

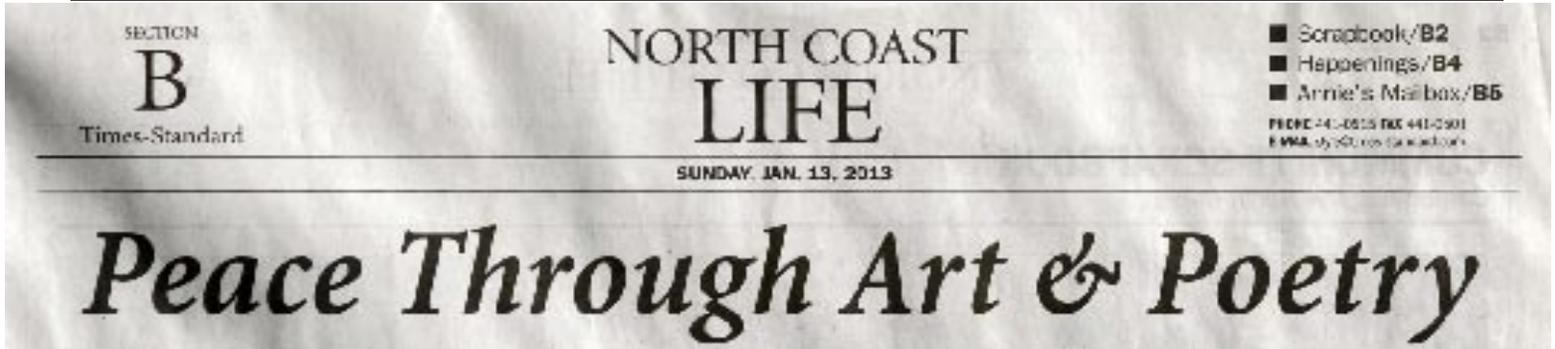


VETERANS FOR PEACE
HUMBOLDT BAY
CHAPTER 56

THE FOGHORN

FEBRUARY
2013

“Cutting Through the Fog of War”



*By Jennifer Morey, Lifestyle Editor
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Last weekend in the Youth Gallery at the Morris Graves Museum of Art in Eureka, a new exhibit opened that showcases the Redwood Coast Peace Poetry and Art Contest winners. This annual contest solicits poetry and art with the theme of peace, non-violence, ending hatred and war, from Humboldt County high school students.

The exhibit features the winners from the contest that culminated in a celebration held last May, where the poets and artists presented their work before family, friends and the general public. The work will be on display through February.

“The art and poetry are fabulous and very moving,” said Lynn Kerman, a member of the contest committee. “The intent of the contest is to promote the discussion of peace and non-violence with youth and the community at large.”

All of the poems and artwork were collected in the 2012 Redwood Coast Peace Poetry Anthology. Each entrant received a complimentary copy of the anthology, and copies were placed in each high school library and county public library branches.



“Peace Tree” by Ferndale High School Art Class

The contest is organized by the Veterans For Peace Humboldt Bay Chapter 56 and co-sponsored by the Buddhist Peace Fellowship of Humboldt County, Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Social Action Committee, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Dell’Arte International and The Ink People Center for the Arts.

Partial funding was also provided by the Carl Neilsen Memorial Fund, a fund of the Humboldt Area Foundation.

The fourth annual Redwood Coast Peace Poetry and Art Contest is currently under way. Humboldt County high school students are encouraged to enter an original poem or piece of art in this year’s contest. Contest information and entry requirements can be viewed on the Chapter 56 website, www.vfp56.org. Entries must be completely original and unpublished, and must be received no later than 5 p.m. on March 4. For more information, students can contact their English, drama, language arts or art teacher, visit www.vfp56.org or contact Jon Reisdorf at 822-4595 or jonreisdorf@hotmail.com, or Carl Stancil at 616-6405 or carlstancil@gmail.com.

The Morris Graves Museum of Art, located at 636 F Street, is open to the public from noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. For more information, visit www.humboldtarts.org or call 442-0278.

