movements in other countries of the region, not to allow such forces to operate from their territories into any of the other countries, and that countries where there is fighting going on will seek a cease fire and dialogue with the unarmed opposition, and that there will be elections under UN and Organization of American States observation to be held in each Central American country at the end of each government's legally mandated term in office. The plan is insulting to the FMLN guerrillas in El Salvador and to the URNG guerrillas in Guatemala, in that it equates them with the U.S. paid, armed and directed Contra mercenaries operating out of Honduras against Nicaragua. This is because the FMLN and URNG are entirely based in their own countries, and get all of their supplies and equipment within their own countries (the U.S.

FMLN and URNG will hardly be touched by the treaty provisions.

Furthermore, UN and OAS observed elections in Guatemala and El Salvador, if honest, would contain some nasty surprises for the governments of those countries, both of which won elections in which the left half of the political spectrum was excluded by terror. On the other hand, the Sandinista government in Nicaragua should probably be able to win its next election without any great difficulties.

This is also why the U.S. government tried so hard to prevent the signing of this plan, twice arranging for the summit to be postponed, and presenting its alternative plan at the last minute.

The question is why did such pro-American governments as the governments of Guatemala, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras, especially the last two, come up with and sign such a plan. The U.S. press coverage of Central America has been atrocious, and most people reading it would have only the dimmest notion of the severity of the political, economic and social crisis racking every nation of the region. Unemployment and underemployment is over 50% in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, and prices of the major commodities produced by the Central American countries are at an all-time low.

The guerrilla war has

THE VETERAN
Published by the
VVAW - National Office
P.O. Box 408594
Chicago, IL 60640
(312) 327-5756

Continued

CENTRAL AMERICA

Anti-government demonstrations are almost daily events in San Salvador now and President Duarte of El Salvador is under savage attack from every direction. When Duarte carried out U.S. orders to postpone the summit in June, even the ultra-rightist ARENA party (whose leader Roberto D'Aubuisson is best known for arranging the murder of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero in 1980) attacked him for selling out the country's sovereignty and for allowing Philip Habib to run Salvador's foreign policy.

In Guatemala the guerrillas are showing new strength, and the government has taken to asking for U.S. logistical support, while U.S. planes are engaging in mysterious herbicide spraying flights (Agent Orange?) over the areas where the guerrillas are now active. Labor and peasant unrest is threatening to become "explosive" in spite of stepped up death squad murders and kidnappings. In Honduras, at least four different armed insurgent groups are operating against the government, while the border with Nicaragua has been in turmoil as a result of the Contra presence. The Contras have driven thousands of peasants from their farms and homes, and have been used in Honduras to murder and threaten political and union activists opposed to them. The Contras are so universally despised in Honduras that even rightists in the Honduran Congress have proposed that they be forcibly expelled.

The presence of thousands of U.S. troops has not been much more popular, especially after it became clear that the U.S. troops had turned the cities near their bases into brothels and were spreading AIDS (a lethal threat in a country with so poor a medical infrastructure as Honduras) and after reports surfaced last year that U.S. troops were sexually abusing Honduran children.

The situation in Costa Rica is somewhat better, but still troubling. It is therefore easy to see why the governments of Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Honduras would come to see that U.S. policy was/is not working and cannot work, and can only get them killed. The fact that Honduras would mutiny shows how desperate the situation is, and I think that the Honduran

stand was the key here. Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua have all clearly been willing to sign this treaty since spring. Apparently it was Honduras that broke ranks with the U.S. and Duarte of El Salvador was forced to go along or be totally isolated domestically and internationally. Honduras must have decided it was getting too little for its pains (\$200 million in U.S. aid a year against \$700 million for El Salvador) and it must have told the Reagan Administration this months ago and warned that they would sign the treaty unless the U.S. came up with a significantly better package. This would explain why the Reagan Administration was so desperate to get the summit canceled or at least delayed, because if Honduras had been in its pocket they could always have counted on Honduras and El Salvador wrecking any summit. But Reagan's policy has been so discredited in the U.S. that he has been in no position to get more money for the Hondurans.

What now? The war will probably continue. Reagan will fund the Contras as long as he can get money out of the Congress, but the Contras are increasingly meaningless. They have been reduced to several thousand men, their leaders having stolen everything and dealt as much cocaine as they could, and can only manage hit and run attacks on smaller and smaller targets. The treaty does give some impetus to negotiations in Guatemala and El Salvador where the guerrillas have always made clear their willingness to talk, but as long as Reagan is determined on a military victory and as long as Congress is willing to continue escalating U.S. aid to El Salvador (from \$14 million in 1980 to \$700 million this year), the fighting will continue, barring a total government collapse and FMLN-FDR victory. It is doubtful that the Guatemalan army will ever lose its habit of slaughtering whomever it does not like until someone destroys the Guatemalan army, so the war will probably continue there as well.

The Nicaraguans are hurting economically under the pressure of the general economic crisis facing the 3rd World and Latin America, the U.S. embargo and the at least \$500 million that U.S. has spent in the last



VVAW members demonstrate at New Jersey Weapons Station to protest War in Central America and for Brian Willson.

On Brian Willson:

'The Tears Came Hard'

To The Editor:

Whatever possessed him to do it? Why didn't Brian Willson simply get off the tracks? Was he mad? Demented? Self-destructive? Or is the answer perhaps more complex? I'd like to share some thoughts.

Wednesday morning started out simply enough: orange juice, exercise and the morning news. Then, without warning, without premonition, the announcement of Brian Willson's wounding. I was stunned. The "ordinariness" of this day had ended. A friend was hurt and I didn't know how to act. I was numb, just numb and shaken.

The news said Brian Willson had lost both legs and

suffered a serious concussion. I thought of my time as a medic with the 1st Infantry Division in Vietnam--I realized the seriousness of his injuries all too clearly.

Brian had also been in Vietnam. He served as a "Damage Assessment Officer" in the U.S. Air Force. His job was to technically survey and officially report the "damage" inflicted by bombing missions. He told me of seeing the dead and the dying and the wounded--he never could get used to the children.

And then the new cancers: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Angola, etc, etc, etc. Our government is at it again. Secret armies, diversion of guns and money,

Turn To page 5

year to destabilize them (given that the Nicaraguan GNP is about \$2 billion a year, it should be clear why this should cause them a problem). But the Sandinistas show no sign of collapsing, and Reagan shows no sign of being able to get the political support domestically and internationally he would need to be able to send in hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops. It is doubtful that Reagan could even get the support for sending in troops to El Salvador to save Duarte's regime.

Even before Iran-Contra-gate Reagan probably lacked the material and political resources to simply send the U.S. Army

into battle in Central America and force his will on the people there, but peace will not come to the region soon unless the U.S. ceases to promote war there, and ceases to fund and prop up governments which have no popular support. But Central America is only the most acute manifestation of the general political, social and economic crisis in Latin America, and that crisis may soon get so severe (as anyone who has been following events in Columbia, Peru, Brazil, Chile, Haiti, and Mexico can see) that the U.S. government will forget that there is such a place as Central America.

"I found (CANU) most useful." Noam Chomsky. "I read it and I like it." Alexander Cockburn. Also recommended by the National Pledge of Resistance, Mobilization for Survival & Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

BIWEEKLY FOREIGN PRESS DIGEST

Central America News Update

I want to subscribe to Central America News Update. ___ as an institution @ \$30 a year. As an individual for ___ 1 year @ \$15, ___ 6 months @ \$8.

I want to send gift subscription(s) to the following. (Mark the individual rates and fill in address.)

I want to distribute Central America News Update.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 Phone _____

Tears....

drug dealing, plausible deniability, the dead, the dying, the wounded—including the children.

We are doing it again.

Brian Willson went to Nicaragua. Three times he led groups of Vietnam veterans through the war zones. They all agreed, Nicaragua is Vietnam spelled in Spanish.

The "action" at the Concord Naval Weapons Station was to initiate a new fast combined with "direct action" against munitions shipments. The train that crippled Brian Willson was hauling weapons for shipment to the Contras. At the press conferences prior to the demonstration, Brian Willson had clearly stated with regard to the Nicaraguans, "...are their lives worth less than ours...? Are our lives worth more than theirs? If we allowed this "death train" to pass our lives it will only take others farther down the line (including the children). They can stop the train, they can pull us off the tracks, or they can run us over. We will not move." He didn't. The death train crushed him just as its cargo is destined to crush the peasants of Nicaragua.

I remember Vietnam. And there were heroes. Men who risked everything, and often lost, to save a buddy, to gain a few yards, to cover a retreat. In a fundamental sense this is what Brian Willson is doing, only his battlefied is not sanctioned. The man is, after all, waging total, unconditional peace. And, just as in war, the price can be as high as that paid on any battlefied.

Soldiers rarely cry on the battlefied; there's seldom time. Following the news, I put on my suit and tie and left for work. After several business calls, I just gave up...today would not be "business as usual." I went to the Peace and Justice Center in Burlington to join with others in organizing an appropriate community response.

Although I came close a few times, I didn't shed a tear all day. Good soldier. But I couldn't get my mind off Brian and throughout the day, vignettes of all the suffering I had seen in Vietnam kept flashing in my mind. All the dead and the dying and the wounded...nightmares come to consciousness.

There was another nightmare Brian and I discussed about how little wars often turn into big ones and of how, should that last great nightmare ever come for us, there won't be any dreamers. Brian Willson reminds us that we need to work harder for peace. And sometimes we are angry at him for it.

When I finally went to bed, I was exhausted. As I lay back on my bed and pulled my legs up under the covers it suddenly struck me like a new thought: Brian's going to bed without his legs tonight. The tears came hard.

--Dave Ross
VVAW Vermont

--John Zutz
Milwaukee VVAW

A private showing of the art show "Vietnam: Reflexes and Reflections" was given by the Milwaukee Chapter of VVAW for their members and friends at the West Bend Gallery of Fine Arts on May 16th.

The multimedia collection of art by over 60 Vietnam vets includes artists from across the country, Australia, and captured NVA art. Each of the more than 300 pieces relates to the artist's Vietnam experiences. The show also features many slides and sound effects recorded in-country.

In the early '80's, Sondra Varco, a Chicago area art dealer, stumbled across some of the art. She couldn't get it shown, but kept finding more artists who had created Vietnam-related work and put it away into basements, attics, and garages since it wasn't done to sell—it was done for emotional release. They formed the Vietnam Vet-

erans Art Group. Their first show had 12 artists.

As the show traveled to New York City's Lincoln Center, to the House and Senate Rotundas in Washington DC, and down the East Coast, more artists joined the group.

About 40 VVAW members and guests saw how the emotions of the Vietnam experience were transferred to wood, stone, canvas and even neon. There was a 30minute videotape, created by PBS, featuring interviews with the artists. Following the show, light refreshments were served while the finer aspects of the show were discussed.

The show was in West Bend from April 29 through May 31 with a special showing on Memorial Day. It topped the gallery's previous attendance record by more than 30%. Many of those attending were vets and their families; many were people who didn't normally pay any attention to veterans' affairs.



ART SHOW VIETNAM: Reflexes And Reflections



(top) Brad and Cindy Culp watch multi-media show.
(left) Fred Wallace and Murial Itoyan eye one of the sculptures.

Son Killed in Beirut: 'PEACE IS NOT EASY TO SELL'

[The following letter responds to an invitation to attend VVAW's 20th anniversary celebration in New York; the writer's son was killed in Beirut, and she has helped construct a monument with the inscription "Let Peace Take Root" along with a dove and the names of the New York Marines killed in Lebanon.]

Congratulations to you and your group celebrating a 20th anniversary....Even though we are unable to attend, I'd like to say we'll be thinking of you on the 27th. Peace is not easy to sell! For some reason people have short memories, or, because it hasn't happened to someone close to them, they are not even aware of what's going on. It's just very sad to see a country that has been #1 for so long lose its strength and honor because of bad foreign policies and poor choices of aides by our President. This is what bothers us the most--did our son and his friends die in vain? As you say, Vietnam is being repeated

again and again and again. Where will it be next--Korea? Anger is in every foreign country: how many more young people will we lose next time?

A memorial is great. It helps to remind people that peace has a price. But who can ever have something to replace the smiles, hugs or even tears of our loved ones? In our minds we can hear their voices. At times an aftershave lotion may make us stop for a moment and remember. Even a song or the way one of his brothers might smirk. Nothing will ever fill the gap in our hearts. Let's hope the American people sit up and listen. The next time it may be one of their sons who doesn't return. And, yes, where better to start than in the schools; the young people have a right to learn their history and the responsibility to get involved.

My husband is a member of the VVA and we try to do whatever we can to help. Our son would want us to do that.

We, the Beirut Families,

have a paper called "The Beirut Connection." It was started by 2 mothers, one from PA and the other from NJ. All of the parents try to support them by sending news, offering each

other help and advice, writing poems and stories and also by trying to attend as many memorials as possible in different states. We've been together almost 4 years and if it's God's will, we'll be together for 40 more just to tell the world we're proud of our "Peacekeepers" and to try to avoid another disaster. We have formed a good support group and at some point, soon, I hope, we'll try to assist the Beirut survivors. The people who returned are not all well and as usual, our government doesn't give them much assistance. We have lots of work ahead.

Good luck in the future. We'll remember you in our prayers.

Sincerely,

Lorraine Coulman

MARCHING AGAINST WAR



Marching against U.S. involvement in Central America.

NIXON vs NAM VETS (VVAW that is)

As the inside workings of the Nixon Administration seep into public view with the release of more and more Nixon documents, Nixon and his lawyers are still sitting on much information relating to Vietnam veterans. No non-national security matter has had as many documents withheld at Nixon's request.

What is known is sparse but intensely interesting. In February, 1971, Nixon ordered the White House to plan to mobilize Vietnam vets in support of Nixon's Vietnam policy. Charles Colson--Watergate jail bird and born again Christian--was put in charge; for awhile the plan was shelved because Colson feared that a new organization, sponsored by the White House, would cut into recruiting by the VFW and American Legion.

