



VETERANS FOR PEACE  
HUMBOLDT BAY  
CHAPTER 56

# THE FOGHORN

DECEMBER  
2011

*“Cutting Through the Fog of War”*

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## “Walker Mike”

*By Jim Sorter*

I doubt many will miss him. Most people in Arcata didn't even know his name. He was one of those!! One of those Plazoids who interrupt our comfortable lives everyday with their mere presence in our other world!!

He lived mostly on the tracks, down by the bird sanctuary. I say he lived there mostly, but had to move every time the police raided the homeless camp and shredded tents and sleeping bags and put most inhabitants personal possessions in dumpsters, forcing them to move on. Other times he slept where he could, under bushes, inside doorways, under vehicles and in abandoned buildings.

I said you probably didn't even know his name, but you probably would recognize him by his appearance, dirty, scruffy beard, disheveled and wracked with arthritis. We few who thought we knew him called him “Walker Mike” because he always carried all of his possessions on a hand-capped-walking device he pushed through the city streets. He could be seen most days walking and pushing it around the Plaza.

One of our members, Mashaw, wrote about him in a past issue of the Foghorn. She shared a bench with him one day and found him to be gentle, kind and very courteous. She spent some time with him learning his story. Linda and I too took time to know Mike as well and found a generous, kind spirit underneath those unwashed clothes. Not only did we find a friend, we found a homeless vet whose government had turned its back on his veterans needs. Mike served in the Army during the 1960s and when he got out was so traumatized by PTSD he did not know where to turn and so just dropped out.

Susan V., our angel who looks after those unfortunate members of our society, saw Mike through some very rough times with his dependencies, but never gave up hope that there was still a spark, a fire inside of Mike who had basically given up on himself.

By working with him and the right government agencies she finally got Mike signed up for SSI just a couple of months ago. With his back pay he was able to buy a ram shackled, small trailer that he could call home. Wow, was he ever proud of having a place of his own to go to every night. No more wet soggy clothes, no more waking up so stiff he could hardly move from arthritis. Finally life was turning in Mike's favor.

Well, as you probably have surmised by now, Mike passed away two short weeks ago. He died from liver complications. He was by himself in his little and dirty, but precious trailer. Friends found him in bed where he spent most of his time. Just when he could see the daylight his future was snuffed out.

Susie searched and searched and finally found a family contact that told her that they had had no idea where he was. His mother had been searching for him for 20 years to no avail. They were grief stricken by the news of his passing, as is the small few that knew him here in Arcata. Mike was loved and had a family that missed him.

Mike was a good and honorable man. He served his country in its time of need and then disappeared, like so many other vets walking our streets, never getting the praise, attention and help they deserve.

I write this article with a purpose in mind! That purpose is to hopefully awaken in our citizens a view that homeless vets are not worthless vagabonds. Some, like Mike, have been given a dirty hand in the past and could not recover from the trauma it set in motion in their lives.

I am proud to have known Mike and witness his gentleness and kindness. There are thousands of Mikes out there who deserve our compassion and care. Take time to get to know some of these homeless vets. They may surprise you with their histories and win a special place in your heart as well.

In memory of “Walker Mike”



## News From Washington DC

*By Richard Gilchrist*

I'm still here in DC protesting our cooperation greed and military intervention around the world. We took over a park in downtown DC and have been here for two weeks. We are one block from the White House. The National Park Service gave up trying to move us out and gave us a permit to stay until Dec. 30. Of course, I'm not going to be here for all that time because Gay Lou can't make it under the conditions so I'll probably leave soon, but plan to come back to support the protests. I have a new found respect for the homeless that have to live on the streets. Sleeping on concrete isn't much fun.

We've been to the senate building and closed it down for several hours. We got very good media coverage so there wasn't any real need to go the route of arrest. We all went into the senate offices and raised a little hell. The police were very professional and all went well. I'm serving as a peacemaker and have had the opportunity to talk with the police on many occasions. Most are on our side and against cooperation greed. If we play our cards right we can turn this mess around.