[To truly appreciate the artwork and poetry, visit the exhibit during Arts Alive! on Saturday, February 2nd from 6 to p.m.,]



I Do Not Support the Troops. Why Those Who Say “I Support the Troops” Really Don’t *by Michael Moore*

I don’t support the troops, America, and neither do you. I am tired of the ruse we are playing on these brave citizens in our armed forces. And guess what -- a lot of these soldiers and sailors and airmen and Marines see right through the bull**** of those words, “I support the troops!,” spoken by Americans with such false sincerity -- false because our actions don’t match our words. These young men and women sign up to risk their very lives to protect us -- and this is what they get in return:

1. They get sent off to wars that have NOTHING to do with defending America or saving our lives. They are used as pawns so that the military-industrial complex can make billions of dollars and the rich here can expand their empire. By “supporting the troops,” that means I’m supposed to shut up, don’t ask questions, do nothing to stop the madness, and sit by and watch thousands of them die? Well, I’ve done an awful lot to try and end this. But the only way you can honestly say you support the troops is to work night and day to get them out of these hell holes they’ve been sent to. And what have I done this week to bring the troops home? Nothing. So if I say “I support the troops,” don’t believe me -- I clearly don’t support the troops because I’ve got more important things to do today, like return an iPhone that doesn’t work and take my car in for a tune up.

2. While the troops we claim to “support” are serving their country, bankers who say they too “support the troops,” foreclose on the actual homes of these soldiers and evict their families while they are overseas! Have I gone and stood in front of the sheriff’s deputy as he is throwing a military family out of their home? No. And there’s your proof that I don’t “support the troops,” because if I did, I would organize mass sit-ins to block the doors of these homes. Instead, I’m having Chilean sea bass tonight.

3. How many of you who say you “support the troops” have visited a VA hospital to bring aid and comfort to the sick and wounded? I haven’t. How many of you have any clue what it’s like to deal with the VA? I don’t. Therefore, you would be safe to say that I don’t “support the troops,” and neither do you.

I don’t “support the troops” or any of those other hollow and hypocritical platitudes uttered by Republicans and frightened Democrats. Here’s what I do support: I support them coming home.

4. Who amongst you big enthusiastic “supporters of the troops” can tell me the approximate number of service women who have been raped while in the military? Answer: 19,000 (mostly) female troops are raped or sexually assaulted every year by fellow American troops. What have you or I done to bring these criminals to jus-

tice? What’s that you say -- out of sight, out of mind? These women have suffered, and I’ve done nothing. So don’t ever let me get away with telling you I “support the troops” because, sadly, I don’t. And neither do you.

5. Help a homeless vet today? How ‘bout yesterday? Last week? Last year? Ever? But I thought you “support the troops!”? The number of homeless veterans is staggering -- on any given night, at least 60,000 veterans are sleeping on the streets of the country that proudly “supports the troops.” This is disgraceful and shameful, isn’t it? And it exposes all those “troop supporters” who always vote against social programs that would help these veterans. Tonight there are at least 12,700 Iraq/Afghanistan veterans homeless and sleeping on the street. I’ve never lent a helping hand to one of the many vets I’ve seen sleeping on the street. I can’t bear to look, and I walk past them very quickly. That’s called not “supporting the troops,” which, I guess, I don’t -- and neither do you.

6. And you know, the beautiful thing about all this “support” you and I have been giving the troops -- they feel this love and support so much, a record number of them are killing themselves every single week. In fact, there are now more soldiers killing themselves than soldiers being killed in combat (323 suicides in 2012 through November vs. about 210 combat deaths). Yes, you are more likely to die by your own hand in the United States military than by al Qaeda or the Taliban. And an estimated eighteen veterans kill themselves each day, or one in five of all U.S. suicides -- though no one really knows because we don’t bother to keep track. Now, that’s what I call support! These troops are really feeling the love, people! Lemme hear you say it again: “I support the troops!” Louder! “I SUPPORT THE TROOPS!!” There, that’s better. I’m sure they heard us. Don’t forget to fly our flag, wear your flag lapel pin, and never, ever let a service member pass you by without saying, “Thank you for your service!” I’m sure that’s all they need to keep from putting a bullet in their heads. Do your best to keep your “support” up for the troops because, God knows, I certainly can’t any longer.

