



VETERANS FOR PEACE
HUMBOLDT BAY
CHAPTER 56

THE FOGHORN

VOL 9, ISSUE 7

DECEMBER
2008

“Cutting Through the Fog of War”

Veterans Village

By Gregory Hunter

Dear Mrs. McCaffrey:

For your information is the following item of interest, i.e., an excerpt from CA State Senator Pat Wiggins' E-Newsletter I received today: "Veterans Village"

Recently, my Santa Rosa office staff were approached by representatives of Veterans Village, a non-profit foundation formed by citizens concerned about the welfare of U.S. veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. Veterans Village is dedicated to building supportive live-in retreat homes for returning veterans. The group is especially concerned about veterans suffering from post traumatic stress disorder and essential physical and mental services will be in each of the villages.

One of the goals of Veterans Village is to build a veterans' home in the town of Guerneville, primarily to help facilitate on-the-job training, college education, and employment assistance for returning veterans. The group says it hopes to gain the support of the local community.

As a member of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, I feel it is important to highlight these ground-breaking efforts, especially in light of the current economic downturn, which could put veterans needs and services at risk at all levels of government, something which saddens me terribly.

By some estimates, around 19% of our troops returning from Iraq suffer from mental health issues such as depression, generalized anxiety, and/or post-traumatic stress disorder. These conditions frequently lead to substance abuse, which makes veterans a population that is most susceptible to homelessness and suicide. According to the federal Department of Veteran's Affairs, there are an estimated 275,000 homeless veterans in the U.S., meaning that people who have served and fought for our country make up about a quarter of the nation's homeless population.

I know that as a community, we want to do all that we can to support our troops and returning veterans by giving them the best possible care. I also believe that as a society, we have learned valuable lessons since the Vietnam War and are very conscious of what our veterans need. While we officially celebrate Veteran's Day on November 11, everyday is an opportunity to give thanks and praise to veterans from past and present duties.

I want to recognize Veterans Village as well as other groups

and individuals for their efforts with respect to veterans' issues. We couldn't do it without them."

Sincerely,

Gregory Lane Hunter
974 Allison Avenue
St. Helena, CA 94574

Submitted by Marc Knipper

JOHN "JACK" VAN LIEU SUCCUMBS TO FIRE INJURIES

By Ellen Bryant

Helloooh Family/Friends/Acquaintances

On October 11 about 2 PM our stupid neighbor across the alley had been illegally burning, using accelerants other toxins.... the wind whipped up and started a fire on his fence, etc.

The fire could have burned our whole neighborhood down... Neighbors, including my husband Jack, (all Hero's) put out the 16 foot or higher fire of flame and thick black smoke. Jack was up close throwing buckets of water on the base of the fire per his Navy training, to save the ship. It took the firemen 20 min. to get here. Jack's face had lots of black smoke on it....

He was scheduled to go to Ft. Miley VA Hospital in San Francisco on the 22nd and instead was sent from our local VA Clinic to St. Jo's ER in Eureka. He was pronounced dead at 11am this morning... His girls were there and all I could do was keep singing "I'll see you in my dreams, hold you in my dreams. Someone took you out of my arms, still I feel the thrill of your charms. Lips that once were mine, tender eyes that shine, they will light my way tonight. I'll see you in my dreams".

Unfortunately, death is part of life and we are all terminal.

My best to all. Ellen

P.S. Obituaries appeared in the Times Standard (can be found online) and in the Eureka Reporter. The Tribute in the Eureka Reporter (11/5/08) has a wonderful photo of him.

Jack will be sorely missed in Chapter 56. In the initial formation of Chapter 56 he, as well as Ellen, were staunch supporters and organizers which made us the chapter we are today!



