



VETERANS FOR PEACE
HUMBOLDT BAY
CHAPTER 56

THE FOGHORN

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2009

“Cutting Through the Fog of War”

This Is My Paycheck

Letter To: Nadia McCaffrey

Tuesday, July 7, 2009

Hello Nadia

I have no excuse for not contacting you sooner after everything you did for our family and how much you mean to so many including myself and Joey. So many things have gone wrong that I did the exact opposite of everything you and so many others taught me. I hid from the world and now the problems are becoming insurmountable.

I didn't write you to ask you to do anything I was just reading a combat PTSD article and it made me think of you and how one person can make difference. You saved my sons life and for that I will be eternally grateful. No matter what he thinks about me, says or does. I have something you sacrificed and thank you just isn't enough. Joey finally won his VA benefits and was able to get the back pay stolen by his now ex wife. Thanks to an FBI Special Agent who works with the VA. Two weeks ago he was also awarded 4 months of SSI and will continue to receive SSDI from the date of receiving his VA. The judge actually back dated it 5 extra months.

Joey left the courtroom crying because the only person who testified was a psychiatrist who deals strictly with PTSD and she told the judge that my wonderful son who at 18 couldn't stand to look at his dog which had been killed by another dog but at 20 could not care less about life. "Everything has to die sometime" Breaks my heart after learning what the awful implication that sentence holds. I know they rate cases and I don't know if you agree or not but I told him not to be ashamed and feel less than a man because of that rating but to remember he tried so many times to tell the Army something was wrong and they just told him to be glad he made it home. The judge feels he isn't capable of handling his own money so that will be set up and they said could be six months before he sees any of it. I am just glad that part is over.

I believe the last time we spoke was right after his girlfriend Jennifer died in our house. I tried so hard to save her but it wasn't meant to be. That affected me a lot more than I realized and I am just starting my journey to forgive myself. Joey has also managed to get himself so tangled up in legal problems. He was actually arrested at his divorce for charges that were supposed to have been dismissed 6 months previously. He says he got the VIP treatment once I showed up at the jail with his list of medications. Unfortunately they transferred him to an adjacent county where we still aren't clear what the charges are. They wouldn't give him his medication wouldn't let us see him and even now it isn't clear what he is charged with, Has a court appointed attorney that is familiar with PTSD so that helps.

The reason I bring up the adjacent county is because since they wouldn't let him have his medication and kept him isolated I was prepared to draw as much attention as I could. Instead a bail bondsman waited on me and my husband and had him out in less than 15 minutes once I gave him my mortgage money. While we were waiting we started filling out forms with his coworker (Margaret) not sure how it got started but she started talking about her husband who committed suicide in May of 2007. He was a Vietnam Vet and she started talking and crying and telling me stories about the life they had lived in the 34 years after his return. He never received any help of course, went out on his ranch dressed in uniform and reenacted things she would never talk about. He abused her and her children and yet she said that every time she was together with her children they wondered what they had done. I thought of you and how much you helped me directly and indirectly and for the first time I believe I brought peace to someone who needed it desperately even if it was too little and too late. Nadia, I am sure people tell you this all the time but I want you to know this comes from my heart and I truly mean it when I say that without you I would not have this wonderful man who causes me so much pain but fills my heart with love and happiness even when I know he hurts.

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My Paycheck: Continued from page 1

We are trying to get him back in to Waco. He has been asking to go.

They turned him away in San Antonio last week. No beds. He told me recently that he never believed in anniversary dates meaning anything but he does now. When he was in Waco before it helped him a lot. Now he knows what to expect and is practically begging to go.

One more thing and then I will let you move on to something important. Two weeks ago he dressed for combat. Only thing that saved him, us, others was that he couldn't find his boots. He acted as if I wasn't there. Looked straight through me. Only his dad could get through. He wants his dad's approval, acceptance, and for him to be proud to call him his son. But his dad just can't seem to do it. That's always the case and he wants to talk to his dad about Iraq but his dad doesn't let him

This year on the weekend of the first and only specific horror he experienced (as an overprotected 19 year old who had never even had a grandparent die). He asked his dad to let him tell him some things and from the other room I tried to get in his dad's head and tell him to go to him and listen but instead an hour later my son was in the front yard digging and talking to no one at 2am. His dad went into action then and got him inside and convinced he was in the states and Joey slept for the next two days.