I don’t “support the troops” or any of those other hollow and hypocritical platitudes uttered by Republicans and frightened Democrats. Here’s what I do support: I support them coming home. I support them being treated well. I support peace, and I beg any young person reading this who’s thinking of joining the armed forces to please reconsider. Our war department has done little to show you they won’t recklessly put your young life in harm’s way for a cause that has nothing to do with what you signed up for. They will not help you once they’ve used you and spit you back into society. If you’re a woman, they will not protect you from rapists in their ranks. And because you have a conscience and you know right from wrong, you do not want yourself being used to kill civilians in other countries who never did anything to hurt us. We are currently involved in at least a half-dozen military actions around the world. Don’t become the next statistic so that General Electric can post another record profit -- while paying no taxes -- taxes that otherwise would be paying for the artificial leg that they’ve kept you waiting for months to receive.

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I support you, and will try to do more to be there for you. And the best way you can support me -- and the ideals our country says it believes in -- is to get out of the military as soon as you can and never look back.

And please, next time some "supporter of the troops" says to you with that concerned look on their face, "I thank you for your service," you have my permission to punch their lights out (figuratively speaking, of course).

(There is something I've done to support the troops -- other than help lead the effort to stop these senseless wars. At the movie theater I run in Michigan, I became the first person in town to institute an affirmative action plan for hiring returning Iraq/Afghanistan vets. I am working to get more businesses in town to join with me in this effort to find jobs for these returning soldiers. I also let all service members in to the movies for free, everyday.)

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The Golden Rule Shall Sail Again

by *Dr. Arnold (Skip) Oliver*
Golden Rule Restoration Committee, and
Veterans for Peace

"What Golden Rule said was, 'We are not telling you WHAT to think, but we are saying, in the most dramatic way we can, that there is a NEED to think.'" Albert S. Bigelow, *The Voyage of the Golden Rule*, 1959, p. 268.

Sailors dream of boats. We conjure up images about the craft that a thing of utter beauty, sails perfectly, and will carry us to magical places. Some of these dreams are readily achievable, while others are less realistic, if not downright quixotic. This is a story about a sailboat dream that some might say is right up Don Quixote's alley.

Those of us who dream about the historic ketch Golden Rule may be a bit less realistic than most. On the other hand, the Rule has stirred the imaginations of people ranging far across space and time -- from Hiroshima to Connecticut, and the 1950s up to the present. The boat is unusual, and her history even more so.

Lets start with the history. The Golden Rule was the very first of the environmental and peace vessels to go to sea. In 1958, a crew of anti-nuclear weapons activists set sail aboard her in an attempt to interpose themselves and the boat between the U.S. Government and its atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands.

At that time both the U.S. and the Soviet Union were conducting above ground tests of very large nuclear weapons which produced readily detectable clouds of radioactive fallout that wafted around

the planet. Radiation contamination began to turn up in cows' and mothers' milk. Public concern grew, and for the first time many middle class Americans began to wonder if their government knew what it was doing.

In 1958 The Golden Rule sailed from San Pedro toward the U.S. nuclear test zone at Eniwetok atoll in the Marshall Islands, but she never made it that far. She was twice boarded by the U.S. Coast Guard at Hawaii, and the crew were arrested, tried and jailed in Honolulu. But, far from being defeated, their example helped to ignite a storm of world-wide public outrage against nuclear weapons that resulted in the Atmospheric Test Ban Treaty of 1963, and which has continued down to the present in the many organizations still working to abolish weapons of mass destruction.

The example set by the Golden Rule and her crew were also the inspiration for all the modern environmental and peace voyages and craft that followed in her wake including the Reynolds family aboard the Phoenix of Hiroshima, which did make it to the test zone; and later Greenpeace and the Sea Shepherds, among others. The connection to Greenpeace is direct. At a Vancouver meeting of activists in the late 1960s Marie Bohlen, an American inspired by the Golden Rule's exploits, suggested a protest voyage toward the U.S. nuclear test site in the Aleutians. The rusty trawler Phyllis Cormack soon headed north and Greenpeace was launched.

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Next VFP56 meeting will be held
 on Thursday, February 7th 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.