Just Two Little Questions

By Matthis Chiroux

From: "Flights of Thought" <FlightsOfThought@Squadron13.com>

Date: Mon, October 20, 2008 8:19 am

To: mdd@humboldt1.com

The below statement is from Matthis Chiroux, one of the IVAW members who tried to deliver "just two little questions" for Presidential debate use at the Hofstra Debate a few days ago, whose members were subsequently beaten, trampled, arrested, and abused by local authorities. The two questions these former Iraq and Afghanistan war Veterans ask of McCain and Obama remain unanswered. You can find out what they are in the full statement below. Additional information including this most recent statement plus pictures, additional links, embedded video and slideshow may be seen by visiting this link: <http://www.squadron13.com/BillPerry/HofstraDebate/> Please forward this link to your friends so people become more aware of what is happening. These IVAW guys and gals are patriots of the highest order. Obama and McCain's refusal to hear these Vets and denounce the disgraceful treatment they received is bewildering and very troubling.

Gordon Sturrock

From Matthis Chiroux, IVAW

Wednesday, Oct. 15th, 2008, members of Iraq Veterans Against the War and supporters gathered near the Hempstead, N.Y., train station to march on the final presidential debate at Hofstra University.

Our intent was made clear in a letter to Bob Schieffer, the debate moderator, one week prior. We wanted two members of our organization inside the debate where they would ask one question of Obama and one of McCain. If CBS and the candidates failed to meet our demands, we would march on Hofstra at 7 p.m. in a peaceful attempt to enter the debate to have our voices heard.

I planned on asking Barack Obama if he would back up his assessment of the occupation of Iraq as illegal by supporting service members who would thus be required to refuse service there. Kris Goldsmith planned on asking McCain about his history of failing to vote in favor of V.A. funding, especially since the beginning of the occupation of Iraq.

Non-violence was stressed in every stage leading up to this action. It was stressed by me and Kris to Det. Thomas J. Calvert and Det. Robert Annese of the Nassau County Police Department the day before the action. Calvert and Annese were in charge of security for the debate, and they assured us they would instruct their officers to respect the non-violent spirit of the action by using restraint towards peaceful veterans and demonstrators.

In every stage of planning, IVAW made every effort to keep all planned tactics and actions "above the table" so that the candidates, the media, the police and the country would know exactly what would happen if our demands were not met.

We were at Hofstra to force the issue that veterans and service members are not being cared for or heard from by our government, and the candidates, CBS and the Nassau County Police Department couldn't have proved us more correct.

We, the veterans and our supporters, stood together in solidarity,

knowing the stakes were high. But a resolve echoed deep from within us to stand our ground and be heard. Twice these candidates had brushed us off, and thrice just wasn't going to happen.

So at seven p.m. when we'd heard nothing from the moderators, IVAW made good on its promise to the candidates and Det. Calvert. We marched to the front gate of Hofstra, read our questions and peacefully proceeded into police lines.

Because these candidates cared more to hear from "Joe the Plumber" than veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, ten veterans went to jail and five civilian supporters joined us.

This upsets me, but I knew the risk, and if I must fall in defense of democracy, peace and justice, I offer my sacrifice willingly.

What infuriates me is the GROSS MISCONDUCT of the police in the process, much of which I believe to be illegal.

After my arrest, the police charged their horses onto a sidewalk and unprovokedly knocked my friend Nick Morgan, a veteran of Iraq, to the ground and trampled his face. They then arrested him, put a piece of gauze on his face wound and loaded him onto a bus headed for jail with the rest of the Hempstead 15.

After they brought Nick onto the bus and we the veterans identified him as exhibiting signs of a concussion and as needing immediate medical attention, our arresting officers laughed at us and told us Nick would receive no help unless he himself asked to go to the hospital, though Nick was barely conscious and completely disoriented at the time AND THE COPS KNEW IT!

We pointed out that as a result of a serious head injury, Nick wasn't aware enough to speak for himself. The police responded with, "too bad."

After Nick stirred enough for us to instruct him to ask for medical attention, he was taken to a hospital, diagnosed with a

...continued on page 3



Two Little Questions: continued from page 2

fractured cheekbone, given nothing more than Motrin for the pain and brought to the Police Station where he sat chained to a bench for 5 hours with no further medical attention at all.