In March of the same year the head of the Veterans Administration, Donald Johnson, wrote to Colson with the analysis that "Vietnam veterans tend to see their experiences as an exercise in survival rather than a defense of national values. The majority, given the opportunity in company of their peers, express both intense anger and much guilt." That a VA honcho could have been so perceptive in 1971 is remarkable. That it took the VA until 1979

to start with their outreach program--which is based on this kind of analysis--is a tribute to bureaucratic ineptness and stupidity.

While the White House was initially impressed by Johnson's thinking, the response changed 6 weeks later when VVAW, in Operation Dewey Canyon III expressed the anger that Johnson mentioned. Many VVAW members did--and do--see the war as an exercise in survival. But following DC III the White House formulated a policy to opposed any recognition that vets had either adverse effects from the war or that Vietnam veterans questioned U.S. policy in Vietnam.

[The above information comes from Stars & Stripes, a veterans paper published in Washington, DC. It opens some interesting possibilities for a researcher with time and expertise--anyone interested should get in contact with the VVAW National Office which will offer whatever help we can provide. Any VVAW member who was around during the Republican Conventions of '72 will remember the feeble attempts of Nixon's Committee to Re-elect the President (CREEP) to come up with Vietnam vets who supported Nixon's war policies. They found 6 people, and only one of those was a Vietnam veteran.]

[The following article is reprinted from POINT, the publication of the Smedley Butler Brigade/Veterans for Peace in Boston. It was written by Winston Warfield, President of the Smedley Butler Brigade.]

As many as 100,000 peaceful demonstrators arrived in Washington, DC by bus and train this cold, raw Saturday to express opposition to U.S. government policies in Central America and South Africa. Their demands were that this government stop interfering in the internal affairs of Central American countries and, in particular, cease any and all assistance to the Contras, and stop giving tacit support to the fascist regime maintaining apartheid in South Africa.

The large turnout, including marchers from as far away as Wyoming, showed without a doubt that what used to be called a "Movement" during the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War years has re-emerged. It is worth mentioning that the crowd was popular in character rather than solely a large turnout of sixties-style activists, and included blacks, students, and labor union officials in impressive numbers.

Demonstrators began gathering in the early hours of Saturday morning on the Ellipse in Washington, DC near the White House, and the mood was serious and positive as the morning progressed and the number kept swelling.

Veterans for Peace, Inc., and Vietnam Veterans Against the War gathered around a veterans' contingent table while awaiting the march's beginning and were an attraction for passersby. Some 75 veterans signed a Veterans for Peace, Inc. contact sheet in the space of two hours.

The combined veterans contingent of Veterans for Peace, Inc., VVAW; and the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, famous as an all-volunteer unit that fought the Franco fascists in the Spanish Civil War, marched together to the nation's capitol. The vets contingent kept up a steady cadence of slogans done to basic training marching rhythms drawing attention to the Vietnam veterans' sense of betrayal about having been manipulated or dragooned into serving in an unjust war against a peasant uprising for national independence in Vietnam.

The April 25th march in Washington was significant especially in the large number of union locals represented, particularly from among government workers. They came despite a concerted effort by top CIO-AFL leadership to smear the march as a communist front effort, which only proved that many people in this country are capable of seeing that freedom from want, national independence, and self-determination are really what's at stake for the peoples of both Central America and South Africa.

Military Records Moved YOUR FILES

In a ceremony at the National Archives on Monday, April 27, Secretary of the Army John Marsh officially transferred to the civilian agency approximately 30,000 cubic feet of records created between 1954 and 1975 by U.S. Army and Joint Commands in Southeast Asia. Included are records of MACV, USARV, MACTHAI, Army divisions and subordinate commands.

The National Archives has released a provisional schedule that calls for the release of records of combat and service units at and below divisional level and MACTHAI records in April 1988; USARV records in April 1990; and MACV records in April 1992. The delay is due to the lack of a staff to service the records and the necessity to review and arrange the material.

In the interim while division-level records are unavailable, access to operational, after-action, and "lessons learned" reports will be through the National Technical Information Service (NTIS), Department of Commerce, 5285 Port Royal Rd, Springfield, VA 22161. Copies of these reports were deposited in NTIX by the Army and have been available to the public through this source.

Records of Air Force, Navy and Marine activities in Southeast Asia are available through agency historical offices. The appropriate addresses are:

Office of Air Force History
Building #5681
Bolling Air Force Base
Washington, DC 20332

Navy Historical Center
Building #57
Washington Navy Yard
Washington, DC 20374

Marine Corps Historical Center
Building #58
Washington Navy Yard
Washington, DC 20374

The Army was responsible for bringing records back from Vietnam following the 1973 peace accords. Due to the disorganized state of the those records, the National Archives has refused until recently to accept them. The records have been located at the National Archives Records Center in Suitland, MD since 1973, and will remain at that facility. In April 1975 a large quantity of records awaiting shipment to the U.S. was seized by North Vietnamese troops at Ton Son Nait airport. Other records were destroyed by Army personnel without authorization during the pullout following the Paris Peace Accords.

VVAW DELEGATION REPORTS FROM VIETNAM

The first post-war VVAW delegation to Vietnam spent 10 days in country; it is much better to visit Vietnam as guests of the government of Vietnam than as invaders sent by the U.S. government.

Our delegation consisted of Barry Romo and Pete Zastrow of the VVAW National Office in Chicago, Ed Damato from New York, Dennis Kroll from Madison Wisconsin, and Tom Wetzler from San Antonio. All of us were Vietnam veterans, all of us were long-time anti-war vets; none of us lied when we put on our visa application, "Friends of Vietnam."

Of course we all went with questions--many of the questions and their answers you will find throughout this section of THE VETERAN. But a fundamental question--how would we be received by people we had once tried to kill, and who had once tried to kill us--was resolved almost immediately. We were in Vietnam as friends, and we were treated not only as friends but as honored guests.

Travel to Vietnam is not especially easy; there are few flights into Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City. Arrangements (for us) had to be made through the UN delegation in New York and until we arrived in Vietnam, we had no chance to communicate directly with our hosts. As a result, when we arrived we found they had planned a tour several days longer than we had to spend and had been forced to cut back at the last moment. Travel to places other than Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (except for those spots within driving distance) could not be arranged.

At first it seemed strange that we could not just get up in the morning and say, "Today we want to go here." But once we saw the elaborate arrangements made for us at almost every stop we could easily understand why preparation was necessary. We were guests, and for guests one takes special care that they will feel welcome.

Although our schedule had been carefully planned in advance, we never had the impression that our activities were restricted. Whenever we had free time we were free to go where we liked--and we did. In Hanoi we were taken on a tour of the



Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum in Hanoi.

market--the large collection of individual booths where everything imaginable is sold. It is as capitalistic as any flea market in this country (only larger) and our guide apologized several times for showing it to us; it was necessary, he said, that we see the bad along with the good. At almost every meeting with government officials we were told that serious errors had been made resulting in an economy that was nowhere near as prosperous as it should be.

Many of the places we visited were those we requested by letter before we arrived. Bach Mai Hospital in Hanoi, the Revolutionary Museum, the tunnels at Cu Chi; other sights such as the factories, the commune, the nationalities exhibit were things that the Vietnamese wanted us to see. The Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum was not suggested to us but our guides seemed pleased that we asked to visit it, and the experience was one not to be missed. We had asked to visit areas where we had served, but time made this difficult. The area around Dian where Tom Wetzler served as a medic with the 1st Division was part of our tour around the area of Ho Chi Minh City; we should have realized (but did not) that what we remembered as Cu Chi or Dian were the sites of American bases, not the Vietnamese towns, and our guides were taking us to the Vietnamese places.

KAMPUCHEA; RE-EDUCATION CAMPS; REFUGEES; AMERASIAN CHILDREN ?

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

--Barry Romo
VVAW National
Office

During our visit we were able to meet with a number of important Vietnamese officials in the Foreign Ministry including Nguyen Dy Nien (Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs), Mr Dang Nghien Bai (Head of the North American Section of the Foreign Ministry), Mr Nu Hac Bong (Director of External Affairs for Ho Chi Minh City) and Mr Dang Nghien Bai of the North American Department of the Foreign Ministry.

Throughout these meetings we asked the questions we believed to be of special interest to Americans. What follows is a composite interview including answers to our questions from all the officials.

Kampuchea: The Vietnamese invasion and occupation of neighboring Kampuchea is often used as a horrible example of what happened after Vietnam defeated the U.S. forces--and then took up aggression against a neighboring state. However, the Vietnamese are in no way ashamed of having driven Pol Pot from power, and compare their action to that of the Al-

lies in invading Germany to overthrow Hitler's Nazi regime. The Vietnamese see no reason to apologize.

At the same time, the Vietnamese are going to leave Kampuchea in 1990--they give this assurance without equivocation. It is not a case of we will get all our forces out if this happens or that happens: they simply say all their forces will be gone in 1990.

There are three reasons for their departure: first, it is hard to explain to Vietnamese families why their sons and daughters are in Kampuchea so long after the defeat of Pol Pot. Second, if they do not leave, Kampuchea will never learn how to stand alone. And finally, the Kampuchians don't want them there any longer.

Refugees: The Vietnamese had no problem with the orderly departure of people who wanted to leave Vietnam for the U.S. It was the U.S. government which will not accept anymore refugees. At this time there were 30,000 Vietnamese awaiting exit to the U.S.--they could

--Edward Damato: Drafted, U.S. Army, May, 1966. In Vietnam, Feb 1967 to Feb 1968. RATT OP, 2nd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, Dong Tam/Mobile Riverine Force, Mekong Delta, RVN. Honorable Discharge, Feb 1968. Enlisted in VVAW, August 1970.

Landing in Hanoi. It's a phrase that would have brought terror to the heart of a B-52 pilot. But for me it was a phrase that brought excitement.

Landing in Hanoi as part of the VVAW delegation came 20 years after I landed in Bien Hoa on a different trip and a different country. As the plane approached the Hanoi airport I could see craters that remained from that war, bombed-out holes in the ground that could only be Vietnam. As the plane taxied to the hangar I saw a woman pedaling her bicycle alongside the runway wearing ao dai and, for a second or two, I felt like I was returning home, the senses fooled by their familiarity in my mind.

It hit me like a ton of bricks that what I was sensing was the Vietnam has been, in one way or another, the focal point of half of my life. Starting as a 20-year old going off to the Far East to wage war in a foreign land, I would find Vietnam claiming a part of me again and again. For the first 2 years after returning to the U.S., Vietnam surrounded me on TV and in the newspapers. Then I heard about a group of Vietnam veterans who would be marching from Morristown, New

--Dennis Kroll
VVAW Madison

After being back in the world for 17 years, my only recollections of the Vietnamese people were the ones that haunted my dreams, the people I had learned to wipe out of my dreams as I had learned to do in combat. After 17 years, my recollections of Vietnam had not changed. Vietnam was a land of misty mountains and steep valleys. I had been a squad leader with the 101st Airborne in 1970, working the highlands of I Corps west of Hue and Phu Bai, skirting the A Shau Valley (when possible) and on either side of the Laotian border. The only cities I had seen then were Cam Rahn Bay where I came in country, and Hue which I saw from the back of a truck.

Waiting to return to Vietnam was both exciting and unsettling. The chance to visit in Vietnam in peace, to experience the people and their culture for the first time was exciting. The uncertainty was in part due to my imagination. Although I knew it would be different from my first trip there, the nights before I left were full of thoughts. One night while staring at the ceiling, I tried to remember the correct sequence for calling in artillery. There were many times I didn't think I could make the trip, but I'm glad I did.

As we made our descent

20 Years Later THE FLIGHT BACK



Ed Damato, Delta '67

Jersey to Valley Forge in Pennsylvania. I joined that march and VVAW; for the next 17 years I would either be demonstrating against the war or speaking of its lessons.

Now, in 1987, I was landing in Hanoi to face up to this country that molded my outlook and politics. As we left the plane and set foot again on Vietnamese soil, I took a deep breath and thought that for the next nine days I would be on an emotional roller-coaster.

It helped to dispel some of my mixed emotions that we were hassled by the bureaucratic customs agents at the airport. Bureaucracy is bureaucracy; filling

out forms in triplicate with no carbon paper was enough of a bringdown that it helped to bridge the gap between seamy Bangkok and exotic Vietnam.

It was a roller-coaster ride filled with soaring heights and stomach-wrenching lows. It would be easy to write pages on my experience, but the editor would grimace, and my boss at work would resent the fact that I'm typing on their time. But there are a few things that stand out in my mind.

I was touched on our visit to Bach Mai Hospital when a doctor practically begged us to send a CAT-SCAN machine so that she and her staff could

better serve the medical needs of the people.

I was momentarily frightened when a slideshow ended with pictures of Siamese twins caused by Agent Orange and pitched us into temporary darkness: I thought this was where we would be machine-gunned to death as American war criminals. On the contrary, our hosts were gracious and understanding.

I was heartened to see children surround us while waiting for a ferry across the Saigon River, laughing and reaching out to say hello and greet these foreign faces. They looked extremely healthy and happy.

I was impressed with the pottery and lacquerware factories and the "new economic zone" farm, and the spirit of the workers and their working conditions.

I was thrilled to crawl through the tunnels of Cu Chi, and afterward, drag Barry onto an old American tank to have our picture taken so we could say we were on a tank together in Vietnam.

Twenty years ago we were foreign invaders. We looked at the Vietnamese as either "gooks" or incompetents. It was a

Turn To Next Page

From the A Shau To Hanoi IT WILL BE DIFFERENT



Dennis Kroll, Ed Damato and Tom Wetzler, Hanoi-1987.

into Hanoi International Airport, the details of the land below became clearer. Hamlets populated meandering rivers, rice paddies stretched for miles, and bomb craters still scarred the lush green surface below. My mouth was dry, my heart was pounding and the now-familiar mantra echoed--IT WILL BE DIFFERENT.

As we hit the runway I expected to see a stronger military presence. Instead, as we touched down, a young boy rode his bicycle up a dirt path and onto and down the runway. We

saw several planes along the strip as we taxied to a stop. The boy on his bicycle went by and onto another path leading to a road.

It's about a 45-minute drive from the airport into Hanoi. Along the way we saw a lot of rebuilding going on. There was a pallet of bricks near most houses. Along the roads were new trees, donated by the Australians according to Mr Quang, our guide who had met us at the airport. The bridge that spanned the Red River was a joint Swedish/Viet-

namese project.

