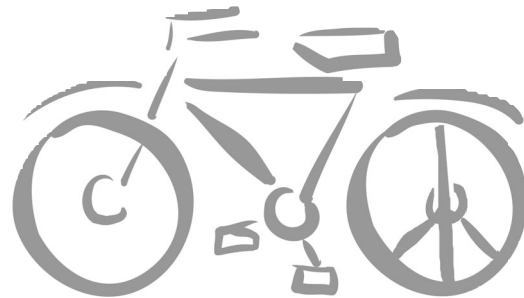




## Peace Bicyclists to be Hosted by VFP-56



Calling themselves Catalysts of HOPE (Healing Our People & Earth), a group of 8 adults and 7 children traveling by pedal power are heading our way carrying messages of peace and sustainability. Building in conjunction with Bike4Peace, a group that has sponsored bike rides from Everett, Washington to Washington, DC annually since 2005, cyclists plan to converge in DC on September 22 (World Car Free Day).

The Catalysts of HOPE kicked off their journey on March 17 in Portland, Oregon and plan to deliver workshops and engage in empowering conversations as they travel across the country. Utilizing principles of Sarvodaya Shramadana pioneered in Sri Lanka and other models of cooperative community building, the Journey plans to engage in collaborative efforts with community planners, activists, and advocates around the country for the many refugees of Hurricane Katrina.

The core of cross-country bicyclists welcome additional riders to ride with them for any part of the trip—across town, across their state, or the rest of the way to DC. Especially welcome are riders who know the local terrain or those who can help to find a specific place or determine the safest route.

Catalysts of HOPE and Bike4Peace are building a network of people devoted to the search for a sustainable lifestyle and collaborative community. Their goal is to build unity with a whole nation full of good people who are only a bike ride away so that, "together we can build a peaceful world."

Veterans For Peace Chapter 56 has

agreed to host the riders for the several days they will be in Arcata. **On Friday, March 30, please come to a potluck and discussion at the Redwood Peace and Justice Center from 6 to 8:30pm**, right after the vigil.

The next day, **Saturday, March 31, a workshop on principles of sustainability will be held at the Marsh Commons, beginning with a potluck lunch at 12noon and going until 4pm.**

**A third potluck event happens Sunday, April 1 from 1pm to 3pm at CCAT on the HSU campus.** Please consider attending at least one of these events, and also help spread the word to others who might be interested!

The ride organizers have specifically

requested organic, vegetarian or vegan food at the community potlucks, and they challenge people to use food grown within Humboldt County (or at least in California).

For more information about the Catalysts of HOPE ride, you may visit <[www.emissariesofhope.org](http://www.emissariesofhope.org)>.

**If you can provide sleeping accommodations or use of a shower for any of the cyclists, or for any additional information about the local events being planned, please call Rob Hepburn at 826-7124 or Gordon Anderson at 498-5889.**

## The Price of Empire

*by Fred Hummel*

**P**REFACE. While it may seem amoral to be talking about the financial aspects of maintaining military superiority over the entire world, it is an issue that affects all citizens in this country. While a favored few will prosper, most will suffer in one way or another. President Eisenhower's words upon departing office put this issue in context: *"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the clouds of war, it is humanity hanging on a cross of iron."*

On these pages in September 2005 I wrote about the FY2006 "defense" budget that was represented in the mainstream media (MSM) as being \$421B(billion), up from the \$300+B budgets of not so very long ago. As shocking as any of those numbers may be, they are less than half of what US taxpayers shell out every year to pay for the national "defense."

Whether the annual defense budget is the cost of actually defending our country,

*...continued on page 5*

## VFP 56 Profile: Royal Alsup

by Becky Luening

Royal Alsup grew up in South-Central Los Angeles, the baby in a family of four siblings. The oldest, his sister, was much, much older. His describes his father as a violent person and his mother as passive. Living in a diverse neighborhood, he was comfortable hanging out with poor whites like himself as well as Latinos and Blacks. Like other youngsters in that place and time, he was a troubled kid who engaged in a lot of violence. At 15 years old he got kicked out of high school and never went back.