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Just as importantly, the use of non-violent direct action as a basic guiding principle by the Golden Rule's crew would also influence future generations of activists. The seas of the world have never been quite the same since.

It is in their memory of her crew, and the causes that they helped to inspire, that the Veterans for Peace have vowed that the Golden Rule shall again ride the waves of peace.

The Original Crew

Former U.S. naval commander Albert S. Bigelow was among those most alarmed by nuclear weapons. In 1945, he had had a moment of epiphany when he heard the news of the nuclear destruction of Hiroshima. "It was then," he recalled, "that I realized for the first time that morally war is impossible." Later, in the 1950s, he joined the Society of Friends (Quakers) and adopted their principles of non-violence.

Bigelow had also been deeply affected by his family's experience in hosting several of the Hiroshima Maidens, women who had come to the U.S. for medical treatment after being terribly injured in the nuclear blasts over Japan in 1945. Bigelow firmly believed that the nuclear arms race was nothing more than a "race to extinction" that had to be stopped. (271)

Deciding that action was called for, he and others joined the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) in 1957. At first, SANE went through normal channels, petitioning the U.S. Government and requesting meetings with officials. When that brought no result, it was decided that more direct action was called for. Thus was born the voyage of the Golden Rule, and the age of the modern protest vessel.

In keeping with their Quaker beliefs, Bigelow and the others came up with what was then a novel approach: They would sail a small craft into the test zone in the Marshall Islands, risking their own lives to do so. At the same time, they determined that their protest would not be done in secret, but in the full light of day; and that a basic

principle of their actions should be the fullest respect for the humanity of their opponents. In January of 1958 they wrote President Eisenhower of their plans.

"How do you reach men," Bigelow wrote, "when all the horror is in the fact that they feel no horror? It requires, we believe, the kind of effort and sacrifice that we now undertake." (273)

It is easy to focus on Albert S. Bigelow when describing the voyage of the Golden Rule. He was, after all, the author of the book by that name. But he would have been the first to point out that the other crew members were noteworthy in their own right, and that was indeed the case.

William Huntington was an architect, a Quaker, an international aid official with the American Friends Service Committee, and a Quaker representative to the United Nations. He had been a conscientious objector during the Second World War and was an experienced sailor. George Willoughby was also a well-known peace activist, a non-violent war resistor who seemed always to be at the center of the action. He was a founder of Peace Brigades International and the Philadelphia-based Movement for a New Society, dedicated to non-violent social transformation.

At 28 years of age, Orion Sherwood was the youngest of the Golden Rule's crew, and the only Methodist. Prior to that, he had been a teacher at a Friends school in Poughkeepsie, New York. Known for his gentle disposition, he was also a graduate engineer, and had studied for the ministry. After the voyage, he returned to teaching at a Friends school in New Hampshire.

James Peck, although not a Quaker, had been a long-time practitioner of non-violent direct action, a conscientious objector in World War II, as well as a fierce advocate of racial equality. He struggled for civil rights for African Americans while in prison during the war, and in the U.S. Navy and merchant marine. In 1938 he was a founder of what would later become the National Maritime Union. Peck joined the crew in Hawaii.

Both James Peck and Bigelow later were among the original thirteen Freedom Riders who in 1961 risked their lives to desegregate interstate public transportation in the American South. Peck was savagely beaten by a Ku Klux Klan mob, and Bigelow placed his own body between a mob and John Lewis, absorbing some of the blows intended for the man who would later become a Georgia Congressman. Lewis recounted the story at the 2012 Democratic National Convention. In 1961, "Albert Bigelow, and I tried to enter a white waiting room, we were met by an angry mob that beat us and left us lying in a pool of blood. Some police officers came up and asked us whether we wanted to press charges. We said, 'No, we come in peace, love and nonviolence.'"

Bigelow appears to have been the only member of the Golden Rule's crew who later remained passionate about the sea and sailing. Returning home to Cos Cob, Connecticut, he became a painter along mostly nautical themes. A number of his works are among the holdings of the Mystic Seaport Museum. He continued to sail and teach the sport. In 1993 the Southern Massachusetts Sailing Association established an award in his honor, to the junior sailor with an "enthusiasm for fair sailing."