I had some fun over in the house building. There was a room full of suits sitting around a big conference table watching TV presentation of the bull shit that Sec. of Defense was putting out at to the house and senate members. There was an empty seat at the table so I went in and sat down. I had on my jacket with all the peace and the VFP patches. They were shocked but didn't say anything. I thought that I would be asked to leave but no one said anything. I was prepared to wait until I had my second warning to leave then leave. You get three before they arrest you. I already had two warnings down stairs to leave the hall way. After a while many of them got up and left the room. It was fun.

Being in this city is like being in the center of the greed pot. We also went to a meeting of the CEOs of the health cooperation and raised all kinds of hell. Of course were forced out of the hotel but one of the interesting aspects was all the hotel workers were giving us the peace sign. I put in a police report for assault against one of the hotel's security people because he slammed me against the door. I was trying to keep one of our group from over reacting. I'm not going to follow through with the charge but it is important to let them know they can't use violence.

We went over to the community center and damn near gave several generals a collective heart attack. They were in the building to look at all the new goodies that the military industrial complex has for them to play with. Went we walked in several of the general hide in a troop carrier.

We are making racket that we are making a dent in this city This is where the action has to be centered.

I think that our peace poetry contest is a great example of what has to be done. We have to keep picking away at the youth to get them thinking about peace and getting involved in making peace. It will not come just because we want it we have to really work hard move in that direction. I keep thinking of Thomas Paine's book, *The Crisis*. I think we are back to that point again.

Keep up the good work. I be back fairly soon and will roll up my sleeves to get working on the contest.

## The Occupiers

*By Larry Hourany*

Dave Meserve has written (T-S, 11-16-11) the clearest summary of the Occupy Movement I've read. Because the occupiers seem not to have singularly specified what it is they are protesting, they are easy for some to dismiss. More than that, the people who have been most acutely impacted by the economic devastation of the last few years have had their voices muffled to the extent that anyone who does speak out is automatically viewed as a pariah and is isolated and scorned. How did this come about in the land of the free and the home of the brave? It is quite clear to some that this scorn is the result of the effectiveness of corporatist propaganda that insists that "there is no problem" and everything will be alright if we just hold our collective breath. Things are OK for those of us whose most pressing dilemma is whether to purchase a yacht or another vacation home.. But for the millions of Americans who must decide whether their children can get thru one more season with their old clothes, every purchase is a luxury.

It is for these Americans that the protesters demonstrate. So, even tho some letter writers deride the demonstrators because of a perceived inability to articulate their cause, it should be understood that the Occupy Movement is a protestation affecting us all. It is in regard to the degradation of our educational system, it is the diminution of our collective bargaining rights, it is the infringement of our social protections, and it is the reductions in our expectations for retirement. These were all once considered basic to the American Dream. Has this now become a chimera of something once so integral to our conduct as citizens that we no longer care whether they are obtainable? In a country founded on rebellion have we yielded to forces that deny the privileges we shed blood to secure? The spirit of rebellion is flourishing thru-out the world and languishing in America.

Never in my lifetime has the working person had their back so affixed to the wall that they were unable to reclaim lost ground. But now we seem to accede to strictures in our freedoms that go counter to what we say we cherish. Yet we do this not only without a murmur, but with a resignation to the trumpeting of the oligarchy that we should be content with whatever we are

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able to retain from among our cherished rights. How, for example, did it ever become acceptable for our government to give the same rights to corporations as to a living, breathing blood-carrying person? We must on some level be aware that if we sheepishly concur that personhood is not a transcendent feature of being human then we are diminished in our personhood.

Whatever the flaw in American assumptions about our own exceptionalism, we have always been a peculiar blend of trust and scepticism. It is this blend that allows our countenance of the half-full glass to generate our basic optimism—an optimism that is founded on assumptions of adequacy in our efforts to provide for our portion of the American Dream.

In sum, honor the occupiers—they give voice if not coherence to our uncertainties. In a time where inertia is the greatest motivator, they are speaking out for the rights of us all. They are turning our dissatisfactions into actions, our yearnings into churnings, our placidity into acidity. Demonstrations are a social service. What we have yielded so sheepishly, they are fighting for. At the most basic level we all know: If you are sheep, expect to get sheared.