From a very young age, Royal was attracted to the idea of being a Marine. His main inspiration was his brother-in-law, who returned from the World War II Guadalcanal campaign when Royal was just 5 years old, looking sharp in his Marine Corps uniform. When, in December 1956, Royal was joining the Corps himself, he visited his brother-in-law just before leaving for boot camp. Reminiscing with Bud about his military journey affirmed Royal's decision, which was not supported by his mother.

Right out of boot camp, Royal married his local girlfriend. His first enlistment lasted from January 1957 to 1960, and began with an overseas tour to Japan, then Okinawa. On the way to Japan, his ship was briefly re-routed to the China Sea. Violence had broken out between the communist government of Mainland China and Taiwan, which at that time was under the rule of the Republic of China government led by Chiang Kai-shek. From his ship, Royal watched a night of fireworks as China bombarded Taiwan. The explosions were a little too close for comfort and although he was never in combat, the experience gave him a little taste of war.

Stationed first in Japan and then Okinawa, Royal's assigned Military Occupational Specialty, or MOS, was Cook. On at least three occasions, he served in this capacity with infantry on FLAPs—short-term missions in various locations, including about two months spent in the Philippines where the US was involved in putting down the Huk rebellion. The troops would be picked up by big ships with names like "Point Defiance" and "Breckenridge," and then just dropped off, making amphibious landings in places where Royal has not-too-fond memories of laying in mud in the jungle and being eaten alive by mosquitoes.

Seven months before the end of his first enlistment, Royal's wife gave birth to a girl who sadly was born with badly deformed feet. The family was broke and he realized that if he left the military there would be no way to cover the expense of the major surgeries that would be required to correct his daughter's feet. However, when he went to re-enlist, he found the laws had changed and they wouldn't let him in without a high school diploma. So Royal signed a contract promising to finish high school while in the military and he was allowed to

re-enlist. Stationed at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, he was able to attend the adult school at San Diego High and finally, at the age of 22, he received his high school diploma. When his English teacher, one of the pivotal influences in Royal's life, asked whether he planned to go on to community college, Royal thought

not. But the question planted a seed, and he did attend college for a semester or so before receiving his overseas orders.

It was during his second, six-year enlistment period from 1960 to 1966, with an extension to May 1966 because of the Vietnam war, that Civil rights and race issues were exploding in the nation and intensely in the military. Royal witnessed a lot of horrible racial conflict within the Marines and noticed that few Blacks were officers. Face to face with the paradox and injustice that the very blacks who were being sent to fight for the US in Vietnam were victims of racial violence and the denial of their civil rights at home, Royal began to experience a spiritual awakening. Two other events helped form his transformation—the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963 and the air strikes against North Vietnam in 1964 while he was stationed on a naval ship in the Pacific near Vietnam. Although Royal did not see direct combat, because he was on that ship, according to Marine Corp standards, he is a combat vet.

During this period one of his personal experiences as a leader in the military—a sergeant—helped shape his own attitudes around race. Still in Okinawa, Royal was marching his squad down to the work area one day when a Black private began fooling around in formation. "When I asked, 'What the hell are you doing?' the guy spit on me," recalls Royal. He intended to write him up, but later that night he discovered the same young marine crying in the barracks. "I'm so sorry Sarge," he cried. "It wasn't you I was spitting on. They wouldn't let me go see my dad who is dying." So Royal had mercy on the guy and decided not to write him up after all. The spitting incident had happened in public, though, and when he didn't put the man on report, Royal was called down to the office to explain why. He was urged to press charges, told he'd lose respect as a leader if he didn't, but Royal refused. The



Royal and Patricia Alsup



demand felt racist to him. After this incident, Royal didn't lose respect, but instead enjoyed total backing from his troops. Something clicked for him then and he began to enact a new leadership style in which he gained more respect by supporting his men than by engaging in macho put-downs.

