

Peace in Our Times



A Veterans For Peace publication exposing the root causes and enormous costs of war

Veterans For Peace in Palestine

Pages 12-16



Veterans For Peace delegation hits the streets in Hebron.
Photo: Ellen Davidson

Drones: Crosses Looming over the World Today

As in Roman times, they serve as a reminder of the power of empire

Syracuse, NY—On Good Friday, April 14, nine non-violent civil resisters of Upstate Drone Action were arrested at the main entrance of Hancock Air National Guard Base protesting the extrajudicial drone killings perpetrated from the base. Three people hung on drone crosses representing victims of U.S. drone strikes from seven majority Muslim countries. Eleven others carried smaller drone crosses bearing words, “Drones crucify: Children, Families, Love, Peace, Community, the U.S. Constitution, the U.N. Charter, the Rule of Law, U.S. Treaties, Due Process, and Diplomacy.”

The Good Friday Hancock Drone Action Statement read, “Good Friday commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus. Recognizing that 70 percent of our nation identify as Christian, the activists come to the gates of the Hancock drone base to make real the crucifixion. As Jesus and others were crucified by the Roman Empire, drones are used by the U. S. empire in a similar fashion. In Roman times, crosses loomed over a community to warn people that they could be killed whenever the Empire decided. So, too, our drones fly over many countries threatening

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‘Activists [came] to the gates of the Hancock drone base to make real the crucifixion.’

Letters

Wider Audience Needed

I was given a copy of the winter 2017 issue of *Peace in Our Times* a couple of days ago and I am blown away by the Angie Hines interview. The article should receive extensive distribution. Is there any way to get it out to a wider audience?

I am tremendously impressed by what you are doing and will put my \$15 check for a subscription in the mail straight away.

Thank you for your time and efforts.

—Paula Day

Right the Ship of State

Dear Partner in Peace, Tarak:

Here we be, you and I and sundry other mates, embarked on stormy, shark-infested seas, rolling, pitching, and yawing out of control aboard a rudderless, directionless Ship of State, no safe port or haven in sight on the horizon, incomprehensibly captained by Queeg, Son of Ahab, a person of markedly poor seamanship and character, whom, from a pool of some 300 million possibilities, we have chosen to elevate to lofty authority.

Along with him, a motley crew of landlubbers, many of dubious sobriety, we observe.

The voices of the moment call out, in desperation, for a person of reason, tact, statesmanship, and compassion, capable of making right the plethora of wrongs manifest, while there remains a smidgen of time at our disposal, replace the buffoon we have empowered, and set right our wallowing, dismasted Ship of State before she sinks to the bottom with all hands lost.

—Stan Levin
Veterans For Peace
San Diego Chapter

Peace in Our Times

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A Note from the Editors

Living in the Outer Provinces

So it's late summer, late seventies when my wife and I and our two little kids pull into the dirt driveway of our new home—an 1820s farmhouse in need of much repair. Perhaps it was our long hair or the fact that we drove up to the house in two (not one) VW vans replete with tie-dyed curtains that caused our one neighbor across the way, "old" Mrs. Jones (name changed to protect the innocent), to offer a hesitant wave. No matter. We were soon welcomed into her world—barely younger than I am now, and legally blind, she lived alone in an old rambling house that kept her dry and warm. All she wanted. She loved our kids. And they loved her back.

The so-called town we moved into had one country store and some 600 residents spread out over dirt roads, rambling meadows and thick woods connected by sweet streams and a few glacial ponds. Either lovingly or disparagingly, the town was referred to as "slab city" because many of our neighbors had a penchant to lay down a slab of cement and plop a trailer down and call that home. No matter. Where you lived did not count as much as how you lived—not a burden to anyone but always willing to lend a helping hand. Pay your taxes, attend town meetings (the first one we went to featured a swinging brawl between two feuding neighbors), and buy local if you could.

To say that our political beliefs do not necessarily align with many of our fellow District Two neighbors is an understatement.

And so it has gone for the past 40 years or so. Our kids went to the local schools, played sports, went off to college, and now have families of their own downstate. "Mrs. Jones" has long passed on. We have gone from heating with three wood stoves and 10 cords of wood to two stoves, four cords of wood and heat pumps that run off our solar panels. We have both quit our day jobs, so to speak, spending much time working in our organic gardens and tending our greenhouse. When an elderly Vietnamese peasant is asked by visiting Americans if she or he has retired, the answer is: "We don't say that; we say we are returning to our gardens." Exactly.

We also engage in politics and political discussions. My wife attends book discussion groups at the local college and is on a committee that regularly meets in Augusta. I edit the VFP newsletter and co-edit this paper, both devoted to veterans' issues and more. I also volunteer at Togus VA hospital. We read a lot. We stand vigil

every Friday in front of the post office encouraging passersby to "resist war" and work for peace. We have been doing that for 13 years now. People may not agree with us, but we have earned their grudging respect by not missing a single week throughout these years.

So now the darkness has begun to descend upon us. I'm not talking about the seasonal vagaries of Maine—we have weathered plenty of them—but, of course, the political atmospherics of the day. To say that our political beliefs do not necessarily align with many of our fellow District Two neighbors is an understatement. Each day I drive into town I pass by a shed with a confederate flag proudly attached to it. If I go in the other direction, I drive by a house with a clothes line adorned by American flags and a sign that proudly announces the owner's devout allegiance to the Donald. When we put up a yard sign calling for stricter gun laws, we were careful to place it down the road a bit so that a drive-by shooter wouldn't send a round into our house if he was upset by our attack on his rights to arm himself to the teeth. No such incident oc-

up the majority of our citizens, then we will never turn our justified, status quo-busting attention to where it belongs—toward the corporate vampires and their lackeys who run our local, state, and national governments. Instead, we might be convinced to moralize against, preach to, even yell at those neighbors who seem to be different from us. But most of us up here don't, really. Why not?

First of all, because we are neighbors. And that still means something. But I think another answer to that question can also be found in a recent essay entitled "We Are All Deplorables" written by the war correspondent/peace activist Chris Hedges. His grandparents lived in Mechanics Falls, Maine, so he has witnessed this town's decline into boarded up storefronts as the paper mill closed and his stressed-out, overworked relatives fell into deep despair. These people do not want our pity nor any self-righteous platitudes. They want economic justice. We all can relate to that.

Unfortunately, they have often sought solace from those snake oil salesmen Hedges calls "megachurch pastors"—you know, cable channel, AM radio preachers who "manipulate despair to achieve power and wealth" (Hedges).



The author places a letter by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C., Memorial Day 2016. Photo: Ellen Davidson

curred. Even our mailbox remained intact. Life goes on.

Which leads me to the point of this rambling discourse. Some will claim that the great divide rippling through this country is not only along racial fault lines but also along urban/rural ones. Forget blue versus red. Think city snobs versus country bumpkins. Liberals versus conservatives. Eggheads versus rednecks. And on and on, as if these neat little cultural packages can tell us anything. They can't, and what's worse, they encourage us to tap into myths that keep those of us in the lower-caste 99 percent at each other's throats. This is by design. Sure, there are real racists, misogynists, and homophobes walking among us. But as long as we think that those people make

Followers of these scum often adopt an apocalyptic vision that compels them to think of "the other" as disrupting their journey into justly deserved earthly and heavenly rewards. Of course I don't agree with them, but rather than talk "identity politics," and archly point out the folly of their ways, I suggest they consider the old adage—"follow the money." Who foots the campaign bill for your state senator and congressional representative? When the paper mill up and left, who was left behind and why? What manufacturing operations should we woo? Aside from the moral issues, why should we go after military contractors with their less labor-intensive projects than, say, alternative energy developers? And so forth. Ques-

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Men of U.S. Army 2nd Infantry Division advancing into Brest, France, under German machine-gun fire.

By Robert Maxwell O'Kane

It is 1942. Pearl Harbor has happened. I am a student in college. I enlist in the Army—a few months later I am called to active duty.

Abruptly, dramatically, I am transformed from the aspiring student, athlete, small town fellow to the anonymity of an Infantry Soldier. My identification now is simply stated as my serial number: 110-40-204.

I am culturally stripped, immediately, of any semblance of civilian life.

It is the beginning of three years preparation for, and practice of, a legalized vio-

in organizations, in war) need to give expression to these experiences. They need to examine the causes, the pathologies, of violence and war. If we are to open ways to that elusive state we call Peace, we must understand and correct those causes of violence and war first.

My conviction is that war is barbaric, obscene and stupid; so is destructive conflict in all human actions. Conflict, violence, and war are too often seen as glorious encounters in competitive struggles for settling who are to be “winners” and “losers”—but destructive conflict can only result in everyone being a “loser.”

Anyone who has fought in a war, as far

and developed to include studies of peace in all of our curricula—in schools, governmental agencies, public forums, in churches, and in the vast media we have.

Peace is about people interacting in cooperative ways; it is about social organizations of diverse peoples who willingly choose to cooperate for the benefit of all humankind; it calls for a system of societies in which there are no winners and losers—all are winners; it is a “state so highly valued that institutions are built around it to protect and promote it.”

Veterans For Peace believe that one cannot claim the attributes of being civilized until, and unless, one finds ways to resolve the causes and occasions of destructive conflict, unbridled violence, and war—and those ways must be perceived as the processes of education writ large.

And those are some of the reasons why I am a member of Veterans For Peace. But there are other important, personal reasons, ones which have remained with me for a long time.

In midwinter of 1944, my Army company was on top of a mountain ridge on the border of France and Germany, looking down on the city of Colmar, the German soldiers below us. It was bitterly cold and some of us lit a small fire in the rocks near our foxholes. We filled our canteen cups with snow, and melted the concentrated chocolate bars, then poured the chocolate over the snow to make a sort of sundae. It was relatively quiet. Then a German mortar barrage hit the trees above us ... we scattered to our holes. When the barrage stopped, I went to check on my men; one was huddled near the small fire; he wasn't moving. I checked and found that shrapnel had penetrated his chest—he died in

my arms calling for his mother.

A few months later we were being fired on by German snipers in the wooded hills near a village in Germany. Several of us went up the hill to attack the snipers. We killed a number of them. One German soldier suddenly stood up in front of me, aiming his rifle. I shot him. I went forward to check him, he was badly wounded. Just as I reached him, our troops in the road

I never heard any of my fellow soldiers describe the horrors, dirt, fatigue, hurting, killing, and terror of combat as ‘glorious’!

below, thinking we were all Germans on the hill, began firing machine guns at us. I fell to the ground and found myself facing the badly wounded German soldier. He was very young. We looked at each other, my troops' bullets close to our bodies. The German soldier was crying, “Mutter, Mutter (mother, mother).”

Two young soldiers, American and German, probably as innocent as most of us about why we were there, dying, calling for their mothers.

And that is another reason why I am a Veteran For Peace.

Dr. Robert Maxwell O'Kane served with the U.S. Army's 7th Regiment of the 3rd Infantry Division in Europe during World War II and was the recipient of two Purple Hearts, two Silver Stars, and a Bronze Star. He retired as a captain from the Army Reserve. Later in life he became an ardent member of Veterans For Peace and spoke frequently around the country of the senseless destruction war causes, particularly regarding the horror of land mines. O'Kane, age 86, died Feb. 16, 2007, at Portsmouth, N.H., Regional Hospital.

Just as I reached him, our troops in the road below, thinking we were all Germans on the hill, began firing machine guns at us.

lence ... the ultimate violence of combat in war as an infantry soldier in Europe. From altar boy to a trained practitioner of violence, adept in the use of many kinds of weapons, all designed to be violently used—to hurt and kill.

I became an expert in their uses, enough to be awarded medals by my country.

Now I am a Veteran For Peace. Now I and others in VFP ponder the causes of violence and war and wonder: is peace possible?

To understand violence, and war, in their ultimate dimensions is, of course, to experience such. Not a very inviting or sought-for goal. But those who have experienced violence (in the home, in school,

as I know, never considered combat to be “glorious.” I never heard any of my fellow soldiers describe the horrors, dirt, fatigue, hurting, killing, and terror of combat as “glorious”! What I did hear was young men hoping they would somehow survive what they were experiencing.

We have long been “schooled” for and about the conditions of war. Our history books are replete with graphic accounts of war, with emphasis on the glorification, the heroism, the gains of the victors. Little attention is given to the downsides of war—almost no attention is given to the plight of those vanquished.

Very little attention is given to peace in the history books. Ways need to be found

Outer Provinces

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tions like these can open up dialogue that is essentially devoid of personal recriminations.

If we want to join forces and beat back the real demons, then let's talk economics. Let's counter the Milton Friedman, Chicago School, neoliberal free-market scavengers with a dash of, say, John Maynard Keynes value-based, community-oriented monetary policies. But however we frame our economic discussions, let's not be divided. Let's not stand astride the fabricated gullies concocted by the Wall Street media hacks. They want us to tear each other apart while they reap the profits of wage-slave companies and heartless, profit-driven health plans. So, let's sit down and talk like neighbors who care about each other's welfare. Let's act like the best neighbors we can be.

—Doug Rawlings

How the U.S. Press Normalized Mussolini and Hitler

Journalists didn't recognize the threat of fascism until it was already too late

By John Broich

How to report on a fascist?

How to cover the rise of a political leader who's left a paper trail of anti-constitutionalism, racism, and the encouragement of violence? Does the press take the position that its subject acts outside the norms of society? Or does it take the position that someone who wins a fair election is by definition "normal," because his leadership reflects the will of the people?

These are the questions that confronted the U.S. press after the ascendance of fascist leaders in Italy and Germany in the 1920s and 1930s.



Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini review troops readied for Germany's North Africa campaign.

A Leader for Life

Benito Mussolini secured Italy's premiership by marching on Rome with 30,000 blackshirts in 1922. By 1925 he had declared himself leader for life. While this hardly reflected American values, Mussolini was a darling of the American press, appearing in at least 150 articles from 1925 to 1932, most neutral, bemused or positive in tone.

The Saturday Evening Post even serialized Il Duce's autobiography in 1928. Acknowledging that the new "Fascisti movement" was a bit "rough in its methods," papers ranging from the *New York Tribune* to the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* to the *Chicago Tribune* credited it with saving Italy from the far left and revitalizing its economy. From their perspective, the post-WWI surge of anti-capitalism in Europe was a vastly worse threat than fascism.

Ironically, while the media acknowl-

edged that fascism was a new "experiment," papers like *The New York Times* commonly credited it with returning turbulent Italy to what it called "normalcy."

Yet some journalists, like Hemingway, and journals, like *The New Yorker*, rejected the normalization of anti-democratic Mussolini. John Gunther of *Harper's*, meanwhile, wrote a razor-sharp account of Mussolini's masterful manipulation of a U.S. press that couldn't resist him.

The 'German Mussolini'

Mussolini's success in Italy normalized Hitler's success in the eyes of the American press which, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, routinely called him "the German Mussolini." Given Mussolini's positive press reception in that period, it was a good place from which to start. Hitler also had the advantage that his Nazi

party enjoyed stunning leaps at the polls from the mid '20s to early '30s, going from a fringe party to winning a dominant share of parliamentary seats in free elections in 1932.

But the main way that the press defanged Hitler was by portraying him as something of a joke. He was a "nonsensical" screecher of "wild words" whose appearance, according to *Newsweek*, "suggests Charlie Chaplin." His "countenance is a caricature." He was as "voluble" as he was "insecure," stated *Cosmopolitan*.

When Hitler's party won influence in parliament, and even after he was made chancellor of Germany in 1933—about a year and a half before seizing dictatorial power—many American press outlets judged that he would either be outplayed by more traditional politicians or that he would have to become more moderate. Sure, he had a following, but his followers were "impressionable voters" duped by "radical doctrines and quack remedies," claimed *The Washington Post*. Now that Hitler actually had to operate within a government, the "sober" politicians would "submerge" this movement, according to *The New York Times* and *Christian Science Monitor*. A "keen sense of dramatic instinct" was not enough. When it came time to govern, his lack of "gravity" and "profundity of thought" would be exposed.

In fact, *The New York Times* wrote after Hitler's appointment to the chancellorship that success would only "let him expose to the German public his own futility." Journalists wondered whether Hitler now regretted leaving the rally for the cabinet meeting, where he would have to assume some responsibility.

Yes, the American press tended to condemn Hitler's well-documented anti-Semitism in the early 1930s. But there were plenty of exceptions. Some papers downplayed reports of violence against Germany's Jewish citizens as propaganda like that which proliferated during the foregoing world war. Many, even

those who categorically condemned the violence, repeatedly declared it to be at an end, showing a tendency to look for a return to normalcy.

Journalists were aware that they could only criticize the German regime so much and maintain their access. When a CBS broadcaster's son was beaten up by brown-shirts for not saluting the Führer, he didn't report it. When the *Chicago Daily News'* Edgar Mowrer wrote that Germany was becoming "an insane asylum" in 1933, the Germans pressured the State Department to rein in American reporters. Allen Dulles, who eventually became director of the CIA, told Mowrer he was "taking the German situation too seriously." Mowrer's publisher then transferred him out of Germany in fear of his life.