The Boat is Lost Then Found

The Non-Violent Action group sold the Golden Rule in Hawaii late in 1958. Her whereabouts after that are somewhat unclear until she later turned up in Eureka, California badly neglected – so much so that she finally sank in a storm in 2010. She was raised from the depths by shipyard owner Leroy Zerlang.

Leroy has had a life-long love affair with Humboldt Bay, its

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history and its classic wooden boats. Among his many projects are the local maritime museum, and its 100 year-old tour boat Madaket which, built in 1910, is the last of the Humboldt ferries, and the oldest passenger vessel in continuous service in the United States. Leroy also takes in strays at the boatyard including dogs and cats, a horse, Gilou the goat, and even the odd political scientist (That would be me.). He has a gruff exterior, beneath which lies an equally gruff interior. He is not much of a peacenik, but is coming around.

So given that background, it should hardly be surprising that when the badly neglected Golden Rule sank in a storm in 2010 off Leroy's boatyard, he decided to raise her, find people who would restore the boat to her former glory. After doing some research on the boat's background, he was startled to learn that the Golden Rule had played an important role in the history of the Cold War. He put some feelers out and was contacted by the Smithsonian Institute, several historians and finally the Veterans for Peace.

One day in 2011, long time Veterans for Peace activists (and-non-sailors) Fredy and Sherry Champagne wandered into the Zerlang and Zerlang boatyard. They had heard something vague about a peace boat in need of restoration at that location. Fredy swears that, when he put his hand on her keel, the boat spoke to him, asking for another life. Wandering over to a somewhat puzzled looking Leroy (they had never met.), Fredy and Sherry asked whether Leroy would provide yard space and facilities if the Veterans for Peace did the restoration. They shook hands on the spot, and thus began the revival of the Golden Rule.

The Restorers -

The restoration team is an eclectic mix of sailors, shipwrights, historic boat lovers, and peaceniks.

The project's master shipwright is David Peterson, widely-acknowledged to be the most talented wooden boat restorer on Humboldt Bay. He advises boatwright Breckin Van Veldhuizen, a recent graduate of the Northwest School of Wooden Boat Building near Port Townsend, WA. Although a stranger to anti-nuclear activism, she loves sailing and working with wood and boats. To her, the three words that every woman should most want to hear are, "Lets go sailing!"

The swizzle that stirs the Golden Rule Project cocktail is Navy veteran Chuck Dewitt, the Restoration Coordinator. Chuck puts countless hours into making sure that the necessary tools and supplies are available to the team working on the boat. He is also involved in fundraising and publicity. Among his other pursuits are volunteering for the Humboldt Baykeepers in their efforts to preserve and protect coastal resources, and taking part in a weekly Veterans for Peace vigil outside the Humboldt county courthouse in Eureka on Friday evenings. He's been

doing that for nearly ten years, having been outraged by the events leading up to the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. Former high school all-American linebacker, Mike Gonzalez of Trinidad began volunteering in mid-2012. As a talented wood sculptor and sailor, he brings much-needed skills to the project. If you ask him why he volunteers, he responds that he is a big believer in "peace, love and freedom", and that to him sailing and the Golden Rule embody all three. He dreams of sailing out of Humboldt Bay on a new mission of peace.

The Golden Rule's welding and metal fabricating are ably handled by Dennis Thompson, a retiree from the military who lives aboard Andromeda, the 44 foot steel hulled sloop that he built, and welded, by himself. Andromeda is docked at the city marina in Eureka.

As of this writing the restoration is moving ahead briskly. Volunteers and shipwrights on the job daily. The hull is fully planked and nearly faired, and is about ready for painting. The new Yanmar diesel engine has been installed, the deck beams are in, the cockpit well is done, and the decks are framed. A new prop and shaft are being delivered. The interior is starting to go in.

The Original Boat

The Golden Rule is a Hugh Angelman and Charles Davies designed Alpha-30 ketch. The hull was constructed in Costa Rica, and the final build was by Les Marsh's "Posami" company in San Pedro around 1957. In his book, "Voyage of the Golden Rule" (pp. 38, 60), Bigelow described the boat as a "character vessel", with a "jaunty, rakish look". She is a ketch with a gaff-rigged main and masts raked sharply aft. The engine was a twenty-five horsepower "Atomic Four", a name that gave rise to humorous consternation among the anti-nuclear crew.