Royal continued to confront racial issues during his cushy last two years in the Marine Corps. In 1964-66 he was stationed at Mare Island in Vallejo, California, site of the biggest nuclear submarine base at that time, where the Marines were in charge of base security. By 1966 he reached the rank of Staff Sergeant E-5. In Vallejo he was in charge of a platoon-size squad and he kept having conflict with a certain captain about the quality of his leadership. This guy, an obvious racist, thought Royal was too soft on the Blacks in his squad. He punished Royal by assigning him to squad bay cleanup and other low-level duty. Other marine corporals and PFCs came to Royal's apartment when they were drunk, looking for fights, and often jumped on him at the enlisted men's club.

Also during this period, the Marine Guard was responsible for burying the Marine dead, and Royal remembers getting in trouble for crying at a funeral. In retrospect, he realizes he was going through a major spiritual transformation, and his personal changes were all mixed up with the politics of the times. It seemed that he was surely moving toward a court martial.

Fed up with the military, Royal fondly recalls one vivid demonstration of clear insubordination to a colonel who walked by as he was painting the fence near the PX. He dropped his paintbrush, saluted him and started singing the Marine Corp hymn. Not long after this incident, Royal was ordered to report to the Vallejo office of then-Democratic Congressman Robert Leggett. When he walked into the congressman's office, there was that same colonel, along with the rich businesswoman who lived in the apartment next to Royal. Fortunately, the woman was there as his ally. She had witnessed the violence of the marines who came to visit Royal's apartment, and she wanted to help him. When he walked into Leggett's office, she asked him, "Well, what would you like? You seem so miserable..." Feeling he had no real options, the first word out of Royal's mouth was "Nam," and he figures the colonel probably would have been glad to send him there. But this businesswoman, who had a lot of political clout in the community, would not hear of it. Instead, she helped broker a sweet deal: For the last three months of Royal's service, he would be allowed to go onto the base, check in, and then leave. Then, finally, after 9 years and 5 months in the Marine Corps, Royal was a free man. A year after leaving the military, Royal's wife left him.

The GI Bill was another reason Royal chose to leave the Marines, allowing him to attend Sonoma State University, which was a major change for Royal. It was the only school at that time involved in the Humanistic Psychology movement,

and its cutting-edge program was world famous. Originally Royal thought he might get into law, but he quickly became immersed in the ideas of Humanistic Psychology. It was a natural fit for someone who had been so keen on justice in the military. Eventually he began focusing on nonviolence, exposing the connection between punishment and violence. His experience in the Marine Corps had taught him that the disciplinary tactics of the military are overly punitive.

Meanwhile, much of his education took place outside the university. While selling tires at Sears to help earn his way through college, he met a man named Robert Hunt who recruited Royal to work with him at Ghettos Inc., an organization that taught cabinetry and metalwork skills to Black prisoners coming out of Alcatraz. Royal came to the realization that communities of color often don't have service resources such as counseling to help keep people out of prison.

Through his work with Ghettos Inc., Royal had some indirect involvement with the Black Panthers and saw from the inside that they were not the violent terrorists they were portrayed to be by law enforcement and the media. Instead, they engaged in projects to help better their community. One such project he remembers being involved with was a campaign to bring more streetlights to Oakland—something seemingly insignificant, but actually very important for neighborhood safety and security.

Royal earned a Bachelors and a Masters Degree in Humanistic Psychology at Sonoma State and then went on to earn a Ph.D. in Psychology in 1975 at the Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center in San Francisco. The same year he became a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. Over the years he has taught psychology at several colleges, including College of the Redwoods, Humboldt State University, and Saybrook, where he has been teaching graduate students for fifteen years.

In the late '70s Royal moved to Humboldt County and began working as educator, therapist and advocate for Native American children and their families. In 1986 he received the Veteran of the Year Award for his work with Native American children. During his activist career as a psychotherapist he met Patricia, whom he later married. Patricia is an associate member of VFP, a psychologist, and an artist. She is currently preparing for a June show at the Ink People Gallery in Eureka. In June 1992, Royal and Patricia co-founded the Humanistic Transpersonal Psychotherapy Center. He is the author of over seventy published articles and a seasoned workshop presenter and speaker.