By the later 1930s, most U.S. journalists realized their mistake in underestimating Hitler or failing to imagine just how bad things could get (though there remained infamous exceptions, like Douglas Chandler, who wrote a loving paean to "Changing Berlin" for *National Geographic* in 1937). Dorothy Thompson, who judged Hitler a man of "startling insignificance" in 1928, realized her mistake by mid-decade when she, like Mowrer, began raising the alarm.

"No people ever recognize their dictator in advance," she reflected in 1935. "He never stands for election on the platform of dictatorship. He always represents himself as the instrument [of] the Incorporated National Will." Applying the lesson to the United States, she wrote, "When our dictator turns up you can depend on it that he will be one of the boys, and he will stand for everything traditionally American."

John Broich is an Associate Professor of History at Case Western Reserve University. He has written on environmental history, the history of race and empire, Royal Navy history, and WWII history. This article was originally published on The Conversation.

My War Never Ended

My war ended during a warm Spring day in Czechoslovakia.

The Germans were done. Safe now, birds returned, trilling, fluttering around my head, seeking sustenance for tomorrows.

I was homeward bound, unaware that for my sake, Eisenhower murdered Eddie Slovik, unaware the French, trying to regain a cushy colony, were destroying a world, unaware that Korean menus were being printed by MacArthur and Co., unaware that my youthful interest in Finland, Ethiopia, China and Spain made them mine.

Unaware that Truman prepaid Vietnam to the tune of four billion, secret music the French would waltz with. As an introduction to that dance, lies were floated on the high seas.

Heroes trekked to Canada, while Harry's co-conspirators tangoed over the jungles.

Reverberations of their tunes left common folks withering with their trees and food and homes, birds again taking wing to hidden places.

Today, these ancient dances macabres continue in the Golden Triangle, where peace-proclaiming leaders' lies lubricate the Birthplace of Civilization, compressing it with greed into civilizations' tomb.

Me, naïve, all those juddering decades ago.

My war never ended, never will.

—Jay Wenk

Succumbing to Bush/Obama Perpetual War

Trump is the third post-9/11 president to prosecute bloody conflicts in the Mideast and impose mass surveillance at home

By Ann Wright

Fourteen years ago, on March 19, 2003, I resigned from the U.S. government in opposition to President George W. Bush's decision to invade and occupy Iraq, an oil-rich Arab/Muslim country that had nothing to do with the events of Sept. 11, 2001, and that the Bush Administration knew did not have weapons of mass destruction.

In my letter of resignation, I wrote of my deep concerns about Bush's decision to attack Iraq and the predictably large number of civilian casualties from that military attack. But I also detailed my concerns on other issues: the lack of U.S. effort to resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict, the U.S. failure to engage North Korea to curb nuclear and missile development, and the curtailment of civil liberties in the United States through the USA PATRIOT Act.

Now, three presidents into the Iraq War and other unsettled conflicts, the problems that I was concerned about in 2003 are even more dangerous a decade and a half later.

the homes of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been destroyed.

Over 800,000 Israelis now live in illegal settlements on stolen Palestinian lands in the West Bank. The Israeli government has built hundreds of miles of separation/apartheid walls on Palestinian land, separating Palestinians from their farms, schools, and employment. Brutal, humiliating checkpoints purposely attempt to degrade the spirit of Palestinians. Israeli-only highways have been built on Palestinian lands. The theft of Palestinian resources has ignited a worldwide, citizen-led boycott, divestment, and sanctions program.

Imprisonment of Palestinian children for throwing rocks at Israeli occupation military forces has reached crisis levels. Evidence of the Israeli government's inhumane treatment of Palestinians has now been formally called "apartheid" in a U.N. report that resulted in massive Israeli and U.S. pressure on the United Nations to withdraw the report and force the under-secretary who commissioned the report to resign.



Barack Obama and George W. Bush at the White House.

war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan; forced exile for NSA contractor Edward Snowden for revealing U.S. government lies about the NSA's bulk collection; Julian Assange's virtual imprisonment in London's Ecuadorian Embassy for fear of retaliation against WikiLeaks' disclosures of U.S. government secrets.

Trump's Complaint

In the latest bizarre twist, President Donald Trump has accused President Barack Obama of "wiretapping" the Trump Tower in New York City during the presidential campaign, but then—amid widespread denials—refused to provide any evidence, although it's true that virtually all citizens have become targets of electronic surveillance.

The past 14 years have been difficult for the world due to U.S. wars of choice and the growth of the surveillance state. And the next four years do not appear likely to bring any relief to the citizens of planet Earth.

The election of Donald Trump, the first U.S. President who has never served in any level of government nor in the U.S. military, has led to—in a little more than two months—an unprecedented number of domestic and international crises, many self-inflicted:

- The Trump Administration has attempted to ban persons from seven mostly Muslim countries (later reduced to six);
- The Trump Administration has appointed to Cabinet positions members of the billionaire class from Wall Street and Big Oil, people who have the intention of destroying the agencies they are to lead.
- The Trump Administration has proposed a budget that will increase the U.S. military war budget by 10 percent, but slash the budgets of other agencies to render them ineffective.
- The Department of State and International Affairs budget for conflict resolution by words not bullets will be slashed by 37 percent.
- The Trump Administration has appointed a person to head the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) who has declared the worsening climate chaos a hoax.

In retrospect, I am glad I resigned from the U.S. government when I did. My decision to resign has allowed me to speak publicly in the United States and around the world on issues that jeopardize international security from the perspective of a former U.S. government employee with 29 years of experience in the U.S. Army and 16 years in the U.S. diplomatic corps.

I am glad that I could join the millions of citizens around the world who are challenging their governments when the governments violate legal standards, kill innocent civilians, and wreak havoc on the planet.

Ann Wright served 29 years in the U.S. Army and Army Reserves and retired as a colonel. She served as a U.S. diplomat for 16 years before her resignation in March 2003 in opposition to the Iraq War. She is the co-author of Dissent: Voices of Conscience.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Donald Trump at White House press conference Feb. 15, 2017.

Continuing U.S. Wars of Terror

As a U.S. diplomat, I was on the small team that reopened the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, in December 2001. Sixteen years later, the United States is still battling the Taliban in Afghanistan, as the Taliban takes more and more territory, in America's longest war, while the graft and corruption within the Afghan government due to the mammoth U.S.-funded contracts for support of the U.S. military machine continue to provide the Taliban with new recruits.

The United States is now fighting against ISIS, a brutal group that emerged because of the U.S. war in Iraq, but has spread from Iraq into Syria, as the U.S. policy of regime change has resulted in arming international as well as domestic Syrian groups to fight not only ISIS, but the Syrian government. The deaths of civilians in Iraq and Syria continue to rise with the acknowledgement this week by the U.S. military that it is "likely" that a U.S. bombing mission killed over 200 civilians in one building in the Iraqi city of Mosul.

Slaughtering Palestinians

With U.S. government acquiescence, if not complicity, the Israeli military has attacked Gaza three times in the past eight years. Thousands of Palestinians have been killed, tens of thousands have been wounded, and

Provoking Korea

The North Korean government continues to call for negotiations with the United States and South Korea for a peace treaty to end the Korean War. But the U.S. government has responded with a rejection of any discussions with North Korea until North Korea ends its nuclear program. The United States also has increased U.S.-South Korean military drills, the last one named "Decapitation"—moves that have resulted in the North Korean government continuing its nuclear testing and missile projects.

Surveiling Our Own

The war on civil liberties of U.S. citizens under the USA PATRIOT Act resulted in unprecedented surveillance through cell phones, computers, and other electronic devices, massive illegal data collection and indefinite, perpetual storage of private information of not only U.S. citizens, but all inhabitants of this planet.

The Obama war on whistleblowers who have exposed various aspects of the illegal data collection has inflicted severe punishments on people accused of sharing truthful information with the public, including: bankruptcy for National Security Agency official Tom Drake in successfully defending against espionage charges; Pvt. Chelsea Manning's long prison sentence for exposing

At the Crossroads

The choice is ours, says Chief Looking Horse; the global human community must unite in the sacred work of healing Mother Earth, or we will perish

By Chief Arvol Looking Horse

I, Chief Arvol Looking Horse, of the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota Nations, ask you to understand an Indigenous perspective on what has happened in America, what we call “Turtle Island.” My words seek to unite the global community through a message from our sacred ceremonies to unite spiritually, each in our own ways of beliefs in the Creator.

We have been warned from ancient prophecies of these times we live in today, but have also been given a very im-



Chief Arvol Looking Horse. Photo: Bryan Eneas

portant message about a solution to turn these terrible times.

To understand the depth of this message you must recognize the importance of Sacred Sites and realize the interconnectedness of what is happening today, in reflection of the continued massacres that are occurring on other lands and our own Americas.

I have been learning about these important issues since the age of 12 when I received the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe Bundle and its teachings. Our people have strived to protect Sacred Sites from the beginning of time. These places have been violated for centuries and have brought us to the predicament that we are in at the global level.

Look around you. Our Mother Earth is very ill from these violations, and we are on the brink of destroying the possibility of a healthy and nurturing survival for generations to come, our children's children.

Our ancestors have been trying to protect our Sacred Site called the Sacred Black Hills in South Dakota, “Heart of Everything That Is,” from continued violations. Our ancestors never saw a satellite view of this site, but now that those pictures are available, we see that it is in the shape of a heart and, when fast-forwarded, it looks like a heart pumping.

The Diné have been protecting Big Mountain, calling it the liver of the earth, and we are suffering and going to suffer more from the extraction of the coal there and the poisoning processes used in doing so.

The Aborigines have warned of the contaminating effects of global warming on the Coral Reefs, which they see as Mother Earth's blood purifier.

The indigenous people of the rainforest say that the rainforests are the lungs of the planet and need protection.

The Gwich'in Nation in Alaska has had to face oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge coastal plain, also known to the Gwich'in as “Where life begins.”

The coastal plain is the birthplace of many life forms of the animal nations. The death of these animal nations will destroy indigenous nations in this territory.

As these destructive developments con-

tinue all over the world, we will witness many more extinct animal, plant, and human nations, because of mankind's misuse of power and their lack of understanding of the “balance of life.”

The Indigenous people warn that these destructive developments will cause havoc globally. There are many, many more indigenous teachings and knowledge about Mother Earth's Sacred Sites, her chakras, and connections to our spirit that will surely affect our future generations.

There needs to be a fast move toward other forms of energy that are safe for all nations upon Mother Earth. We need to understand the types of minds that are continuing to destroy the spirit of our

A “disease of the mind” has set in world leaders and many members of our global community, with their belief that a solution of retaliation and destruction of peoples will bring peace.

In our prophecies it is told that we are now at the crossroads: Either unite spiritually as a global nation, or be faced with chaos, disasters, diseases, and tears from our relatives' eyes.

We are the only species that is destroying the source of life, meaning Mother Earth, in the name of power, mineral resources, and ownership of land. Using chemicals and methods of warfare that are doing irreversible damage, as Mother Earth is becoming tired and cannot sustain any more impacts of war.

I ask you to join me in this endeavor. Our vision is for the peoples of all continents, regardless of their beliefs in the Creator, to come together as one at their Sacred Sites to pray and meditate and commune with one another, thus promoting an energy shift to heal our Mother Earth and achieve a universal consciousness toward attaining Peace.

As each day passes, I ask all nations to begin a global effort, and remember to give thanks for the sacred food that has been gifted to us by our Mother Earth, so the nutritional energy of medicine can be guided to heal our minds and spirits.

This new millennium will usher in an age of harmony or it will bring the end of life as we know it. Starvation, war, and toxic waste have been the hallmark of the great myth of progress and development that ruled the last millennium.

To us, as caretakers of the heart of Mother Earth, falls the responsibility of

A ‘disease of the mind’ has set in world leaders and many members of our global community, with their belief that a solution of retaliation and destruction of peoples will bring peace.

whole global community. Unless we do this, the powers of destruction will overwhelm us.

Our Ancestors foretold that water would someday be for sale. Back then this was hard to believe, since the water was so plentiful, so pure, and so full of energy, nutrition and spirit. Today we have to buy pure water, and even then the nutritional minerals have been taken out; it's just empty liquid. Someday water will be like gold, too expensive to afford.

Not everyone will have the right to drink safe water. We fail to appreciate and honor our Sacred Sites, ripping out the minerals and gifts that lay underneath them as if Mother Earth were simply a resource, instead of the source of life itself.

Attacking nations and using more resources to carry out destruction in the name of peace is not the answer! We need to understand how all these decisions affect the global nation; we will not be immune to its repercussions. Allowing continual contamination of our food and land is affecting the way we think.

turning back the powers of destruction. You yourself are the one who must decide.

You alone—and only you—can make this crucial choice, to walk in honor or to dishonor your relatives. On your decision depends the fate of the entire World.

Each of us is put here in this time and this place to personally decide the future of humankind.

Did you think the Creator would create unnecessary people in a time of such terrible danger?

Know that you yourself are essential to this world. Understand both the blessing and the burden of that. You yourself are desperately needed to save the soul of this world. Did you think you were put here for something less? In a Sacred Hoop of Life, there is no beginning and no ending.

Chief Arvol Looking Horse is the author of White Buffalo Teachings. A tireless advocate of maintaining traditional spiritual practices, Chief Looking Horse is a member of Big Foot Riders, which memorializes the massacre of Big Foot's band at Wounded Knee.

On the Ward

For Lizz

***So, describe what it's like, she said,
working with veterans,
and to her credit her eyes
did not glaze over***

***as I said:
March is the month that opens
with the roar of a lion
and today is no exception***

***as I took the dog down the woods
road
and the birches and oaks
so silent for most of the year
squealed and creaked snapped and
bellowed***

***sometimes even collapsing
sometimes alone
sometimes bringing down their pals
but more often just leaving a limb
across the road that I clear out by
myself.***

***All because the wind has taken the
time
and the care to pass through
with fierce open arms, giving those
silent sentinels
voice, so to speak.***

***And then the ward nurse usually tells
me
that our time is up and the session is
over.***

***I see, Lizz said.
Which is how
I know she gets it.
She gets it.***

—Doug Rawlings

Hancock 9

... continued from page 1

extrajudicial killings and upon whoever happens to be in the vicinity. On this Good Friday, activists recall Jesus' call to love and nonviolence. We are asking the Air Force base and this nation to turn away from a policy of modern-day crucifixion."

Hancock Air Base is located on the backside of Syracuse International Airport. It hosts the 174th Attack Wing of the New York Air National Guard—the MQ9 Reaper drone hub. It is also the national Reaper maintenance training center. The MQ9 Reaper is a robotic, satellite-linked, remote assassin drone. Hancock is presently one of 20 U.S. drone-warfare bases across the United States, and there are more in Germany, Australia, Italy, and the UK. The "Drone Papers," leaked by an internal military whistleblower, states that during a 5-month period in 2015, 90 percent of all drone victims were bystand-

ers, including children.

The activists stated, "What if our country were constantly being spied upon by drones, with some of us killed by drones? What if many bystanders, including children, were killed in the process? If that were happening, we would hope that some people in that attacking country would speak up and try to stop the killing. We're speaking up to try and stop the illegal and immoral drone attacks on countries against which Congress has not declared war."

Those arrested were Veterans For Peace member Ray McGovern, Jessica Stewart of Bar Harbor Maine Catholic Worker, Syracuse antimilitarism activist Ed Kinane, Tom Joyce of Ithaca Catholic Worker, James Ricks, Joan Pleune of Brooklyn Raging Grannies, Mark Colville of Amistad Catholic Worker, John Amidon of Veterans For Peace and Albany Friends Meeting, and Brian Hynes of New York City St. Joseph Catholic Worker.



'We are asking the Air Force base and this nation to turn away from a policy of modern-day crucifixion.'