Don't know why I turned this in to a book but I just always feel that somehow you just understand and care. We Love You Nadia McCaffrey and are grateful everyday for the time and effort you give the heroes of this country

*GOLDSTAR MOTHER * NADIA McCAFFREY * MOTHER IN BLACK * www.veteransvillage.org * http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_q7cTlRjGeU, * Nonprofit 501c3. Reach Out to Iraq Veterans dealing with the trauma of War. Workshops. Home/Office: 209-830 9955 Cell: 209-627 7644* <http://patrick-mccaffrey.memory-of.com> * Mother of Sergeant Patrick McCaffrey, 34, father of 2 young children, an American Patriot, fallen in an ambush, shot 8 times, near Balad, Iraq, June 22 2004. Patrick is the first combat-death in 58 years history of the California National Guards 579 Engineer Battalion based in Petaluma, CA, Patrick is Casualty number 848*

Submitted by Marc Knipper

FOLKDANCE SEPTEMBER 12TH

We welcome all dancers! We have an excellent start on committed volunteers. We can still use a couple more people to sign up to help sell concessions. More volunteers are needed at the end of the dance to help with clean-up. We also need several bakers to donate cookies, brownies etc. for the concession stand.



To volunteer please contact Judi Rose 822-2142 rosebuds@humboldt1.com I'd love to add your name to the list.

**NEXT VFP 56
MEETING IS
SCHEDULED FOR
AUGUST 6TH, LA-
BOR TEMPLE, 840 E
STREET IN
EUREKA, 7:00pm**



VFP56 WELCOMES NEW MEMBER

By Jim Sorter

VFP56 just got a new member for our organization. James Ellis, originally from Nampa, Idaho is living in Eureka at the moment, with short stays in Arcata. He said that he greatly admires the VFP message and has wanted to become a member for quite awhile but with limited funds at the moment it was prohibitive. With the willingness of members we found a way to honor his wish to join VFP56.



James served in the Army from 1987 until 1992 with basic training done in Fort Lewis, Washington. While in the Army James participated in Desert Storm and was sent to Iraq, Kuwait, Arabia and Germany.

Since being discharged James has had some bad luck waiting for his disability checks. He is presently living in his car while awaiting the government to catch up with him to begin paying him what is owed.

You can visit with James at Wildberries Market on the corner of 13th and G. in Arcata. He is the proud owner of a new VFP hat and plans to begin standing on the plaza soon with the rest of our dedicated members. He hopes to begin coming to our monthly meetings in Eureka as well. If you see him up at Wildberries please introduce yourself and make him feel welcome to our chapter.

VFP MEMBERS CRUISE

SHADES OF GILLIGAN'S ISLAND "VFP" STYLE

By Nate Lomba

On the morning of July 6th, a jolly contingent of the Eureka Courthouse Friday Vigil embarked on 3-hour* cruise aboard the Baykeepers' yacht. The Humboldt Bay tour was organized by Lynn Kerman, A. Mem., as a desperate effort to interject a little excitement into her, otherwise, boring day. Skipper Chuck DeWitt, Mem., cast off from the pier around 1030 hours, PDT. Helping to crew the vessel and identify features in and around the bay was Baykeepers' Docent Maggie Herbelin. Also along for the ride were: Peter Aronson, Mem., Don Swall, Mem., and 'Nate' Lomba, Mem.

Weather that morning was uncharacteristically mild, clear, and sunny. A higher than average tide provided calm water for the tour. Skipper Chuck steered the craft out of the marina and headed for the old Simpson Pulp Mill. South of the old pulp mill our attention was directed to an Osprey nest perched atop a high-voltage power pole. An adult and fledgling were evident to the naked eye but Docent Maggie whipped out a pair of binoculars that brought the birds into our laps. 'Nate' managed to get a good photo of the pair as well.



Front, L to R: Lynn Kerman, A. Mem.; Docent Maggie Herbelin
Back, L to R: Peter Aronson, Mem.; 'Nate' Lomba, Mem.; Skipper Chuck DeWitt, Mem.; Don Swall, Mem.

VFP members along for the ride were Lynn Kerman, Peter Aronson, "Nate" Lomba, Skipper Chuck DeWitt, and Don Swall

Motoring south, the tour skirted the shoreline of Fairhaven, the former "DeWitt Beach," and USCG Station Humboldt Bay. Nothing appeared to be happening with the "coasties," just a couple of guys hanging around a pick-up truck. The calm water made a transit of the Humboldt Bay entrance channel feasible and Skipper Chuck

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VFP Gilligan's Island Trip: Continued from page 3

“made Westing” toward a pair of channel buoys.