One of the themes of Royal's professional life has been his work on behalf of oppressed peoples. A major aspect of his

...continued on page 4



# Evidence of the March 17th Vigil in Eureka

*Photographed by VFP Member Don Maddox*



TOP LEFT: VFP Associate Members Kit Crosby-Williams and Jane Riggan hold one of the large banners mourning Iraqi deaths; TOP RIGHT: VFP Member Marc Knipper, Peacekeeper on his bicycle; BOTTOM LEFT: Meditators for peace VFP members Bill Thompson and Carl Stancil, along with members of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship; BOTTOM RIGHT: VFP Member Brian Willson checks out the sign of Miranda resident Chip Tittman.

## VFP Member Profile: Royal Alsup ...continued from page 3

career in psychology is the treatment he developed for PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) among Native Americans, which he believes is caused largely by post-colonialism. He also developed Liberation Psychology, which is defined by the following statement: "The needs for justice, power, freedom, nonviolence, love, respect, belonging, trust, hope, safety, security, competence, uniqueness, gender, culture, creativity, and spirituality burn deep in oppressed people."

In February 2003, when people all over the world took to the streets to prevent another war in Iraq, Royal and Patricia went to San Francisco to participate in the big peace demonstration there. Then, on March 15th they joined thousands of Humboldt County residents to march in Eureka. It was at that march that Royal discovered Veterans For Peace. He remem-

bers meeting Bill Thompson and Nate Lomba, who welcomed him to march with them and hold the big VFP banner at the front of the march. Royal says he just about cried as he marched with his fellow veterans, because "it felt like I had come home." He says he enjoys coming to VFP Chapter 56 meetings, where he can just "sit in that room and be surrounded by great activists."

Even if you haven't met Royal at a Veterans For Peace meeting, you may be familiar with him as the host of the local community television interview program, "Royal Inspirations." The show is now in reruns, but he is still interested in drawing on the expertise and telling the stories of his fellow peace veterans. He may be calling to interview you for your stories to be included in a book he is writing about War with a colleague from Saybrook. Royal's own example of personal growth and transformation is truly an inspiration.



## The Price of Empire ...continued from page 1

or, more likely, the cost of maintaining military superiority over the rest of the world, is a valid question, one that gets very little debate amongst our national leaders or coverage in the MSM (mainstream media). In this article we'll simply 'follow the money.'

For FY2007 the federal government places the "defense" budget at \$439.2B. (The Council on Foreign Relations claims it is \$462B). That lower amount in itself exceeds the military budget of any other country in the world and comes close to exceeding that of all other countries combined. We truly are Number One in military spending.

But is \$439.2B the full cost of "defending" our country? Since many military costs are buried in the budgets of other federal agencies, the answer is clearly no. Nuclear weapons, for example, appear in the Department of Energy's budget at \$16.4B for the year. And you all know Bush 43 wants to increase that one.

Add in the Homeland Security budget at \$41B and the VA's expenses for caring for the wounded and sick from current and past wars at \$68B. Now we're at \$564.6B and you're starting to see a sharper picture of the true "defense" budget. At well over half a trillion dollars we're talking real money. But don't go away, there's more.

Like the interest to be paid by the federal Treasury on loans made to finance past and present wars that in 2002 amounted to \$138.7B. (We do not have current figures.) You and I know wars don't come free of charge even if the MSM and our leaders don't quite get the picture. Tack on interest payments and the total rises to \$703.3B.

Iraq/Afghanistan? Those sneaky folks in the Pentagon don't put the costs of these ongoing wars in the DOD budget; they use something called the "emergency supplemental funding process." \$99.7B has been proposed for FY2007. And that comes on top of a 'bridge' payment of \$70B to fund the wars while awaiting Congressional approval for the larger amount. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) in FY2006 estimated the cost for both wars to be \$10B/month. Evidently the price is going up. Adding the \$70B and \$99.7B to our running total of \$703.3B gives us total of \$873B. We're now perilously close to an outlay of a trillion a year. One thousand billion dollars!