Submitted by Larry Hourany, PhD, 1988 Ocean Dr..McK., CA 95519, 707 839 5014

## Can't Wait! Won't Wait! REVOLUTION NOW!

By Jack Nounnan

At 4:30 in the morning of November 7th, the Eureka Police Department, under the direction of Humboldt County, forcibly attempted to end our peaceful Occupy Eureka demonstration. However, we will not go quietly into the night, instead, we are determined to continue our Occupation, in solidarity with Occupy Wall Street. We will not swallow the half-truths our politicians are feeding us. It's time to fight back against the attacks on our unions, schools, social security...death by a thousand cuts while the bankers enjoy historic profits. It is time for a "Tahrir moment" to claim what is rightfully ours!

The occupy movement has spread like wildfire to over 1200 cities across the world. We are occupying to create a living alternative to the corporate oligarchy that threatens the last of our remaining freedoms. We are creating networks of international resistance to tackle a globalized problem. We will not be deterred by spurious media reports or police propaganda.

This is a call to action - for those who want to end the rule of the One Percent; for those who will not stand by as "democracy" is sold to the highest bidder; for those who want to give voice to the injustices committed by this unequal system to come out and join us.

Just as the rains are coming in, the police have robbed us of

our tents, tarps, sleeping gear, banners, signs, cooking equipment, dishes, tables, etc. We need people to help us re-establish and revive Occupy Eureka, in this visible and high profile site, with donations of appropriate gear and signs, and with a strong presence on Friday to stave off the almost constant harassment since November 7th from the Eureka police.

We look forward to hearing from veterans. Disillusioned by illegitimate and endless war, veterans of all ages lend their support to this global movement to take down the financial system that creates so much suffering around the world.

*(Editor's Note: Martha Devine called me at 4:00 am the morning of the raid to go to Eureka with her and witness the tactics used by the police to break up the Occupy Eureka movement. While we were there we saw police indiscriminately destroy personal property, chase occupiers off the site and arrest, forcefully, many who were trying to protest their actions.*

*We stayed for about an hour. At about 5:15 am the police made the announcement they were going to arrest anyone in the immediate area if they didn't leave within five minutes. We hung around for another four to five minutes before we left.*

*What we witnessed was flagrant use of police power on people who were trying to peacefully protest in solidarity with others across the nation.*

*We all need to be strong and remember that those putting themselves on the line are doing it for us. Occupy America must continue if we are ever going to have a say in our future and the freedoms of our children.)*

Comments by Jim Sorter

Next VFP56 meeting will be held  
on Thursday, December 1st at  
7:00 PM.  
Meeting will be held in the  
Commons Room at 550 Union  
Street in Arcata.  
Veterans and non-veterans are  
more than welcome to come and  
help us dialogue about what we to-  
gether can do to bring about peace  
in this complex world.



# Letter to a Cynic

*Author Unknown*

*Submitted by Mashaw McGunnis*

Hello,

I briefly visited the “We are the 53%” website, but I first saw your face on a liberal blog. Your picture is quite popular on liberal blogs. I think it’s because of the expression on your face. I don’t know if you meant to look pugnacious or if we’re just projecting that on you, but I think that’s what gets our attention.

In the picture, you’re holding up a sheet of paper that says: I am a former Marine. I work two jobs. I don’t have health insurance. I worked 60-70 hours a week for 8 years to pay my way through college. I haven’t had 4 consecutive days off in over 4 years. But I don’t blame Wall Street. Suck it up you whiners. I am the 53%. God bless the USA!

I wanted to respond to you as a liberal. Because, although I think you’ve made yourself clear and I think I understand you, but you don’t seem to understand me at all. I hope you will read this and understand me better, and maybe understand the Occupy Wall Street movement better.