Several Harbor Seals were evident sunning themselves on the buoys. Skipper Chuck made a few passes around the buoys and the tour members got a chance to watch a juvenile seal make several attempts to get on top with the rest of the group. The juvenile made valiant leaps from the water but was unable to get high enough to make it to the top of the buoy. Needless-to-say, none of its fellow sun worshippers extended a helping flipper. Not to worry, though, according to the writers research, Harbor Seals are able to sleep in the water so the juvenile wasn't about to suffer. As Skipper Chuck noted, “if it gets tired, it'll just head for the rocks on the sides of the channel.”

Leaving the seals to their sun worship, Skipper Chuck headed back toward the bay saying, “there wasn't enough gas to venture into open water.” This was a relief to a couple of tour members that confessed an inclination for sea-sickness. As the craft passed into bay waters, ‘Nate’ got to observe Pelicans diving for fish for the first time. He was so mesmerized by the activity he forgot about taking a picture until the boat was well out of range for a good shot.

Turning northward, Skipper Chuck opened ‘er up as the tour headed back to the marina. Along the way the tour boat slowed and passed a barge being filled with wood chips—destined for a pulp mill in Oregon—and the mountain of shaved wood towered above our little craft. A few yards further on the tour passed the “Fireworks Barge” used to illuminate the clouds on the Fourth of July. You know what? Those barges are really—really—big! when you get up close.

As the tour approached the harbor, Skipper Chuck deftly pulled alongside an outer dock whereupon Don Swall adroitly leapt ashore and moored the craft. Tour members then gathered for a group photograph at the stern. All agreed the tour was an enjoyable way to spend a few hours and extended a hearty “thank you” to Skipper Chuck and Docent Maggie, and to Lynn for arranging the tour. As we walked back to our cars Chuck and Maggie headed off for the refueling station.

* Actually, the scheduled tour only lasts 1-hour but ours took a little longer.

Back to the marina. Along the way the tour boat slowed and passed a barge being filled with wood chips—destined for a pulp mill in Oregon—and the mountain of shaved wood towered above our little craft. A few yards further on the tour passed the “Fireworks Barge” used to illuminate the clouds on the Fourth of July. You know what?

US Troops Hiding in Iraqi Homes

By David Swanson

July 24, 2009

A few words from U.S. troops in Iraq, all quoted in Chapter 1 of Dahr Jamail's brilliant new book “The Will to Resist: Soldiers Who refuse to Fight in Iraq and Afghanistan”:

“Oh yeah, we did search and avoid missions all the time. We would go to the end of our patrol route and set up camp on the top of a bridge and use it as an over-watch position. It was a common tactic. We would just sit there and observe rather than sweep. We would call in radio checks every hour and report that we were doing sweeps.” -- Eli Wright

“Unit members would go and play soccer with Iraqi kids instead of going on patrol. I knew soldiers who learned to simulate vehicular movement on the computer screen, to create the impression of being on patrol.” -- Josh Simpson

“Nearly each day they pull into a parking lot, drink soda, and shoot the cans. They pay Iraqi kids to bring them things and spread the word that they are not doing anything and to please leave them alone.” -- Geoff Millard

“Our platoon sergeant, an E7, was with us and he knew our patrols were bullshit, just riding around to get blown up. We were at Camp Victory, at Baghdad International Airport. A lot of time we'd leave the main gate and come right back in another gate to the base where there's a big PX. They had a nice mess hall, and a Burger King. The BK is where we wanted to go and to the PX and look at DVDs and dirty magazines. We'd leave one guy at the Humvees to call in every hour, and we'd spend the full eight hours doing this.” -- Cliff Hicks

“A big thing used to be squads putting up in some Iraqi's house for a day or two, just going there and staying. They insert themselves in a house covertly in order to watch a neighborhood without anyone knowing that they were there. But it is really not about watching. It is about sleeping. Hopefully the squad is well-accepted in the family. Sometimes they even make friends. A few soldiers keep watch, the rest of the squad catch up on sleep and relax for a change.” -- Bryan Casler

“So we would go and drop the dismounted people at some house with an air conditioner, where they would kick in a door and hang out and drink tea with those people, while we would proceed with the vehicles and bide time out of visible range.” -- Seth Manzel