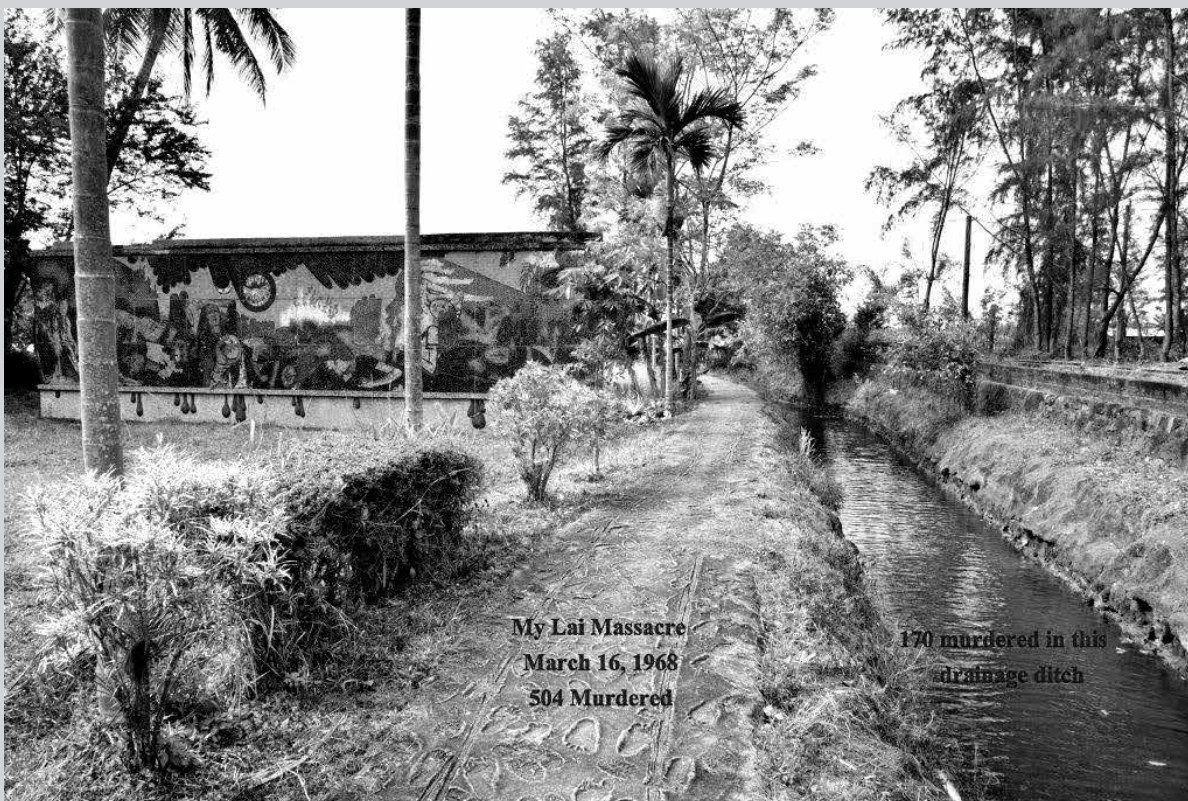


Photo by Mike Hastie
March 6, 2016

Kieu,

I wanted to send this picture to you, to use as you wish. It is my way of remembering a dreadful day in Vietnamese history, committed by my government. Millions of American people who were very much against the war will remember March 16, 1968. As a U.S. Army medic in An Khe, Vietnam, I am very sorry that I was ever involved in the war. I have carried this pain all of my life, but each time I return to Vietnam my pain becomes less, because the Vietnamese people are very kind to me. In 1994, I made my first trip back to Vietnam. When I was in Hue, I gave an old Vietnamese woman some money because she was very poor, and I carried so much shame for ever being in her country during the war. As I walked away from her, I returned to her and kissed her on the cheek. After I kissed her, I realized I was kissing my mother. The emotional connection between me and the Vietnamese people was very powerful at that moment. I was born in America, but my heart is Vietnamese.

Mike Hastie
February 25, 2017

[Kieu Phan is the co-director of the My Lai Massacre Museum in Quang Ngai, Vietnam.]

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.—George Santayana

VFP Joins Space Organizing Conference at 'Pentagon of the South' in Alabama

By Bruce Gagnon

It turned out to be a long hard trip to Huntsville, Ala., for the 25th annual Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space organizing protest and conference April 7-8.

Eric Herter and I were scheduled to fly from Boston on Thursday, April 6, in order to make it in time to get things ready for a very full weekend of events.

But major storms in Washington, D.C., and Atlanta caused a national disruption of airline schedules. (We heard Delta cancelled 300 flights.) Eric and I sat in our plane on the Boston runway for two-and-a-half hours waiting to take off, but the flight was eventually cancelled. We were told to retrieve our bags at baggage claim, but my suitcase, full of banners and supplies for the conference, was nowhere to be found.

Mary Beth Sullivan was to fly to Huntsville the next day, but when she heard about our cancelled flight, she jumped on a bus and met Eric and me at the airport. By then we had decided that the only way to make it to Huntsville in time for the conference was to rent a car and drive all night. We took turns driving and resting in the back seat of the rental car for what turned out to be a 20-hour journey.

Our crew of three arrived at the Huntsville hotel just an hour before the news conference we had scheduled to review our weekend plans for the local media. But first, I was in serious need of a shower. My bag had not yet been found,

so a local man loaned me a clean shirt.

Soon thereafter, people began to arrive from across the nation, including delegations of Veterans For Peace from Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. We loaded up our vehicles and made our way to the gate of the Army's Redstone Arsenal for a 4:00-5:30 peace protest as those working for the Army and NASA left work. There was a steady stream of cars for that 90-minute period, and I was quite surprised at the lack of hostility from those driving by. I expected a strong negative reception, and in fact we got a surprising number of waves and toots as cars zoomed by.

The bag full of Global Network space banners that we were going to use at this protest was lost along with my suitcase, so we had to make do with a smattering of other signs that people brought along. Still, the event went well, and we

NASA had helped us by informing the workers, which I am certain created some level of discussion about our protest even before we arrived.

had a nice closing circle with the 50 people who gathered at the gates. The place was crawling with media, and we were pleased with the photo coverage we got from the *Huntsville Times*.

One local space center employee told us that NASA had sent an email to all those



Huntsville Space and Rocket Center.

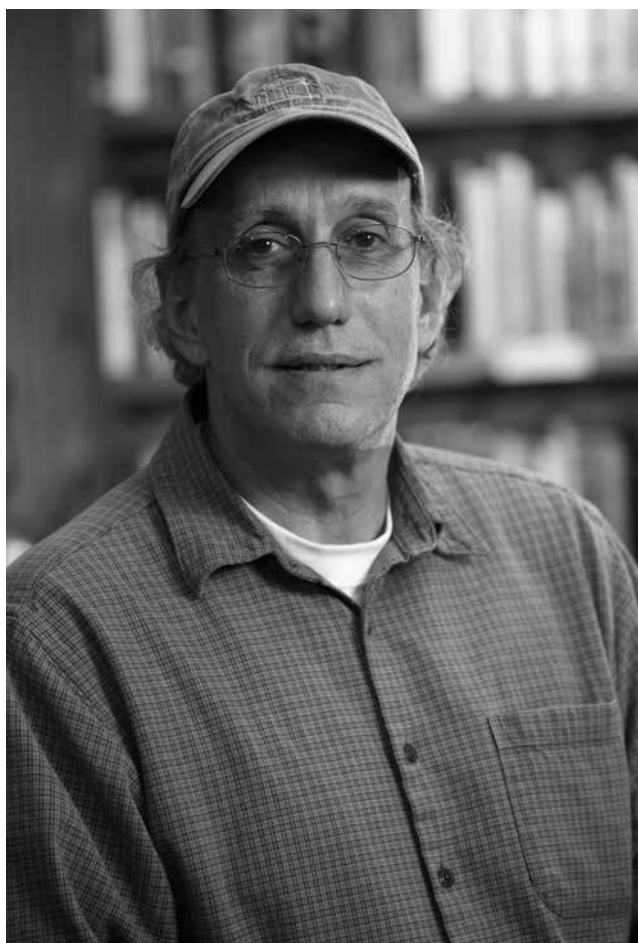
working inside Redstone Arsenal informing them that we would be protesting. It was nice to hear that NASA had helped us by informing the workers, which I am certain created some level of discussion about our protest even before we arrived. I experienced similar situations during my time in the Air Force at Travis AFB, Calif., during the Vietnam War, when base

three speakers (Guam, Norway, New York City) who were not going to be able to make the event due to cancelled flights. In spite of that, the conference went very well and the venue inside the Flying Monkey Theater was a perfect fit for us. There was plenty of room for literature tables and for serving food, and comfortable seating for all who attended.

We were thrilled to have a three-person delegation from the current NO THAAD speaking tour across the United States join us for the conference. Rev. Seong-hye Kim, co-chair of the Seongju Struggle Committee to Stop THAAD Deployment, South Korea, made an excellent presentation as she brought their important struggle to us.

We decided that our 2018 conference would be held in England—either at an expanding U.S. surveillance base called Croughton (near Oxford), or at the Menwith Hill U.S. NSA spy base in Yorkshire. Our 2019 annual conference will be in

continued on next page ...



Bruce Gagnon

Keep Planting Those Seeds

My energy is slowly returning after spending a couple days in bed earlier this week. That all-night drive from Boston to Huntsville just about finished me off as I arrived in rocket city with a sore throat and barely able to talk.

Yesterday I ordered garden seeds for spring planting that is still a few more weeks away. I always remember the words from our beloved Tom Sturtevant, who was one of the founders of Veterans For Peace in Maine. Tom always asked me on Memorial Day if I had our peas in the ground yet. He was a

What inspires me is the millions of good people all over the planet who keep the lights of love, justice, and peace burning.

Korean War Navy veteran who served on an aircraft carrier and often recalled how the United States bombed every building in North Korea during that ugly war. The North Koreans had to live underground and came out at night to tend their fields so they would not starve. Now today the United States is itching to unleash "shock and awe" upon them once again.

It can't be repeated often enough that the United States has become emotionally and economically addicted to war. We've been killing and stealing lands and resources since before the founding of this nation. Most Americans, for various reasons, are not particularly interested in reflecting on our violent history. Few are willing to take a deep look at our collapsing economy and the epidemic of depression that exists amongst our people—largely due to our endless wars and our tendency to devalue life at home and abroad.

Martin Luther King, Jr. put his finger on this in 1967 when he said, "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death." That is America's story.

Remarkably, what inspires me is the millions of good people all over the planet who keep the lights of love, justice, and peace burning. Imagine how much worse things would be without these steadfast and determined people.

There is no doubt that the dark forces are out to try to dominate the planet. Their greed and lust for power has put them into an epic struggle against the forces of light. I am proud to be part of the love team and will keep giving it my all as long as I take breath. What an honor to be alive with the simple mission to ensure that all future generations have a chance for life on this small spinning orb.

The humans, the plants, the animals, the water, the air—we are all related.

—Bruce Gagnon



Participants in the day-long conference on April 8. Note the No THAAD 'missile defense' banner hanging in the background. The United States is now forcing deployment of THAAD in South Korea despite growing national opposition.

... continued from previous page

Bath, Maine. Iraq and Afghanistan veteran Will Griffin was added to the Global Network board of directors.

On Sunday we took conference attendees to the Space and Rocket Museum, which was loaded with families and their children. It was important for conference

use at Redstone Arsenal had been ripped open and was tossed back on top of the disheveled contents. I can't help but wonder if my bag was sent off on its own delayed journey in order to make sure that I could not have what I needed for our events.

Special thanks go to a handful of local peaceniks in the Huntsville area who

It was important for conference attendees to see how the coming generations are being indoctrinated to support 'everything space.'

attendees to see how the coming generations are being indoctrinated to support "everything space." Space technology controls and directs everything the "war-fighter" does these days, but these systems are massively expensive. Thus the need for a thorough brainwashing program to help steer the unsuspecting public toward

really extended themselves to help us in every way possible before and during the weekend events. We could not have pulled this conference off without them, and it must be said that living in Huntsville and doing peace work is not an easy task, so their efforts on our behalf were even more impressive.



On the first day of the conference 50 activists held a 90-minute protest outside the Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville as Army and NASA personnel were leaving work. The reception from the steady stream of cars was much better than anticipated.

giving up social progress in order to pay for the dazzle and flash of military space technology.

My suitcase finally arrived at the hotel in Huntsville the night before the conference was over. When I opened it, I found a card from Homeland Security saying they had performed a "routine check" of the bag. Everything had been turned upside-down. The plastic bag with the protest banners that we were going to

Thanks as well to all those who traveled to Huntsville to join the conference from as far away as India, Nepal, England, Sweden, Japan, and South Korea, and from every corner of the United States.

Bruce K. Gagnon is a Vietnam-era Air Force veteran and VFP member who lives in Bath, Maine. He is coordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space.

What Would Gwendolyn Brooks Do?

*Dawn oversees percolating coffee
and the new wreckage of the world.*

*I stand before my routine reflection,
button up my sanity,
brush weary strands of hair with
pomade
and seal cracked lips of distrust
with cocoa butter and matte rouge.*

*I ready myself once again
for morning and mortify.
Stacking poetry and bills in a knapsack;
I bundle up hope (it's brutal out there).*

*For a moment, I stand with ghosts
and the framed ancestors surrounding
me.
I call out, hoping she can hear me
over the day-breaking sirens—
hoping she's not far away,
or right down the street,
praying over another dead black boy.*

*How will we make it through this,
Ms. Brooks?*

Hold On.

*When she held a body,
she saw much worse than this.
I know she was earshot and fingertip
close to oppression.
She saw how hateful hate could be.
She raised babies, taught Stone
Rangers,
grew a natural and wrote around critics.*

She won a Pulitzer in the dark.

*She justified our kitchenette dreams,
and held on.
She held on to all of us.*

Hold On, she whispers.

*Another day, when I have to tip-toe
around the police and passive-
aggressive emails
from people who sit only a few feet
away from me.
Another day of fractured humans
who decide how I will live and die,
and I have to act like I like it
so I can keep a job;
be a team player, pay taxes on it;
I have to act like I'm happy to be
slammed, severed, and swindled.
Otherwise, I'm just part of the
problem—
a rebel rouser and rude.*

*They want me to like it, or at least
pretend,
so the pretty veils that blanket who we
really are—
this complicated history, can stay pretty
and veiled
like some desert belly dancer
who must be seen but not heard.*

Hold On.

*We are a world of lesions.
Human has become hindrance.
We must be stamped and have papers,
and still, it's not enough.*

*Ignorance has become powerful.
The dice that rolls our futures is
platinum
but hollow inside.*

*Did you see that, Ms. Brooks?
Do you see what we've become?
They are skinning our histories,
deporting our roots,
detonating our very right to tell the truth.
We are one step closer to annihilation.*

*Hold On, she says,
two million light years away.*

*She's right.
Hold On everybody.
Hold On because the poets are still
alive—and writing.
Hold On to the last of the disappearing
bees
and that Great Barrier Reef.
Hold On to the one sitting next to you,
not masked behind some keyboard.
The one right next to you.
The ones who live and love right next to
you.
Hold On to them.*

*And when we bury another
grandmother,
or another black boy;
when we stand in front of a pipeline,
pour another glass of dirty drinking
water
and put it on the dining room table,
next to the kreplach, bratwurst, tamales,
collards, and dumplings
that our foremothers and fathers—
immigrants,
brought with them so we all knew that
we came from somewhere;
somewhere that mattered.
When we kneel on the rubbled
mosques,
sit in massacred prayer circles,
Holding On is what gets us through.*

*We must remember who we are.
We are worth fighting for.
We've seen beauty.
We've birthed babies who've only
known a black President.
We've tasted empathy and paid it
forward.
We've Go-Funded from wrong to right.
We've marched and made love.
We haven't forgotten—even if they
have—Karma is keeping watch.*

*Hold On.
Hold On everybody.
Even if all you have left
is that middle finger around your God-
given right
to be free, to be heard, to be loved,
and remembered ... Hold On,
and keep
Holding.*

—Parneshia Jones

Parneshia Jones is an award-winning poet published in several anthologies including *She Walks in Beauty: A Woman's Journey Through Poems*. Gwendolyn Brooks is one of the most highly regarded poets of the 20th century, and the first black author to win the Pulitzer Prize.

The letter below was sent to President Donald Trump. Veterans and their supporters will gather in Washington, D.C., May 30 to demand that the President meet with them. For details, see opposite page or go to veteransforpeace.org.



VETERANS FOR PEACE

NATIONAL OFFICE: 1404 North Broadway, St. Louis, MO 63102
PHONE: (314) 725-6005 **FAX:** (314) 227-1981 **E-MAIL:** vfp@veteransforpeace.org

March 30, 2017

President Donald Trump
 The White House
 1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
 Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

We want our Peace Bonus.

As you may know, a bonus was promised to the American soldiers who fought World War I—the “war to end all war,” but they called it, “hell on earth.” More than their bonuses, those soldiers wanted peace. They gathered in Washington in 1932 to demand payment of their bonus, but they were met with violence, in their own nation’s capital, just for trying to claim what was rightfully theirs.

I am president of Veterans For Peace (VFP), a national organization of military veterans with a visceral understanding of war and its causes. We have come to believe in nonviolence as a more effective and humane response to conflict.

In 1967, Martin Luther King Jr. said prophetically, “A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual doom.”

I wish to convey our serious opposition to your administration’s policy of increasing the military budget while decreasing and even eliminating funding for vital social services.

As veterans, we have long recognized that increases to an already bloated Pentagon budget are what keep us in the business of war. We in VFP are not fooled into thinking that this budget makes our country any safer.

Marine General Smedley Butler, two-time Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, pronounced, “War is a racket.” We believe that and we are sick of it. Butler’s sentiment is still resonant today. In the words of our own Matt Hoh, a former State Department official and Marine captain: “The killing, the organized murder we engaged in, benefitted only the profits of the defense corporations, the salaries of retired generals, and the terrorist groups themselves.”