Hanoi was a pleasant surprise for me. I say that because we had spent a couple of days in Bangkok getting visas before going to Hanoi. In Bangkok the streets were dirty, canals were open sewers, and I saw children digging through piles of garbage looking for food. My first thought was: "This is it--this is what it's going to be like in 'Nam, just the same as I saw it 17 years ago from the back of a truck."

Hanoi is a beautiful city. The parks, ponds, rivers and lakes reminded me of Madison, Wisconsin where I live. Flowering trees lined the streets. Ancient trollies carried their passengers. French and Vietnamese architecture intertwined.

We stayed at the government guest house in Hanoi. This was not an attempt to keep us from exploring: we were free to come and go and, when our day's itinerary was done, we did. We spent many nights walking in the streets of Hanoi and never had reason to feel threatened or uneasy--remarkable when we remembered what

TURN TO NEXT PAGE

FACING REALITY POW-MIA'S



Children held by Saigon government for "political crimes", 1967

--Barry Romo
VVAW National
Office

The MIA/POW question is an emotional one for many Americans. Families who have a loved one missing long to have the issue resolved with the return of at least the body. Some widows, orphans and parents hope beyond hope that somehow their loved one did not die and will return.

Others are tied not so much emotionally as financially to the issue. To a few the MIA issue is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. They collect money, make wild claims, insinuate unverifiable journeys into the jungles, go on TV with stern faces and somber accusations. When it comes down to results, these Rambo's come up short--even shorter than Stallone. But, by playing on the genuine fears, misery and hopes of the families, they can turn a buck claiming that POW's are still being held (if not in Vietnam, then certainly in Laos).

The rightwing has found a political pot of gold (although

they are not above making a couple of bucks on the issue either). By reciting racial stereotypes about "inscrutable orientals with no respect for human life" these toads can gain a few followers. By fostering lies about live POW's they can sabotage normal relations with Vietnam.

The Reagan Administration uses the issue to continue an embargo on trade (among other things) thereby stopping the flow of commerce but also stopping medical supplies desperately needed to help the numbers of Vietnamese babies and children affected by Agent Orange.

Reagan and Co also use the MIA/POW issue to continue to vote to keep the Pol Pot regime in the UN representing Kampuchea, and to continue to give aid to the murderous butcher responsible for the deaths of fully 1/3 of his own people.

The Vietnamese flatly stated that there are no live Americans left in Vietnam. We asked about Robert Garwood, the convicted Marine turncoat, and were told that he had been the last--and they wish he had left sooner than he did.

Politically, it is beyond reason to think that if, in fact, the Reagan Administration had any proof whatever about American servicemen still being held in Indochina, that he would not go on TV to tell all. Think of it: the "Great Communicator" on TV looking into the camera showing us proof of POW's in Indochina. Irangate would fade. North could lead the charge and the nation would unite behind our president! The presidency is saved!! But there is no such proof to save Reagan or his cohorts, so we're in the Persian Gulf instead of the Gulf of Tonkin.

The question of MIA's and the bodies of the dead is a different matter. Certainly, the Vietnamese understand as well as anyone the natural desire of families to be able to bury their dead. But the issue is a whole lot more difficult than simply turning over bodies of American

servicemen who were killed in Vietnam (mostly in North Vietnam).

Physically, locating the remains of bodies crashed in the jungle 12, 15 or 20 years ago is an awesome task. *National Geographic* did a story on a dig in Laos and compared it to a major archeological search costing some \$30,000. And this is in a country where the average yearly wage is \$600. Quite simply the jungle consumes bodies, whether animal or human.

We asked the Vietnamese about the search for remains; it is not an easy job, we were told. Many of the areas where remains might be found are remote, these are the areas which were most heavily bombed during the war, and therefore the local populace is not disposed to look for American bodies. Government officials stated that they wished they could turn over the bodies both for simple humanitarian reasons and to remove that stumbling block to normal diplomatic relations. But they found it extremely difficult to explain to their own people why they should devote time and money to searching for the 1200 American remains when there were over 100,000 Vietnamese MIAs--what was their government doing to find their own sons and daughters?

How personally the issue affected many Vietnamese was made clear to us by our friend and guide, Mr Nguyen Hong Quang, who told us (after we had heard about the problems from government officials) that his own brother had been missing since the 1968 Tet offensive where he had been a sapper in Saigon and disappeared in combat. He also told us of leading a delegation from the Australian government to look for the remains of Australian MIA's. The province chief would not look for--or have people take time to look for--old bones.

The chief's reluctance was made clear when he told of being a guerrilla fighter during the war; his wife served as a courier. She was captured, executed and left in the road by the same Australian unit for whose remains they were now searching. The Australians set up an ambush to kill those who came for the body, but no one came because the Vietnamese knew of the ambush. After a week the Australians left. But by then the body of the chief's wife had been eaten by dogs and other animals.

Mr Quang said he had to argue about the importance of Australia to Vietnam, and to ask the chief to put the war behind him. The province chief did and even personally welcomed the

Australians, but the story points out that central government directions are not always followed locally. An old Vietnamese saying says, "The Emperor's authority stops at the village gate."

And on this issue at least it is not difficult to understand. How many confederate soldiers would have gone looking for Yankee bones 15 years after the Civil War? Or Jews for the bodies of Germans after World War II? Or, for that matter, how many Americans would look for the bodies of Vietnamese missing today?

The government of Vietnam is looking. But the real answer lies in normalization of relations. That is the first real step. Second, people have to realize, as difficult as it may be, that in war, guns, grenades, bombs, napalm, white phosphorous, and jet fuel shred, rip and destroy bodies. Many of those who are missing will never be found or accounted for. That is a fact of life--a fact of war.

CONTINUED

KROLL

we had been doing the last time we were in Vietnam. Few U.S. cities of Hanoi's size have streets where a traveller could feel or be as safe, a fact that Vietnamese had a hard time understanding.

Hanoi's serenity is not a product of a strong police or military presence. We were there for both the anniversary of the liberation of Saigon and May Day. Rather than a strong military show, we saw a Vietnamese rock band entertaining spectators from the steps of the National Bank on both nights. The few uniformed soldiers we saw seemed to be just home on leave, enjoying the show along with everyone else.

The people we met at various meetings or on the street were genuinely sincere in their warmth and respect for us and our organization. At times I felt like we were folk heroes to them: it seemed everyone had heard about the soldiers who fought the war and then went home and fought for peace. In the War Museum in Hanoi there is a glass case that contains two old VVAW buttons. I wouldn't be surprised if the next group of veterans to visit the museum will find a VVAW T-shirt proudly displayed.

The trade embargo against Vietnam has impeded their progress of rebuilding after so many years of conflict. Spare parts for machinery are a constant problem. Lack of medicine adds unnecessary suffering to the lives of the sick. The Vietnamese, however, continue to use the same determination, resourcefulness and pride to overcome these problems that they did years ago to drive out occupying forces.

For the immature foreign policy of the United States toward Vietnam, there is no pride or honor.

JOGGING MORNING EXERCISE

--Edward Damato

Someone once told me that if you want to get a different perspective on a foreign country, try jogging in the morning. In Vietnam, the advice was certainly true.

In Hanoi, at 5AM the streets were filled with people exercising. Many were running, but there were also children and teenagers playing soccer, adults playing badminton, and elderly people doing organized calisthenics.

When I remarked to our guide and translator that I was surprised to see so many people out so early in the morning, he explained that this was "morning exercise" and was very prevalent in the country.

I began morning exercise on the second day in Hanoi. At 5AM I put on my Bill Rogers jogging shorts, my 3rd Avenue Brooklyn Run For Fun T-shirt and my Nike Air shoes, and joined the others on the streets of Hanoi. Soon I noticed that my dress was as much an oddity as was my foreign face. The other joggers were either barefoot or in canvas shoes, shirtless (I saw no women joggers) and in bargain-store shorts.

But, like joggers everywhere they waved or smiled at me. Some said "Hello" in English, and several children ran alongside and spoke English phrases: "What's your name?" "How are you?" and "Where are you from?"

I did two laps around the central lake in Hanoi each morning. The weather, even at 5AM was very hot and humid. Running was difficult, but as I slowly circled the lake I got a chance to see the trolleys start

their runs, people bicycling to work, cooking on the streets, workers sweeping sidewalks, and everywhere, people exercising.

There was a group of about 50-60 elderly people out every morning doing organized exercise consisting of running in place, stretching, rubbing their arms and legs and close-order drill. Once, the seniors were in ranks facing the lake and I walked behind them so as not to stand out like a sore thumb, when their "sergeant" gave the order "About Face." As they turned around, I came into their view which gave them a good laugh while they nodded their greetings.

After running that first morning I walked back to our hotel and was offered a badminton racket by a young man. Each morning after that I played with a young woman for about five minutes: she beat me every time.

Once I talked to a jogger who worked in the trade unions who told me that exercise is encouraged and people do it because it is a good way to start the day. I have to agree with this.

Ho Chi Minh City was another story.

Every morning I would get up at 5AM and jog in Ho Chi Minh City. Mostly I ran alone, seeing only four or five joggers each day. When I mentioned this to our guide, she said I should run along the Saigon River where more people exercise. I did, but while there were more exercisers, not many were jogging. There was, however, a large group of elderly people exercising like their counterparts in Hanoi.

This stark difference between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh



City made me realize how different are the recent histories of the two cities. Ho Chi Minh City still shows the influence of the American presence: it is more of a night city and each night the streets were clogged with bicycles. We passed a youth club where we heard the sounds of a late '60's rock band with many, many young people milling about in the street enjoying the music. Hanoi seemed more provincial--more my speed.

But while morning exercise hasn't caught on in Ho Chi Minh City, jogging gave me a good tourist's view of the city and the cooler, less humid temperatures made it more comfortable to run in.

I jogged by the old Presidential Palace (now Reunification Hall) and its gardens, the old U.S. Embassy with its fortified bunkers (now housing an oil company) and most interestingly, the huge Catholic Cathedral.

On my last morning I

couldn't resist the temptation to go into the church to see the 5AM mass that was in progress. While I was not properly dressed and dripping with sweat I had to see about religion in Vietnam. I sat in the back of the church and listened to the mass and songs in Vietnamese and watched about 40 people take Holy Communion. I noticed that the centerpiece of the altar had a statue of the Virgin Mary and a neon light that read "Ave Maria."

My memories of Vietnam are vivid and my private jogging experiences remain special to me. So next time you're in a foreign country take my advice: get out there and do morning exercise.



CONTINUED FROM 7

VVAW

It was difficult to realize, as we toured through the countryside in our foreign ministry van, that the lives of everyone we saw over the age of 15 must have been affected--probably badly--by Americans. We had no way to judge what scars were there. We could see that the physical remains of the American military were nearly gone. Around areas where there had been major American bases--Dian or Tan Sa Thut/Long Bien--we could make out occasional bunker emplacements. Some of the areas in Ho Chi Minh City still had barbed wire over every wall. Conexes would appear in the countryside in odd places. We saw a few old American military vehicles being used. But the greatest reminder of the American presence is the territory still bare because of Agent Orange. There are still bomb craters (though

the craters we saw as we flew into Hanoi were in fact, we were told later, being used to raise fish by local farmers); mostly, however, U.S. presence is only a bad memory.

Of the Vietnamese military we saw little. There were a couple of guards, after dark, at the foreign ministry guest house where we stayed in Hanoi. They never prevented us from leaving if we wanted to, so presumably they were there to keep people out. We saw occasional police directing traffic. Other than that, we saw no police or military presence.

The emotional trip involved in our ten days in Vietnam was longer than the physical trip, and that was long enough. The flavor of what our return meant is captured in other articles in this section of THE VETERAN, but I suspect that other vets should consider a similar travel. The Vietnamese welcomed us and asked us to arrange more such

trips. There is a sense of completion: somehow, my tour of duty in Vietnam is now over. When I left after my year, I left behind friends who were still fighting the war. I left behind a sense of incompleteness, as if the final pages of the book I was reading had been torn out and I never knew the ending. The return to Vietnam was, for me, very much the end of my tour. Now I have seen what I did and what my government did to Vietnam. More important I have seen that the Vietnamese have gone beyond all that and are able to welcome me back as a friend. I learn from them what it means to distinguish between the war and the warrior, between those who carried out the policies of the U.S. government and those who made these policies.

We came away from Vietnam with even greater respect for the Vietnamese people. Each of us was ready to do

what we could toward normalization of relations between the U.S. and Vietnam: the U.S. policy is ridiculous. In previous wars the U.S. has re-established relations quickly (of course the U.S. won those wars). And a policy which will not even allow a Vietnamese to travel in the U.S. because our government refuses to grant a visa makes no sense: picture the government of the U.S. cowering in fear at the prospect of a couple of Vietnamese travelling through the U.S. Both Vietnam and the people of the U.S. would benefit greatly from normal relations. Under the present policy, everyone loses.

You may remember--as I do--thinking, when I was in Vietnam the first, what a beautiful country was Vietnam, and how nice it might be to come back some day when there was no war. For me that day had now come--I hope you get the chance and take it.

Remember the Beauty of The Children 'THE FUTURE'



--Pete Zastrow
National Office

If you were in Vietnam it would be hard to forget the children: even during my year in Vietnam (the first time), when all of us thought we had reason to suspect almost any child we saw, we remember the beauty of Vietnamese children. None of that has changed.

The VVAW delegation seemed to attract children wherever we went. As we walked the streets of Hanoi we would often be accompanied by children; they would ask us if we were Russians (they don't see all that many Americans in Hanoi). When we said no, we were Americans, they would take our hands and walk with us through the stores or along the streets. Or they would try out their English--"Hello, how are you?"

In Hanoi in the early morning we could watch the children congregate. At 5 AM the youngest children would gather in the park across from where we were staying, creating a makeshift soccer field with a couple of concrete benches as goals. Kids--4-5-6 years old--would begin kicking around the soccer ball; usually, two kids with bandages or limping would sit on the benches to act as goalies. As best I could see from across the street, no one much cared who won; running and kicking were enough. As the morning moved along, older children and then adults started using the same space; the small

kids vanished, no doubt heading home to get ready for school.