What a bunch of slackers: that might be an appropriate response to all of this if there were some comprehensible and worthwhile thing that any of these people were supposed to be doing. But, as Jamail's book makes clear, when US soldiers in Iraq are not avoiding their duty they are engaging in harassment, abuse, torture, the murder of civilians, endless stress and trauma, and the risk of their

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Troops Hiding in Iraqi Homes: Continued from page 4

own death and injury for no purpose that has been made clear to them. Soldiers quoted in the book point out that if their own nation were occupied they would certainly fight back just as the Iraqis do. In fact, these are soldiers who signed up to fight for a cause. Some of them fell for the post 9/11 propaganda and signed up thinking they would help defend the United States. Many of them signed up for economic reasons, but they also had a willingness to kill and risk death for a noble cause. Many of them tried to do so for years before losing faith. And what went away, other than their physical and mental well being, was not their courage or generosity. It was their ability to convince themselves they were risking their lives for any good reason.

As recounted in "The Will to Resist," which ought to be read by every American, avoidance of duty (or, rather, illegal orders masquerading as duty) in Iraq has often evolved seamlessly into refusal to obey. Jamail recounts incidents of individuals and squads refusing to obey orders. If you were sent out at the same time every night to the same place, and were losing more friends each time to predictable attacks, for no apparent reason, would you not at some point refuse to go out yet another time, at least without changing your path and timing? Most of these soldiers do not have any understanding that war is always a mistake. They are willing to fight a war if someone can explain to them what the purpose of it is, or what a victory would look like. But they have turned against this particular war, since nobody can explain it to them, and they have seen for themselves that what they do in it accomplishes no good.

So, some soldiers refuse to load their guns, risking their own lives rather than kill. Others go AWOL. Others, indeed, turn against all wars and apply for conscientious objector status. Some leave the country, some go to jail, some go to court and win. All of these stories are found in this book. So is a rich collection of stories from Winter Soldier, the series of events organized by Iraq Veterans Against the War, at which veterans of the Iraq War have described what they did -- most of it far more shameful and painful than facing the charge of "slacker" from fat chicken hawks in air conditioned studios. Iraq Veterans Against the War turns five years old this week and continues to grow rapidly, as it should: <http://ivaw.org>

Other worthwhile organizations to join and support are described in "The Will to Resist," which includes a powerful foreword by Chris Hedges, and some excellent chapters on how veterans are trying to deal with PTSD, injuries, lack of income, and despair, the products of a war that kills more US troops through post-combat suicide than through enemy attacks. The resistance movement within the military to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is still not what it was during the Vietnam War. Soldiers today were not drafted away from lucrative careers. They are in the military because they do not have other options, and almost half of them have families to support. And soldiers are kept together in their units so that they will each fight out of loyalty to their buddies even if they all oppose the fighting. But, as Jamail discusses, soldiers who want to resist lack the same support from civilians that was provided during the Vietnam War. That's the rest of us. We have a duty to read these books, support the groups doing the work, build up the coffee shops near the bases, keep the military out of our schools, and offer our

time to assist those willing to make a more courageous choice than that of simply obeying illegal orders.

David Swanson is the author of the upcoming book "Daybreak: Undoing the Imperial Presidency and Forming a More Perfect Union" by Seven Stories Press and of the introduction to "The 35 Articles of Impeachment and the Case for Prosecuting George W. Bush" published by Feral House and available at Amazon.com. Swanson holds a master's degree in philosophy from the University of Virginia. He has worked as a newspaper reporter and as a communications director, with jobs including press secretary for Dennis Kucinich's 2004 presidential campaign, media coordinator for the International Labor Communications Association, and three years as communications coordinator for ACORN, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now. Swanson is Co-founder of AfterDowningStreet.org, creator of ConvictBushCheney.org and Washington Director of Democrats.com, a board member of Progressive Democrats of America, the Backbone Campaign, and Voters for Peace, a convenor of the legislative working group of United for Peace and Justice, and chair of the accountability and prosecution working group of United for Peace and Justice.

Author's Profile

Author's Other Articles

Author's RSS Feed

Mothers and the Lies About War

By Diane Rejman

Lie: To create a false or misleading impression, whether intentional or not.

