

# TO OUR SISTERS AND BROTHERS IN THE MARCH

As we walk together on a peace march through an area with a high concentration of military personnel it is tempting to fall into an "us against them" state of mind. This is because, with the exception of the Vietnam veterans among us, most of us come from religious and pacifist backgrounds. But our movement is much broader and needs to broaden more.

**We are winning allies among people in the military** whom the Administration would use to kill Central Americans. And think of the contribution made to our movement by veterans of Vietnam like Brian Willson, Charlie Liteky and others.



*Sgt. Daniel Cobos*

## Support Sgt. Daniel Cobos

Sgt. Daniel Cobos had been flying aboard a specially-equipped RC-135 spy plane for the past three years. His job was to monitor electronic frequencies and translate what he hears. He now rejects further participation in the illegal war against Nicaragua.

Daniel Cobos has applied for conscientious objector status and an honorable discharge. You can help him by writing his commander, Lt. Col. Robert Leech, Com. 6949 Electr. Sec. Squad., Offutt AFB, NE 68113. Say you have heard of Daniel's case, you appreciate his sincerity, and that you think Daniel's position deserves respect and that he merits an honorable discharge. If you like, you can send a copy to Sgt. Daniel Cobos, 3120 Hamilton, Omaha, NE 68131.

## Vietnam Veteran Brian Willson

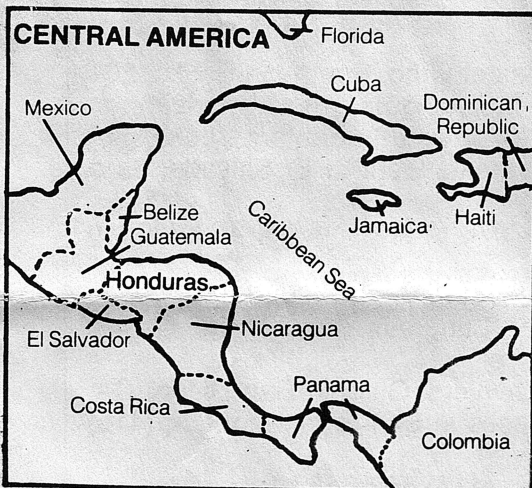
Brian Willson decided his life was not more important than the life of the poorest Central American peasant. He along with former Fort Ord Chaplain, Charles Liteky, had fasted on the steps of Congress last year. He had walked in the first of the Veterans Peace Action Teams on mined roads in the war zones of Nicaragua. This time he put his body on the tracks at Concord Navel Weapons Station. He knew that at the Nuremburg war crimes trials after WW II the judges said all citizens have a duty to oppose crimes against humanity committed by their government.

Brian said the Commander at Concord had three choices: stop sending the land mines, bombs and white phosphorus rockets, etc. to maim the bodies of Central Americans, arrest and remove him like Martin Luther King during the Civil Rights Movement, or run him down. Video tapes show the train was running at about 17 miles per hour when it hit him. Brian is calling on everyone to resist the illegal campaign of terror against the people of Central America conducted by our government.

The point we need to think of today is that at one time Brian was in the military. It was people reaching out to him that helped him change his consciousness.

When young people like Daniel or Brian join the military they do so to better themselves, or at least that is what they are promised. Many recognized the lack of job opportunities in civilian life for young people and tried to do the best thing they could. Almost all enlisted people, if not the more advantaged officers, are conscious of thwarted aspirations for a better life for themselves and their families. Life for military families is often very hard; a young boy in a family transferred to Fort Ord committed suicide several years ago so there would be "one less mouth to feed!"

Because of their genuine patriotism the truth behind the Administration's Central American policy comes as all the more bitter a revelation for soldiers. It is an emotional thing to be asked to be ready to sacrifice your life for what turns out to be not protection of your beloved country, family, and friends, but a monstrous and insane crime. Think about how you were deceived and lied to and show compassion for those in the military who lack information you now have.



We are opposing a powerful, unscrupulous adversary waging "low intensity wars" in Central America with our tax money. These cruel wars are causing great damage and loss of life. Our adversary may be stopped for now in their desire to use overwhelming military force, including the troops of the 7th Infantry Division (Light) from Fort Ord to conquer Nicaragua because of the Iran-Contra scandal, the Arias Peace Plan (see the *New York Times*, for August 12, 1987, for the text of the agreement), and our movement's impact on the heart and soul of many citizens, but the battle is far from over. Right now thousands of officers from Latin countries are being trained in counter-insurgency at Ft. Benning, Georgia.

We must be principled and disciplined if we are to win more allies. Never return hostility for hostility from people who can be our allies. Now is the time to reach out to all people, especially those in the military. Assume that they are already trying to figure out what they are preparing for when they go to Honduras on "maneuvers" which seem never to end. Remember your patience, your common humanity, your compassion, and the knowledge you have to share.