We could quit here but there are other hidden costs to maintaining the largest military machine in the history of the world, numbers we know are there but are almost impossible to dig out. These include payments of pensions to military retirees and their widows/widowers and their families plus the billions spent each year by the Department of State to finance foreign arms transfers and militarily related development in other countries. As for the CIA budget? Shhh!

The sad truth is, thanks to the Alice In Wonderland military accounting our government uses we may never be able to gain a trustworthy number for the total cost of being Number One. Nevertheless, the numbers we've been able to find bring the total pretty close to a trillion dollars a year—and it could easily be

more than that. Tie this amount to the steadily increasing US trade deficit—\$782.7B in 2005—and a sane person might well ask how long can we keep this up? But, hey, there's no such thing as a free empire, right?

### SOURCES:

Michael Moran, "110th Congress—Defense Spending Issue Looms," *Council On Foreign Relations Backgrounder*, Jan. 4, 2007, <<http://www.cfr.org/publication/12344/#3>>

*The Defense Monitor*, Vol. 32, #5.

Office of Management and Budget, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2007/defense.html>

*Harper's Magazine*, January 2007.

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## Tens of Thousands March on Pentagon

by Tony Teolis, Veterans For Peace Chapter 16

Congratulations to everyone who made it through the snow and freezing rain to get to Washington and join together in the tens of thousands and March on the Pentagon!

The lead banner of the march demanding "US Out of Iraq Now" was carried by Cindy Sheehan, Elliott Adams, National President of Veterans For Peace, Cynthia McKinney, Jonathan Hutto, co-founder of Appeal for Redress, Mahdi Bray, Executive Director of the Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation, Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson, and youth and students in the anti-war movement.

Led by a contingent of Iraq war veterans, active-duty service-members, Gold Star families, and veterans from other past and present wars, the demonstration received a large amount of media coverage. CNN featured the demonstration, described as a march of tens of thousands, in its television and web reporting. The major French newspaper, *Le Monde*, ran a significant article about the March on the Pentagon under the headline, "More than 50,000 People Protest Against the War in Iraq," as the US component of the world-wide protests marking the beginning of the fifth year of the war against Iraq. The rally was broadcast live on C-span and Al-Jazeera and received widespread media coverage.

The March on the Pentagon was not a solitary action but one of more than 1,000 protests that took place in the US between March 17 and March 20, 2007. The March on the Pentagon took place the day after a severe winter snow and sleet storm suddenly hit northeastern states and prevented many buses from traveling, 700 flights from taking off, and thousands of cars from reaching the march. Throughout New England and the Mid-Atlantic region motorists were advised to stay off the road. The large turnout at the demonstration was all the more significant given the hardships people had to endure to participate. People marched to the Pentagon and stayed as long as they could, braving 20-mile-an-hour winds and a windchill factor into the teens.

SOURCE: <<http://www.vfpdc.org/>>

[Submitted by VFP Member Jim Sorter.]



# America's Broken Social Contract: Our Betrayal

by Bobby Muller, President, Veterans for America

As we enter the fifth year of our war in Iraq, I am deeply distressed that our country is betraying our service members.

As a veteran, I can assure you that there is no greater pain than the sense of betrayal by a government and a country that send you to war.

Thirty-eight years ago, while serving in Vietnam, an enemy bullet ripped through my chest as I led an assault against a hill, just below the demilitarized zone, defended by North Vietnamese regular forces. It is a miracle that I survived, albeit as a paraplegic confined to a wheelchair. The military medical evacuation was the best in the world. I was flown out to the hospital ship the USS *Repose* and given immediate life-saving surgery. The care was spectacular. Then I entered long-term rehabilitation and things went downhill fast.

My first day in the New York City veterans' hospital, where I was to stay as an inpatient for a year, was the first time I cried since being wounded. I was overwhelmed with despair at the circumstances I found myself in. *LIFE* magazine depicted my ward as a "medical slum." It was awful.