I was invited to participate on a panel of veterans at an anti-war event. I recently started to sing, so I asked if it would be OK to perform Bob Dylan's "John Brown" as part of my allotted time. This is a most powerful song about a mother who proudly sends her son off to war. He returns as so many sons and daughters do, damaged almost beyond recognition. Dylan wrote this in 1963. Some things don't change.

I discussed this song selection with many people beforehand, and got mixed reactions. Most understood my belief that the only way of ending war is to get people to see the reality of it before it is too late. Songs like "Where Have All the Flowers Gone" make powerful statements, but simply do not portray the reality of the damage war brings to society, family, and individuals. I've heard too many stories from veterans who describe the moment when they first realized war is not a movie or a video game. I began to wonder what it takes to get people to understand this before they go to war, or before they send their son or daughter.

I haven't found the answer. But I do think a song with the brutal, honest reality of "John Brown" can get people's attention.

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Others didn't like my song selection. During my years as a peace activist, I often came across people who seem to know the reality is out there, but do not want their days ruined by having to think about it. Others seem to want to continue to believe the myths – for example, that there is some nobility in a war, regardless of the motives behind it. They don't realize that the traditions of the “ancient warrior” are no longer applicable in the current environment of high-tech, random battles. They may believe the military machine is a good thing for their son or daughter to be part of. This is an opportunity to travel! Have a great adventure! Get college paid for! As ridiculous as this may sound, I believe whatever their reason for supporting their son or daughter's enlistment, they often just don't see the big picture, thinking bad things simply “can't happen” to their child.

I decided it might be good to talk about the lies of war and the recruiting system before singing the song. I believe it is the messages in these stories that can cause a mother to proudly send her son or daughter off to war. The following is my message leading into the song. At the end is a link to a video of our performance:

I was in the Army from 1977-80. I was spared first hand knowledge of being shot at, or having to kill others. I've now been involved in the peace movement for six years. I learned about the pain of war through reading and talking with war veterans, especially Vietnam veterans. I also learned about the lies that contribute to the continuation of war. I believe that, without certain misguided beliefs, war would not exist. Or at the very least, we would not go into it as casually as we do.

For several years I was heavily involved in the demonstrations and all the work done to bring attention to the truth about war, especially Iraq. I protested, wrote articles, managed an anti-war band, and did whatever I thought might make a difference. In 2004, I attended the Veterans for Peace convention, where I met Kevin and Joyce Lucey. They sat behind me at a PTSD seminar. It had been only a couple of months since their son's suicide, and their story was not yet public. When they shared it with me, I had no idea the ending would be Kevin finding his veteran son, Jeffrey, hanging in their basement. This story haunts me. As many of you know, they have now spent years working to bring their truth to the world. They recently won a wrongful death suit against the US government.

This is one of the core reasons I do what I do as a peace activist. I want to try to bring the truth to people who don't see it.

Have any of us figured out what works? I sure haven't. I've found that people who don't already understand the horror of war, don't even want to hear the message. When I talk with Vietnam Veterans, over and over I hear the same thing – they maybe had already arrived in Vietnam when, – “then it hit me – I could get killed.” Somehow – this message does not come across as real to many people until it's too late. The soldier often believes he or she is special. They are smarter and/or stronger than everybody else. Their training is good.

God will protect them. “Don't worry ma, everything will be OK.”

I learned it doesn't matter how strong or smart a soldier is, or what kind of training he or she receives. I learned that death and injury in a war zone is a lottery. First prize may be a college education. But second place is getting physically or emotionally wounded for life. Third place is death.

With all the signs and banners I saw at demonstrations, this message, for some reason doesn't come across as strongly as it should. Conservatives see a group of protestors and assume we are all nut jobs, and won't even pay attention to the signs. They don't want to read about the pain and damage war inflicts on all parties involved. When I tried discussing the damage our invasion of Iraq would cause on its civilian population, my friend yelled at me, saying “I don't want to hear about that! Don't ever bring it up again.” Her strong Christian faith led her to believe this kind of killing is OK and necessary.

Those of us in the peace movement know we have a formidable force to overcome. This is the billion dollar machine known as the military recruitment system. It absolutely amazes and shocks me to consider how much taxpayer money is being spent on trying to turn America's young men and women into killing machines! It is called a “volunteer” army, but enlistees are seduced by financial incentives such as signing bonuses, the chance to play with expensive flying machines, and a free college education. In many cases, in what some of us call the “poverty draft,” they enlist because they don't see any financial opportunities (as in a decent job) in their hometown. In our collapsing economy, with hundreds of thousands of jobs being lost, a relatively healthy young man or woman can always get a job in this war. They need to know the truth of what they may end up paying for that job, and the true potential cost of their “free” education.