In Chicago, we're afraid to let our kids lose to play by themselves--there would have to be at least a couple of adults around to keep them from being stolen, molested or murdered. In Hanoi, where they love their kids as much as we do, there is no problem with letting them run free.

At the home of Ho Chi Minh long lines of school children filed through the Mausoleum and then around the lake and through the house where Ho Chi Minh had lived. They mostly wore the red scarves of the Young Pioneers; the children were slender (I don't think we ever saw an overweight child--or many adults, for that matter) and looked both healthy and happy. Although they seemed suitably awed walking through the home of the founder and leader of their country, they were also quite ready to pass around appropriate giggles for the strange-looking American tourists.

Much later, as we were waiting to board the car ferry for the commune outside of Ho Chi Minh City, we were sitting in our van until the ferry got to our side of the river. Off the beaten track, we were indeed a curiosity here, a place where a few food stands and a couple of houses marked one end of the ferry route. But there were plenty of kids: our van was surrounded, young faces peering in the windows to look at our cameras, watches, pictures, anything we could find to show them. One boy wore a "Mork From Ork" T-shirt but with the added decoration of a Lenin button. All the children were infatuated with the pony tail belonging to one member of our delegation, and, when he wasn't looking, would make scissor motions with their fingers for the rest of us to

see. Once again we seemed to be seeing happy and curious children, delighted to have something new to talk about for the day. They gladly escorted us on to the ferry.

In the museums as we were escorted from display to display, often a couple of children would come along. Our guides, conscious of their duties to let us see everything, would shew the kids away, but in a couple of minutes they would be back. Through the length of the historical museum, our guide was accompanied by her young child often to her embarrassment, but for those of us who are familiar with what childcare means in this country, having the child at work seemed a perfect solution.

We saw the official solution to childcare problems on our last day in Ho Chi Minh City. It was going to be difficult to arrange a tour of the Children's Hospital so we asked to have the chance to see a daycare center instead.

Daycare is state operated; in Ho Chi Minh City it is supervised by the Committee for the Protection of Women and Children. The head of the local committee showed us through the school/daycare facility. It was friendly. Of course the kids were friendly, happy like kids anywhere to have someone for whom to perform (we were treated to several songs) or a reason to break routine. Kids were playing with many of the same toys American children play with; the school bags hanging in the hallway could have been the same bags hanging in school all over the U.S. Caring adults helped wherever they could.

There were some profound differences from the U.S. Childcare could begin as early as 3 months, although the laws had recently been changed so that women automatically were given 6 months leave after a

birth. (In the U.S. finding childcare for children under 6 months is almost impossible.)

Nutrition is watched with great care; daily menus are posted with all the various food and vitamin values of each. We saw several children being brought back from malnutrition, children who had lived in the countryside where food is sometimes less plentiful than in the city. But even these children were clearly on their way back. Proper nutrition and tender loving care help.

All over Ho Chi Minh City are networks of these childcare centers and, while most families do not use them, preferring to leave their children with relatives, the centers are available and inviting. No woman who wanted to work outside the home would feel she could not because there was not adequate childcare; the childcare was there, available and, from all we could see, dedicated to the welfare of the children.

During this visit, as with most of our tours, we were shown the best; 2, 2 1/2 year-old children were drawing (probably with some help from the teacher). Children sat contentedly around tables sharing toys, though my own experience with children of that age made the "sharing" seem a little suspicious. Naturally enough they wanted us to see the best--and we did. *But if we saw children well scrubbed and on their best behavior, I believe that other childcare centers are equally inviting and the children equally well loved.*

In one of the ironies which recurred during our trip, we discovered that our guide had a history at which we could only marvel. The head of the Protective Society accompanied us throughout the tour of the childcare center; through the translator, she sounded much like everyone's picture of the administrator from the local board of education--filled with facts, dryly giving us far more information than we could use. As we were ready to leave we learned she had spent years and years at the infamous Cong Son Island, the worst of the prison camps run by the worst of the South Vietnamese abetted by the worst of the Americans. There was something appropriate that a woman with the strength to endure that was now devoting her strength to the children.

Not knowing what may come, it is still true that these children are the future of their country. They seem to have a good start. And from all we saw, their future--and their country's future--looks bright. As we expressed several times during our travels, we can only hope--and work to accomplish--that these children and our children will meet someday on the playfield instead of the battlefield. May their children and our children someday play together in peace.

THE VETERAN
Published by the
VVAW - National Office
P.O. Box 408594
Chicago, IL 60640
(312) 327-5756



Vietnam/My Society: we visited the Vietnam/My (Vietnam/American) Friendship Society while in Hanoi both to exchange views and to present a gift from VVAW.

We discussed ways to build friendship between our two peoples as well as ways to overcome the legacy of the war.

A painting by VVAW member Robert Spicher (of Chicago) was presented on behalf of VVAW. The Vietnamese were very impressed by the painting which combined the famous scene of a marine throwing away his medals at Dewey Canyon III and the photo of Vietnamese civilians just prior to their massacre at My Lai.

A Human Tragedy **AGENT ORANGE**

Dennis Kroll, Madison VVAW

There were many times prior to leaving for Vietnam that I was worried as an American we would be badly received by the Vietnamese for the policies of the U.S. during the war. Time after time the Vietnamese people we met, young and old, made that fear dissipate.

However, the day we were to meet with the Chemical Warfare Committee in Hanoi the fear returned. Having worked closely with Vietnam veterans and their families for nine years, and seeing the frustrations, sorrow and anger of exposure to Agent Orange and the effects it had on children, I could only imagine what the Vietnamese had endured through the years and how those working closely with the problem might feel towards us.

We were warmly received by Dr Hoang Dinh Cau, Vice-Minister of the Faculty of Medicine of Hanoi and his colleagues. "First, I would like to thank you, your organization, as well as the other American people, for your struggle for peace in the war in Vietnam. I thought the past war was a very dark place in history between our two people. It is our wish and your wish that we let bygones be bygones. We shall look to the future and join you in your actions in stopping chemical warfare."

In an informative presentation we were given details of the study the Vietnamese started in 1969.

The effects of defoliation on the environment is still evident. In some areas only viru-

lent grass will grow. In other areas only pine trees take root. Initial replanting of forests failed in many areas; forests have now been replanted two or three times, but many areas still suffer from stunted growths and are still not suitable for commercial or agricultural production. Tens of thousands of hectares of damaged tidal mangroves are still wasteland. Equipment shortages hamper the recovery progress. Sampan and motorized canoe are the only forms of transportation into the mangrove forests and canals. It takes days to reach them and then most of the work is done manually.

Dr Arthur Westing, an authority on chemical warfare in Vietnam, predicts that it will take at least fifty years for some of the mangrove forests to recover.

Far worse is the human tragedy. Much research was done comparing samples with the Vietnamese who lived in the North and those living in similar geographical areas of the South. Of nine samples of body fat taken in the North, all were negative. Of 26 samples taken in the South, 23 contained high quantities of TCDD, one of the proven toxic components of Agent Orange. Samples were tested in Finland, Canada and the U.S.

The infant mortality rate is 6.44 times higher in the South than in the North. In mother's milk, six samples showed 3.8 ppt dioxin, 27,866 times the amount deemed acceptable by the U.S. Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, GA. The cancer rate is four times higher in the South

than in the North. In Ho Chi Minh City, we met Steve Minken, author, international health consultant, and former chief of the UNICEF nutrition program in Bangladesh. He had visited Tu Du Hospital in Ho Chi Minh City where, he said, "I saw a room full of women, some two in a bed, all diagnosed with Hydatidiform Mole Chorio Carcinoma; according to Dr Nguyen Thi Ngoc Phuong there are continuous intakes of this type of cancer (627) cases and they are probably only a fraction of the cases in the country. One such case, several years ago in Bangladesh, rated articles in medical journals because of its extreme rarity.

The most painful aspect of the presentation involved Vietnamese children. Over 30 Siamese twins have been born in the South. Only a few slides of other monstrous deformities born to the Vietnamese were needed and no words needed to be spoken to explain the legacy of U.S. chemical warfare in Vietnam. Children born years after the last bombs fell and years after the last plane sprayed its deadly poison still suffer the effects of the war. Because of the embargo that the U.S. government has placed against shipments of medical supplies to Vietnam, there is pitiful little medicine to ease the sufferings of these children.

As a nation we must move towards normalization of relations between our government and the government of Vietnam. A joint scientific and medical program to deal with the tragedy of Agent Orange would be a humane place to start.

IN THE TUNNELS

--Edward Damato
VVAW New York

Cu Chi is a district 30 kilometers northwest of Ho Chi Minh City on Highway #1. Its towns and villages, today 12 years after the war ended are peaceful. Its rural farmlands are green with produce. Highway #1 is lined with thousands of newly planted eucalyptus trees. Villagers go about their business of bicycle and foot, and people loll about in the squares.

It is hard to believe that Cu Chi is the area of Vietnam that was the most bombed and defoliated area in the war. For each person in the district 1.5 million pounds of bombs were dropped--3 kilograms of bombs per square meter. Of 16,000 Vietnamese in battle, 10,000 were killed. One of three families had a wartime death.

Cu Chi, then, was more than just another district. It was also home to one of the most extraordinary systems of tunnels ever built. These tunnels were used by the People's Liberation Army and village defense forces as a military complex and a refuge from the American military.

Originally the tunnels were built during the war with the French in the late '40's and early '50's, and grew to huge lengths during the '60's and '70's during the war with the U.S. In Cu Chi district the tunnels were 350 kilometers long with the deepest sections over 7 meters. They virtually served as underground base camps. Interlocking tunnels connected storage caches of weapons and explosives, food, water wells, first aid stations, air raid shelters, sleeping chambers and escape and evasion entrances and exits.

Even kitchens were situated underground using "hoang cam" stoves with small tunnels for the smoke to be dispersed without detection from above.

At some points the tunnel networks went directly below



CU CHI SYSTEM

the base camp of the U.S. 25th Infantry Division (what the U.S. forces called Cu Chi). There were also Vietnamese base camps situated near the French-owned Michelin rubber plantations which operated during the war and went untouched by American bombing.

The tunnels were constant targets of American forces. Many tunnel rats gave their lives and limbs trying to destroy the tunnels. Even dogs were used to ferret out the trap doors. While B-52's did some damage, nothing proved to break the tunnel system which General William Westmoreland later admitted was undestroyable. Even though the tunnels were used against American GI's, many had a great admiration for the skills of the tunnel builders.

Our guide at Cu Chi recounted tales of heroism by Vietnamese including a story about one mother, Nguyen Thi Ranh, who had 10 members of her family killed by U.S. forces. She also bragged to us about leaders of Vietnam who lived in the district: Nguyen Van Linh, Mai Chi Tho and Vo Van Kiet. Her pride in Cu Chi and the tunnels was evident.

But nothing could have been more graphic to us than having the chance actually to crawl through 50 meters of tunnel to appreciate the engineering skills of the builders of the tunnels of Cu Chi.

First our guide went through a tiny entrance hole in the ground, followed by myself, Tom, Dennis and Barry. We dropped several feet and crawled through a small tunnel and around a bend. All light disappeared and a deafening silence took hold of us as we proceeded in total darkness.

Our guide snapped on a flashlight so we could see. As the tunnel twisted and turned, and we climbed up and lowered ourselves through it, we passed the light back and forth so the rear could catch up. At times there was blackness; at times the light caught thousands of crawling insects who shared the tunnel with us.

As we crawled I realized the heat was unbearable. My shirt was drenched in sweat, in part because of fear and exhilaration, but also because of the effort to drag this 40-year-old body through this museum of war.

The tunnel seemed interminable. Talking was replaced by silence as we worked our way forward, inch by inch. When I thought my lungs would burst, the guide rounded a turn and I saw the end was near.

In an explosion of happiness I couldn't help but stop and turn back to yell at my fellow "tunnel rats," "Hey guys, I see the light at the end of the tunnel."



The War Museum in Hanoi is composed of a number of buildings, courtyards and displays. We were guided through the Museum by Major Dang Hong Thieu.

Separate rooms were devoted to different periods of Vietnam's revolution and wars, fighting the French, the Japanese, the Americans and the Chinese. Most of us saw the maps, photos and different pieces of equipment from areas where we had fought often captured from units of which we had been a part.

In the courtyards were captured American guns and tanks as well as Vietnamese military equipment.

Of special interest was a section dedicated to foreigners who fought for peace. Included prominently were VVAW buttons and photos.

Here and in the historical museum one could see that the 2000 year history of Vietnam has been a constant struggle to throw out invaders in battle after battle. Among the results have been remarkable sacrifices and incredible casualties.



While staying in Ho Chi Minh City we went to the Nationalities Fair. A permanent government program, the cultural event moves from city to city extolling the diversity of the different ethnic cultures and their different contributions to Vietnam. It resembles a state or county fair in its mood, with games and rides as well as booths and displays. We first visited a cultural display which explored musical instruments and sounds of the 54 minorities which make up the people of Vietnam. From there we went to a large display on the Chinese minority including photos of Chinese heroes and contributions to modern Vietnam.

Replica houses, water chimes almost a block long, local dance groups and more displays covered the grounds. We met a former captain with the National Liberation Front who was anxious to discuss events with us, exchange war stories and share tea and food.

When he discovered we were looking for posters and banners to bring home to the U.S. with us, but that we were having no luck finding them, he set up an appointment to meet us at his office the following day. This was our final meeting of the trip and one of the most memorable.

We were ushered into a room filled with museum pieces at the Cultural and Information Office of Ho Chi Minh City. Seated formally, we met Mr Nguyen Van Tong, Director of the Office and former political commander of the 9th NLF Division; Dang Dac Chung, Chief of Bureau and ex-NLF Captain; and from yesterday, Mr Pham Son Lan who had been underground in Saigon from 1969 to '73 in intelligence, escaping the Phoenix program and death.

We were given coconut milk still in the nuts. Mr Nguyen had been underground for 18 years, rising to divisional command of one of the toughest NLF units in southern Vietnam. He presented us with cultural posters as gifts, and a huge banner commemorating the 12th anniversary of the liberation of South Vietnam with the paint still wet to take back with us. They had clearly stayed up the night before making these items as gifts for us to take home.