Additionally, police pulled other members and supporters of ours from the sidewalk and arrested them while horses spun in circles causing injury to most who couldn't escape their paths.

All of this, I observed after arrest through the large windows of a bus we were detained in which was parked parallel to the demonstration and subsequent atrocities.

While on the bus, the officers mocked us, calling us idiots and whiners. When we arrived at the Nassau County Detention Center, the hazing did not cease.

One officer, when I brought up the prospect of speaking to a lawyer, threatened to, "put me in the back (jail)," where, "the big boys will pop your cherry!" When I asked this officer if he had just threatened an honorably discharged veteran of Afghanistan with prison rape and told him I wanted his name and rank, he refused and told me to look it up on the police report which the Nassau County Police Department has refused to provide us a copy of.

While detained, the three females who were arrested with us, including Marine Reserve Capt. Marlisa Grogan, were sexually harassed by the police who went so far as to hold Ids next to the chained women's faces and make comments like, "you look like you came out of a Barbie magazine."

All night, they didn't stop. "You're cowards, you're idiots," they said. The hostility was thick and unwarranted. "This non-violent protest stuff is retarded," they said (as if they'd prefer the alternative). "See how it got your friend's face fucked up?"

Literally, they said this when they brought Nick in and chained him to the bench. The harassment only increased from there. "Look at you friend's face," said one officer. "You're responsible for that." As if I gave to order to charge horses onto a crowded sidewalk.

I saw this same officer in the Colony diner where we went to eat after we were charged with disorderly conduct and released. He was with the one who threatened me with prison rape, and when I approached them respectfully and again asked for their names, he leapt to his feet, threw his finger in my face and began threatening to "beat my ass" if I didn't drop it.

Afterward, one of his friends, also a police officer, approached me, accused me of being drunk and said I was about to get arrested again. I retorted that his accusations were false (considering I'd only gotten out of jail 30 minutes prior) and that I was only interested in learning the names of the officers who arrested and harassed us as I have the legal right to do. He responded with only his name, which he said was Peter Sikinger, but re-

fused to reveal the names of his partners, though to his credit, he did back down from threatening me with arrest.

I am outraged at the egregious conduct of the Nassau County Police Department and the failure of Det. Calvert to make good on his promise to "make things go as smoothly as possible." But mostly, I must put this on the candidates.

Barack Obama and John McCain, you have failed to properly address the occupation of Iraq and veteran and service member issues in this campaign. You failed to hear from us, the veterans and service members, at the conventions. Your overwhelming concern for "Joe the Plumber" at the final debate while veterans are killing themselves at a rate of 18 per month is inhumane to say the least.

The fact that you allowed your veterans to be arrested, brutalized and harassed for simply trying to be heard by you is inexcusable. Forever should your consciences be scarred for what you allowed to take place to veterans on American soil.

But our questions still stand, and we still demand answers.

Obama, are you ready to support members of the military refusing to participate in the occupation of Iraq which you have termed "illegal?"

McCain, as a veteran, how can you account for your abysmal failure to vote in favor of post-2003 legislation to fund the V.A. which provides life saving services to men and women who gave all to serve this nation?

Besides which, you both owe the Hempstead 15 an apology. You owe Nick Morgan an apology for the reconstructive surgery he'll be receiving and the permanent, violent altering of his face that is a result of your failure to hear from us.

You owe every veteran in history a public statement condemning the sidewalk trampling of Nick and Carlos Harris, an Iraq veteran, who also had his foot broken by a horse. As well Geoff Millard, a disabled veteran of Iraq with degenerative spine disease who was knocked to the ground, dragged from the sidewalk and arrested, and Nadine Lubka, one of our supporters, who was kicked in the face by a horse.

And we the people are not done forcing this issue.

I encourage every person who reads this to contact both the Obama and McCain campaigns and demand they answer our questions and condemn the actions of the police Wednesday night.