Think about these words - the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

The recruiting system leaves out the second part of this. Recruiters talk about travel, adventure, skill-training, and getting your college education paid for. They don't mention that the travel and adventure may involve being in 110 degree+ temperatures, loaded up with gear, sleeping in tents, having your life threatened on a daily basis, and maybe not even having enough clean water to drink. They don't mention that the skill-training is usually not transferable to a civilian job, or that some of the skills taught include how to be a prejudiced, hate-filled, bigot, who can be capable of killing another human being without feeling. They don't explain that the military will teach a person to hate when he or she enlists, but doesn't teach them how to love again when they return home. And they certainly don't mention that only 14 percent of soldiers who sign up for the GI Bill use the benefit.

The lies of omission often go further. A recruiter may promise a job as a pilot, even if they are relatively certain the soldier won't

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Mothers & Lies About War: Continued from page 6

qualify, and will possibly end up as a truck driver in Iraq – one of the most dangerous jobs. They often don't tell the prospective pilot this last part. And then there's the person who enlists to be a Navy medic, who may not realize he or she may end up in a combat zone, since they are the ones who take care of Marines. And then there's what I believe to be the biggest omission – the recruiter tells the soldier he or she is signing up for three years, and doesn't point out that in the current environment, with the stop-loss program in place, the enlistment agreement (note I don't use the word "contract") currently commits the soldier potentially to a life sentence. The agreement says the soldier can be kept in the service until six months after a war ends. Most enlistees I've talked to do not realize this. It's not the kind of information a recruiter will volunteer.

But you know what, these are only a few of the tales that are told to keep a war machine going. The greater misconceptions come from society itself. That war is a good thing. That movies and video games represent reality. You get killed in a video game, press a button, and start over. You don't lose a friend, body parts, or your mind.

Have you heard about "Army Experience" in Philadelphia? This is basically a 14,000 sq. ft., \$12 million tax payer funded interactive video game. You get to play a game to make believe you are in a war, but you don't experience any of the pain or gory, horrific reality of the effect of an IED on the human body. You can even attempt to fly an Apache attack helicopter in what is probably one of the greatest flight simulators out there. Wow – who wouldn't want to try this? I spent ten years of my life helping to build Apache helicopters. The flight simulators, even for employees, were off limits. How's this for a pretense – the Army experience is NOT a recruiting center, even though it is staffed by 20 trained recruiters.

Here are some quotes from an article about the "Army Experience":

- * It offers visitors the opportunity to virtually experience many aspects of Army life, while evaluating new marketing strategies.
- * They want to "make the Army accessible to visitors."
- * Oftentimes people have a negative perception of the Army, but the negatives are a very small part.
- * We want to give people the opportunity to experience the Army for themselves.

Don't be ridiculous. You can't possibly experience the real Army until you have at least faced a drill instructor and learned your life is no longer yours. You can't experience the real war until you witness it.

They are not presenting the "whole" truth. If they were, they would have a final stop on the tour. They would have a room for a group such as Military Families Speak Out (www.mfso.org) to allow mothers and fathers of dead soldiers to share their stories. They would have a room full of the boots used in the Eyes Wide Open display (www.afsc.org/eyes/ht/d/sp/i/38782/pid/38782). They would show SOMETHING of the pain of this part of the truth. Only then might visitors come to understand the gamble. They might realize there are other ways of traveling and getting a college edu-

cation besides putting their life and soul at risk.

I read a story about a young man who was in the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003. He was standing on a roof in Baghdad, very visible to the opposing forces. The journalist pointed out that he was putting himself at risk. The soldier replied with a grin, "I want to see what it feels like to be shot!"

This is the lesson our children learn. The possibility of death and injury is not real. This is the lesson we must counter.

I only started singing two years ago. I came to realize the power of a song. People will listen to a song with words they wouldn't want to read or hear in a speech. I realized if I am going to invest my time in learning a song, it should be one that might make a difference. One that might wake up a soul or two. That might touch people in a way to at least plant a seed in their soul that maybe there is more to this war thing than pressing "reset" and starting over.