Like all sailboats, the Golden Rule design was the product of compromises, with its particular limitations and flaws. Bigelow noted (pp. 60-61) that it had been built with coastal cruising in mind; and the built-in ice chest, large cockpit, and sink were not ideal for blue water passages. The long bowsprit added looks and character to the boat, but entailed additional risk to the crew. More seriously, the gaff rigged main sail could not be permanently stayed aft, which resulted in a slack forestay and mediocre sailing to windward. The rig's design made it difficult to stay the masts to the rear, and serious chafe issues were the result. Somehow, during construction limber holes had not been drilled in the bilge frames, which meant that standing water became trapped, and the boat could not be pumped dry. In spite of these issues, Bigelow called the Golden Rule a "stout and able vessel" that served them well

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The End of the Beginning

The restoration of historic sailing craft is new to Veterans for Peace, and we are still working to get our minds around the idea. But to VFP the Golden Rule is such an important symbol of resistance to war that we believe she is worthy of preservation. Thus, the Golden Rule restoration was adopted as a national project of Veterans for Peace in 2012.

With the able help of many volunteers and supporters, the goal is to refloat the Golden Rule in 2013 and launch a ten year voyage in opposition to war and militarism, as well as to illuminate a key chapter of American history

After all, if one is going to dream of boats, why dream small? And here is another big dream – the VFP goal that the United States abandon war as an instrument of national policy. For the Golden Rule Project, those two dreams are irrevocably intertwined.

Our website (VFP Golden Rule Project) has information on where to donate, other items that we need, and updates on our progress
-END-

PROGRESS REPORT FOR TGR,,,,, FOR JAN. 13TH. MTG.

TO ALL:.....:

FIRST OFF, WE ALL NEED TO THANK BILL EASTWOOD FOR THE TIME AND TALENT HE'S USED TO CREATE THE DRAWINGS, SKETCHES AND SCALES THAT I'M USING TO MOVE FORWARD ON THIS PROJECT.

HERE IS WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING DURING THE HOLIDAYS. THE KEEL HAS BEEN CEMENTED. THAT IS QWIK-CRETE, A VERY FINE TYPE OF CEMENT MORTAR HAS BEEN POURED AROUND THE KEEL INSIDE THE BOAT UP TO THE TOP OF THE KEEL SO THAT ANY LIQUID INSIDE THE BOAT WILL FLOW THROUGH THE LIMBER HOLES TO THE LOWEST PART OF THE BOAT AND THEN BE PUMPED OUT BY THE BILGE PUMP. THIS HAS BEEN DONE FROM STEM TO STERN.

DAVID PETERSON HAS SEALED THE AFT KEEL BELOW THE TRANSOM AND INSTALLED NEW STEEL BOLTS, EACH ONE CLOSE TO TWO FEET LONG. THE BOTTOM IS NOW READY FOR A COAT OF BOTTOM PAINT. BRECKIN HAS DONE MOST OF THE FAIRING BELOW THE WATER

LINE. THIS IS A PARTICULARLY NASTY JOB REQUIRING MANY HOURS OF FILLING AND SANDING AND THEN REPEAT AGAIN AND AGAIN UNTIL THE BOTTOM IS FAIR. THE HULL ABOVE THE WATER LINE IS ALSO DONE, WE ARE NOW WAITING FOR A BREAK IN THE WEATHER TO APPLY ANOTHER COAT OF PRIMER.

THE FORE DECK AND AFT DECK AS WELL AS THE SIDE DECKS HAVE ALL BEEN CONTOURED AND FAIRED. A BASE FOR THE WINDLESS HAS BEEN INSTALLED, GLUED AND SCREWED. HYDROTECH SHEETING HAS BEEN PURCHASED FOR THE DECKING. ON MONDAY, JAN. 14TH., WE HOPE TO BE PUTTING IN PLACE A BULK-HEAD OR WALL BETWEEN THE AFT DECK AND THE CABIN. THIS WILL GIVE US A CORNER STONE TO START FRAMING THE CABIN AND A FORTH WALL ON THE AFT AREA SO WE CAN NOW START SHEETING THE DECK AFT OF THE CABIN.