Mr Nguyen's parting statement was poignant: "We used to wear different uniforms and fight and kill each other in the war. Now we don't wear uniforms, we are just veterans of that same war. But we do have tasks as veterans to insure an end to the arms race and nuclear holocaust, to insure that 'another Vietnam' does not occur in Central America, and finally to oppose apartheid in South Africa."

Where We Came From,
Who Are We, Who Can Join
**VIETNAM VETERANS
AGAINST THE WAR**

VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR began in 1967 when veterans of the Vietnam war took up the cause of ending that war. Since then VVAW has continued to fight against unjust wars and military adventures, and for the rights and needs of veterans. Today VVAW stands firmly for peace and for social justice at home and around the world.

As the oldest organization based primarily among Vietnam vets, VVAW confronted the problems of post-traumatic stress among veterans early in our history; we took up the cause of testing, treatment and compensation for victims of Agent Orange poisoning, and still are fighting that battle which has grown to include use of dioxins around the country. We continue to believe in the rights of veterans of all eras to be treated with respect and dignity, especially by the government and Veterans Administration.

Although based on Vietnam veterans, membership in VVAW has expanded to include veterans and friends of veterans from all eras, all of whom bring their own ideas and perspectives to the organization. As the time of the Vietnam war recedes into history, VVAW members try to keep alive the lessons from that war. We share with others the hope that our children--and any of America's young--will never again have to fight a war such as the one we fought, and that the lives of our friends who died in Vietnam will serve to make another such venture more difficult. To that cause VVAW stands dedicated.

VVAW IS A NATIONAL VETERANS ORGANIZATION; DONATIONS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.

National Coordinators

Barry Romo
(312)327-5756

Peter Zastrow
(312)761-8248

Bill Davis
(312)386-1413

John Lindquist
(414)963-0398

SUSTAINERS

I would like to become a part of the monthly sustainer program and will contribute \$_____ per month. A subscription to THE VETERAN is included.

CONTRIBUTIONS

I would like to contribute \$_____ to building VVAW and THE VETERAN.

Make checks payable to VVAW
P.O. Box 408594
Chicago, IL, 60640



Membership Form
Fighting for Veterans, Peace, & Justice since 1967

National Office
P.O. Box 408594
Chicago, IL 60640

DATE _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Dates of Service _____ Branch _____ Unit _____

Overseas Duty _____ Date _____

Military Occupation _____ Rank _____

VVAW welcomes all people who want to join to build a veterans' organization to fight for peace and justice. Although most of our members are vets of the Vietnam-era, we want all veterans of all ages--as well as interested non-vets--to join to help prevent more Vietnams. Memberships requirements are participation in the life of the organization, and payment of \$1 per month to the national organization with a \$5 initiation fee.

VVAW is a democratic organization. Chapters decide on local programs and projects under the general guidelines of the national program. Chapters elect local leadership and representatives to annual national meetings where major organizational decisions are made and national coordinators elected. These coordinators are responsible for day-to-day organizational leadership and publishing of THE VETERAN.

Signature _____

(Make checks payable to VVAW; all contributions are tax deductible)

**T-SHIRTS
BUTTONS
CAPS**



All have the VVAW insignia in three colors:

T-shirts: \$7.50 (specify size-S, M, L, XL)

Buttons: \$1.00

Hats: Baseball style--\$7.50

BUMPER STICKERS

\$1.00 each (Plus Postage)

I'm a Vietnam Veteran



"I'm a Vietnam Veteran"
or
"Vietnam Service Medal"

4" x 14", Long Lasting Vinyl

Order from:
VVAW: Milwaukee Chapter
3433 N. Fratney St.
Milwaukee, WI 53212



VVAW and THE VETERAN are copyright; the insignia is a registered trademark of VVAW, Inc. All rights reserved.

SUBSCRIBE!

12 Issues \$6
Institutions \$15

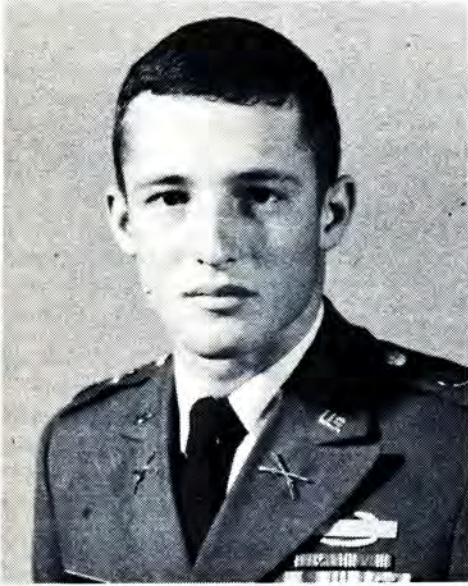
Make checks payable to
VVAW

P.O. Box 408594 Chicago, IL 60640

(312) 327-5756

Fighting since 1967 and still going strong.

THIRD TOUR OF DUTY



Barry Romo, Company
Commander, '68.



Hanoi, Christmas '72.

--Barry Romo
VVAW National
Office

This was my third "visit" to Vietnam. In 1967-68 I served in the 196th Light Infantry Brigade (soon to become the Americal Division). As an infantry platoon leader and then battalion S-2, my "tour" was cut short when my nephew was killed in the post Tet Offensive in 1968 and I escorted his body home. Bob was one month younger than I, was killed along

the DMZ and returned home in a closed casket. I was walking down a hill on patrol, was picked up by a Hwey and was in San Francisco that evening (given time changes). It was a mind-boggling chain of events, from killing and death, C-rations and leeches, to beds and booze and hamburgers and TV in just 24 hours all on a ticket paid for by my nephew.

In December, 1972, I returned not to South Vietnam but North Vietnam on a peace delegation that included Joan



Dennis Kroll, Peter Zastro, Barry Romo, Nu Hac Bong--Minister of External Affairs, Ho Chi Min City, Tom Wetzler, Madame Hao, Representative of External Affairs, Nguyen Hong Quang, our guide/friend/interpreter, and Ed Damato.

Baez. We flew into Hanoi with Christmas presents for the POW's. Nixon and company had other things in mind than peace on earth: he broke the bombing halt with a surprise attack on Hanoi and all of North Vietnam, dropping more tonnage in 10 days than had been dropped on Japan in the second World War.

Death and destruction were daily occurrences along with the heroism and friendship of our hosts. Bac Mai Hospital, the largest in Indochina, was bombed on three different occasions and destroyed. Houses and apartment buildings and schools were pounded out of existence.

On our way into Hanoi we had stopped at a small hamlet outside of a bombed-out railroad yard. Telford Taylor, a former general and chief prosecutor at the Nuremburg trials, had pointed it out as proof of pinpoint bombing. The children of the daycare center came out to play and sing for us. Telford continued, "Bombing destroyed the yard totally, yet did not hit this civilian area--no war crimes here."

On the way out of Hanoi we passed that railyard--the one that was already destroyed. This time the hamlet was destroyed and all those babies dead.

The trip this time would be in peace time. I had been lucky--I had fought in the South as a grunt, had survived under American B-52 bombing in the North; I was the only person to have both experiences and now was returning.

This trip would be no easier than the last, only different. The shadows and memories: the ghosts are still present after 20 years.

In walking the streets I found myself not looking up a lot, uneasy to look the Vietnamese in the face as if doing so would somehow be disrespectful. As a westerner there was more than a twinge of guilt for what we had done there.

I also found myself smiling (almost giddy) at intervals, just being in-country. I found emotions I thought gone (blocked out). It was a joy akin to the feeling of coming home.

We were treated extremely well. We stayed in the government's foreign ministry house. We enjoyed excellent meals, had cars and an interpreter, access to government offices and knowledgeable people. We walked the streets of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City alone, unattended, not followed, not attacked and not afraid.

Vietnam was clean compared to most third world countries--hell, compared to New York City--and decidedly Vietnamese in appearance. The all-encompassing U.S. presence is but a memory now, and thou-

sands of bicycles jam roads instead of cars and trucks with only one working street light in our whole trip.

Visiting Bac Mai was almost too much. In 1972 when I visited, the hospital was in ruins, people were going over the area with cranes and hands to recover people buried in the rubble. The head of the hospital, in a semi-state of shock, had said how proud he and his staff were that no patients had died, only staff. But bombs were still going off. Now we saw the hospital rebuilt but, at the end of our hospital tour, we stopped to take pictures of a monument built to those who had died in the bombing; I found that the list now included an 8-year-old child.

I found myself numb again, that old defense mechanism--don't feel because you might feel too much. Don't look inside yourself because you might not like what you see. Don't enjoy yourself too much because you don't deserve to--guilt!

The Vietnamese don't really lend themselves to these feelings. They are just too damn friendly, courteous and respectful. The guilt was there because of what American had done, what we as former GI's had been part of, not because of what the Vietnamese said or did. In fact they seemed to go out of their way to spare our feelings.

In 1972 when I was having a particularly hard time remembering, Mr Quat, our host, had a discussion with me. He said that guilt was destructive, that as an emotion it had no place to go. It could not be built upon. He touched my heart when he said that guilt and hate would get me nowhere, that I had been used in the war, used by my own government and society, that then I had no choice. Now I did and I had made the correct one. Now I opposed the war, opposed the killing, opposed the destruction of the land and the countryside: that emotion--love--could be built upon. In closing, he said, you've seen the war from both sides, suffered with the Vietnamese people; later, during peace, I could share in their joy like no other.

No wonder journalists, politicians and military officers have such a hard time accepting defeat from so gentle a people, people who could talk of love while bombs were dropping, and mean it.

In a certain sense a curtain has closed on one period of our lives. I believe every vet should visit Vietnam again. To see the country at peace, to face those memories and to say goodbye to the nightmares: the country is open for visits, so go already.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Report

leave Vietnam, but could not get into the U.S.

Amerasian Children: About half the Amerasian children in Vietnam had expressed a wish to go to the U.S. Some 50% of these are cleared to leave. But the U.S. sets immigration standards. These "children" must answer a hundred questions to qualify--although "children" is no longer appropriate since all of these young people are teenagers or young adults by now.

We asked if Vietnam considered the Amerasians to be citizens--was there discrimination?

Amerasians are citizens, we were told, and there is no official or governmental discrimination; they have access to education and jobs. But that does not mean the ordinary Vietnamese does not discriminate. The young people--the Amerasians--often want to live in the land of their fathers, a land rich compared to Vietnam, a land where they believe they will be given everything they want or need, including cars, jobs, etc. None of this was surprising; many in third-world countries picture the U.S. as having streets paved with gold. And of course we hardly have to look all the way to Vietnam to see discrimination against minorities--there's plenty of discrimination right here against those considered "foreign."

In Vietnam there is a special problem with children of mixed blood: there is the stigma of having gone out with GI's much less bearing their children (and that is true of all of Asia, not just Vietnam). And the situation is only worsened if the woman is thought of as a prostitute, again not an unknown feeling in the U.S.

Re-education Camps: There are still 6,000 to 7,000 people in re-education camps. At this point it is a slow process, especially with continued U.S. meddling in the internal affairs of Vietnam. Almost all those still in the camps are former high-ranking Saigon officials or military officers. These are men who spent their lives serving the French and then American interests instead of the interests of their own people. It is certainly not beyond reason to suspect that they could be enlisted once again if the price were right--and the U.S. can always come up with the bucks.

Foreign Visitors: On the day we left Vietnam a law was passed allowing any and all Vietnamese who had left to return to visit Vietnam. This invitation was extended to all Vietnamese, including those who left illegally, and seems a mark of the confidence and security the Vietnamese feel in their system. Americans, and especially Vietnam vets, are also welcome to visit Vietnam to see the country once again.

Visit to 3 Plants FACTORY LIFE

--Barry Romo
VVAW National
Office

On our tour we visited 3 factories and were able to observe work conditions, talk to union representatives and sample local products. While there were not giant steel mills, we did get an idea about factory life in Vietnam.

In Hanoi we visited the Dong Da wool carpet factory. Its main products were high-grade, hand-made carpets for export. The quality was exceedingly fine, incorporating designs which ranged from traditional to modern--some of the products seemed closer to tapestries than to carpets. For the most part the carpets were exported to West Germany, the USSR and Italy.

There were 80 workers at the plant, 95% of them women, ranging in age from 17 to 54. Workers were paid a combination wage plus piece work and generally saw the product to its completion providing a sense of personal satisfaction and accomplishment. As in most wool factories brown lung was a problem, but the factory had a high ceiling, was well lighted and open.

Childcare was provided at the factory, a reality for most of Vietnam; women were allowed time with children for feeding. As with all the plants we visited there seemed to be an extremely relaxed feeling, a long ways from the kind of pressure-cooker atmosphere in comparable U.S. factories.

We visited two factories in Song Be Province west of Ho Chi Minh City. The first was a traditional lacquer factory. All work was done by hand and the art was passed on from generation to generation. The lacquer work begins with plain wood, a flat piece that ends up as a wall tile or a tube which becomes an inlaid vase. The wood is covered with cloth, rubbed with cuddebone (yes, just like the one you put in your para-keet's cage). Next come four separate coats of paint, smooth-ed out with water, followed by four more coats of paint, a sealer and a final coat of special paint. Then comes the hand rubbing. One mistake--too much paint--and the article is no good and thrown away. Sea shells are cut by hand in elaborate designs to be inlaid or designs on rice paper are painted onto the product in the early stages.

Lastly we visited a ceramics factory. This was privately owned, built in 1981. Wages were better than in cooperatively or state-run factories, some 20-30% better. This was clearly an attempt by the state to try out different economic



forms to see which would work best under what circumstances, a far cry from an inflexible economic policy. A good block long, the factory produced everything from cups and saucers to elaborate 4-foot high vases, exquisitely painted. Except for the oven, everything was open air with a straw roof, and although some items were mass-produced, they were still all hand-painted. Work seemed to move along easily but the products were anything but simple. Some were made for home use, some for export--in fact we later saw some of the products in Thailand.

It was apparent to us that the U.S. was missing a tremendous bargain; we saw goods of exceedingly high quality at very low prices, and we could only hope that enterprising U.S. businessmen might help to get relations between the countries restored--Vietnam could certainly use the foreign trade. What we saw was still another example of the U.S. refusing to trade while everyone around us is trading. In fact, Japanese businessmen this year have started exporting oit to Japan through joint Vietnamese/Japanese ventures.