# TO OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE MILITARY

Reagan Administration officials sold weapons to Iran mainly because they wanted money for the Contras, not because they wanted to rescue American hostages. That is the conclusion reached by the Congressional investigating committees according to the *New York Times* on September 18, 1987. Reagan Administration officials lied to Congress and to us. Their actions violated the United States Constitution that they had sworn to uphold.

Reagan Administration officials claim Nicaragua is a "Marxist-Leninist torture dungeon." But the Nicaraguan foreign minister is a Catholic priest who studied in the United States, and who cherishes the values of self-determination and religious freedom. What totalitarian country would dream of arming its population as has the Sandinista government of Nicaragua? Over 200,000 automatic rifles are in the hands of men, women and even children who want to defend their country and revolution.

Nicaragua, which the Reagan Administration is trying to overthrow, is faithful to the Geneva Convention on treatment of prisoners of war. The Contras, for whom the Reagan Administration sold weapons to Iran, have murdered numerous prisoners as well as killed medical personnel, teachers and countless civilians by mining civilian roads. This year they even shot at point blank range an American engineer, Benjamin Linder, who's "crime" was to bring electrical power to small, Nicaraguan mountain towns.

Let Nicaragua be a test case for you. It may be too late for the Reagan Administration to send you to Nicaragua because of the Iran-Contra scandal, but what about Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti or Ecuador where poor peasants also are struggling for land and, along with the urban poor, want the right to read and have medical care? Is it fair to send you to kill them and perhaps die for policies put forward with such lies? The question is important because **the 7th Infantry Division (Light) is designed for fighting against movements for liberation** in such places.



If the Reagan Administration sends you to fight in Nicaragua, Guatemala or El Salvador you should know that you will be fighting, among others, *armed children*. This means that, in combat, a decent man's normal moral hesitation to shoot a boy or girl of 10 or 12 could get that soldier killed by that armed and determined child.

On the other hand, put into such a situation with a survival consciousness you and your buddies might tend to shoot first and ask questions--of yourselves, your orders, your superiors, your country--later. As many Vietnam vets can testify, one never gets over the killing of children.

Once you are in it, it is nearly always too late to make a decision. And even if there is time, the choice can sometimes be between getting killed and having very messy and accusing nightmares for the rest of your life. Some choice! It is better to get information and make your choices before you go.

Be careful. It is now against the law for soldiers to form a union. So if you get together with your buddies you must be careful of this new law. (A lot of people think this law is unconstitutional, but it has not yet been challenged.) The UN Charter, The OAS Charter, the War Powers Act, and the Neutrality Act all forbid armed intervention into Latin America to overthrow governments and suppress revolution. The World Court ruled against the United States in the case of Nicaragua, but do not expect U.S. courts to be sympathetic if you refuse an unlawful order.

Think about your situation and what honor, courage and truth demand. Listen to veterans who are experts like Charlie Clements, Brian Willson, and John Stockwell. Talk to your buddies. Write Congress. As a citizen you have a right to join demonstrations while off duty and out of uniform. You have a right to keep a copy of this leaflet and any printed material you choose.

## Resources:

Phillip Berryman, *Inside Central America*, \$5.95 in many bookstores or write: Pantheon Books, 201 East 50th Street, New York, NY 10022. (This book has the facts about Central America.)

Charles Clements, MD, *Witness to War*, \$3.95 in many bookstores or write to Bantam Books, 414 East Golf Road, Des Plaines, IL 60016. (Vietnam vet Clements went to El Salvador as a doctor in a rebel area.)

Information on Central America: call 758-4001 in Salinas, 728-2076 in Watsonville, 458-0303 in Santa Cruz.

Local Congressperson: Hon. Leon Panetta, 649-3555 in Monterey and 202-225-2861 in Washington, DC; ZIP code: 20515. Call any member of Congress through the Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121.

Military Law Advice: The Military Law Project of the National Lawyers' Guild in San Diego, CA, (619) 233-1701; or a private law office accepting military cases in San Francisco, CA, (415) 928-1999.

Conscientious Objection Information: CCCO, San Francisco, CA, (415) 552-6433.

Veterans Peace Action Teams, P.O. Box 586, Santa Cruz, CA 95061, 426-7822. (Sends unarmed teams to Nicaragua; have speakers available.)

Media: If you are in a jam, reporters can help get your story out. You might start with the *New York Times*. Their San Francisco office phone number is 415-861-8662. And you can get a free subscription to *On Guard* put out by Citizen Soldier. Write them at 175 Fifth Ave., Suite 808, New York, NY 10010, or call 212-777-3470.