We speak for the majority of U.S. citizens, who believe your policies are taking innocent lives and endangering more of our young soldiers, who have already given so much in the needless wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Now we have sent more Marines into Syria. Your policies are also causing suffering and despair among immigrants, Muslims, communities of color, women, Native Americans, and LGBTQ communities, and if implemented, these policies will further destroy the environment. Ultimately, they make all of us considerably less secure.

Since these policies do nothing to promote human or planetary betterment, we are left to conclude they are intended to maintain and advance what has sadly become the global U.S. Empire—an empire that, like all empires of the past, exploits and oppresses other nations and the earth itself in order to increase the wealth and power of the very few. Meanwhile common people’s lives become more and more impoverished.

We are now requesting that a delegation from Veterans For Peace be invited to meet with you in person to speak about your policies and how they affect peace, at home and abroad—with independent media present.

Like the bonus marchers of the 1930s, we demand our bonus. The bonus for our service and the many sacrifices of our comrades is peace.

Most sincerely yours,

Barry Ladendorf, National President
 Veterans For Peace
 U.S. Navy, 1965-69

Veterans on the March! Stop Endless War, Build for Peace

“War is a racket: A few profit, the many pay!”—Major General Smedley Butler, USMC

The Trump administration recently fired 59 Tomahawk missiles into Syria, in violation of international and U.S. law. After that, the largest non-nuclear bomb was dropped on Afghanistan, an impoverished country that has suffered enough already. Trump has been making threats towards North Korea that could initiate a nuclear war—WWIII. He says he will not tell anyone ahead of time what he will do.

Donald Trump and company are hell-bent on destroying this planet with utter disregard for our children and grandchildren. Veterans cannot be silent while he does it.

On May 30 Veterans For Peace and others will be in Washington, D.C., to make our collective veterans' voices heard loud and clear, and we ask everyone who cares about peace and the planet to join us.

On May 30, we will boldly and loudly demand an end to war, an end to the assault on our planet, an end to abuse and oppression of all people and to stand for peace and justice at home and abroad.

We will hold a powerful rally at the Lincoln Memorial at 11:00 a.m., followed by a march to the White House.

Our demands are:

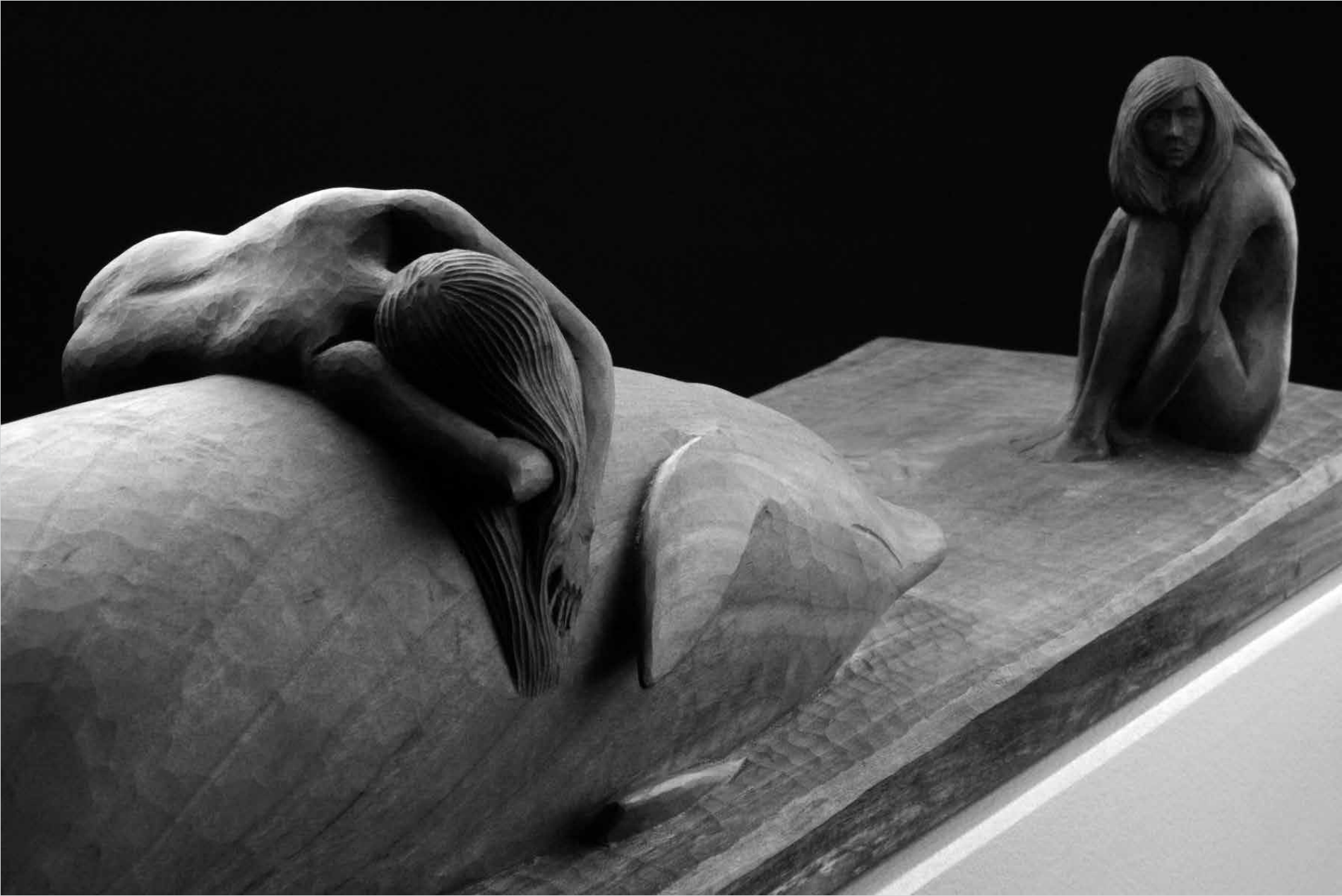
1. Dismantle the U.S. empire at home and abroad
2. Close U.S. bases on foreign soil; bring the troops home
3. Ban nuclear weapons
4. Redirect the Pentagon budget; money for education, health-care, infrastructure and sustainable green energy
5. Dismantle corporate control of our government
6. Dismantle the school-to-prison/military pipeline
7. Stop persecution of migrants, immigrants, and refugees
8. End sexism and gender discrimination in the military
9. Respect and honor First Nation sovereignty and treaties
10. End racism and racist violence

Peace is still possible! Join us. We need you. The earth needs you. For more information, visit VeteransForPeace.org.

Lamentation

By Russell Wray
Cherry wood, 6 1/4" h. x 37" w. x 8" d.

I carved this piece from a cherry log to express my deep sorrow over what humans have been doing, and continue to do, to our non-human relatives... In this case, the whales. I love this Earth and all her creatures, but I have a particular fondness for the whales and dolphins. It was they who made me an activist, as I could not stand to sit by and watch as they were whaled out of existence. One of many threats they continue to face is from the Navy's arrogant and reckless use of its sonar. The beached whale depicted in "Lamentation" is a Cuvier's beaked whale, one of the species often victimized by that use. While the Navy sees this as collateral damage, to me it is a horrendous, tragic crime!



A Glimpse of Palestine

By Tarak Kauff

Palestine, the land, the people, are strikingly beautiful. You are transported as soon as you catch sight of the Damascus Gate, one of the entrances to Jerusalem's City. You are stepping centuries back in time. The long walk down ancient stone steps, the huge arched stone gateway, the immense solid stone walls and fort-like parapets, the people, the sensuous smells, the hustle and rich colorful aliveness, delicious fruits, vegetables and spices on display, small shops and vendors hawking their goods—all enchant you. Even the handful of heavily armed Israel soldiers stationed both at the top and bottom of the steps, with their U.S.-made M-16s and other automatic weapons, do not dampen your sense of wonder.

On Feb. 16, Ellen Davidson and I arrive, luggage in hand, to meet up with seven other members of Veterans For Peace: Miko Peled, Mike Hanes, Matt Hoh, Will Griffin, Ray McGovern, Ken Mayers, and our filmmaker, Chris Smiley. After passing through the first marketplace, we take the right fork, and head toward the hostel that will be our base.

Eventually everyone shows up. Miko, a former soldier in the Israeli Defense Forces and author of *The General's Son*, now a full-time anti-Zionist peace activist, will prove invaluable with his contacts, knowledge, and entertaining stories.

The next morning, Friday, after breakfast in the hostel of hummus, olive oil, cucumber, boiled eggs, Palestinian pita, baba ganoush, tea and coffee, the eight of us walk



outside the Damascus Gate to meet our van and driver, Sami.

Our destination is Bil'in, a village in the Occupied West Bank. Since 1995, it has been administered by the Palestinian Authority. The village has been cut in two by what the Israeli government calls the "separation barrier" and Palestinians and their supporters call the Apartheid Wall. The structure, which separates Bil'in from the illegal Israeli settlement of Modi'in Illit, takes some 60 percent of the village's farmland. In 2004, the International Court of Justice ruled that the wall, 30 feet high in some places, was illegal.

In 2005, the Bil'in Popular Committee Against the Wall, led by the indefatigable Iyad Burnat, began organizing nonviolent protests in which the villagers

We were going to Bil'in to join in the 12th anniversary of these weekly Friday protests. The last time we were there, in 2015, before the regular Friday demonstration, some young members of the village went to the wall in the dead of night and removed and carried off the huge metal gate that the Israeli forces use when they attack the demonstrations or invade the village.

On this day, two-and-a-half years later, we arrive in the center of Bil'in close to noon and are met by Iyad. After an hour or so of chatting with old friends and new, we form up to march to the wall—or as close as we can get before the soldiers fire tear gas at us.

The march is full of spirit, noisy and jubilant. We chant in Arabic and English: Free, free Palestine!

Despite years of being met by violence from Israeli soldiers, including many injuries and even deaths, there is no sense of fear.

and international solidarity activists would approach the offensive wall, only to be driven back time and again by IDF tear gas, rubber bullets, and sometimes live ammunition fired by snipers.

There are drums and the sense of solidarity and purpose is felt by all of us. Despite years of being met by violence from Israeli soldiers, including many injuries and even deaths, there is no sense of fear.



The courage is contagious. In defiance of tear gas, bullets, nighttime raids, beatings, and arrests, the Palestinian youths still throw stones at the invaders and their armor-plated vehicles. In 2005, undercover Israeli soldiers admitted that they also had thrown stones at other Israeli soldiers so it would be blamed on the Palestinians and provide an excuse to crack down on the primarily peaceful protests.

As we approach the wall we see the ground littered with spent tear-gas canisters, many of them made in the United States. On this day, something unusual happens—or rather doesn't happen. We march all the way to the wall, right up to the large metal gate, which had been replaced since the theft three years ago and of course was securely closed. There are no soldiers, no tear gas, no show of Israeli military force. It is, well, almost disappointing.

The large crowd of marchers gathers by the wall, but nothing happens, no soldiers appear. We take pictures with the banner by the rolls of concertina wire lying in front of the wall. Perhaps the Israeli soldiers took the day off, knowing many internationals would be present.

Soon some Palestinians with faces covered by kuffiyehs to protect their identity begin to try to pry open the hated gate. It looks hopeless but they persevere, their boots sinking in the mud by the

gate. After a while elements of the crowd began to drift off and head back through the hills to the village, but the gate openers keep on, determined to open the oppressive gate keeping them from their land.

Amazingly they pry the gate open just enough to jam a bolt cutter through and cut the chains on the other side, and the massive gate slides open.

Soon after, two soldiers appear and tear gas canisters are fired. Not a lot of tear gas, just enough to remind everyone that we didn't really feel like having more. The tear gas is powerful and strong, just a whiff is painful. Eyes, faces, and throats burn, many feel sick to their stomach. It's new and chemically enhanced stuff, not like what we experienced during basic training in the military.

More soldiers come out. One Palestinian protester, running across the rocky ground, trips and breaks his leg while being chased by soldiers, at which point the soldiers decamp and the protesters carry the injured man up to the road to the Palestinian ambulance. Other than that, this day, there are no injuries and the opening of the gate was glorious.

We stay the night at the home of Iyad and his wife Tasaheel and enjoy their traditional Palestinian hospitality—graciousness, food, strong coffee and tea. In the morning before the others rise, I take a long solitary and



Clockwise from top left: The march begins; concertina wire with the Modi'in Illit settlement in the background; protesters pry open the gate in the wall that separates the village of Bil'in from part of its agricultural land; children in Aide Refugee Camp get out of school and race excitedly past us; we march up toward the sniper tower overlooking Aida Refugee Camp with keyhole-shaped huge arch in the background topped by a key representing the right of return for all Palestinians; at the gate at the top of the hill, a soldier opens a window and points a tear-gas launcher directly at us from five feet away; murals are painted all over the Apartheid Wall.
Photos: Ellen Davidson



peaceful walk through the hills to where I can view the wall, the settlements and the gate that was forced open. The land, despite those blemishes, is still strikingly beautiful. I imagine it as it was before the occupation.

March 14 update from Bil'in: Iyad and Tasaheel's eldest son, Abdul Khalik, was kidnapped at 2 a.m. when soldiers raided their home, terrorizing the children. Abdul, who was taken in handcuffs while his father was away, had been previously shot in the head with a rubber-coated steel bullet and had been suffering pain daily since the incident. He was released a few days later, but the terror remains.

ter at the refugee camp. He talks about how the Oslo agreement has done nothing to help the Palestinians besides getting their hopes up that there would be some lasting peace and self-determination, neither of which is anywhere in sight. He tells heart-breaking stories of prisoners and children killed by snipers.

But he also shares uplifting stories of how his organization works to support local farmers and empower children who grow up in a place where soldiers drag 6-year-olds away to arrest them. There is joy and life in the camp despite the occupation. There is a school for the children and love.

The huge wall surrounds the

of what we are in Palestine to express—solidarity, friendship, and all that is written on our banner.

We face the wall and Munther finds a metal rod and begins knocking on the large metal gate. After a while, a small window opens in the gate and Ellen, our fearless photographer, sees a gun pointed directly at her.

"Why are you pointing that weapon at us? We are unarmed. Put the gun down," I demand. He eventually closes the metal door, and we turn around.

Later, Munther takes us on a tour to see some of the "sites." We stop at a side road leading to a nearby Palestinian village that has been arbitrarily blocked off by huge stones bulldozed in place by the Israeli forces because "children were throwing rocks."

We approach the soldiers and ask why they have done this; one of them points to a small group of unarmed Palestinian men standing peacefully nearby and says "terrorists." I look at the weapons he and the other soldiers are carrying and reply, "It looks to me like you guys are the ones terrorizing, look at the weapons you carry. I don't see that they

continued on page 22 ...



At the end of the main road stands a gate and sniper towers. It is from one of these that an Israeli soldier shot 150 yards to kill 13-year-old Aboud Shadi while he played with his friends.

Aida Refugee Camp

Another amazing day in Palestine. We visit Aida Refugee Camp in Bethlehem and then take a tour around the city and outskirts to see how the wall, the settlements, and the military presence affect the area. Miko introduces us to Munther Amira, a long-time dedicated nonviolent activist who heads the youth cen-

ter at the refugee camp. He talks about how the Oslo agreement has done nothing to help the Palestinians besides getting their hopes up that there would be some lasting peace and self-determination, neither of which is anywhere in sight. He tells heart-breaking stories of prisoners and children killed by snipers.

We decide to walk with our banner up the hill to the gate. We don't know what to expect, yet we are confident in the rightness



Issa Amro (left) leads members of Veterans For Peace and CODEPINK during the annual Open Shuhada Street march.
Photo: Ellen Davidson

Facing Down Israeli Violence in Hebron

A U.S. veteran reflects on protesting alongside Palestinian human rights activists

By Matthew Hoh

I hadn't been shot at in seven-and-a-half years. In the week prior, some tear-gas cans were fired by the Israeli army at my fellow Veterans For Peace members and me in the Palestinian town of Bil'in. But for a former tough-guy Marine, that doesn't count.

Hebron was different.

For over a decade, peaceful, nonviolent Palestinian residents of Hebron, along with friends and allies from Palestine, Israel, and other countries, have marched through the streets of Hebron annually to demand the re-opening of their former main marketplace on Shuhada Street—what many hope is one of the several first steps in a process to restore dignity and human rights to the Palestinian people.

Each year, the peaceful march is stopped violently by the Israeli military and police forces, as similar nonviolent resistance is met by Israeli military and police violence throughout all of occupied Palestine.

At this year's march, my comrades and I, including organizers of the march, were roughly one-third of the way from the head of the protest, which numbered more than a thousand people. We wound through the streets of Hebron with arms linked, making blind turns as we walked deeper into the city. As we descended a hill and bent to the left, weapons were fired and the crowd came back toward us.

Explosions from concussion grenades echoed off the concrete streets and stone

buildings, and white wispy fingers of tear gas followed the crowds. The gas soon ballooned into thicker clouds of chalky white. My mate on my right arm, I now know, is no ordinary activist. Issa Amro is his name, and he said, "Let's go," and we did, through the tear gas and toward the gun line of the Israeli army and police.