(top) Peter Zastro examining goods at privately owned ceramic factory. (middle) Woman weaves carpet. (bottom) Song Be lacquer factory.



A Visit To The New Economic Zone

TAM THOM SIEP COMMUNE



Children greet us at the Saigon River Ferry.



Commune leadership posing with VVAW Delegation.

--Pete Zastrow
National
Office

The VVAW delegation was taken to the Tam Thom Siep commune, south and east of Ho Chi Minh City to show us how the New Economic Zones were functioning. While the tour accomplished that purpose, it also did much more. It was in fact a moving demonstration of the words of Ho Chi Minh, "Our Party has brought up a revolutionary generation of boys and girls full of zeal and courage.

"These are beautiful flowers of revolutionary heroism..."

Just getting to the commune was no simple task; we left in our air-conditioned Toyota Foreign Ministry van and drove for 45 minutes to a car ferry, where we waited since, of course, it was on the other side of the Saigon River. Surrounded by children, entertained by us, our pictures, our watches and cameras, we finally left the

van to walk to the cabin on the car ferry--a tugboat pushing a large barge on which the cars and busses floated. Back into the van on the other side, we drove through countryside as flat as Kansas, with water everywhere. Ducks swam in and out of the rice paddies, a perfect example of getting two crops from the same place at the same time.

Another drive and another boat, this time a sampan waiting for us. We crossed a narrow board, walking the plank into the boat which then navigated through wide rivers, rimmed with villages, until we got to the commune. The village head and most of his assistants were there to greet us: he was the old man of the village at 34.

Until 1978 the area was vacant, a mangrove forest having been destroyed by U.S. dioxin during the war. It was 1980 when members of the Volunteer Youth Organization in Ho Chi Minh City began to make the attempt to bring the area

back. Long on enthusiasm, but initially short on experience, they tried a number of crops without much success. Perseverance and planning paid off, however. We saw the maps of the area where each square yard's produce was planned for years to come--and next year more acreage would be planted. Now there was mangrove, there were eucalyptus trees (used all over the South since they apparently have some value in bringing back the soil devastated by Agent Orange). Shrimp farms flourished during the rainy season, and they could grow some coconut.

What they had done, more important than the crops, was to build community where there was nothing. Members of the Volunteer Youth Organization devoted three years to this project; at the end of that time they were free to return to the bright lights of Ho Chi Minh City. If, instead, they decided to stay in the commune, they were given a house, tools, space for their garden. We could see a small town had been built--all of it in the last 7 years. At this point, there were 49 families, about 150 people. They worked hard (that was evident everywhere we went--paths were covered in sand, there were bridges, some of them good-sized across the many streams criss-crossing the area), but watching the kind of private play/conversation that went on among commune members while we were listening or eating, they also seemed to be having a hell of a good time.

A beautiful building for the childcare center filled with children, showed both their priorities and their investment in the future. A medical center treats almost everything and will send patients on to larger facilities if necessary. A school section of the commune has facilities where a Ho Chi Minh scientist comes out regularly to give classes so that the commune inhabitants will understand their fight against chemical

poisons.

Life in the commune is certainly well-filled, although the volley ball nets we saw in several places suggested that it was not all work. Life was not easy: the area floods every December with sea water up to as much as 4 meters (12 feet) high. Fresh water which cost just over 1 dong in Ho Chi Minh City cost over 500 dong out in the commune because of the cost of getting it there. Wells drilled to get fresh water locally only got more salt water.

When we arrived there were cigarettes on the table; tea and coffee arrived as we did; iced towels were given to us to help us recover from our long trip to get to the commune. And if we did not always know exactly what we were eating for lunch, the several courses were delicious. And the beer we were served was plentiful. Understanding that we were in an area of no frills, bare-boned economy only made us feel more grateful for the honor done to us and to the organization we represented.

With all of that we could not escape the fact that the leadership of the commune--and presumably everyone else there--were kids. People joined up for their three years at about the same age that many of us joined up to go to Vietnam. Thank goodness they have more sense than we did, and can devote their youth to a cause worthy of their zeal and dedication.

We ended our remarks in the commune's Visitors' Book with the thought, "May our children play together in peace." But, it was and still is hard not to feel ashamed of the role our government is and had played: not only did we destroy the land in the past, but now that people have revived it (at least partly) and U.S. technology could make a hard life a little easier (a desalination plant, for instance) the U.S. government refuses to trade with Vietnam.

URGENT: Don't Let Wayne Felde DIE !

There are enough names on the Wall. There are enough names, not on the Wall, of those Vietnam veterans whose deaths since the war was a result of the experience of Vietnam. Now the State of Louisiana wants to add another name, another veteran to the roles of casualties of Vietnam.

Wayne Felde, Vietnam veteran, was scheduled to die in the Louisiana electric chair on the 31st of August. That date was postponed, but not for long.

Wayne was charged, tried and convicted of shooting a Louisiana policeman in 1981. Although testimony showed that Felde got a weapon in order to kill himself, and although there was expert testimony that Felde was suffering from post-traumatic stress at the time of

the shooting, he was charged with first degree murder. The trial was hasty. Headline hysteria prevailed. Wayne now sits on Death Row.

If the trial were held today, his defense would have been better: more is known today of the problems that PTSD can cause. For now, however, we must do what we can to try to save Felde.

CALL, WRITE OR WIRE:
GOV. EDWIN EDWARDS,
State House,
Baton Rouge, LA 70804.

Demand that Wayne Felde be given a new trial and that he be treated for the disability he brought home from the war. (For more information contact the Wayne Felde Defense Committee, c/o Brian Guerre, 132 Thompson St #24, New York, NY 10012).



Vietnam Veterans Tell Their Story

RECOLLECTIONS



Dennis Kroll
Madison VVAW

FRIENDLY SKIES: 1970

The flight officer of United Flight #719 broke the sleepy silence.

"Flight seven-one-niner, military transport, is approaching the coast of the Republic of South Vietnam. We are...."

His voice was lost as the eyes and minds of the men aboard searched the horizon.

"We will be starting our descent and landing approach in approximately 2-5 minutes, the stewardesses will be...."

The stewardesses had been with us since Ft Lewis bringing us coffee, food and magazines--had, up to now, been very calm. Now something had changed; their voices were tighter, nervous.

"The time in Vietnam is 0500 hours, weather conditions are...."

Back in the world it was winter; back on the block, snow had covered the ground. We had looked silly standing in formation shivering in our jungle fatigues and boots back at Ft Lewis.

"International laws state that we must disinfect the plane before entering another country. The stewardesses will be spraying...."

The stewardesses walked down the aisles with aerosol cans of perfumed Lysol.

"I'll now turn the mike over to the chief stewardess who will explain landing and emergency landing procedures...."

We had landed twice before, once in Hawaii and then in Okinawa. Although we were flying on a commercial aircraft, it was considered a military transport, the only real difference being that no alcohol was served and we were given plenty of free soda. Troops on their second or third tours knew enough to sneak a bottle or two on board and keep it low and to themselves; if the stewardesses knew, they didn't care.

As we approached the airport in Hawaii, we all knew they would never let us off the plane.

"Naw, the fuckin' assholes ain't even goin' to let us off--the only Hawaii we'll see is from these fuckin' windows."

Someone answered the question on everyone's minds.

We resigned ourselves to more sitting, more waiting.

Then the intercom crackled:

"This is the Captain. We will be landing in two-zero minutes, please remain in your seats until the plane ahs come to a complete stop, please keep your seatbelts fastened until the light in your cabin goes out. Refueling will take approximately 45 minutes; FAA rules state that only the crew may remain on board while the aircraft is being refueled...."

Our eyes opened wide.

"All passengers will disembark, the stewardesses will...."

Faces grinned, hands slap-



ped and dapped, the roar in the cabin was deafening. A lifer on board thought he should take control of the chaos and took the mike from the stewardess.

"Men, give me your attention," he said, pulling himself up to his full leadership height.

"Shit, here it comes," someone said; "they're not going to let us near the bar."

"Probably make us pull guard duty at Pearl Harbor," another voice grumbled.

"Now listen up! Keep it down," the lifer continued. "We are members of the United States military...."

"No sheeyt..."

"At ease! When we enter the terminal, I will expect that you will act as such or...."

"Man, what are you going to do? Send us to 'Nam?'"

"I said 'At Ease' back there..." His voice was drowned out as the plane came to a stop with a loud metallic click of seatbelts. "One last word about drinking...."

"You had your last word; we only have 45 minutes," someone in the rear of the cabin snarled, and as one, the 200+ jammed the aisle heading towards the door, and backing the lifer into 1st class where he stood and glared at us with popping eyes and little throbbing veins in his forehead.

The terminal was packed; you could see uniforms everywhere. Many were there saying their goodbyes to wives, lovers, each other after their R&R. The lounge was doing very good business. As we walked in all eyes were on us. We must have looked pretty fearsome in our shiney new

new jungle fatigues swept the bar, grabbing bottles and drinks and headed for the gate.

There was a remarkable difference between the flight from Hawaii to Okinawa and the flight that left Ft Lewis. Sitting on the runway in Ft Lewis we had been quiet with hundreds of thoughts filling each man's head. Someone had excitedly told us to put the headphones on channel six. From the headphones came the strained strains of the "One Hundred Voice Choir" (to be renamed the "Bring Me Down Band" later), singing "I'm leaving on a jet plane, don't know when...." which was another thought to dwell on. The mood was somber; nobody wanted to talk.

After Hawaii the ice was broken. Some of us were drunk and drinking more from the pillage of the bar. The story was told and retold for the benefit of those who went to other lounges or more isolated spots to catch a buzz. Soon after we took off, we were shown a movie, "Shoes of the Fisherman." By the end of the movie most of the men were sleeping. The only sign of the party was an empty bottle kicked into the aisle. After the movie we were served a snack with the usual kidding likening it to C-rats. Then the film from the officers' cabin was exchanged for ours, and we were soon sleeping to the sounds of "Finnigan's Rainbow."

We got off the plane in Okinawa with the same enthusiasm as we did in Hawaii. The lifer who had tried to be so strac before only looked at us in disgust through the doorway. The only thing that was open in Okinawa was the bathroom and it didn't look like there was anything else to be open.

In an hour we were back in the air, fed another meal and shown another movie. For those who fell asleep it was the sound of the intercom that woke them up.

"...and on behalf of the crew I'd like to wish each of you the best luck and hope we will have the honor of serving you on your return....Please remain seated with your seatbelts fastened until the plane comes to a complete stop. In the case of incoming rocket or mortar attacks there will be trenches...."

The lifer looked through the doorway and smiled.

*REMF: A "rear-echelon mother-fucker," a soldier whose duty was not combat and who was usually in what passed for the rear areas in Vietnam.

THE VETERAN
Published by the
VVAW - National Office
P.O. Box 408594
Chicago, IL 60640
(312) 327-5756

Laced with 2,4-D PESTICIDE LAW



Madison "Welcome Home" Parade, Photo S. Dauber

VVAW Madison

On May 5th the Madison, Wisconsin City Council unanimously approved a new pesticide policy described as one of the strongest and most comprehensive in the country.

The new policy culminates months of work by VVAW Agent Orange Outreach Coordinator Sukie Wachtendonk. For many years she has worked in the state of Wisconsin to ban Agent Orange chemicals, assist vets and those domestically exposed in finding adequate medical care, and consistently to speak out to whomever would listen about the harmful effects of herbicides and pesticides used indiscriminately in the environment.

Development of this latest policy was undertaken by VVAW, the Public Health Commission, the Audobon Society and Citizens for a Better Environment following complaints by Sukie and residents of elderly and handicapped housing units in the City of Madison. An agency of the city decided to "contract out" to spray 14 sites

Sukie prompted a change in the Madison Parks Department pesticide policy in 1980 when the City covered all the parks in the system with 2,4-D, contaminated the Wachtendonk home and property, and sent Zak into the hospital with a Grand Mal seizure. The EPA and Dept. of Agriculture, after investigations, concluded that "drift from reckless usage of pesticide 2,4-D contaminated the Wachtendonk's property" and fined the City and the applicator for breaking two federal and two state statutes. Jim and Sukie lost their home on that one and have continually moved to avoid re-exposure by chemical with 2,4-D in combination with other toxins to rid the properties of dandelions. One of these units is adjacent to the Wachtendonk home.

Following that spraying in June of 1986, three elderly residents were taken away in ambulances with respiratory failure, another developed large and oozing sores and a rash on her feet, and Kee and Zak Wachtendonk began to seizure (again).

Following the latest incident, there was no choice but to challenge the City one more time on its usage of toxins against dandelions, old folks and kids.

Sukie asked the mayor to initiate a survey of all chemicals used in Madison by City Agencies. The results were frightening. Not only were herbicides--in dangerous concentrations--being used outdoors, but all kinds of pesticides and insecticides were being sprayed in the strangest places indoors, including Diazinon (responsible for killing 26 species of birds in 18 states) in one of the City's municipal wells. City busses, parking ramps and elevators were being sprayed regularly and without warning in very high concentrations. The mayor's office was flabbergasted and the Health Commission and the Commission on the Environment called department managers on the carpet; heads rolled.

Under the new policy:

1. ALL city departments will be committed to managing pest control activities (indoors and out) in such a manner that the safest non-chemical alternatives and the smallest amounts of pesticides possible are employed.
2. Post readily visible signs advising of applications for a period of 24 hours prior to and 48 hours following applications.
3. Use pesticides only "where a pest problem seriously hampers the intended usage of the property or poses a health or safety hazard."
4. Maintain careful records on pesticide usage which must be reported to the Health Dept before applications.
5. Report all citizen complaints regarding usage.
6. Submit an Integrated Pest Management profile for each department for the coming years.
7. Require state certification of all applicators and special classes for applicators on adverse health effects of pesticides.
8. Private contractors applying pesticides must furnish lists of chemicals used, together with label information and safety data sheets for each product's proposed usage. All are subject to review and rejection by the Health Commission.