They don't own this election, the media doesn't own this election, we the people own this election, and we deserve to have our voices heard.

..continued on page 4



Two Little Questions:continued from page 3

Any candidate who disagrees with that statement is unworthy the Presidency of the United States of America.

Peace and Solidarity,

Matthis Chiroux

The Hempstead 15:

Matthis Chiroux (Army Sergeant)

Submitted by Mark Dubrow

NOEL ADAMSON DIES OF PANCREATIC CANCER

By James M. Sorter

Unfortunately another one of our long standing members, Noel Adamson died early October 30 of pancreatic cancer. Noel had been bravely fighting this disease for several years and in the end went very peacefully in his sleep.

Noel had been very active in VFP 56 in the early years of its formation and was very instrumental in the formation of Communities for Peace, and establishing the peace marches in Eureka. He was very knowledgeable with computers and the internet. He established the first Communities for Peace web page to be used for the Humboldt County Ambassadors being sent to Washington DC a few year ago.

Larry Hourany has assembled a few of Noel's writings and throughout the year we will highlight a few of Noel's thought so that we can remember and honor the commitment he had to rid this world of corruption and war.

His first piece follows:

Federal Corruption

Unpublished letter noting that, in Noel's words via email, "I had no proof and they were fearful of libel; bizarre logic that I cannot voice my opinion on an opinion page without proof while they publish the grossest distortions and outright lies throughout their paper."

Dear Editor,

Corruption at the federal level is being spotlighted in our country and while the full extent of it will likely never be revealed to the folks in the street, the tip of the iceberg is enough to shock even the most blind 'patriots.' One example being Gonzales who is in this spotlight for the extreme politicization of the justice system, nothing new at all, rather than for his leading role in ignoring the Geneva conventions which opened the door not only for the disgusting abuses at our prisons overseas but also for an abandonment of any

hope of humane treatment for our soldiers and mercenaries in Iraq, a deep hatred for the U.S. and its people that will not be undone for many decades to come. The rate of terrorist events has risen dramatically also. Now we learn that paramilitary death squads responsible for large pits filled with the dead bodies of many men, women and children in Columbia were paid directly by U.S. corporations bypassing the usual CIA middleman.

Corruption at our local level takes different forms but has very similar effects. When law enforcement targets their political enemies and other victims of their prejudice rather than bothering with actual criminals, the results are dead bodies all over the hills of Humboldt County, innocent people and the pettiest of offenders clogging our prison system and corporate crooks forcing small business owners out of business. It is no secret that criminals run our neighborhoods and rural locales and it is anything but a secret that they have warm ties in local law enforcement and government.

If we can address the national level corruption, we can surely make an attempt to address the local corruption starting with the judiciary and law enforcement, corporate kickbacks to local government officials, and so on. We should all be greatly alarmed that law enforcement has resisted every effort to establish the least bit of accountability to the community such as civilian police review boards. We should be enraged that a crooked corporation tried to replace our D.A. with an incompetent and crooked one.

Noel Adamson
Eureka

Noel's wisdom, expertise and commitment to peace will be sorely missed in VFP 56 as well as the community as a whole.

Rest in peace Noel. You fought the good fight!!

**THE DECEMBER VFP 56 MEETING
WILL BE HELD AT THE LABOR TEM-
PLE 843 E STREET IN EUREKA AT
7:00 ON DECEMBER 6TH.**

**SINCE THE DATE OF THE JANUARY
MEETING FALLS ON THE FIRST OF THE
MONTH, IT HAS BEEN DECIDED TO MOVE
THE MEETING TIME TO JANUARY 8, SAME
PLACE, SAME TIME.**



VFP Mothers – Cathi’s Story

By Mashaw McGuinnis

Famed peace mom Cindy Sheehan asked, “Why would I want one more mother either Iraqi or American -- to go through what I’m going through?” A question which sums up simply, yet profoundly what changed an ordinary mother into a powerful social/political activist. A mother’s love of her children is like no other, but is seldom a subject discussed at Veterans For Peace meetings. In the next few issues of the Foghorn, we will read about the different reactions mothers have to their child’s decision to enlist. Heart-warming and heartbreaking, hopeful and poignant, each of these women were called to action in their own way:

It is an unseasonably warm and dry in Arcata for a November afternoon, and Cathi Bettinger is soaking up every ounce of it at the Arcata marsh. As the sunlight peaks between the branches and warms her shoulders, she walks with the brisk pace of a woman determined. She is a woman on a mission. This marsh walk is not about leisurely watching the herons fly overhead, or enjoying the soft breeze on Klopp Lake.

This walk is a necessary, therapeutic tool for a grieving mother. Cathi’s 18 year old is one of the thousands of ambitious, young Americans who believed that Uncle Sam would offer them a chance to be part of something bigger than themselves. So against his mother’s wishes and better judgment, as soon as Kyle turned 18, he signed a contract with the U.S. Army.

The army was eager to accept a bright young man like Kyle, in spite of his having a heart condition. A condition serious enough to merit open-heart surgery in his childhood and serious enough for the Marines to reject him. Once rejected, Kyle soon heard a rumor that the army had looser restrictions, so he decided to approach them. To his mother’s dismay they granted him a medical waiver and wholeheartedly welcomed her son as a soldier-in-training.

Though she was just a lay person with no military or law background, accepting a young recruit with a heart condition seemed somewhat suspicious to Cathi. Kyle was not put through any special cardiac testing and to add insult to injury, the army accepted him without ever seeing his full medical records. Doctors’ records of his heart surgery and

other pertinent details got held up until the very last minute of Kyle’s departure. “In fact” says his mother, “Kyle had to carry his medical records with him as he went off to boot camp. The Army never even examined them”.

If she couldn’t protect him from joining the military, the wisdom of being a single parent for 14 years told her to at least help protect her son’s rights along the way. Cathi repeatedly told Kyle to get a copy of his enlistment contract and when it arrived there was an entire section missing. “There was no page two at all” Cathi recalled “The section which refers to any re-enlistment agreement”. After a dizzying maze of phone calls and faxes, Cathi finally resorted to Congressman Mike Thompson’s office, which helped flush out the mysterious page two. “Now imagine my surprise” she said

“when after all that, I read page two and discovered that none of the items in that whole section had been initialed by Kyle”.

Not only had it not been initialed, but when Kyle’s mother contacted his recruiter, he claimed that he had never seen such a page in the enlistment paperwork before. This denial was echoed by all of the recruiters in the Eureka office according to Cathi. This discovery, though it spoke poorly of the army, was seen as a hopeful sign to Cathi, as the legal validity of the contract now seemed very weak.



Last picture taken of Cathi and Kyle

Mother’s intuition told her to file the suspicious looking contract away in case it proved useful in the future. For the time being however, each letter arriving from boot camp gets more depressing than the last. The reality of what Kyle is experiencing is nothing like what the recruiters promised. He writes Cathi of being depressed and having mood swings, and in one letter, even receiving a death threat. Cathi was horrified after reading that and says she has no idea whether or not to take the threat seriously. “What could I do”? she asked.

Kyle was also surprised to learn that the job he had been promised was no longer available. “He went down there to sign up in the DEP and said he was planning on leaving in a few months. But they assigned him to another (job) and told him would be leaving in three weeks”! Cathi expressed being

...continued on page 6



VFP Mothers: continued from page 5

in shock and then sobbed so hard she ended up vomiting. She cries herself to sleep some times and misses work because of the stress she feels. "Now every time the phone rings or the mail comes" Cathi says with a sigh, "is like running sandpaper all up and down my skin".

Unable to just sit idly by, her son's enlistment experience helped prompt her to work on a political campaign for the first time. Measure F and J, two city measures which passed in Arcata and Eureka, make it against the law for military recruiters to approach anyone under the age of 18 for purposes of recruiting.