First, let me say that I think it’s great that you have such a strong work ethic and I agree with you that you have much to be proud of. You seem like a good, hard-working, strong kid. I admire your dedication and determination. I worked my way through college too, mostly working graveyard shifts at hotels as a “night auditor.” For a time I worked at two hotels at once, but I don’t think I ever worked 60 hours in a week, and certainly not 70. I think I maxed out at 56. And that wasn’t something I could sustain for long, not while going to school. The problem was that I never got much sleep, and sleep deprivation would take its toll. I can’t imagine putting in 70 hours in a week while going to college at the same time. That’s impressive.

I have a nephew in the Marine Corps, so I have some idea of how tough that can be. He almost didn’t make it through basic training, but he stuck it out and insisted on staying even when questions were raised about his medical fitness. He eventually served in Iraq and Afghanistan and has decided to pursue a career in the Marines. We’re all very proud of him. Your picture reminds me of him.

So, if you think being a liberal means that I don’t value hard work or a strong work ethic, you’re wrong. I think everyone appreciates the industry and dedication a person like you displays. I’m sure you’re a great employee, and if you have entrepreneurial ambitions, I’m sure these qualities will serve you there too. I’ll wish you the best of luck, even though a guy like you will probably need luck less than most.



I understand your pride in what you’ve accomplished, but I want to ask you something.

Do you really want the bar set this high? Do you really want to live in a society where just getting by requires a person to hold down two jobs and work 60 to 70 hours a week? Is that your idea of the American Dream?

Do you really want to spend the rest of your life working two jobs and 60 to 70 hours a week? Do you think you can? Because, let me tell you, kid, that’s not going to be as easy when you’re 50 as it was when you were 20.

And what happens if you get sick? You say you don’t have health insurance, but since you’re a veteran I assume you have some government-provided health care through the VA system. I know my father, a Vietnam-era veteran of the Air Force, still gets most of his medical needs met through the VA, but I don’t know what your situation is. But even if you have access to health care, it doesn’t mean disease or injury might not interfere with your ability to put in those 60 to 70 hour work weeks.

Do you plan to get married, have kids? Do you think your wife is going to be happy with you working those long hours year after year without a vacation? Is it going to be fair to her? Is it going to be fair to your kids? Is it going to be fair to you?

Look, you’re a tough kid. And you have a right to be proud of that. But not everybody is as tough as you, or as strong, or as young. Does pride in what you’ve accomplish mean that you have contempt for anybody who can’t keep up with you? Does it mean that the single mother who can’t work on her feet longer than 50 hours a week doesn’t deserve a good life? Does it mean the older man who struggles with modern technology and can’t seem to keep up with the pace set by younger workers should just go throw himself off a cliff?

And, believe it or not, there are people out there even tougher than you. Why don’t we let them set the bar, instead of you? Are you ready to work 80 hours a week? 100 hours? Can you hold down four jobs? Can you do it when you’re 40? When you’re 50? When you’re 60? Can you do it with arthritis? Can you do it with one arm? Can you do it when you’re being treated for prostate cancer?

And is this really your idea of what life should be like in the greatest country on Earth?

Here’s how a liberal looks at it: a long time ago workers in this country realized that industrialization wasn’t making their lives better, but worse. The captains of industry were making a ton of money and living a merry life far away from the dirty, dangerous factories they owned, and far away from the even dirtier and more dangerous mines that fed raw materials to those factories.

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The workers quickly decided that this arrangement didn't work for them. If they were going to work as cogs in machines designed to build wealth for the Rockefellers, Vanderbilts and Carnegies, they wanted a cut. They wanted a share of the wealth that they were helping create. And that didn't mean just more money; it meant a better quality of life. It meant reasonable hours and better working conditions.

Eventually, somebody came up with the slogan, "8 hours of work, 8 hours of leisure, 8 hours of sleep" to divide the 24 hour day into what was considered a fair allocation of a human's time. It wasn't a slogan that was immediately accepted. People had to fight to put this standard in place. People demonstrated, and fought with police, and were killed. They were called communists (in fairness, some of them were), and traitors, and many of them got a lot worse than pepper spray at the hands of police and private security.

But by the time we got through the Great Depression and WWII, we'd all learned some valuable lessons about working together and sharing the prosperity, and the 8 hour workday became the norm.