Amro scares Israel. If the Trump Ad-

ministration weren't so ignorant and arrogant, Amro would scare them as well, because he is an archetype of popular nonviolent leadership against oppression, occupation, and fascism. Recognized as a Human Rights Defender by the European Union, Amro is currently facing 18 charges in an Israeli military court. These charges are largely nonsense, meant to silence him and prevent him from being a witness to the world, to minimize his role in fighting for a Free Palestine.

Amro works professionally as an electrical engineer. From what I understand, he's a pretty good one, as he travels and lectures on the subject internationally. It was while he was studying electrical engineering at college that the Israeli military

Amro said, 'Let's go,' and we went—into the gas and toward the guns of a fascist state, toward an Israeli military that wantonly kills Palestinians not just without repercussions, but also with the conscious financial reward of my own government.

In a report issued last November, Amnesty International stated: "The deluge of charges against Issa Amro does not stand up to any scrutiny." The group noted that some of the charges were previously made against him and already dismissed, charges for which he was not physically present. Or, they were charges for actions that are not internationally recognizable criminal offenses. Amro is a very real threat to Israel, and if it—a racist apartheid state—is

not to go the way of the Jim Crow South or pre-1994 South Africa, then it must do everything it can to silence him.

closed his university. Amro started then as a leader of the Palestinian nonviolent resistance. At his school, he led his fellow students who remained on campus in

sleeping there in protest until the military left. The Israeli forces relented, and the university was reopened. Issa understood the asymmetric power of nonviolent resistance, the moral authority of it, and he began to study the classic leaders of nonviolent resistance and change, so that he could lead and inspire his own people in their struggle for freedom. He started his organization, Youth Against Settlements, in Hebron a decade ago, founded a kindergarten, and is in the process of opening a cinema. He is constantly targeted and harassed by the Israeli military and settlers in Hebron and throughout Palestine, and for good reason: he is incredibly effective.

I spent 10 years in the Marine Corps. I went to Iraq twice and Afghanistan once. I've traveled a lot, been on television, and for a time revolved in a world of big shots and important people in Washington, D.C., and New York City. But true leaders, people whose presence is unordinary, emerge less often than we would like, and, as we in America know, selfless and dedicated leaders cannot be manufactured by the military rank on one's shoulder, the attention of a TV camera lens, or the ballots of voters.

In Hebron, I was with a leader. Amro said, "Let's go," and we went—into the gas and toward the guns of a fascist state, toward an Israeli military that wantonly kills Palestinians not just without repercussions, but also with the conscious financial reward of my own government.

The gas was too much for us on that first attempt to reach the army and police line, an effort we were making just to be able to speak with them. We retreated up the street, our eyes sealing shut, our chests convulsing, and everything else burning from the gas. We regrouped around a corner where a fortunate breeze helped dissipate the gas. Between the seven members of Veterans For Peace, we had nearly 60 years of military service. We all looked to Amro.

A few minutes passed. The street below us was quiet. No one else continued to march; no one else was making a move to restore the lost dignity and rights to the people of Hebron. "Let's go," Issa said again. And we went. We linked arms again, down the hill and around the bend toward the gun line of the Israeli police and the army. No words from the army or police, no movement at all from them. As



Protesters duck as tear-gas canisters fly over their heads. Photo: Ellen Davidson

we got closer, some of us shouted, “We are unarmed! We want to talk.” Those of us whose arms weren’t linked had hands and fists raised in the air, perhaps to show defiance, but also to show our lack of weapons and to plead with the soldiers and police not to shoot.

Halfway down the street, maybe 50 yards after the turn, the first tear gas can rushED directly over our heads. The cans were fired level at us so that we were forced to duck. If struck in the head or chest, we could be killed. Many Palestinians have died that way. On our trip I met the relatives of several who were murdered in that manner. Amro said, “Don’t do that,” and kept us advancing. As we moved, having to duck further, we were fortunate that the gas canisters, just several feet off the ground, passed wide of us,

directly at us, and we were lucky not to have been severely injured or killed, although there was a very strong possibility that we would now encounter rubber-coated bullets or live ammunition.

The Israeli army and police held their fire this time, and when we reached their line we encountered a heavily armed and armor-plated phalanx composed primarily of apparently scared and confused 18- and 19-year-old conscripted soldiers and border police officers. Nothing came of our attempts to speak with the army and police, as they quickly deployed squads to raid Palestinian homes in order to punish the residents of the city for the actions of those who demanded dignity and human rights that day.

It was by no means a wasted effort to have endured the gas to reach their line, as

demands the theft and occupation of Palestinian lands. Such a position is morally bankrupt, strategically impossible and bound to collapse. Dissolution of America’s support of Israel’s apartheid and occupation is the most important element in this eventual collapse.

Desperation is now clear in Israel’s actions—how else to describe the bill passed in March to ban the Muslim call to prayer?

Many men and women, like Amro, have been raised under occupation—harassed, silenced, humiliated, arrested, imprisoned, beaten, and tortured. They have been on the receiving end of every action the government of Israel can take to keep alive the occupation and the apartheid state, they have been on the receiving end.

man rights to their people. Many of them were of the caliber, temperament, and quality of Amro: able to inspire, capable of transferring confidence and infusing hope. These Palestinian men and women are what terrify Israel; and as the Trump Administration moves further along a path akin to Israel’s, President Trump and his legions will also see a rise of such leaders from among the U.S. people—of that I am sure.

Israel is pursuing its charges against Amro in military court. A petition has been started to remind the United Nations that Amro is a designated and recognized international human rights defender and as such, the United Nations, and its member states, have certain obligations to him.

Amro is a tremendous leader, and he, along with many others, will end the occupation of Palestine through their non-violent resistance, so long as we follow them, support them, and stand with them.

Matthew Hoh is a former State Department official who resigned his post in Afghanistan in 2009 to protest U.S. strate-

*Desperation is now
clear in Israel’s
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gic policy and goals in the region. Prior to his assignment in Afghanistan, Matthew served in Iraq; first in 2004-05 in Salah ad Din Province with a State Department reconstruction and governance team and then in 2006-07 in Anbar Province as a Marine Corps company commander. When not deployed, Matthew worked on Afghanistan and Iraq policy and operations issues at the Pentagon and State Department from 2002-08. Matthew’s writings have appeared in the Atlanta Journal Constitution, Defense News, The Guardian, Huffington Post, USA Today, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post. The Council on Foreign Relations has cited Matthew’s resignation letter from his post in Afghanistan as an Essential Document. Matthew is a member of Veterans For Peace.



Issa Amro of Youth Against Settlements, Ariel Gold of CODEPINK Women for Peace, and VFP member Will Griffin being tear-gassed in Hebron. Photo: Ellen Davidson

but the gas, some produced by U.S. corporations, is more powerful than the human body, and we had to retreat once again.

After 10 minutes, when the gas wore off because that magnificent and benevolent breeze had worked its wonders, we walked for a third time to that same gun line. The army and police have killed people in Hebron, they have done so routinely and often; the murder of a wounded Palestinian by an Israeli soldier in Hebron was recently a major news story in Israel and Palestine. A costume of the soldier who murdered the Palestinian was a top choice among Israelis for the Purim holiday.

Often at demonstrations, after the gas and the concussion grenades are used and a greater degree of force is desired, the Israeli army and police will move to live and rubber-coated ammunition. This is something we witnessed in the village of Nabi Saleh the following week. For those of you who have not been gassed in Palestine, the gas the Israeli army and police use is of a potency well beyond anything any of us in this Veterans For Peace delegation had ever encountered in the U.S. military, or U.S. law enforcement. Up to that point Israeli army and police had shot

I now understand very well that it is madness to assume that Israel’s occupation can endure, particularly if it were to ever lose its backing from its patron, the United States. As we stood in front of those young, terrified boys and girls, some not much bigger than the rifles they carried, the actuality of the legendary and mythic “Israeli Defense Forces” was evidently morally and ethically haphazard, and the folly of the occupation was too clear.

Israel is dependent on massive infusions of cash and patronage from one of the wealthiest nations in the world, which also serves as a political shield from (well-deserved) diplomatic and economic isolation that much of the rest of the world seeks to enact against the Israeli government as a response to the decades-long Israeli governmental crimes against the Palestinian people. To keep control within its borders and within the lands it illegally occupies, Israel must heavily arm tens of thousands of teenagers, many of whom have no interest in the fundamentalist, sexist and racist views of the far hard right in Israel, a nationalist movement that takes orders from an invisible real estate agent in the sky who

What has occurred is not a stamping out of a Palestinian people, a destruction of the Palestinian nation, or a subdued land of collaborationists and cowards. Instead, Israel’s terrorism has grown a generation of nonviolent popular leaders.

Throughout our time with the nonviolent popular resistance in Palestine, we met and worked with men and women committed to restoring dignity and hu-



Tarak Kauff approaches Israeli soldiers and border police. Photo: Ellen Davidson



Aziz al-Touri shows 'Forager Mike' the local vegetation. Photo: Ellen Davidson

Sumud: Inside and Out

By Ken Mayers

Our Veterans For Peace delegation in the West Bank has had some highly dramatic experiences—prying open the gate in the wall at Bil'in, ducking tear-gas canisters in Hebron—but to me, the most meaningful experiences were the quiet revelations in between the days of protest.

One of these took place in Ramallah, the administrative home of the Palestinian Authority. The so-called "separation barrier" follows a snakey line intended to incorporate the maximum geographical area into Jerusalem's municipal boundaries while eventually including the smallest number of Palestinian residents.

To achieve this objective, the Israeli government deploys a variety of cruel strategies, many relying on the enforcement of unreasonable, unjust laws. Probably the most common and the most visible is the demolition of homes built or expanded without a construction permit. And since the Israeli government never grants building permits to Palestinians, almost all homes are subject to demolition orders.

We met with a gentleman who is one of the leaders of the resistance to the wall—Jamal Juma'a, head of the Stop the Wall Campaign. He took us to visit one of the

areas targeted by the government for "maximum geography, minimum demography" described above. In this neighborhood, seven homes and two apartment buildings had been demolished. Demolition crews—caterpillar D9 bulldozers (made in America) protected by police and/or soldiers—come in the middle of the night and give residents 10 minutes to take what belongings they can carry and vacate the house. In a few hours, there is nothing left but rubble. One night, Jamal related, they came in with 200 bulldozers and destroyed 32 structures.

After viewing several of these houses, our guide took us to a house that was still standing, adjacent to which was a pile of rubble. He took us into a small garden next to the house, where the owner welcomed us and explained that the rubble behind the house had been a 4-unit apartment building that he had built at a cost of \$200,000 to house his sons and their families when they finish their university studies.

He then chased his younger children into the house to get glasses and a pitcher of water for his guests. We all sat down to chat with this kindly, gentle victim of Israeli cruelty, and soon coffee, tea, and dishes of fruit, vegetables, and hummus appeared on the table, a miracle of generosity to strangers from a man whose life

savings had been destroyed by a housing demolition order.

His own residence remained only because it had been built before the 1967 conquest of the West Bank by the Israeli army. For the time being, pre-1967 structures are exempt from demolition orders. I'm sure the taste of the fennel, apples, and oranges we were given in that garden will long outlast the taste of tear gas from Hebron.

The next day we took the bus down to the Negev Desert to visit the Bedouin village of Al Araqib, one of the dozens of Bedouin villages in the Negev that the Israeli government considers "unrecognized," and therefore ineligible for services such as water, electricity, and trash collection. Nonetheless, the village has been there for centuries, as was recognized by the Ottoman Empire in 1905, the British Mandate in 1929, and even Israeli documents in 1973. In June 2010, the Israeli government demolished the village and destroyed all the houses, bulldozing 4,500 olive trees and 900 fruit trees (figs, avocados, lemons and oranges), as well as the water cistern and the electrical generator. Immediately after this disaster, the villagers rebuilt the village insofar as they

that. The first thing every morning when he wakes up, he raises thanks to God for his life, and then raises thanks to the activist Jews who help the community survive. He teaches his son that he must not hate Jews. He may hate the police, the army, the "green patrols," and the Jewish National Fund—all of which are trying to drive them off the land. But he must not hate the people—or any people.

When the coffee beans were roasted to his satisfaction, his friend Saleem pounded them into powder in an iron mortar and pestle. He poured the grounds into a beautiful brass pitcher that had been boiling over a flame while the beans were being pounded. He gently shook the pitcher for a while, then dropped a handful of cardamom seeds into the mortar and ground them up, eventually adding that to the coffee as well. Finally, he poured coffee for us all. Our colleague Mike Hanes declared it the "best coffee ever!" We all agreed. It had been made with love.

Then Aziz took us on a tour of the village fields. At one point he grasped a handful of leaves from a plant that Mike identified as mallow. It grows wild in the winter in Al Araqib and since time immemorial has



Aziz al-Touri with Ken Mayers. Photo: Ellen Davidson

could and credited activist Jewish Israelis with helping them in the revival.

But not long thereafter, the government destroyed the reconstructed village. Since 2010, the village has been demolished 108 times, or more than once a month for seven years. But the Bedouins persist. Each time their material belongings and surroundings deteriorate further, but the spirit of *sumud*—steadfastness—is more powerful than the D9 bulldozers. When we visited Al Araqib in 2013, they still had a number of travel trailers in the village, one of which served as a computer classroom. The Israeli government has since destroyed them all.

They are poorer than ever, but as hospitable and generous as ever. As soon as we arrived we were offered tea and water. Then Aziz al-Touri, our host, started preparing coffee, while telling us how important morning coffee is to the community. He started with raw beans, roasting them in a skillet in which he was continually flipping them, while telling of his culture and the attempts of the Israeli government to destroy both their culture and their history.

He started this commentary by saying

been a staple of the Bedouin winter diet. But the Israeli government has declared it illegal to pick, making it a violation subject to a fine of 800 shekels (roughly \$225 dollars.) He pointed out several more edible wild plants, all enthusiastically tasted by "Forager Mike." Then we were called back to the welcoming tent where a feast of Bedouin dishes had been set out for us. Once again, people from whom nearly everything has been taken are giving us loving hospitality so deeply rooted in their culture that it survives monstrous abuse.

After the feast, we joined them in their annual Sunday protest at the Lehavim highway crossing. Then the long bus ride back to Jerusalem.

What amazing human beings these are!

Ken Mayers is a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps and holds a Ph.D. in so-called "Political Science" from the University of California, Berkeley. A member of Veterans for Peace since 1986, Ken co-founded the Santa Fe Chapter in 2001. Since his late wife Elizabeth's untimely death from cancer in 2005, Ken has been an increasingly frequent participant in nonviolent direct action against U.S. militarism.



Demolished home near Ramallah with photo of what the structure used to look like. Photo: Ellen Davidson

Palestine's Nelson Mandela

By Uri Avnery

I have a confession to make: I like Marwan Barghouti. I have visited him at his modest Ramallah home several times. During our conversations, we discussed Israeli-Palestinian peace. Our ideas were the same: to create the State of Palestine next to the State of Israel, and to establish peace between the two states, based on the 1967 lines (with minor adjustments), with open borders and cooperation.

This was not a secret agreement: Barghouti has repeated this proposal many times, both in prison and outside.

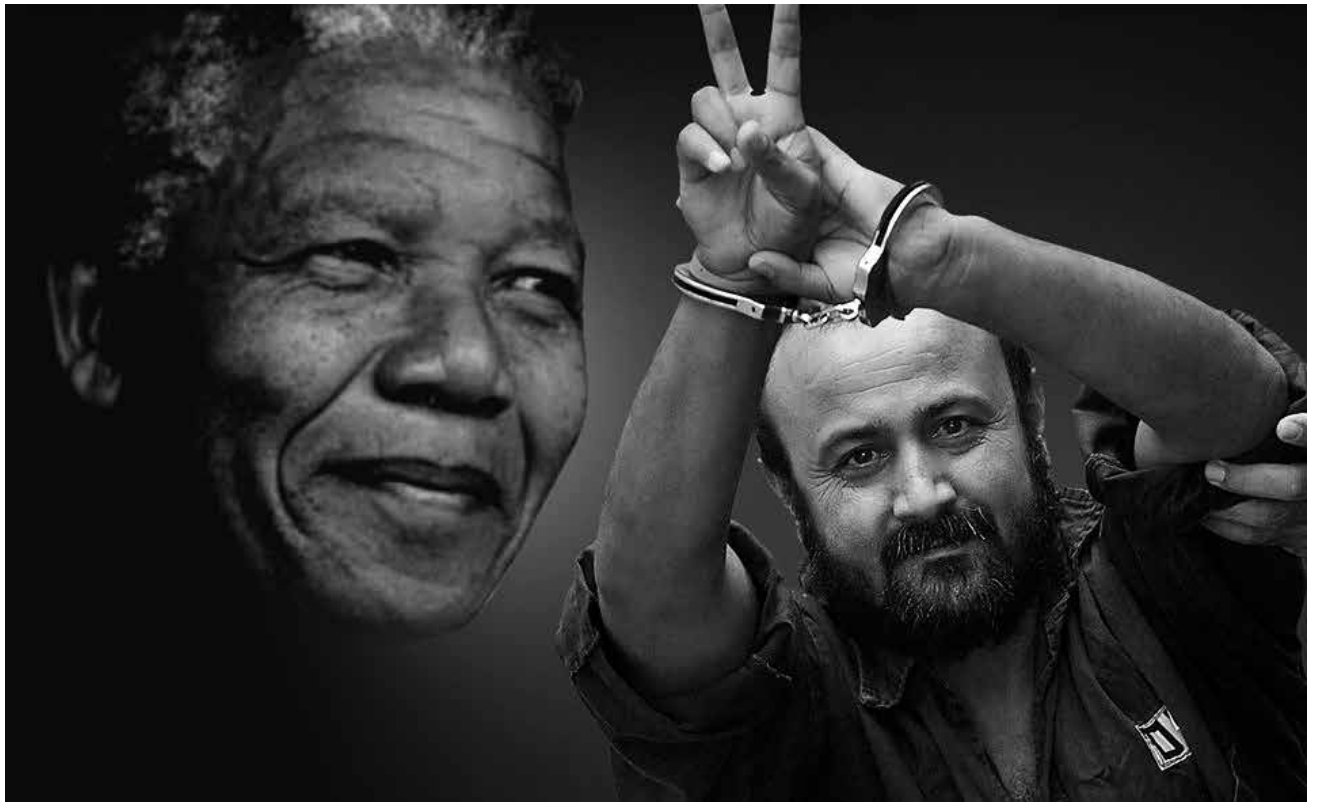
I also like his wife, Fadwa, who was educated as a lawyer, but devotes her time to fight for the release of her husband. At the crowded funeral of Yasser Arafat, I happened to stand next to her and saw her tear-streaked face.