Although Cathi had no public speaking experience, she felt the slick-talking recruiters swaying naive kids was just too important an issue to ignore. She wanted other parents to hear her son's story.

"Somewhere back in Kyle's own youth, a positive image was painted in his mind about military culture. He told me once he thought it was noble and brave". But now his letters speak of disappointment, confusion and resentment towards the recruiters.

Long walks at the marsh along with yoga classes have become a necessary practice to keep this mother of a young recruit grounded while she copes with the difficult change in her life. She also eagerly shares her insights and Kyle's experiences with her son's friends here at home. If she can keep just one more mother's child from joining the military, she will feel like she has accomplished something important.

VETERAN'S DAY

Why this came to mind today (11/11/11) is hard to say. I read this while I was in college and going through a phase when I was very interest in poetry (one of my many secrets). I think it is fitting today. On this day, far too often we aren't honoring the veterans, we are honoring war. We make it sound noble:

Rich Gilchrist

WILFRED OWEN
Dulce et Decorum Est

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through
sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! – An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling,
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime . . .
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.
In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie; Dulce et Decorum est

- it is sweet and right to die for your country

Submitted by Richard Gilchrist

Afghanistan Vets Find a Voice in Capitol

Nonprofit becomes powerful new player for recent wars'
1.8 million vets

WASHINGTON - Some lobbyists come to Capitol Hill armed with Power Point presentations and Excel spreadsheets. Todd Bowers brought the rifle scope that saved his life.

He was on patrol outside Fallujah, Iraq, when his unit came under fire. Bowers, 29, a staff sergeant in the Marine Corps Reserve, fired back. A sniper's bullet hit his scope, inches from his face.

So when members of Congress wanted to know why they should pass legislation that would reimburse service members for buying their own combat equipment, Bowers, 29, a staffer at Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, pulled out the \$600 piece of equipment his father had bought him before his second tour in Iraq. His scope, with the bullet still lodged in it, brought the war home.

The legislation passed.

The veterans' group might not have the budget or membership or fancy clients of some of the lobbying shops that line K Street. But its leaders, most of whom are younger than 30,

....continued on page 7



Afghan Vets Find Voice: continued from page 6

are keenly aware of the problems their unique constituency faces -- post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, repeated tours -- a fact that has helped the fledgling nonprofit group become a powerful voice for the 1.8 million veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan on this Veterans Day.

With its ability to talk intimately about both the horror of combat and the difficulty of coming home to a society disconnected from it, the first nonpartisan organization dedicated to veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan has emerged as a key player on veterans issues on the Hill.

From the battlefields to halls of Congress

One of the group's biggest successes was helping to pass the Post-9/11 GI Bill, sponsored by Sen. James Webb (D-Va.), while working alongside some of the other veterans groups such as Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"They have a lot of heart and are very passionate about the issues facing their fellow veterans," said Webb spokesman Kimberly Hunter.

Rep. Michael H. Michaud (D-Maine), chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs health subcommittee, said: "They definitely do have a lot of credibility, because they've dealt with these issues themselves, and it's fresh in their minds. They're literally fresh from the battlefield to the halls of Congress."

Today is a sort of coming-out party for the group, which was founded in 2004 by Iraq war veteran Paul Rieckhoff, now 33. The group, which has about 125,000 members, will unveil an ad campaign designed to reach out to veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. It has set up a Web site, <http://communityofveterans.org>, that is like a Facebook for veterans, designed to help them connect with one another, navigate the Department of Veterans Affairs and get information on programs such as the GI Bill.

As part of the outreach, the group has taken out print ads showing soldiers in combat and proclaiming: "99% of Americans have seen combat on TV. 1% of Americans have seen combat in Iraq or Afghanistan."

The campaign's motto illustrates the theme that the group says sets it apart from others composed largely of veterans of other wars: "We know where you're coming from."