The new policy is one more small victory for VVAW Madison in our 12-year war to reduce

the re-exposure of vets, our children and others in the domestic population to toxic chemicals. You can do it in your area too! For more information write:

Sukie Wachtendonk
P.O. Box 3472
Madison, WI 53704

Also:

Booklet available on Integrated Pest Management Techniques for home lawns is entitled "Least Toxic Lawn Management," and is available through Bio-Integral Resource Center, Box 7414, Berkeley, CA 94707.

Agent Orange Studies

ONE & ONE

Bill Davis
VVAW National
Office

The end of August, beginning of September 1987 brought Vietnam's veterans renewed national attention on the subject of Agent Orange poisoning.

The first report came from the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta that they had been unable to successfully conduct an investigation (started 5 years ago) into the effects of defoliants on Vietnam veterans because they could not find enough veterans to make the study--an understandable claim if the CDC were located in Nepal, perhaps.

On the heels of this astonishing revelation came the Veterans' Administration disclosure a week later that U.S. Marines who served in Vietnam have died of lung cancer and certain lymph cancers at a significantly higher rate than their stateside colleagues. There was a 58% higher rate of lung cancer for *Marines who were in Vietnam*, and a 110% higher rate of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma; the study was based on deaths of almost 50,000 Marines and Army veterans who were ground troops in Vietnam and elsewhere between 1965 and 1973. While refusing to take a stand, the VA report did say that "Exposure to Agent Orange may be suspected."

The CDC announcement was more or less expected. From the time the protocol for the study was established, critics of the study pointed out that requirements were impossible to meet. Whereas the study required veterans with levels of exposure to Agent Orange that were precise and extremely high, most vets could simply say they were in an area that was sprayed--we certainly had no way of knowing how much was sprayed or even how often spraying took place around basecamps, along roads, etc. Records of such things were at best spotty.

The second announcement was the shocker, given the VA's usual role in the on-going battle to shelve, squash, suppress and discourage veterans and their families on any aspect of defoliant poisoning.

As different federal agencies continue to muddy the water on Agent Orange, VVAW's commitment remains the same: we demand testing, treatment and compensation for ALL Agent Orange victims and their families.

Milwaukee

Milwaukee VVAW campout again was a tremendous success. (right) Children at play. (bottom) John Lindquist cooking breakfast.

Photos by S. Dauber



--Sukie Wachtendonk
Madison VVAW

"Country Joe McDonald brought the Vietnam War back to the University of California at the Berkeley campus," wrote a reporter in the April 28th edition of the San Francisco Chronicle.

Joe, in fact, did much more than that in a week-long series of events which brought together veterans, peace activists, Vietnamese and students for the Vietnam Veterans Film Fest and Art Show, April 27-May 1st in Berkeley.

"We want to reawaken people from the sleep they've fallen into. We want to pay tribute to the people who lost their lives in Vietnam, and the people who fought and resisted the war in Vietnam," McDonald said, adding that "the event brought all elements of the Vietnam experience into the fold."

The week began with a rally on the steps of Sproul Plaza on the Berkeley campus, site of some of the heaviest anti-war demonstrations throughout the war years. Joe kicked off the rally with a rousing rendition of "Fixin' To Die Rag," and was followed by speakers--anti-war activists Steward and Judy Clavis Albert, authors of a new book on the anti-war movement entitled The Sixties Papers. Other speakers included veterans poets David Brown and Steve Hassna. Music was provided by "Dynamite" Annie Johnson of the Cleanliness and Godliness Skiffle Band, and Booney Toons' Jim Wachtendonk.

VVAW's banner "Honor the Warrior, Not the War" maintained a prevalent position on the steps of the Plaza throughout the rally. Not surprisingly it attracted the attention of many vets who had thought for years that "VVAW was dead." They were heartened to see the old original colors once more flying in California without the defiling "A.I." scrawled over the shield. There was considerable talk that day and throughout the week of reviving the Berkeley Chapter of VVAW.

On Monday evening the films began at Wheeler Auditorium with a 1977 black and white film "Faces of War" which documented the experiences of a Marine Company on patrol for 97 days in the jungles of Vietnam.

Other offerings that evening included some psychedelic flashbacks in the film "Now's Real," the San Francisco Diggers film of Haight-Ashbury in the '60's, and the "Hog Farm" movie about the infamous commune and its inhabitants on a bus ride through middle America in the '60's; "David Harris--A Portrait," the story of America's most celebrated draft resister; "Ecocide," an eye-witness portrayal of the defoliation and aftermath in Vietnam. My favorite film of the evening was the Green Mountain Post Film, "The Secret Agent" which is a

VIETNAM VETERA FEST & ART SHO



Singer Country Joe McDonald

history and overview of American use of Agent Orange in Vietnam including field photography of spraying missions, comments by the chemical companies, VA luminaries and extraordinary veteran activists and family members. The film is complete with a soundtrack of Country Joe's best Vietnam tunes.

Tuesday night's films included the legendary "FTA" movie, not shown anywhere in many years (it's rumored that Jane Fonda had all the prints destroyed). The film features Jane, Donald Sutherland, Holly Near and others travelling with the Free The Army show to military bases overseas, bringing its anti-war message to American GI's.

Also shown Tuesday evening were "Peoples' Park" which documents Berkeley's demonstrations and student takeover of a tract of University land during which one student was killed by the police. "War Shadows" is a portrait of Vietnam vet Paul Reutersham's struggles to publicize the dangers of Agent Orange, his illness, his lawsuit which mushroomed into the class-action suit, and his death from cancer at the age of 27. "Be-In" was a film of San Francisco's 1967 Human Be-In at Golden Gate Park which launched the "Summer of Love." "Troop Train" was footage of the first anti-war actions to block the passage of the troop trains moving from Emeryville, CA on their way to the Oakland Army Terminal in transit to Vietnam.

The film series blew many minds in the audience: those of the students who were babes of tender years at the time and don't remember the violence of those years--as well as the seasoned veterans of Vietnam and anti-war activists who were also, at that time, children of tender years. The vets, still running the living memories in their brains of the jungle heat

and their war at home upon their return. The demonstrators also have film running on: 20 years later they can still smell the tear gas and visibly shudder at the scenes of police violence. All in attendance were sucked into the celluloid, and shared thoughts, memories and hopes for the future after the screens went black.

Wednesday evening's program at the International House featured women in the Vietnam era and demonstrated the far-reaching effects and wide range of disruption the war had on the lives of women in the U.S. and Vietnam. Wendy Wilder Larsen and Tran Thi Nga read moving passages from their newly released book of poetry, Shallow Graves about their lives, one a journalist's wife in Vietnam and the other a Vietnamese civilian in a war zone.

Judy Clavis Albert (Co-author of The Sixties Papers) spoke eloquently about women's roles in the anti-war movement, battling sexism and racism, and the eventual blossoming of the women's movement from these roots.

Pam White, a Vietnam combat nurse relayed startling experiences of her tour in Vietnam as a surgical nurse in triage in a field hospital. She is still very troubled by the war, and spoke angrily of the effects it still has on her life, and the lives of thousands of others who served and still need help coping with the horrors.

Penni Evans, an American Red Cross worker and civilian volunteer in Vietnam shared with the listeners passages from her journal begun while she was recovering from her trauma of Vietnam. In her writings she confronts the realities of a young woman who volunteered for duty in Vietnam and smashes the stereotypes of those many women who served as doughnut dollies.

Vangee Guettenenger, a former flight stewardess talked of transporting both live and

dead soldiers to and from Vietnam and her continued concern and memories of those veterans.

Muriel Hogan, singer-songwriter, musician and VVAW member spoke of her formative years travelling with her Air Force family, and her eventual turning to anti-war activism and peace issues while virtually "in the military" with her father. Muriel performed several classic anti-war songs: "Fields of Flanders," "The Cruel War," "Where Have All The Flowers Gone," and, appropriately, "Give Peace A Chance."

I was honored to be among the speakers that evening, representing wives and partners of Vietnam vets. I spoke mainly about the Agent Orange issue, our children, lingering health effects, domestic re-exposure to Agent Orange pesticides at home, and our struggles to keep our families together and healthy.

The evening was a moving educational experience for those in the audience as well as those participating in the event. The collective experiences aptly demonstrated that the consequences of war and suffering extend way beyond the soldier--to his mother, his wife, his lover, his sister, his daughter--to every woman sharing his life.

Women veterans and volunteers in war time service also carry the scars of war and have been forgotten by the society and government they so valiantly served. I was re-awakened to the hard fact that we are, all of us, veterans of Vietnam. To these women of war--those who were present in Berkeley and those who were not--I give my thanks, my gratitude, my love and my commitment to continue the struggle for us all.

The fourth evening featured comedy, music and poetry with an amazing array of artists and characters. Country Joe MC'd the show, which included Scoop Nisken, a Berkeley commentator, radio news personality and anti-war activist; Paul Krassner, comedian, cartoonist and writer. Both had great comedy routines and the talent to bring laughter and comic relief to an audience which all week had been bombarded with the realities and heaviness of the war years. Wavy Gravy also added his touch of looniness to the scene when he appeared on stage in all his robustness in a hand-painted and tie-dyed rainbow sweat suit. He applied clown make-up while discussing his life's work of making folks laugh. His story about the Chicago cops bringing him to the station during the "Days of Rage" in 1968, not to arrest him but to show him off

Turn To Next Page

NS FILM W



VVAW's Suki Wachtendonk speaking at U.C. Berkley.

in all his regalia was hilarious--thanks, Wavy--we needed that!

Poetry of the evening was presented by David Brown, a soft-spoken and reserved veteran of Vietnam. His book of poetry *Returning Fire* seethes with the overpowering imagery and beauty that is Vietnam, and the undercurrent of sinister forboding which plagued every vet who served there.

Vietnam vet and poet John Trudell, leader of the American Indian Movement and veteran of Wounded Knee and Alcatraz Island takeover, had us all riveted to our chairs while speaking of his experiences in Vietnam and his coming home to realize that as an indigenous member of the native American race, he was the Viet Cong. His book *Living In Reality--Songs Called Poems* and his cassette tape "Graffiti Man" are highly recommended. He's an intensely powerful orator and human being.

John Trudell's appearance at this event added another '60's twist which I found delightful. It is well known that Bob Dylan and George Harrison are friends and often attend John's readings. Throughout the evening the crowd buzzed with the whispered rumor--"Dylan and Harrison will be here." The murmur added that flavor of the old days: the electric magic of those years was there. Funny how some things never change.

Steve Hassna completed the poetry readings for the evening in his unmatched excellence. His poetry about Vietnam and Central America allows him to educate old and young alike. His keen ability to use words as ammo against the enemy or as beautiful gifts of love to his children never fail to amaze me after all these years of listening to his work.

The music interspersed throughout the evening's lesson in Vietnam history was provided by Muriel Hogan, Joe McDonald, Rick and Chip Duvall and Jim

Wachtendonk, all VVAW members. Rick and Chip Duvall performed several favorites, "Back on the Block," "You Must Be Crazy," and a new tune, "No More War." Their lively, upbeat style and humor were crowd-pleasers as usual.

Muriel brought chills to the spines of the audience with her "Agent Orange Song": "They killed me in Vietnam and I didn't even know"--which has become an anthem of sorts for the Agent Orange movement. The song has been recorded by the late Kate Wolf and also by Country Joe, with much critical success.

Jim Wachtendonk is one of the best singer-song-writers to come out of the Vietnam era. Being that he's my partner definitely colors my opinion, but nonetheless, he is gifted with a beautiful voice and the talent of a wonderful lyricist. His tape "Incoming" and songbook, "Songs For America" are available through VVAW, Madison.

The final evening of the Film Fest and Art Show was definitely a '60's experience. Jerry Abrams, the inventor of the original '60's light show and pioneer in the art of combining lights and music offered a spectacular visual accompaniment to the concert which brought to a new generation of young people the best of Berkeley's legendary 1960's bands and brought to the rest of us enjoyable flashes from our pasts.

Joe McDonald opened with the "FUCK" cheer and an interesting and humorous historical account of the song and his trials and tribulations throughout the years in performing it in the U.S. and around the world.

Berkeley's first street band, the Cleanliness and Godliness Skiffle Band performed original material and '50's and '60's rock & roll, jazz and blues to a packed house of 500.

The Joy of Cooking also made an appearance. Together for only the second time in 15

years, they had Pauley Ballroom rocking. They were the first of the '60's new wave of bands

to contain women as strong, talented and equal musicians. They are responsible for many familiar folk-rock-fusion tunes, extremely popular in our era, and I would bet would be just as popular today if re-released.

Lazarus, another famous Berkeley band, wrapped up the evening with songs that stirred up the students of the '60's at Peoples' Park and Pauley Ballroom during the war years. They proved that they could still stir 'em up in the '80's.

At 1:30 AM when the biggest cop on the University Police Force made his presence known complete in body armor and his intentions clear--to pull the plug--Lazarus' lead singer Pete Barsotti (now road manager for the Grateful Dead) announced to the crowd: "They're telling us to quit--so we'll do one more song"--the crowd went nuts. He launched into a driving song "Berkeley--it's the place to be for the demonstrations," complete with images in the background of campus cops and the National Guard gassing and clubbing students rolling on the giant screens. The cop slowly melted into his bullet-proof vets and quietly disappeared. What a gas!

The week-long series of events was designed to build bridges between generations and close the gaps that have long existed between the anti-war and veterans movements. Congratulations Joe--it worked!

For information on the availability of books and tapes reviewed in this article, contact Suki care/of VVAW, Madison.

LITANY
A DANCE/DRAMA BY MARGIE FARGNOLI



Performed at the Southern Theatre
1420 Washington Ave.S. Mpls
SEPTEMBER 24-27 & OCTOBER 1-4
Thursday-Sunday at 8:00 pm
tickets: \$8.50
reservations: 340-0187

CovertAction INFORMATION BULLETIN

Researching, documenting, and exposing the CIA and the western intelligence complex for the past nine years. World-renowned, in-depth international coverage, investigating wherever the hand of the CIA can be found.

Subscriptions:

U.S.—\$15; Canada & Mexico—\$20;
; Institutions—add \$5.