This week, Barghouti, together with about a thousand other Palestinian prisoners in Israel, started an unlimited hunger strike. I have just signed a petition for his release.

Marwan Barghouti is a born leader. In spite of his small physical stature, he stands out in any gathering. Within the Fatah movement he became the leader of the youth division. (The word “Fatah” is the initials of “Palestinian Liberation Movement, in reverse.)

The Barghoutis are a widespread clan, dominating several villages near Ramallah. Marwan himself was born in 1959 in Kobar village. An ancestor, Abd-al-Jabir al-Barghouti, led an Arab revolt in 1834. I have met Mustafa Barghouti, an activist for democracy, in many demonstrations and shared the tear gas with him. Omar Barghouti is a leader of the international anti-Israel boycott movement.

Perhaps my sympathy for Marwan is influenced by some similarities in our youth. He joined the Palestinian resistance movement at the age of 15, the same age I was when I joined the Hebrew underground some 35 years earlier. My friends and I considered ourselves freedom fighters, but were branded by the British authorities as “terrorists.” The same has now happened to Marwan—a freedom fighter in his own eyes and in the eyes of the



worldwide boycott, Mandela emerged as the natural leader of the new South Africa. Many people expect that when a Palestinian state is set up, Barghouti will become its president, after Mahmoud Abbas.

There is something in his personality that inspires confidence, turning him into the natural arbiter of internal conflicts. Hamas people, who are the opponents of Fatah, are inclined to listen to Marwan. He is the ideal conciliator between the two movements.

Some years ago, under the leadership of Marwan, a large number of prisoners belonging to the two organizations signed a joint appeal for national unity, setting out concrete terms. Nothing came of this.

That, by the way, may be an additional reason for the Israeli government's rejection of any suggestion of freeing Barghouti, even when a prisoner exchange provided a convenient opportunity. A free Barghouti could become a powerful agent for Palestinian unity, the last thing the Israeli overlords want.

Divide et impera—“divide and rule”: since Roman times this has been a guiding principle of every regime that sup-

The man who claimed this victory was an individual I find particularly obnoxious. He calls himself Michael Oren and is now a deputy minister in Israel, but he was born in the United States and belongs to the subgroup of American Jews who are super-super-patriots of Israel. He adopted Israeli citizenship and an Israeli name in order to serve as Israel's ambassador to the United States. In this capacity he attracted attention by using particularly virulent anti-Arab rhetoric, so extreme as to make even Binyamin Netanyahu look moderate.

I doubt that this person has ever sacrificed anything for his patriotism; indeed, he has made quite a career of it. Yet he speaks with contempt about Barghouti, who has spent much of his life in prison and exile. He describes Barghouti's article in *The New York Times* as a “journalistic terror act.” Look who's talking.

A hunger strike is a very courageous act. It is the last weapon of the least protected people on earth—the prisoners. The abominable Margaret Thatcher let the Irish hunger strikers starve to death.

The Israeli authorities wanted to force-feed Palestinian hunger strikers. The Israeli Physicians Association, much to its credit, refused to cooperate, since such acts have led in the past to the deaths of the victims. That put an end to this kind of torture.

Barghouti demands that Palestinian political prisoners be treated as prisoners of war. No chance of that.

However, one should demand that prisoners of any kind be treated humanely. This means that deprivation of liberty is the only punishment imposed, and that, within the prisons, the maximum of decent conditions should be accorded.

In some Israeli prisons, a kind of *modus vivendi* between the prison authorities and the Palestinian prisoners seems to have been established. Not so in others. One gets the impression that the prison service is the enemy of the prisoners, making their life as miserable as possible. This has worsened now, in response to the strike.

This policy is cruel, illegal, and counterproductive. There is no way to win against a hunger strike. The prisoners are bound to win, especially when decent people all over the world are watching. Perhaps even the *New York Times*.

I am waiting for the day when I can visit Marwan again as a free man in his home in Ramallah, even more so if Ramallah is, by that time, a town in the free State of Palestine.

Uri Avnery is an Israeli writer and founder of the Gush Shalom peace movement. A member of the Irgun as a teenager, Avnery sat in the Knesset from 1965 to 1974 and from 1979 to 1981. He is famous for crossing the lines during the Siege of Beirut to meet Yassir Arafat on July 3, 1982, the first time the Palestinian leader ever met with an Israeli. Avnery is the author of several books about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including *1948: A Soldier's Tale*, *the Bloody Road to Jerusalem*; *Israel's Vicious Circle*; and *My Friend, the Enemy*.

A hunger strike is a very courageous act. It is the last weapon of the least protected people on earth—the prisoners. The abominable Margaret Thatcher let the Irish hunger strikers starve to death.

vast majority of the Palestinian people, a “terrorist” in the eyes of the Israeli authorities.

When he was put on trial in the Tel Aviv District Court, my friends and I, members of the Israeli peace movement Gush Shalom (Peace Bloc), tried to demonstrate our solidarity with him in the courtroom. We were expelled by armed guards. One of my friends lost a toenail in this glorious fight.

Years ago I called Barghouti the “Palestinian Mandela.” Despite their difference in height and skin color, there was a basic similarity between the two: both were men of peace, but justified the use of violence against their oppressors. However, while the apartheid regime was satisfied with one life term, Barghouti was sentenced to a ridiculous five life terms and another 40 years—for acts of violence executed by his Tanzim organization.

(Gush Shalom published a statement this week suggesting that by the same logic, Menachem Begin should have been sentenced by the British to 91 life terms for the bombing of the King David hotel, in which 91 people—many of them Jews—lost their lives.)

There is another similarity between Mandela and Barghouti: When the apartheid regime was destroyed by a combination of “terrorism,” violent strikes, and a

presses another people. In this, the Israeli authorities have been incredibly successful. Political geography provided an ideal setting: The West Bank of the Jordan River is cut off from the Gaza Strip by some 31 miles of Israeli territory.

The hunger strikers do not demand their own release, but demand better prison conditions. They demand, inter alia, more frequent and longer visits by wives and family, an end to torture, decent food, and such. They also remind us that under international law an “occupying power” is forbidden to move prisoners from an occupied territory to the home country of the occupier. Exactly this happens to almost all Palestinian “security prisoners.”

Last week, Barghouti set out these demands in an op-ed article published by *The New York Times*, an act that shows the newspaper's better side. The editorial note described the author as a Palestinian politician and Member of Parliament. It was a courageous act by the paper (which somewhat restored its standing in my eyes after it condemned Bashar al-Assad for using poison gas, without a sliver of evidence.)

But courage has its limits. The very next day the *Times* published an editor's note stating that Barghouti was convicted for murder. It was an abject surrender to Zionist pressure.



People search for survivors under the rubble of houses destroyed by Saudi airstrikes near Sanaa Airport in Yemen, March 2015. Photo: AP

In Yemen, Shocked to His Bones

By Kathy Kelly

The ruins carpeted the city market, rippling outwards in waves of destruction. Broken beams, collapsed roofs, exploded metal shutters, and fossilized merchandise crumbled underfoot.

In one of the burnt-out shells of the shops where raisins, nuts, fabrics, incense, and stone pots were traded for hundreds of years, all that was to be found was a box of coke bottles, a sofa, and a child nailing wooden sticks together.

This is Sa'ada, ground zero of the 20-month Saudi campaign in Yemen, a largely forgotten conflict that has killed more than 10,000, uprooted three million and left more than half the country short of food, many on the brink of starvation.

—Gaith Abdul-Ahad

The Guardian, Dec. 9, 2016

Yemen stands as the worst-threatened of four countries where impending famine conditions have been said to create the single-worst humanitarian crisis since the founding of the United Nations. On May 2, 2017, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs published a grim infographic detailing conditions in Yemen, where 17 million Yemenis—or around 60 percent of the population—are unable to access food. The United States and its allies continue to bomb Yemen.

Jan Egeland, who heads the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), says that seven million Yemeni people are on the brink of famine. “I am shocked to my bones,” said Egeland, following a five-day visit to

Yemen. “The world is letting some seven million men, women, and children slowly but surely be engulfed.” Egeland blames this catastrophe on “men with guns and power in regional and international capitals who undermine every effort to avert an entirely preventable famine, as well as the collapse of health and educational services for millions of children.” Egeland and the NRC call on all parties to the conflict, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, the United States,

The U.S. government has so far sounded no note of particular urgency about ending or suspending the conflict, nor has its close ally, the Saudi dictatorship. Saudi Arabian Defense Minister Prince Mohammed bin Salman recently gave “a positive view of the war in Yemen” (*The New York Times*, May 2, 2017). He believes that Saudi forces could quickly uproot the Houthi rebels, but rather than endanger Saudi troops, he says, “the coalition is waiting for the rebels to tire out.”

“The world is letting some seven million men, women and children slowly but surely be engulfed.”

and the UK, to negotiate a cease fire.

The situation stands poised to become dramatically worse with the apparently imminent bombing by Saudi Arabia, one of the U.S.’ closest allies, of the aid lifeline which is the port of Hodeida.

Egeland stresses the vital importance of keeping humanitarian aid flowing through Hodeida, a port that stands mere days or hours from destruction. “The Saudi-led, Western-backed military coalition has threatened to attack the port,” said Egeland, “which would likely destroy it and cut supplies to millions of hungry civilians.” U.S. congresspeople demanding a stay on destruction of the port have as yet won no concessions from the Saudi or U.S. governments.

“Time is in our favor,” he added.

Even if Hodeida is spared, reduced imports of food and fuel due to the Saudi-imposed naval blockade puts the price of desperately needed essentials beyond the reach of the poorest. Meanwhile, prolonged conflict, dragged out by a regime that feels “time is on its side” and punctuated by deadly airstrikes, has displaced the needy to those areas where food insecurity is the highest.

Refugees from three North African countries where conflict is also threatening to impose terrible famine have Yemen on their route to escaping the continent, so they have fled conflict and famine only to be trapped in the worst of this dreadful year’s arriving tragedies.

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein describes the present situation, two years after Saudi airstrikes escalated the conflict:

“The violent deaths of refugees fleeing yet another war, of fishermen, of families in marketplaces—this is what the conflict in Yemen looks like two years after it began ... utterly terrible, with little apparent regard for civilian lives and infrastructure.

“The fighting in Hodeida has left thousands of civilians trapped—as was the case in Al Mokha in February—and has already compromised badly needed deliveries of humanitarian assistance. Two years of wanton violence and bloodshed, thousands of deaths, and millions of people desperate for their basic rights to food, water, health, and security—enough is enough. I urge all parties to the conflict, and those with influence, to work urgently toward a full ceasefire to bring this disastrous conflict to an end, and to facilitate rather than block the delivery of humanitarian assistance.”

Time is on no one’s side as regards the crisis in Yemen. As nightmare visions of living skeletons with bloated bellies and pleading eyes once more appear on the planet’s TV screens, we in the United States will have missed a vital chance to avert a world in which untold millions are to be shocked to their bones.

Kathy Kelly co-coordinates *Voices for Creative Nonviolence* and has worked closely with the *Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers*. She is the author of *Other Lands Have Dreams* published by CounterPunch / AK Press. She can be reached at: Kathy@vcnv.org

A British Soldier Returns to Northern Ireland

Street poet Spike Pike served in the Scots Guards. In 2014 he happened upon a video of Veterans For Peace-UK founder Ben Griffin speaking at an Oxford Union Debate. Ben's words had a profound effect upon Spike and he joined VFP without delay. At their next Annual General Meeting, he heard former British soldier Lee Lavis, who, like himself, had served in Northern Ireland and was engaged in working with the Republican and Loyalist communities there. Spike expressed his enthusiasm for joining this project and, in his words, "I went back to Belfast after 34 years ... not as a soldier, but as a man of peace."

By Spike Pike

My name is Spike Pike, and I am an ex-soldier who did a tour of Belfast in 1981 at the time of the hunger strike. I am now a member of Veterans For Peace. This is about my journey toward reconciliation and peace. It started at the Veterans For Peace UK Annual General Meeting, where I met Lee Lavis who was speaking about his work in Belfast. When he finished, he asked, are there any questions? My hand shot up and I said, "I'd like to work with you." The ball was rolling.

Day 1—Thursday, August 7

I had driven to Glasgow the previous day as that's how the journey would have been in 1981, Glasgow to Belfast. I was hoping to recreate the same feelings I had then; it worked. My dad used to drive me to the airport back then, but he's too old to drive now, so I'd arranged for my sister-in-law Dee to take me. An hour before Dee arrived my guts were in knots. I was pacing about my parents' house, I felt very anxious. Dee arrived and off we went. Talking and a couple of really bad jokes from Dee lightened my mood. By the time I got to Glasgow airport, I was fine.

The flight from Glasgow to Belfast took 40 minutes. In 1981 ... 40 minutes from being at home with your family to the hate-filled streets of Belfast, 40 minutes, that's how it was. I was met at Belfast airport by Lee; we made the bus journey into town. I started to see the flags, mostly Loyalist and then a few Republican. It all started coming back to me.

It was straight to Lee's flat, and then off to a talk by Jo Berry and Pat Magee. Jo's father was killed by the Brighton bomb. Pat had planted the bomb. This was powerful. Two people from opposite tribes had chosen to come together, Jo wanted to understand why. What were the circumstances that drove Pat, a member of the IRA, to take out the entire British government? Maggie Thatch-

er's government. I was sitting listening to a man saying to a woman, "I killed your father," and for her to respond in a calm and loving manner was quite something. Lee and I were asked backstage for some refreshments. Jo asked me if I would speak to a guy, let's call him Mr A, whose father was shot and killed by a British soldier 40 years ago and he had never spoken to a soldier or former soldier since. I had never experienced this situation before. We locked eyes as we spoke and there was tension. Fortunately Lee has had this experience many times and quickly defused the situation. Lee spoke with Mr A for maybe an hour. I spoke to several people, including Pat. Now I have never spoken to a member of the IRA or former member of the IRA without seeing them as the enemy. There was a time the very mention of the IRA would have sent me into a rage. To me, they were scum, murderers, even the Irish flag would evoke such rage. This was different. I was talking to a human being. A human face had been put on the enemy, the same way that for Pat, Jo's father became a person, not the enemy.

That was my first night in Belfast.

Day 2—Friday, August 8

We went along to a museum; there was a talk about the role of Irish regiments in the first and second world wars. I was reminded of a play I'd seen earlier this year, *Raising Lazarus* by poet Kat Francois, and the role West Indian soldiers had played in both wars. Seems both Irish and West Indian regiments were treated badly. I met a woman called Bernadette, whose father was killed in a sectarian shooting early on in the troubles. She was a wonderfully compassionate woman. It's quite humbling that people I've met who have suffered personal loss have rejected bitterness as a coping mechanism. Later that day, I was interviewed at length for an oral history project by Claire Hackett of the Falls Road Community Council. This interview will be placed in an archive that will record the history of the Northern Ireland conflict in West Belfast. I find it very refreshing that the Nationalist community wish to include the experiences of former British soldiers. At one point, re-living and talking about my experience I got quite emotional.