IAVA's staff is largely made up of service members who know what it's like to be a modern-day veteran, home from war. When lobbying for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Bowers, IAVA's director of government affairs, told legislators and their staffs that he had to drop out of George Washington University because the current version of the bill did not cover the high cost of tuition.

In a congressional hearing two years ago on post-traumatic stress, Patrick Campbell, 30, a combat medic with the D.C. National Guard, tossed aside his prepared statement and told lawmakers about how

one of his fellow soldiers had recently killed himself. Then, with his voice cracking, he said he would "tell you all a story I don't tell anyone."

His base in Iraq came under mortar fire. A civilian contractor was hit. "She had holes all over her body," he said. "Her intestines were sticking out. There was nothing we could do."

Grotesque, yes. But that's war, and Campbell, IAVA's legislative director, figured members of Congress needed to hear it.

The group is based in New York but opened a Washington office two years ago. At first, Campbell worked alone out of his apartment near Catholic University. A few months later, Bowers joined him, and the pair worked out of office space donated by the Blinded Veterans Association as they tried to navigate the halls of Congress, "put a face on the war and say, 'This is what it is like to have been in Iraq,'" said Vanessa Williamson, the group's policy director.

But it was difficult. "We didn't know any of the players down here," Campbell said.

Soon, though, they were getting in to see leaders of both parties and making regular appearances on cable television, advocating for veterans. The group's strategy has been to reach out to veterans using Facebook, MySpace and Twitter, and its Washington staff has grown to six.

Bringing recent experience to the issues

The organization has been careful to pick issues -- such as the GI Bill, set to be in place Aug. 1 -- that directly affect this generation of veterans. That is something that other veterans' groups, with hundreds of thousands of members from several wars, cannot do.

"They bring combat experience, recent combat experience, so when you're talking about PTSD or (traumatic brain injury) or how to reach this generation of vets, why not talk to people who just went through that?" said Eric Hilleman, deputy director of national legislative services for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. "That's a very powerful tool."

Bowers and Campbell have a personal stake in the legislation they lobby for, not just because they are veterans themselves but because both will probably be headed back to war early next year. Bowers's Marine Corps unit might be headed to Afghanistan, and Campbell's Guard unit could be going to Iraq.

Which is yet another way they are different from the people they meet on the Hill, Campbell said: "We're the only people at the table who are still deployable."

Submitted By Tom Pinto





**Veterans For Peace
Chapter 56**

Phone 707-826-7124
Email: VFP56@aol.com
WE'RE ON THE WEB:
<http://www.vfp56.org>

LEADERSHIP TEAM

**Rob Hepburn, Steve Stamnes
Steve Sottong, Linda Sorter
Jim Sorter, John Schaefer
Gordon Anderson**

STANDING COMMITTEES

**WU/WMD: Peter Aronson
General Store: Doug Smith
Media: Mashaw McGuinnis
VEOP: Carl Stancil
Jon Reisdorf
VSC: Marc Knipper**

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

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 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.

Dear Friends and members of VFP 56,

It is with regret and sadness that I have to notify you that, for a length of time in the future, I cannot have an active, physical role in our monthly VFP 56 meetings or general gatherings.

While in Mexico I was exposed to an unknown strain of a TB virus and unfortunately it caught up with me to the tune of sickness and quarantine. I have to stay isolated in my home for a period of weeks taking medication which hopefully will eradicate it. We will know in two weeks what we are dealing with.

Linda and I have always known that this was a possibility with the type of volunteering we do around the world, but the good we hope we do out weights the negative of the sickness.

I will still be able to work on the Foghorn, agenda and minutes if someone will email me what goes on at the meetings. Or you might want to choose another secretary for the consistency and accuracy of the meetings. That might be wise!

As far as the Foghorn is concerned I will gladly continue to work on it, but I will not be able to print, fold or mail it. Possibly I can send it in a PDF form to Mashaw and Gordy and they can figure it out from there.

Hopefully in time ,Inchalla, this will rectify itself and all will be as it was.

In the meantime, think positive thoughts. Peace to you all, Jim Sorter