When my government asked me to serve, I did. I paid an immense personal price, and my country subsequently turned its back on me. I had been betrayed.

As the war began to wind down and we became aware that our government lied about the necessity and purposefulness of the war, I became very angry and the betrayal that I felt was debilitating.

I have fought for service member and veterans benefits for more than 35 years. I used to believe that the changes enacted as a result of our struggles would lead to better care for future generations. It was my hope that no service member or veteran would ever feel a similar sense of betrayal by our country.

I was wrong.

Today's service members and veterans are being forced to fight the same battles we fought.

It is shameful.

How is it possible that America has not learned from its mistakes?



How is it possible that we collectively ignore the challenges of service members until the suffering and neglect are horrifying?

I'll tell you how:

There is a social contract between a country and those it sends to war, and America's social contract is broken.

When our citizens are willing to serve and, in some cases, sacrifice their lives for America, our government has a corresponding moral obligation to ensure that this willingness is not squandered. We must recognize and defend this obligation prior, during, and post deployment.

First, we need to ensure that deployment is absolutely necessary. The conflict must be worthy of the sacrifices being asked. Decisions that require the greatest sacrifice from our citizens must be subjected to full congressional and public debate.

Second, when our nation deploys troops, the government has an obligation to provide the capacity, the strategy, the numbers, the equipment, and any other support our troops require. Today, it is clear that our service members are not getting the support they deserve.

Third, when our service members pay a personal price by serving our country, we must do right by them when they return. This means ensuring that health, rehabilitative, and readjustment programs adequately provide for their specific needs. Everyone in America realizes that this is not the case today.

The media and public uproar following the Walter Reed debacle was a necessary first step. Now, this foundation must be built upon.

Walter Reed is symptomatic of a country disengaged from its wars.

Less than half a percent of our population is being asked to bear the burden of this "long war." Our all-volunteer military has allowed most of the country to remain oblivious to the horrors of our wars.

We must begin to equitably distribute this sacrifice—not by sharing the burden of combat, but through the burden of political engagement.

The American public can create a strong social contract. We must begin to pressure our government to uphold its end of the bargain. Our service members are in desperate need of our advocacy. The betrayal felt by this generation must be reversed.

Whether we like it or not, these are our wars, and we must begin to take ownership of their causes, conduct and consequences.

What does America owe to those who serve? We owe them a social contract worthy of their sacrifice.

SOURCE: <<http://www.veteransforamerica.org/>>

[Submitted by VFP Member Carl Stancil.]



## The Trial of Agustin Aguayo

*Eyewitness Account by Fernando Suarez del Solar — English translation by Jorge Mariscal*

The 5th of March, 9:00 a.m. The US military base in Würzburg, Germany. We enter the building where a trial will be held—the court martial of conscientious objector Agustin Aguayo. His family is nervous, his daughters still do not fully understand what may happen to their father, his wife Helga displays a fearlessness that masks what she really feels.

At 9:28 a.m., the military judge enters the courtroom where Agustin is seated with his lawyers. A few civilians and military personnel are there as well as representatives of Amnesty International and I.

The bailiff reads the charges and the prosecutor asks that the accused be found guilty of desertion, AWOL, disobeying orders, abandoning his unit. He asks for the maximum sentence of seven years.

The defense presents its case by claiming that the defendant is innocent, guilty only of AWOL and refusing to deploy to Iraq.

Witnesses are called for both sides. There is a recess for lunch at 12:30. The family is nervous; afraid of the unknown. The General Consul of Mexico appears and states that his government is present to lend support to a fellow citizen.

The trial is called back into session and the judge finds the accused guilty on all counts. At this moment, Helga begins to sob softly, the daughters cry without understanding what has happened, Agustin's mother weeps, and I shed a tear out of anger and impotence before such an injustice. But the real surprise has not yet taken place.