Day 3—Saturday, August 10

We met a former Republican prisoner, Danny, who now works as a youth development officer. We met at the foot of Divis flats on the Falls Road, once a very dangerous place for British soldiers. Danny gave me a brief history of the Republican movement going back to the late 1800s. His energy and knowledge were compelling; he spoke very matter of factly, with no trace of bitterness



Detention of Irish civilians by British occupation forces, Derry, Occupied Northern Ireland.

or anger. We toured various Republican areas. Danny was a first-class guide, and there was so much to take in. We reached the Ardoyne area, where there is still tension between the two communities regarding Loyalists marching past Twadell Avenue. Lee and I crossed the road to the Loyalist side (apparently not the done thing!). We were quickly approached by an angry man demanding to know who we were. Once we explained why we were there, he relaxed a bit and gave us a rundown on the situation. We thanked him and made our way back across the road. Considering the history of the place, maybe crossing the boundary was not the best thing to do; I mean, people have been shot for that.

Final Day—Sunday, August 11

Went to Derry/Londonderry. After an artery-hardening breakfast, courtesy of Lee, and with Kieran at the wheel, off we went. Derry/Londonderry was not what I had imagined. It was a lovely town, somewhat quiet compared to Belfast, but it was Sunday afternoon. We visited the Free Derry museum, where I met Jean, whose brother had been shot and killed on Bloody Sunday. She was a lovely woman; she spoke of the pain for all concerned, even expressing compassion for one of the soldiers at the tribunal. We then met Fiona Gallagher. Her brother was shot and killed while riding a bus home from town. She, too, was full of compassion for all victims of the troubles. I have met so many people that have experienced the pain of loss, the same people that wish for peace.

Summary

What did I get from my trip? Well, a greater understanding of why it all kicked off in 1969. Why were the folk in Catholic areas denied basic rights, decent homes, proper jobs? Why were they treated like second-class citizens? So many whys. Now in 2014, it's so much better, but there is still a long, long way to go. I'm not naïve enough to think all Republicans would greet me with open arms; far from it: there are still a few who would see me as a "uniform," the "enemy." Of that, I have no doubt. But what I saw was people and groups within the Republican areas that are driving the peace process, that are pushing for a lasting peace. The trip was exhausting and very rewarding. I felt humbled and blessed to meet so many amazing people.

I'd like to thank Jo Berry, Pat Magee, Claire Hackett, Fiona Gallagher, Danny, Jean, Kieran, and most of all Lee for making this whole experience possible.

Much love and respect to all, I'll leave you with this poem.

No Man's Land

*In no man's land we'll be as one
No need to fight or kill
In no man's land there are no kings
Or rich man's gut to fill
So when the guns at last go silent
And the drums no longer beat
When we awaken to our madness
In no man's land we'll meet*



Police and firemen in Whitehall where an IRA bomb exploded.

Struggle Against New Helipads on Okinawa

Rush to complete landing pads in Takae results in unusable facilities and raises questions about Henoko construction

By Doug Lummis

On December 22 last year the awkwardly and inaccurately titled “Return Ceremony of the Northern Training Area” was held in the city of Nago, in northern Okinawa. The occasion was the handing over by the U.S. military of part, not all, of what they call the Northern Training Area (NTA), an area of subtropical forest they have been using for jungle warfare training since World War II. In exchange for this, Japan’s Defense Agency presented to the U.S. military the last two of six newly built helipads, located in the southern part of the NTA, intended for use by the U.S. Marine Corps’ MV22 tilt rotor Osprey, the notorious Widowmaker. The ceremony was attended by then-U.S. Ambassador Caroline Kennedy, Japan’s Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshida, Defense Minister Inada Tomomi, and assorted USMC generals and maybe some colonels.

Okinawa Governor Onaga Takeshi, however, boycotted the ceremony, instead attending a large and angry rally protesting the crash of a USMC Osprey into the ocean just nine days earlier. (The U.S. military and the Japanese government refuse to call it a crash, rather using the expressions “forced landing,” “hard landing” and the Japanese equivalents of these terms. But as witnesses testify and photographs show, the Osprey, which came down in shallow water, broke apart, and scattered jagged metal pieces over a wide area. If that was a “landing,” it’s hard to know what it would take to qualify as a “crash.”)

For years, Okinawans have been protesting the construction of these helipads, for reasons that need not be explained in detail to readers of this paper. Aside from the danger of the Osprey there is its ear-splitting noise, the fact that the helipads literally surround the village of Takae, the effect of both the construction and the low-level flights of the Osprey (the noise, the downwash, the heat) on the delicate ecology of the subtropical jungle, the fact that the helipads are operationally connected with the hated new USMC air facility planned for nearby

Henoko—and the fact that Okinawans, after seven decades of U.S. military occupation, have had enough.

The protests, which included blocking dump trucks from entering the construction sites, succeeded not in stopping construction, but in delaying it.

After four helipads were completed, construction stopped for a while, but then resumed again last year. The government set the date for the return ceremony for Dec. 22, and announced that the last two helipads would be completed by then. To the government, the deadline was politically important, as they would lose face if it had to be postponed because of the actions of the protesters. But among the protesters are several retired engineers, who know how to do this kind of work, and who knew that this deadline could only be met by doing a rush job, cutting corners. They began to suspect that the workers, to satisfy the government, would have no choice but to fake it, to build something that looked like completed helipads, even though they weren’t.

Following circuitous paths through the forest, protest-

Following circuitous paths through the forest, protesters began to infiltrate the construction site, observing the work and taking photographs. They reported seeing the workers, instead of uprooting the stumps of the some 30,000 trees they had cut down, simply burying them under truckloads of dirt, where they would rot slowly.

ers began to infiltrate the construction site, observing the work and taking photographs. They reported seeing the workers, instead of uprooting the stumps of the some 30,000 trees they had cut down, simply burying them under truckloads of dirt, where they would rot slowly. They reported that the raised helipads were constructed by piling up dirt into a helipad-like shape without doing the extensive rolling and tamping required to make it firm, that a proper drainage system was not installed, and that at the last minute all the flaws were hidden by trucking in turf and laying it over everything.

The U.S. military engineers gave their final approval the day before the ceremony was scheduled, the ceremony was held, and the exchange was made.

Then the winter rains came.

Now we have photographs taken after the ceremony, showing the briefly level helipads sagging and sinking, squares of turf that had failed to put down roots slithering down the bulging embankments, one embankment starting to wash away, another spurting out water, a third covered by a huge blue plastic sheet—and workers busy doing emergency repair work—all only weeks after the construction was declared completed. According to our engineers, to be usable the helipads will have to be completely redone—that is, several meters of dirt removed, then replaced in one-foot layers, each layer being properly tamped and rolled. But this work cannot be done until the rainy season is over.

Our engineers’ analysis was confirmed by a person identified by the newspaper that interviewed him as “a person connected with the construction”—in other words, a whistleblower—who said, yes, construction was done hastily and sloppily because they were told it had to be done in time for the ceremony. Given that

workers like to be able to take pride in their work, it isn’t surprising that someone would go to a newspaper and explain that the fault lay with the government, not the workers.

What is harder to understand is the behavior of the U.S. military engineers. There are two possibilities: either they were deceived into giving their approval, or they participated in the deception. The former is hard to believe, as the sloppiness is too gross to miss. But if it’s the latter, they must be damned angry. Engineers are not politicians, and lying is not part of their trade. If they were forced to give their approval to that bag of worms (to use an old USMC expression), we can be sure they didn’t like it.

And we can be sure they were the first to notice when, only a couple of weeks after they declared construction “completed,” the embankments began to give way. We can also be sure that this is something of which the helicopter pilots and crew members, as well as their commanders, are painfully aware.

There are two things the U.S. military can, and hopefully did, learn from this. One is that information they receive from the Abe Shinzo government about the progress of base construction at Henoko and Takae is not to be trusted. Second, it would be wise for them to entertain a healthy doubt as to whether the Japanese government really has the ability to overcome the vehement opposition of the Okinawan people and construct a safe air facility at Henoko. There are growing signs that the Defense Agency is considering skipping vital stages in the process of hardening the sea bottom over which the airstrip is to be built, rather than attempting to persuade the governor to issue the permits that work would require.

However much the U.S. military might want to cooperate with the Abe government, surely they don’t want to be handed an airstrip that, like Kansai International Airport in Osaka, mainland Japan, is slowly sinking into the sea.

Doug Lummis is the president of the Veterans For Peace chapter in Okinawa and author of *Boundaries on the Land, Boundaries in the Mind*.



MV-22 Osprey terrain flight training in the Yanbaru forest. Photo: T. Kitaueda

The Long, Dirty History of U.S. Warmongering Against North Korea

By Christine Hong

As the latest North Korea crisis unfolded, and Donald Trump swapped campaign plowshares for post-inauguration swords, Americans took to the streets demanding that the President release his tax returns and then marched for science. There were no mass protests for peace.

Although the substance of Trump's foreign policy remains opaque, he had campaigned on an "America First" critique of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton's liberal interventionism in Libya and, to his own party's mortification, blasted George W. Bush's neoconservative adventurism in Iraq.

Once in the White House, though, Trump announced he would boost the U.S. military budget by a staggering \$54 billion, cut back on diplomacy, and push the United States to the brink of active conflict with North Korea. None of this provoked a major backlash. To the contrary, Trump's surprise bombing of Syria, which, his administration declared, doubled as a warning for North Korea, garnered him across-the-aisle praise from hawks in both parties and his highest approval ratings so far.

The U.S. public's quietism with regard to the prospect of renewed U.S. aggression against North Korea is remarkable. It stands in stark contrast to the broad anti-war galvanization in the post-9/11 lead-up to the U.S. war in Iraq and the widespread protests against the Vietnam War in an earlier era.

To some degree, it recalls the muted mid-20th-century political terrain that led to the Korean War—a brutal, dirty, and unresolved conflict that set the model for subsequent U.S. intervention. It was an asymmetrical conflict in which the United States monopolized the skies, raining down ruin. Four million Koreans—the vast majority of them civilians—were killed. Chinese statistics indicate that North Korea lost 30 percent of its population. In North Korea, where few families were left unscathed by the terroristic violence of the Korean War, anti-Americanism cannot be dismissed as state ideology alone.

More than almost anyone in the world, North Koreans know intimately what it means to be in the crosshairs of the U.S. war machine. In May 1951, writer and activist Monica Felton observed that in the course of her travels through North Korea as part of an international fact-finding delegation, "the same scenes of destruction repeated themselves over and over again The destruction, in fact, is so overwhelming that if the war is allowed to continue—even for another few months—there will be nothing left of Korea. Nothing at all."

Then, as now, Korea rested in the hazy recesses of American consciousness, mostly out of sight, mostly out of mind. When asked recently to comment on the catastrophe that would ensue were Trump to authorize a preemptive strike against North Korea, Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) responded with chilling candor:

"Yes, it would be terrible, but the war



Woman and child wander among debris in Pyongyang, North Korea, after a U.S. air bombardment.

would be over there. It wouldn't be here. It would be bad for the Korean peninsula, it would be bad for China, it would be bad for Japan, it would be bad for South Korea, it would be the end of North Korea but what it would not do is hit America."

Although famously at odds with Trump on numerous other matters, Graham here captured the pyrrhic spirit of the President's "America First" foreign policy, a self-privileging worldview that allows for untold ruin and suffering so long as they remain far from our shores.

Graham's statement is in keeping with

*It was an
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Four million Koreans
... were killed.*

the time-honored American tradition of envisioning apocalypse for North Korea—a tradition that survived the Cold War's end and serves as through-line across successive U.S. presidencies. In recent days, we have been told that the United States must entertain all possible scenarios against North Korea as an interloper in the nuclear club, including a preemptive nuclear strike.

It has been drilled into our heads that North Korea poses a clear and chronic danger, a threat not just to the United States and its allies in Asia and the Pacific, but also to all of humanity. Yet as Donald MacIntyre, Seoul bureau chief for *Time* magazine during the George W. Bush era, has observed, when it comes to North Korea, Western media have faithfully adhered to a "demonization script" and in so doing has helped to "lay the groundwork for war." Conditioned by jin-

goistic portraits of the North Korean enemy—"axis of evil," "outpost of tyranny," "rogue state"—and complacent in our displacement of risk onto them, we consent to North Korea's extinction in advance.

Instability in Korea has, for several decades, lined the pockets of those who profit from the business of war. Indeed, the Korean War rehabilitated a U.S. economy geared, as a result of World War II, toward total war. Seized as opportunity, the war enabled the Truman Administration to triple U.S. military spending and furnished a rationale for the bilateral linking of Asian client states to the United States. General James Van Fleet, the commanding officer of U.N. forces in Korea, described the war as "a blessing" and remarked, "There had to be a Korea either here or some place in the world."

As Cumings writes: "[I]t was the Korean War, not Greece or Turkey or the Marshall Plan or Vietnam, that inaugurated big defense budgets and the national security state, that transformed a limited containment doctrine into a global crusade, that ignited McCarthyism just as it seemed to fizzle, and thereby gave the Cold War its long run."

Fast-forward to the present: the portrait of an unpredictable nuclear-armed North Korea greases the cogs of the U.S. war machine and fuels the military-industrial complex. Within Asia and the Pacific, this jingoistic

portrait has justified accelerated deployment of missile-defense systems in Guam and South Korea, strategic positioning of nuclear aircraft carriers, military weapons sales, war exercises by the United States and its regional allies, and a forward-deployed U.S. military posture. Even as China is the main economic rival of the United States, an armed and dangerous North Korea furnishes the pretext for a heavily militarized U.S. presence in the region.

Unsurprisingly, few media outlets have reported on North Korea's overtures to the United States, even as these, if pursued, might result in meaningful de-escalation on both sides. Far from being an intractable foe, North Korea has repeatedly asked the United States to sign a peace treaty that would bring the unresolved Korean War to a long-overdue end.

It has also proposed that the United States cease its annual war games with South Korea—games that involve the simulated invasion and occupation of North Korea, the "decapitation" of its leadership, and rehearsals of a preemptive nuclear strike. In return, North Korea will cap its nuclear weapons testing. China has reiterated this proposal. The United States maintains that its joint war games with South Korea are simply business as usual and has not seen fit to respond.

With the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism rearing their heads, we have cause to be gravely concerned. During his recent anti-North Korea tour of Asia and the Pacific, Vice President Mike Pence grimly stated, "The sword stands ready," with no sense that plowshares might be in the offing. The implication in the Trump administration's words ("all options are on the table," "behaving very badly") and deeds (U.S. bombings of Syria and Afghanistan) is that force is the only lingua franca available and with North Korea, we must learn war over and over again.

Almost 70 years ago, we entered into a war with North Korea that has never ended. At the time, only a handful of Americans raised their voices in opposition. Let's not let the historical record reflect our silence now.

Christine Hong is an associate professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and an executive board member of the Korea Policy Institute. She has spent time in North Korea, including as part of a North American peace delegation.



"Massacre in Korea" by Pablo Picasso, January 1951.

By Doug Rawlings

Marc Levy's collection of "postwar stories" entitled *How Stevie Nearly Lost the War and Other Postwar Stories* (Winter Street Press, 2016) puts the reader on a rough road that is well worth traveling. One might ask what is in the air nowadays. Why these stories, poems, documentaries, novels about the American War in Vietnam? A simple answer is that we are now entering a series of 50-year commemorations of the war and people like Marc Levy, who served as a medic with the First Cav in Vietnam and Cambodia in 1970, are feeling the urge to get the real narratives out there.

Levy got me with his first sentence—"Anyone can say they were in Vietnam." Ain't that the truth. Beware the teller of tales replete with bone-chilling bloody details of hand-to-hand combat and amazing life-saving heroics. Beware the calm narrator who can string out seamless cause and effect scenarios of life in the bush. Beware the wannabe fed on Rambo movies and other Hollywood concoctions. So was Levy "in" Vietnam? You bet he was. A Silver Star, two Bronzes, and a couple of other medals can attest to that. But, more important, it's Levy's bouts of surrealistic prose/poetry, black, black humor, and scintillating "minor" details that speak to me of his trustworthiness. You really want to know what nam was all about? Read this collection.

I have to say that over the years I have come to believe that it is the medic, the wartime doctor, who really holds the keys to that tale of woe and brutality and butchery called the Vietnam War. Think of Doug Anderson, Doug Peacock, Peggy Akers, Mike Hastie, Mark Foreman, Mike Ferner, and now Marc Levy. What is it with them? That they carried their hearts and souls into battle? That some of them crawled into firefights, looking for the wounded, rather than try to burrow into the ground

Marc Levy's Vietnam War Is the Real Thing

Review of *How Stevie Nearly Lost the War*



like most of us did? That after years of living in despair they can somehow pull dark memories into the light because they were there to save lives rather than take them? I don't know. But I do know that when I talk to young people, and they ask about "my war," I steer them in the direction of the medics I know and have read.