The 8 hour workday and the 40 hour workweek became a standard by which we judged our economic success, and a reality check against which we could verify the American Dream.

If a family could live a good life with one wage-earner working a 40 hour job, then the American Dream was realized. If the income from that job could pay the bills, buy a car, pay for the kids' braces, allow the family to save enough money for a down payment on a house and still leave some money for retirement and maybe for a college fund for the kids, then we were living the American Dream. The workers were sharing in the prosperity they helped create, and they still had time to take their kids to a ball game, take their spouses to a movie, and play a little golf on the weekends.

Ah, the halcyon days of the 1950s! Yeah, OK, it wasn't quite that perfect. The prosperity wasn't spread as evenly and ubiquitously as we might want to pretend, but if you were a middle-class white man, things were probably pretty good from an economic perspective. The American middle class was reaching its zenith.

And the top marginal federal income tax rate was more than 90%. Throughout the whole of the 1950s and into the early 60s.

Just thought I'd throw that in there.

Anyway, do you understand what I'm trying to say? We can have a reasonable standard for what level of work qualifies you for the American Dream, and work to build a society that realizes that dream, or we can chew each other to the bone in a nightmare of merciless competition and mutual contempt.

I'm a liberal, so I probably dream bigger than you. For instance, I want everybody to have healthcare. I want lazy people to have

healthcare. I want stupid people to have healthcare. I want drug addicts to have healthcare. I want bums who refuse to work even when given the opportunity to have healthcare. I'm willing to pay for that with my taxes, because I want to live in a society where it doesn't matter how much of a loser you are, if you need medical care you can get it. And not just by crowding up an emergency room that should be dedicated exclusively to helping people in emergencies.

You probably don't agree with that, and that's fine. That's an expansion of the American Dream, and would involve new commitments we haven't made before. But the commitment we've made to the working class since the 1940s is something that we should both support and be willing to fight for, whether we are liberal or conservative. We should both be willing to fight for the American Dream. And we should agree that anybody trying to steal that dream from us is to be resisted, not defended.

And while we're defending that dream, you know what else we'll be defending, kid? We'll be defending you and your awesome work ethic. Because when we defend the American Dream we're not just defending the idea of modest prosperity for people who put in an honest day's work, we're also defending the idea that those who go the extra mile should be rewarded accordingly.

Look kid, I don't want you to "get by" working two jobs and 60 to 70 hours a week. If you're willing to put in that kind of effort, I want you to get rich. I want you to have a comprehensive healthcare plan. I want you vacationing in the Bahamas every couple of years, with your beautiful wife and healthy, happy kids. I want you rewarded for your hard work, and I want your exceptional effort to reap exceptional rewards. I want you to accumulate wealth and invest it in Wall Street. And I want you to make more money from those investments.

I understand that a prosperous America needs people with money to invest, and I've got no problem with that. All other things being equal, I want all the rich people to keep being rich. And clever financiers who find ways to get more money into the hands of promising entrepreneurs should be rewarded for their contributions as well.

I think Wall Street has an important job to do, I just don't think they've been doing it. And I resent their sense of entitlement – their sense that they are special and deserve to be rewarded extravagantly even when they screw everything up.

Come on, it was only three years ago, kid. Remember? Those assholes almost destroyed our economy. Do you remember the feeling of panic? John McCain wanted to suspend the presidential campaign so that everybody could focus on the crisis. Hallowed financial institutions like Lehman Brothers and Merrill Lynch went

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belly up. The government started intervening with bailouts, not because anybody thought “private profits and socialized losses” was fair, but because we were afraid not to intervene - we were afraid our whole economy might come crashing down around us if we didn’t prop up companies that were “too big to fail.”

So, even though you and I had nothing to do with the bad decisions, blind greed and incompetence of those guys on Wall Street, we were sure as hell along for the ride, weren’t we? And we’ve all paid a price.