When I first heard the song "John Brown", it smacked me awake, and woke me up to a new reality. He wrote it in 1963, years before the Vietnam War peaked, although talk of it was in the air. It is a timeless message. And a painful one. I think it carries a message that many of us would like the world to know. It's a message we'd like other mothers, fathers, sons and daughters to understand BEFORE it's too late.

It's one thing to go to Vegas and drop a chunk of money on slots or blackjack. The gambler at least knows the worst case possibility of how much he or she may lose. It's important for enlistees and their parents to truly understand that enlistment in the military is a gamble, with the highest stakes imaginable.

Diane Rejman served in the US Army from 1977-80. She is a lifetime member of Veterans' for Peace (www.veteransforpeace.org), and worked for three years as a counselor with the GI Rights Hotline and has been listed in Who's Who in America. She also spent 10 years supporting the build of the Apache attack helicopter. Diane can be reached at yespeaceispossible@yahoo.com.

Submitted by Mashaw McGuinnis

PLEASE DONT FORGET THE VFP YARD SALE TO BE HELD SEPTEMBER 19TH AND 20TH AT 15TH AND GST STREETS IN ARCATA. SALE STARTS AT 8:00AM AND RUNS TO 5:00PM BOTH DAYS.

IF YOU HAVE ITEMS TO DONATE FOR THE SALE AND CAN'T GET THEM TO THE STORAGE FACILITY CALL JIM (826-1781) AND HE WILL PICK THEM UP UNTIL AUGUST 21ST. WE NEED SOMEONE TO PICK THEM UP AFTER AUGUST 25TH AND TAKE TO BILL THOMPSON'S AS JIM AND LINDA WILL BE OUT OF TOWN





**Veterans For Peace
Chapter 56**

Phone 707-826-7124

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WE'RE ON THE WEB:

<http://www.vfp56.org>

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LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

If you would like to submit an article, opinion, comment or response to anything you have read which might interest the members of VFP-56, please e-mail it to turtldnccer@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.

UNAFRAID

BY JEFF GOLDEN

I'm writing at the suggestion of my brother Mike Golden, who says your group might be open to hosting event centered n a reading of UNAFRAID. There's a lot of information about the event and some suggestive excerpts at www.unafraidthebook.com.

I've spent a lot of the last year doing UNAFRAID events. A few of the have been hosted by progressive groups, like the Ecology Center of Mount Shasta, the Citizens for Peace and Justice in Oregon, and West Coast Live. The benefit for the groups has been the chance to bring their members together for a provocative and entertaining evening doing something different than they usually do, a combination social/political gathering that gets people talking and thinking and primed to come back for more. What's in it for me, of course, is the chance to sell some books (20% of which I leave with the hosting group) and to rev up word of mouth so that more people will hear about it.

Generally I read aloud from the book for 30-40 minutes and then stir the pot until a good political discussion gets going. My own mission, the reason I wrote the book, is to prod folks to think harder about the kind of engagement and citizenship it will take to really get our country back. The central plot premise of UNAFRAID -- JFK's survival out of Dallas, and two terms in the White House as a transformed leader -- is a vehicle for digging down to really consider, not what kind of leadership is possible, but what kind of leadership we're ready to support. If we had a President who, as JFK does in UNAFRAID, turned foreign policy upside down with the core principle that our national security depends on a fair a decent life for people everywhere in the world, would we be ready for it? Would we organize strongly enough to overcome the dominance of those who've made great wealth by keeping the war cannons booming? In the last few months, the talks have evolved into interactive sessions that draw on all our experience to identify what tends to get people to step up to effective citizenship, and what keeps them there. Folks coming to these events invariably living feeling stirred up, and often energized to get more involved.

Would that be a good fit for your group? I'm asking for Sept 20 because on Sept 18-19 I'm keynoting the North Coast Writers Conference in Humboldt, which means I wouldn't incur the cost and time of a separate trip...that takes off some of the pressure to sell books.

I should add that it probably makes sense to do this only if you and others can get charged up by the idea, because it will take some focused outreach or publicity efforts on your part to make this worthwhile. If your group is up for that, terrific. If this proposal doesn't really line up with what you're doing, that's fine too. I do want to hold out the offer in any case.

I believe my brother Michael has extra copies of the book. If not, and if having one would help with a decision, let me know and I'll ship one out.

Thanks for considering this. Hope we can talk before too long.

Best, Jeff Golden

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(I'll send you the website by separate email)

***In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of
our decisions on the next seven generations."
- From The Great Law of The Iroquois Confederacy***