What I especially like about Levy's work is his sardonic voice that, paradoxically, draws you nearer to him rather than distancing you from him. When you read of his exploits during and after the war, you get the impression that he has spent a good part of his life trying to keep everybody out of his mind, his soul, his heart. He's rough and tumble. He travels as a solitary lost soul drawn into jungles and danger, for what? Try applying PTSD or moral injury theories to explain that. Or don't bother. Ac-

cept what he has given us here. Realize that Levy himself has failed to accomplish his goal of keeping others out of his life by the very fact that he has written personal universal truths into these essays/stories/accounts (I pay his work the ultimate compliment that I pay Tim O'Brien's *Things That They Carried*—the lines between fact and fiction are blurred, and that, my friends, is exactly what Vietnam was like.)

It took me a while to finish this book. Sure, it called me back to places I don't like to go; sure, I have a life, you know, and can't just sit there by the fire drilling down into muck and mire; all true. But, but, what made this reading experience disjointed and tough to manage were the diverse styles that Levy employs, from a Gerard Manley Hopkins type of poetry/prose in his brilliant title piece "How Stevie Nearly

Lost the War" to his matter-of-fact reportage of sexual encounters. Is he a story teller or a journalist? In the end, it matters not. What made his collection tough to read was exactly what kept me coming back to it. Who is this guy? How did he creep into my soul? What's he going to tell me next?

So, if you, like me, keep on asking what brings us to these narratives from five decades ago, from a time that we really would like to forget, then ask yourself: "Why read of wars long past like *The Iliad*? Why read Ambrose Bierce, Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Randall Jarrell, and James Dickey?" Answer: to engage with truth-tellers who can lead us to a place of reconciliation, or, if not that, to give us a voice for the young when we are tongue-tied. War is totally, totally fucked up. It seduces you, warps your soul, spits you out into the street, and walks away with a sneer. Don't believe me? Then read Marc Levy's *How Stevie Nearly Lost the War and Other Postwar Stories*. Then get back to me.

Doug Rawlings is retired college administrator who lives in Maine. He is the author of two books of poetry and a co-founder of Veterans For Peace.

Palestine

... continued from page 13
[the Palestinians] have any weapons."

Most likely due to our presence, a third jeep with soldiers soon pulls up, this time with a commander. We speak with him about the blockade and our concerns.

Munther next takes us to see Abu Dia, a farmer that Munther's organization has helped to plant 500 apple trees to promote self-reliance among Palestinians. A settlement right up the hill looms over Abu Dia's farm, encroaching on his land, yet he continues undaunted. The Palestinians have a name for it—*sumud*. It means steadfastness, perseverance, everyday resistance.

We end the day with Abu Dia inviting us into his home to have some tea and dibbis, a syrup made from grapes. He mixes it with tahini and we enjoy it on pita, and as the long day winds down, we drink tea and chat.

Tarak Kauff is the managing editor of Peace in Our Times and a member of the Veterans For Peace national board of directors.



IDF major at Israeli roadblock tells us not to take photos. Photo: Ellen Davidson

Erebus

You have the dream again: monsoon season, jungle, a muddy village road; you are naked, stumbling along a paddy dike across an open field toward the village where C. W. killed all the pigs

but once into the trees there is only thickening jungle, canopy hung with smoldering flares.

You stumble into an open field, cupping your balls, and from the next treeline you hear music, Motown, Aretha who used to throb from the mortar pits where the brothers slung round after round down the tubes, a little respect,

and when you enter the village, ashamed, you see men you tagged dead and choppered out like sides of beef, grinning at you from around a fire,

and the old women, the children who didn't move quick enough, all the Cong, they are there too,

and the ones from the day so many died you tore up your own clothes for bandages, all there and singing, lit amber by the fire.

What took you so long, Doc, they say. They ask you where you've been and you can't tell them.

Over twenty years since you got lost coming home, and now you're back here in the stinking silt and hedgerows, shin deep in pigs, but this time naked and without a weapon.

And so you sit down with the dead. Reese with the white eyebrows wraps a poncho around your shoulders, tells you what it was like when he was dying, treeline crackling with machinegun fire you pounding on his chest to start his heart and him thinking, Easy, it's so quiet

where I am, quiet and fine, and Ballard, blue black and thick-shouldered, telling you he watched you working on his body from above, how you were white and sweat-soaked, your chest heaving, trying to find the exit wound and keep from being hit and how he wanted to tell you it was all right, it was fine, and Price, arms so long he could fold a sheet by himself, whom you crawled down into the stream bed to drag out by the heels, who lived to go home, to be killed in a dope deal two years later.

All of us are here, he says, sit down, we'll get you some clothes, you're home now, easy, remember what you used to say? You're going to be fine, my man, you're going home, just don't fade out on me, hey, what's your mother's maiden name?

—Doug Anderson

A Book of Failures

Review of Book of Lies: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam

By Denny Riley

Every one has his or her feelings about peace and war. One point of view is humans are a species with an intellect and a high degree of free choice, and those two traits should allow us to seek peaceful resolutions. Humans should also be able to learn from mistakes, and since no war has ever brought lasting peace while every war has

on a military that knows best, but the JCS as a council was dysfunctional, notes and references provided. This served Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's purposes just fine. He was an intelligent and successful man who'd taught at Harvard's school of business, risen to lieutenant-colonel as a statistical control officer during WWII, and was the 44-year-old president of Ford Motor Company when Kennedy asked him to come on board as secretary of Defense with a goal of reorganizing the Pentagon. Kennedy and then Johnson trusted what McNamara was doing, and he did everything. If the JCS had been functional they would have only been in his way. McNamara's downside was that this wasn't an assembly plant where he could control how quickly a chassis came down the line. He and his "whiz kids" staff applied their math to Southeast Asia, a place where some parts of his equations were

military officers whose Rube Goldberg construction had brought the conflict that far. As Vietnam was on the brink of becoming "a white man's war in Asia," the men running it could not decide whether the goal was to secure South Vietnam as a sovereign nation, fight to a stalemate and negotiate with the North from there, or withdraw. No one told the full truth to anyone else, particularly House and Senate members and the press.

McMaster may not have known the book would be a total snake pit when he began work on it, but the deceit, folly, disaster, and loss brought on by the lies is what his final work is about.

He's known as a renegade officer, one who tells it like it is, who hasn't always simply said, "Yes sir." Yet he has joined the White House to serve a man who is famous as a liar. So expect it. A theory shared in barracks bull sessions when I was in said that everyone in uniform from the raw recruit to the top four-star general did as he was told if he wanted to get along. The military rewards non-renegades. Here's what McMaster's own book tells us about renegade behavior at the very top. In 1964 when General John P. McConnell was being considered by Lyndon Johnson for Air Force Chief of Staff, "Johnson arranged for the general to return from Europe for an interview in the White House. Getting right to the point, Johnson asked if McConnell would support policies inconsistent with his professional military opinion. The general assured the president that, even if he did not have faith in the administration's policies, he 'would still go ahead and carry out [Johnson's] decisions to the best of my abilities, and I would see, also, to it that the entire Air Force did the same.'"

If Donald Trump is interested in broad and true advice on national security and not simply that of an army offi-

McMaster's book makes the Joint Chiefs of Staff sound like five little boys dressed in make-believe costume while they fight over toy guns.

brought pain and loss, we should by now have learned that peace is better. Pretty simple. A peaceful resolution seems like a more intelligent choice, a preferable choice, given what we've learned from history.

So it is surprising when an intelligent human supports or willfully participates in a cause that could lead to violence. Yet perhaps it isn't, if we consider the history we are taught, the games we play as kids, the allure of the uniform, and the praise bestowed upon the people who wear it.

Donald Trump's latest National Security Adviser, Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster, earned a PhD in American History from the University of North Carolina so he must know upon what this great land of ours has been built. He has served in many posts as he worked his way up through the ranks, but until now he has been most famous for his book adapted from his PhD thesis, *Dereliction of Duty*. It is subtitled *Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam*.

Feeling a prejudice against H.R. McMaster simply because he makes his living waging war or threatening to do so, I thought I'd better try to be fair, so I read his book. *Dereliction of Duty* covers the military history of Vietnam at the command level from World War II to 1965 and includes copious notes, quotes, indices, and a selected bibliography.

I was 20 in 1965 when my duty station was the target room of a Strategic Air Command bomb wing at an airbase on the Great Plains with targets in the Soviet Union to be nuked by our B-47 bombers and Atlas missiles, if we as a nation were sufficiently provoked. By February of 1966 I was with an F-105 wing whose mission was the daily bombing of North Vietnam and Laos. Late at night or very early in the morning a coded Top Secret message came from Saigon telling us our targets for the day. We'd decode it and prepare target charts and gather aerial photos for each target and make them ready for the pilots when they came in for their briefing. We had aerial photos for all of North Vietnam and Laos, and these photos showed us other targets we didn't strike. Most of those were designated JCS targets, only to be struck when ordered directly from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. All of us working in the target room, all young enlisted men, viewed the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a sage gathering of elder warriors, privy to information we couldn't imagine. Striking those targets or not striking them was beyond our plebeian role in the military.

Alas, McMaster's book makes the JCS sound like five little boys dressed in make-believe costume while they fight over toy guns. These five men, each a four star officer, could not put aside their turf wars long enough to do what they'd sworn to do.

I was surprised by this tack of the narrative. I'd expected the book to be about civilians forcing their will

other humans, intelligent and thinking for themselves and not subject to his formulas, and in a fight for their native land. If he saw these people as the quotient of 10 they might be the quotient of 12 when he decided to engage them. This didn't go well, as many of you know.

Nothing shared in McMaster's book is left to chance. Notes and references are given for everything put forth. Perusal of the notes and references would lead any reader to believe that everyone in authority in the White House



National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster with President Donald Trump.

and the Pentagon and our embassy in Saigon lied to everyone else. If I'd written the book its title would be *A Book of Lies, A Book of Failures*. A dereliction of duty isn't actually shown. Lying to other government people and deceiving the voters is *de rigueur*. It's not a happy story. Take for instance this: "At the end of October [1964] Senator Russell suggested separately to Johnson and DCI McCone that to 'save face' the United States bring a man to the top of the government in South Vietnam who would demand that the U.S. withdraw its forces from that country." The idea was dismissed. When the troop buildup began in 1965 Lyndon Johnson was busy with his Great Society legislation. He left Vietnam to the civilians and

cer hoping to earn one more star, he might consider as a second advisor a person of the character of Louis Vitale, who served in the Air Force and since has worked with the Nuclear Control Institute, Critical Mass Energy Project, Greenpeace, Public Citizen, Friends of the Earth, the Sierra Club, and Veterans For Peace, and is a Franciscan friar.

Otherwise, when the Vigoro hits the air conditioning unit you can expect H.R. McMaster, Ph.D., to say exactly what he's been told to say. For all his shiny buttons and glossy ribbons, he will lie.

Denny Riley is a member of VFP Chapter 69 in San Francisco.

When Veterans Protested the Vietnam War



Jan Barry at a Vietnam Veterans Against the War demonstration in 1970 in Valley Forge, Pa. Photo by Sheldon Ramsdell.

By Jan Barry

An ad in the April 9, 1967, edition of *The New York Times* caught my attention and changed my life. “We appeal to North Vietnam, if they really want peace, to stop bombing the United States—or else get the hell out of Vietnam!” stated a group named Veterans for Peace in Vietnam. A Vietnam veteran myself, I recognized it as a tonic outburst of G.I. black humor, a cheeky comment on the reality of who was bombing whose homeland. It also convinced me that there was a role for me to play, as a veteran, in exposing what the U.S. government was doing in Indochina.

Posted to Vietnam as an Army radio specialist, I celebrated my 20th birthday in Saigon in January 1963, a very drunk soldier in the U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam. Two and a half years before the Gulf of Tonkin “incident,” we were already waging war—when we weren’t doing happy hours in bars from the Delta to Da Nang—under slick counterinsurgency slogans like “winning hearts and minds” and cynical unit slogans like “only you can prevent a forest” (motto of the Air Force missions spraying the countryside with chemical warfare herbicides). I’ll admit—some of it was thrilling. I caught flights on Air Force C-123s skimming treetops and bush-pilot planes flown by my Army unit transporting Special Operations teams in and out of hush-hush places, with B-26 and T-28 bombers and assorted other airplanes and helicopters flitting around, all part of a strategy to “pacify” rice-farming regions and jungle forests potentially harboring elusive Vietcong guerrillas, under the guise of being “military advisors” to a government we had installed.

Our mission was to hold Communist China in check. We occupied old French Foreign Legion posts, contemptuous of the

French for being defeated by Vietnamese. Yet we seldom controlled much beyond our bases. Things in Southeast Asia, I learned, were not as upstanding as portrayed in official pronouncements. Declining a military career, I resigned from the U.S. Military Academy, where I went after serving in Vietnam, intending to write an exposé of our secretive, bizarre little war in Southeast Asia. That project got snagged in a tangle of new revelations as the war mushroomed in 1965-66 into an assault on the scale of World War II campaigns.

Quitting a newspaper job in New Jersey, I moved to New York in early 1967, looking to join the emerging public debate over the war. Working as a file clerk at the New York Public Library and doing research for another stab at a book project, I read a news dispatch about the bombing of yet another Vietnamese village. I was incensed that the news item quoted a military spokesman

older, predominantly World War II and Korean War veterans wearing “Veterans for Peace” hats. I joined a small group of grim young men with a banner that read “Vietnam Veterans Against the War!”

Vietnam ‘67

Historians, veterans, and journalists recall 1967 in Vietnam, a year that changed the war and changed America.

That was the beginning of a movement of military veterans determined to speak out from personal experience about troubling battlefield tactics, strategies, and national policies driving the war in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. In November 1967 our new group, Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW), placed an ad in *The New York Times*, titled “Viet-Nam Veterans Speak Out.” Signed by 65 veterans of the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marines, the statement said, in part: “We know, because we

*Bitter war stories burst out
in poetry, short stories, novels, memoirs,
and testimony to Congress.*

saying this was a mistake, but didn’t report that bombing villages was our strategy in Vietnam. So I dashed off a dissenting letter to the editor; sent a furious letter of protest of our bombing campaign to one of my senators, Robert Kennedy; and wrote a blistering letter to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara blasting the bombing of civilians and enclosed my war medals with the letter to emphasize my disgust.

And much against my small-town, patriotic, Republican upbringing in upstate New York, I joined a peace demonstration. The April 15, 1967, antiwar march to the U.N. plaza drew more than 100,000 people, including a large contingent of

have been there, that the American public has not been told the truth about the war or about Viet-Nam. ... We believe that true support for our buddies still in Viet-Nam is to demand that they be brought home (through whatever negotiation is necessary) before anyone else dies in a war the American people did not vote for and do not want.”

McNamara privately shared our public dissent with President Johnson, it was later revealed. Yet combat missions and casualties continued to escalate. It would be another year before public opinion turned toward doubts about the war. Elected president with a promised peace plan, Richard Nixon ordered more bomb-

ing and an invasion of Cambodia.

We veterans played a major part in the roiling antiwar activism. As college campuses exploded in protest, outraged student veterans spoke out across the nation, appalled when four students were killed by the Ohio National Guard at Kent State University. Soldiers coming home joined veterans in mounting their own protests, embittered by horrific battlefield casualties, nightmarish atrocities, and horrendous conditions at Veterans Administration hospitals. They also sought answers about a mysterious malady, later named post-traumatic stress disorder; pressed for better health care programs at the VA; and raised worries about health threats from exposure to Agent Orange. Bitter war stories burst out in poetry, short stories, novels, memoirs, and testimony to Congress.

In April 1971, on national television, several hundred veterans flung war medals onto the steps of the Capitol during an encampment in Washington organized by VVAW to protest the continuation of the fighting, which by then was over a decade old. Such anguished actions aimed to “search out and destroy the last vestige of this barbaric war,” Navy Lt. John Kerry told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on behalf of the protesting veterans, so that Vietnam might come to mean “the place where America finally turned and where soldiers like us helped in the turning.”

The following spring, in 1972, with the assistance of many VVAW colleagues, Larry Rottmann, Basil T. Paquet, and I published, as the editors of 1st Casualty Press, a poetry anthology that offered a GI outcry by veterans whose views had been dismissed in literary as well as political circles. “Forty years after its publication, *Winning Hearts and Minds: War Poems by Vietnam Veterans* remains one of the most compelling, insightful and moving accounts of the American war in Vietnam,” wrote the critic Adam Gilbert in the literary journal *War, Literature and the Arts* in 2013. “*Winning*, and the body of ‘Vietnam war poetry’ that it helped to establish, presented a searing critique of the war by those who had fought in it, a critique that continues to offer a valuable opportunity to understand and examine America’s policies and attitudes toward Asia through the eyes of the men who implemented them.”

In the public imagination, Vietnam veterans stand in contrast to antiwar protesters—at best, the maligned victims of government policy; at worst, willing accomplices to atrocities. But as I experienced firsthand, those stereotypes ignore the vital role that thousands of veterans played in the antiwar movement, bringing testimony and moral witness to bear against a disastrous military adventure.

Jan Barry, a founder of *Vietnam Veterans Against the War*, is an investigative journalist, the author of *A Citizen’s Guide to Grassroots Campaigns* and co-editor of *Winning Hearts and Minds: War Poems by Vietnam Veterans*.