At 5:55 p.m., the judge asks Agustin to stand to hear the sentence. There is tension and fear in the faces of friends and family because the prosecutor has asked for the full seven-year sentence and we know the minimum sentence is two years. The judge declares that the penalty will be eight months, and that given the time he has already spent in prison Agustin has to serve only 49 more days. He will be demoted to the rank of E-1 with a lower salary and discharged.

The dark skies parted for the family! Only 49 more days and Agustin would be able to embrace his family as a free man!!!

The expressions of the prosecutors showed frustration, anger, even hate. The expressions of friends and family showed joy because this signified one more defeat for the Bush administration.

As I approached Agustin to hug him, he said "Thank you Fernando for being here. Your presence gave me courage. I knew that having you here would help me to face adversity, you brought me luck, and imagine—only three months and I will be with you, discussing the lies that led to this war."

I couldn't avoid crying and neither could he. We embraced, and I thought "Why could my son not be here to witness this victory? I would gladly exchange my life for that of my son. I

would rather see him in prison for refusing to go to war than have to visit his grave." I left the courtroom, lit a cigarette, and began to weep—Agustin free; Jesus gone forever.

AGUSTIN AGUAYO: WE SALUTE YOUR COURAGE AND CONSCIENCE. THANK YOU.

SOURCE: Guerrero Azteca Peace Project

[Submitted by VFP Associate Member Becky Luening.]

## Iraq Veterans Use Street Theater to Show True Reality of War



PHOTO CREDIT: LOVELLA CALICA

WASHINGTON, DC—In an effort to illuminate the true reality of the conflict in Iraq, members of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) engaged in a series of street theater actions around the nation's capital on Monday, March 19, 2007. This day begins the fifth year of a war that has claimed the lives of over 3,200 American service members and over 655,000 Iraqis.

Actual veterans of the conflict in Iraq played the part of American service members—with reenactments that highlighted various aspects of life in combat in Iraq. The event was treated like a military operation with participants in full military uniform, however, there were no weapons used at any time.

"We are calling Monday's action Operation First Casualty because we believe that truth was the first casualty of this war. Our aim is to show the American public the truth of the US occupation in Iraq," said Garrett Reppenhagen, IVAW board chair and one of the organizers of March 19th's event. "It is time for the American people to know the truth so they will act to bring the troops home now."

SOURCE: <<http://www.ivaw.org/>>

[Submitted by VFP Associate Member Mark Dubrow.]





**Veterans For Peace  
Humboldt Bay  
Chapter 56**

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**STANDING COMMITTEES**

**Weapons of Mass  
Destruction/DU:**  
Peter Aronson

**General Store:** Doug Smith

**Media:** Becky Luening

**Veterans Education and  
Outreach Project:**  
Carl Stancil & Jon Reisdorf

# LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

If you would like to submit an article, opinion, comment or response to anything you have read that might interest the members of VFP-56, please email it to [turtldncer@aol.com](mailto:turtldncer@aol.com) in Word format, or mail to Jim Sorter at 1762 Buttermilk Lane, Arcata, CA 95521. Submissions will be included on a first come basis until the newsletter is full. Late arriving submissions will be archived for future issues.

*“One of the things that will surely strike future historians about our era is the odd placidity of American cultural life at the time of a wildly unpopular war—the unexcited alternation of American death and “American Idol,” so different from the eruptions that attended Vietnam—that is a result of our not having to go there if we don’t have to. This is not exactly comforting. All wars are total to the people they kill.”*

— Adam Gopnik, *The New Yorker*



**Veterans For Peace Chapter 56**  
P.O. Box 532  
Bayside, CA 95524

## **Next VFP 56 Meeting**

**Thursday, April 5, 2007 • 7–9 pm**  
**Marsh Commons, 101 H Street, Arcata**

**Info: 707-826-7124 • [www.vfp56.org](http://www.vfp56.org)**

**VFP Hosts “Catalysts of HOPE”**  
**Bicyclists for Peace & Sustainability**  
**from Oregon, March 30–April 1**

See page 1 for details.