**CAIB, P.O. Box 50272,
Washington, D.C. 20004**

Display Advertising Rates

THE VETERAN

P.O. Box 408594

Chicago, IL 60640

Rates based on Camera-ready copy:

\$20 per column inch

\$100 per 1/4 page

\$175 per 1/2 page

\$325 per full page

Copy must be in at least two weeks before publication; payment due at the same time. For more information, contact the VVAW National Office.

Classified Advertising Rates

\$1 per word, no less than 15 words. Copy due at least two weeks before publication; pay at the same time.



**REAL
WAR
STORIES**
Comic Book

The greatest lineup of comic book talent ever assembled brings you real stories of war and military life just as they actually went down, with no fiction at all.

A powerful comic book like no other ever produced, it gets the stories from Viet Nam to El Salvador down on paper and out in the mainstream. It looks at women, conscientious objectors, resisters and walk-aways from the nuclear Navy. *Real War Stories* is a great tool for vets and peace activists committed to helping youth sort out the realities from the myths.

Conceived by CCCO/An Agency for Military, Draft and Pre-enlistment Counseling, published by Eclipse Comics. You can buy it in comic book stores or order from CCCO. Single copies \$2.00 plus \$1.00 postage and handling. Discounts on bulk orders. Write to CCCO, 2208 South St., Philadelphia, PA 19146. 215-545-4626.



KNOW THE ENEMY


and know yourself;
in 100 battles
you will never
be imperiled.

sun tzu

RECON

Quarterly newsletter on anti-military affairs: draft counseling, U.S. troops abroad, chemical warfare, military-industrial complex, direct action against the Pentagon, and books for organizers. Subscribe for \$10 to RECON, P.O. Box 14602, Phila., PA 19134.





OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

HAROLD WASHINGTON
MAYOR

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, on June 13, 1987, Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) the first Vietnam Veterans organization established opposed to the war, will celebrate its 20th Anniversary; and

WHEREAS, during the remaining years of the war, VVAW's membership grew rapidly, and following the end of the war, the organization turned its attention to the government's neglect of veterans and their problems; and

WHEREAS, VVAW was the first organization to call attention to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (then called Post-Vietnam Syndrome), health problems related to Agent Orange, and the need for Vet Centers; and

WHEREAS, VVAW has been involved in the struggle for civil rights from Cairo, Illinois, to Cummings, Georgia, and has long participated in the movements against apartheid in South Africa and increased U.S. military involvement in Central America; and

WHEREAS, Veterans from all over the country will be attending the three events arranged for June 13, 1987, which include a memorial service at the Vietnam Veterans Foundation, a Vet Fest with music and speakers outside Bethany United Church, and a dinner inside the church hall:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Harold Washington, Mayor of the City of Chicago, do hereby proclaim June 13, 1987, to be VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR DAY IN CHICAGO and urge all citizens to be cognizant of the special events arranged for this time.

Dated this 10th day of June, 1987.

Harold Washington
Mayor

Photos from top, counterclockwise.

(1) Jessie Jackson greets VVAW member Clarence Fitch at Operation Push. (2) Getting down with the music. (3) Listen to speeches at the Memorial. (4) Dinner with friends.



All photos this page C. Sandow except 2nd from top by Jean Dalber.



NYC Celebration: At left, Jan Barry talks of early days. Top, Ed Damato recounts his recent trip to Vietnam. At right, Gold Star mother Anne Pyne remembers her son.

20 YEARS

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR

Founded in 1967, VVAW Pioneered
Post Traumatic Stress Rap Groups and
Work on Agent Orange
From the 60's to the 80's

20 Years of Struggle for Veterans, Peace and Justice

Bill Davis
VVAW National
Office

On June 13th VVAW celebrated our 20th anniversary and reunion in Chicago, Illinois. The event was not just simply a nostalgic reunion, but a celebration of a vibrant, healthy and fighting anti-war veterans organization.

When the word of plans for the anniversary went out across the country, response was immediate and overwhelming from friends, supporters and members in this country and around the world.

The planning committee set up a pace of activities on the 13th to satisfy the most serious of activists and dedicated party-person--a balance of work and play that has characterized the history of our organization. The activities began with a rally in downtown Chicago at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fountain. The program addressed wars past and battles today in Central America. The list of speakers was brief, to the point, and uniquely, all veterans of different eras.

Following a break for lunch, the celebrants gathered at Bethany United Church on the city's northside for the balance of the festivities.

Speakers Frank Ortiz, Vice President of the United Farm Workers of America, Dr Ron Sable of Chicago, Illinois State Representative Ellis B. Levin, Safia Sanchez and member of the Sandinista Youth Movement were interspersed with the music of Jim Wachtendonk, Rick Duval, and Country Joe McDonald. Steve Hassna and Billy Curmano added their poetry.

William Buirke, Chairman of Mayor Harold Washington's Veterans Liaison Committee, read words of greetings from the city of Chicago, and on behalf of the Mayor, presented VVAW with a proclamation naming June 13th, 1987, as Vietnam Veterans Against the War Day in the City of Chicago.

The program was followed

by a wonderful meal prepared by VVAW members from Chicago. During the course of the meal VVAW members stepped forward to toast each of the 20 years, speaking of particular demonstrations, activities, or, in some cases, touching moments from our history.

VVAW concluded the "official" activities with a dance with live band ("Stillwater" from West Bend, Wisconsin) with Muriel Hogan, longtime VVAW member from Milwaukee sitting in for a couple of numbers.

The past 20 years have been full of hard, but fruitful work. We returned our medals to the White House in disgust and anger. We returned to Vietnam as civilians full of goodwill. We focused public attention on the problems we face with Agent Orange and post-traumatic stress. And, of course, we continually deal with these and other "veterans affairs" in formal organizations and rather informal reunions and rap groups.

Today we continue to fight for peace and justice. Sometimes our efforts have seemed futile and lonely--but could any of us sleep content without having made the effort? So, we joyfully join our brothers and sisters to march for peace and march for justice whether that means an end to apartheid, no intervention in Central America, or domestic social reforms.

With the U.S. government's present foreign policy, VVAW's efforts are directed at stopping U.S. military adventurism, but we go far beyond that: the letters we write to Congress do nothing to help the victims of the current policies. VVAW members and chapters have adopted numerous Nicaraguans orphaned by the Contras. We persist in our support for the struggle for self-determination around the world. And now, veterans of Lebanon, Grenada and Central America are joining in our efforts.

VVAW wishes to express our appreciation for the support we received on our 20th an-

niversary program.

We wish to thank those who attended for making the program come to life.

We appreciate the support of friends, merchants and organizations who helped to make the event possible.

Specifically we want to thank members of Chicago VVAW for producing the event: Mike for the art work and video; Ray and Ronnie for the ad book; Virg for the marvelous meal; John and Annie (from Milwaukee) for music and literature; and Annie L. of Chicago for her subtle but firm grip on the controls of the event.

We appreciated messages from around the country and the world. Among these were greetings from U.S. residents in Germany, from Graham Bell of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, from members of the 2nd Veterans Peace Action Team on the evening of their departure for Nicaragua, from the Veterans Peace Action Team, Nuremberg Actions, Concord Naval Weapons Station, California.

Thanks to John Holman, long-time VVAW members with a message from Physicians for Social Responsibility, Washington DC, whose message fell victim to a packed program and hungry crowd.

To the Bill Motto Post #5888, VFW, from Santa Cruz, CA for their patience and understanding on June 13th. Their message:

"Vietnam, Vietnam, Vietnam,
You've lit the fuse of the
American time bomb.
El Salvador, El Salvador
El Salvador,

We see your war, we know
the score, we'll have no more.
We'll have no more.
We'll have no more.
We'll have no more!

Thanks for all the inspiration, VVAW.

From the guys at Bill Motto VFW Post #5888."

And finally,
"Please receive friendly greetings and wishes from the Vietnamese people on your 20th anniversary. Let your celebration contribute positively to our common struggle for peace, understanding, and friendship.

Vietnam/American
Friendship Society
Hanoi,
Vietnam"



Country Joe McDonald



Jim Wachtendonk



Rick Duval

Bottom, The crowd from NY/NJ in Chicago.



Boonie Tunes Revue

Thanks for the mail. Boonie Tunes like to hear from you. If you've got someone in mind who belongs in "Boonie Tunes" write me c/o Boonie Toons, Box 3472, Madison, WI 53704.



It's VVAW's 20th year as a national veterans' organization. Throughout those years musicians have given of their time and talents to help us along. In the late '60's, veterans used guerrilla theatre to show the people at home what was going on in Vietnam.

Joan Biaz once loaned VVAW her farm in the hills near Palo Alto for a national meeting. She, along with Pete Seeger, Holly Near and Country Joe McDonald sang at demo's and benefits for Vietnam vets. In 1971 Country Joe wrote "Kiss My Ass" for VVAW. It came out on a 45 with the flipside being "Tricky Dick"--anybody out there still have a copy of that? In 1971 there was a travelling band of performers doing the FTA (Fuck The Army) shows: Holly Near is remembered by one brother as singing GI movement songs. She and Pete Seeger sang benefits for the Karl Armstrong Defense Committee. Pete Seeger would surface again during the Gainesville conspiracy trial adding his wit and wisdom to entertain an audience of VVAW members and supporters. 1971 was also the year that VVAW launched "Operation Dewey Canyon III" and, according to my sources, the cast of "Hair" did their thing on the Mall in DC.

Joe McDonald was one of the first vets to sing and talk about Vietnam. The peace movement had some questions about Vietnam vets but the force behind us was great enough to overcome their suspicions. The bond that held us together was Vietnam and, around that, a culture started to grow. One of the first Vietnam vets to write, produce and per-



Pete Seeger sings to demonstration at "Gainesville 8" trial

form his songs was Billy Homans from Oklahoma. In 1973 he released "Merry Airbreaks" which circulated well inside VVAW but did not do so well in the civilian world: like much of what we had to say, America wasn't ready for it yet. Bill's "Quang Tri City" was a hallmark in veteran music, 10 years ahead of its time. The songs were spilling out of us slow but sure.

Jimmy Hendricks' version of the "Star Spangled Banner" is a classic. Was he trying to tell us something? It's a psychedelic symphony of patriotism slung out on a six-string Fender with the volume soaring like the

101st Airborne unit Hendrix served with.

Boonie Tune's East coast ears tell me that David Crosby and Graham Nashe played a series of concerts for VVAW's "Winter Soldier" campaign. The East Coast band responsible for the longest-lasting support from the early '70's on is Bev Grant and The Human Condition. This R&B band did much for VVAW through the years.

By the middle and late '70's Vietnam vets began recording their own music. John Prine's "Sam Stone" showed heroin addiction brought home from 'Nam. Harry Chapin's

"Shooting Star" spoke of post traumatic stress long before the mainstream picked up on it. Guys like Billy Homans and Joe McDonald were well into singing their own songs about the war in Vietnam.

It was around the issue of Agent Orange that I became active. The members of the veterans' community encouraged me and my music and I thank them for it. It was around this time that I heard Rick Duvall's "SGT Willy." Last issue of THE VETERAN I showcased Rick in Boonie Tunes. He and Joe McDonald were instrumental in my recording "Incoming."

I recall an action in Washington DC at the American University in 1981. 'Nam vets had gathered to discuss Agent Orange. Two busloads of vets left Milwaukee for DC to attend the Conference. The evening of the second night was my birthday, May 23rd. That evening we partied at the dorm we were housed in. I sang my songs that night and was presented with a birthday card from everybody in the room. In it was \$62.90 "toward my first album." Together, nobody there had a pot to piss in, yet \$62.90 was raised toward my first recording. Thanks to everybody who was there: "Incoming" is for all of you.

There are those of us who chronicle the past and present through music. Muriel Hogan's "Agent Orange Song," Chip Duvall's "Back on the Block," Doc Knapp's "Stay Pure Stay Gold," Brad Smith's "Missing," Martin and Holiday's "Who Are the Names on the Wall?"--it's an endless list and still growing. The music and lyrics came from the experience of one year spent in Vietnam. Those who take the chance and sing the stories of that experience walk point for their audiences.

The lessons Vietnam taught America are already eroding with time. The music and musicians of the Vietnam era can be congratulated for telling the story in a poetic and straightforward way. Stark, realistic, locked and loaded, political Vietnam music has made a space for itself. It's up to us to encourage its growth throughout the '80's and beyond. My thanks and appreciation goes out to those musicians who've helped Vietnam vets throughout the war years. Our history has been rich in music. The stories told through tales of song keep the memory alive.

That's all for now!

--Jim Wachtendonk
Madison VVAW

Seen & Heard on PBS Vets' Special **INCOMING**



New Music for America

"Jim Wachtendonk is an American voice, with a message from an all-too-silent generation. He deserves to be heard and I urge you to listen." --Tom Paxton

"Jim Wachtendonk's songs and singing stay with you because of the raw intensity and elegant style...." --Judy Gorman-Jacobs

....He speaks for a generation of Americans who were sent to fight in a war that is still not over for them... or for us." --George Vukelich, poet, author, WWII vet

... His songwriting cuts clean and deep into the heart of the American dream and reminds us of the struggles and hopes of our people... Whether he's writing about the world through the eyes of a Vietnam vet, a husband, a father, a poet, or a public employee, his insights and talents combine to create a moving listening experience." ---Kristin Lems

INCOMING--Music by Jim Wachtendonk

SONGS FOR AMERICA Songbook

Both include:
"The Claymore Polka," "Arlington's Gate," "Hill 6-0," "Hiroshima," "Oh Say Can You See" and much, much more.

Send to:
Jim Wachtendonk
c/o P.O. Box 3472
Madison, WI 53704

Cassettes-----\$7.00
Songbook-----\$8.00
Handling-----\$1.00

Combat Assault



A Vietnam veterans concept cassette by Rick Duvall.

Featuring:

Combat Assault (from the PBS Broadcast)
SGT Willy
Missing
Johnny Rambo
G.I. Bill and many others.
"Years before mainstream America addressed itself to Vietnam veterans' issues, Rick Duvall sang of the post-war struggles of his friend, SGT Willy, which has now become a classic among activists...." Country Joe McDonald

COMBAT ASSAULT is a strong, positive, and healing thing. Listen closely and meet the vet.

Available through
Rick Duvall
P.O. Box 2012
Guerneville, CA 95446

(\$10 includes shipping and handling.)