All the” 99%” wants is for you to remember the role that Wall Street played in creating this mess, and for you to join us in demanding that Wall Street share the pain. They don’t want to share the pain, and they’re spending a lot of money and twisting a lot of arms to foist their share of the pain on the rest of us instead. And they’ve been given unprecedented powers to spend and twist, and they’re not even trying to hide what they’re doing.

All we want is for everybody to remember what happened, and to see what is happening still. And we want you to see that the only way they can get away without paying their share is to undermine the American Dream for the rest of us.

And I want you and I to understand each other, and to stand together to prevent them from doing that. You seem like the kind of guy who would be a strong ally, and I’d be proud to stand with you.

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## VFP56 Support Occupy Movement

By Mashaw McGunnis

*(At last month’s general meeting a suggestion was made from the group that we should show solidarity with the “Occupy Movement.” Several of the members volunteered to go different gathering to show our support. Although some of the occupiers have moved on, the following report was filed by Mashaw after she and Carl went to Humboldt State and Arcata City Hall to be with the groups occupying those sites.)*

If I mistakenly left you out of last night’s report (Occupy Arcata) please let me know and I’ll send it to you.

Well the campus visit was a totally different experience. As with the other group, we took them homemade pumpkin bread and said we represent our local chapter of VFP, and we are supporting their actions.

The students are in good shape, and well-organized. It was dark & raining when we got there for the 7:00 “general assembly” but many of them had moved inside. There were three or four large tent/gazebo things set up and they had soup going, chai and other food. A gal was going around announcing “dinner”! and invited us to join them.

We spoke with a bright young man named Kern, who said Mark Files had been going down there every eve, and that feels great, plus they really appreciate the visits from what he called the “veteran activists” who can share what they learned in their protest actions of the 60s. (I didn’t tell him I was only 5 or 6 when those events were happening). ha ha.

Our conversation with Kern seemed like their group has clear shared goals and intentions. I frequently heard from the Occupy Arcata members things like “I’m not sure what’s happening /where such and such is/when such and such is supposed to happen, I only got here this morning” type of comments.

We asked Kern if they had larger groups during the day and he said the rain and cold had forced them to rotate the outdoor activities and they have decided to only hold the general assembly only on Tuesdays at 5:00, rather than every night.

All in all, they have a better grounding. There was no alcohol to be seen, and no smell of pot. The HSU crowd was doing a fine job of policing themselves. They have the luxury of access to bathrooms, showers, and permanent “homes” so they can rotate sleep shifts in the tents. But the Occupy Arcata group are mostly folks who are forced to sleep in tents all the time by circumstance. I keep hearing that Occupy Eureka desperately needs strong support also, so perhaps our Eureka members (Wade, Nezzie, Peter...?) can visit them and give them some guidance.

That’s all for now...  
Mashaw

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## Ann Wright Invited to Unveiling of Landmark Military Sexual Assault Legislation in D.C.

*Statement by Ann Wright*

According to the Department of Defense, 19,000 incidents of sexual assault occurred in the military in 2010, yet only 13.5% of those were reported.

As a 29 year veteran of the US Army and Army Reserves, I am deeply moved that Congresswoman Jackie Speier has initiated legislation to mandate specific actions that leadership of the military must do to address the crimes of sexual assault and rape in the military. Leaders in our military must ensure an environment where

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criminal actions in the unit do not happen and if they do, the victim is given treatment, counseling and legal assistance. The goal of the legislation is to stop these criminal acts.

Congresswoman Speier has drawn attention to this crisis in our military by telling the story of a military rape victim every week on the floor of the House of Representatives in the US Congress. The 11 speeches have told the stories of women and men who are trying to overcome the tragic consequences of the criminal acts which have been perpetrated on them by members of their own military.

I am also very appreciative of a new national organization, website and campaign dedicated to giving voice to the survivors of rape and sexual assault that Nancy Parrish, President of Protect Our Defenders, will announce.

***For Immediate Release***

***November 16, 2011***

***Contact:***

***DC - Cookab Hashemi (202) 225-3531/ (202) 465-5745***

***Cookab.Hashemi@mail.house.gov***

***CA - Katrina Rill (650) 342-0300 / (650) 208-7441***

***Katrina.Rill@mail.house.gov***

**Congresswoman Jackie Speier Proposes New Justice Process To Combat Sexual Assault Crisis in the Military**

Washington, DC - Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D-San Francisco, San Mateo) today introduced legislation to dramatically reform how sexual assaults and rape in the military are treated (bill summary attached.) She will hold a press conference on Thursday, November 7, 2011 at 9:45 am ET at the National Press Club (see details below.)

Speier stated, "For too long the military's response to rape victims has been: 'take an aspirin and go to bed.' We owe our brave women and men in the military a justice system that protects them, not punishes them when they become victims of sexual assaults and rape committed by other service members."

Speier added, "Despite 25 years of Pentagon studies, task force recommendations and congressional hearings, sexual assaults and rape in the military continue unabated. In 2010 the Department of Defense (DoD) conducted a survey of active duty members which revealed that only a small percentage of the more than 19,000 incidents of rapes and sexual assaults involving service members was actually reported. For the record, an estimated 13.5 percent of sexual assaults and rapes saw the light day—and only 8 percent of those reports resulted in prosecution—in the end 465 service members were either administratively discharged or punished through the court-martial process—that's about 2.5 percent of the total suspected acts of sexual assaults and rape—a good percentage for a direct mail response, but unacceptable for a justice system.

"The vast majority of men and women who have been sexually abused have come to realize that there is no justice in the in the military's chain of command and so they are forced to live with their trauma in secret and that, in turn, subjects them to a second act of victimization—they suffer while their attacker goes unpunished. Instead of justice, we end up with increased diagnoses of PTSD among victims of sexual assault who know what is like to be told to shut up and take an aspirin...it will only hurt...for a lifetime.

"The failure to respond in a judicial manner to sexual violence, is more than an injustice, it is, according to some of our highest ranked military leaders, a threat to our military readiness. Members of military units live on, survive on the code of watching out for each other. When sexual assaults and rape are hushed, or ignored, trust in a unit is compromised along with its collective readiness to engage the enemy.

"To end this needless injustice, I am proposing a legislative remedy and fully endorsing the website, Protect Our Defenders, which will provide the grass roots mechanics required to make our military leaders and Congress understand that what has been going on before their very eyes for decades is unconscionable and must be stopped. We owe our brave women and men in the military a justice process that protects them, not punishes them when they become victims of sexual assaults and rape.

"The Sexual Assault Training Oversight and Prevention Act—the STOP Act—takes the reporting, oversight, investigation, and victim care of sexual assaults out of the hands of the military's normal chain of command and places jurisdiction in the newly created, autonomous Sexual Assault Oversight and Response Office comprised of civilian and military experts."

Speier noted the following:

- The military adjudication system lacks independence as military judges depend on base commanders and the like to provide the salient facts of a case while these commanders have significant discretion in dealing with accusations of sexual assault. Service members have only limited access to civilian courts to address their grievances.

- The U.S. military's default position regarding any service-members' complaints is that they be resolved through the chain of command. According to the Manual for Courts-Martial, "each commander has discretion to dispose of offenses by members of that command. Ordinarily the immediate commander of a person accused or suspected of committing an offense triable by court-martial initially determines how to dispose of that offense."

*Submitted by Jim Sorter*





**Veterans For Peace  
Chapter 56**

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

**COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

**Rob Hepburn, Steve Stamnes  
Steve Sottong, Jim Sorter,  
John Schaefer, John Mulloy  
Mashaw McGuinnis, Ernie Behm**

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**VSC: Ernie Behm, John Mulloy**

# 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](mailto: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.

## NOVEMBER 26TH SUPPORT

On November 26th at 1:00 PM in Eureka VFP56 members, along with several trade and education unions will be gathering at the Eureka City Hall to show solidarity for those occupiers who have been braving the cold, rain and police harassment for the past month.

We will gather and then march around the block in mass to let our Humboldt citizens know that the occupy movement is not dead and is supported by a vast majority of people tired of having no voices in their lives.

We hope you will join us on November 26th. Lets fill the sidewalk and totally encircle the court house with our numbers.

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