THE FUEL TANK THAT DENNIS THOMPSON HAS COMPLETED IS BEING INSTALLED MONDAY MORNING. THE TANK IS STAINLESS STEEL, HOLDS 62 GALLONS, IS WEDGED SHAPED AND WILL BE INSTALLED UNDER THE FOOT WELL IN THE AFT DECK AREA. INTERIOR FLOORING IS NOW BEING INSTALLED FROM RIB NUMBER 7, BACK TO RIB NUMBER 15. THIS WILL ALLOW US TO WORK MORE SAFELY AND QUICKER WHILE WORKING ON THE CABIN AND DECKING. THE FLOOR IS 3/4 INCH HYDROTECH AND EXTENDS ABOUT 10FT. FORE AND AFT BY ABOUT 5FT. WIDE.

WE'RE PRETTY SURE THE WOODEN BOAT SCHOOL WILL BUILD US A MAIN MAST BUT WE ARE STILL AWAITING COST ESTIMATES FOR THE MATERIALS. WE ARE ALSO STILL WAITING FOR THE PROP, SHAFT AND STUFFING BOX, NONE OF WHICH HAS BEEN PAID FOR YET. DAVID MERITT HAS REJOINED OUR WORK FORCE AND WILL WORK ON WEEK ENDS. DENNIS THOMPSON AND I HAVE BOTH BEEN WORKING 7 DAYS A WEEK AT THE YARD. DENNIS, BY THE WAY HAS REFUSED SO FAR TO CHARGE US FOR ANY OF THE TIME HE'S PUT IN WORKING ON THE FUEL TANK, AND HAS PAID FOR ALL OF HIS MATERIALS OUT OF POCKET, AND THAT'S A LOT..... DAVID PETERSON HAS BEEN WORKING FULL TIME ON THE RULE HERE LATELY AND OF COURSE BRECKIN AND MIKE GONZALEZ ARE STILL AROUND. WE'VE ALSO BEEN GETTING VISITORS FROM OUTSIDE THE AREA STOPPING BY TO SEE WHAT WE LOOK LIKE. THAT'S ALL I CAN THINK OF TONIGHT.....

STILL HAPPY TO BE HERE, CHUCK DEWITT.....

GRReport



Air Force finds thousands of inappropriate items, including pornography

By Chris Carroll Stars and Stripes

Published: January 18, 2013

The Air Force announced Friday it had found hundreds of examples of pornography and tens of thousands of other inappropriate items, including photos of painted aircraft nose art, listed under “inappropriate/offensive.”

Haley Zimmerman/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

WASHINGTON — The Air Force announced Friday it had found hundreds of examples of pornography and tens of thousands of other inappropriate items in a recent sweep of bases and facilities worldwide.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh III in late November ordered wing commanders to scour work areas for pornographic or offensive materials that sexually objectify men or women, and for other “unprofessional” items.

Welsh’s order came on the heels of media reports of sexual harassment and hostile working conditions for female airmen, and in the midst of a growing scandal centered on Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, over sexual misconduct by Air Force instructors toward trainees.

Gen. Larry Spencer, the Air Force vice chief of staff, told Stars and Stripes on Friday that the inspection was aimed at making sure current policies and standards on workplace conduct are being enforced. There were “no issues” found at most installations, he said.

“We want folks to come in to work every day and feel like they’re in a professional environment and feel like they’re respected,” Spencer said.

Inspections took place in recent weeks at 97 active duty installations and offices worldwide. They uncovered about 32,000 items that fell into three categories: pornography, unprofessional material and inappropriate or offensive material. Inspections at Air National Guard installations are just starting, Air Force officials said.

The majority of 631 items deemed pornographic were uncovered in Air Education and Training Command, which oversees training at Lackland and other bases. While most were items like magazines or computer videos that were removed or deleted, investigators also identified 11 pornographic computer images that were “preserved for evidence,” according to a database provided by the Air Force.

Air Force officials said they could not comment the images, which could be part of a criminal investigation.

Other items classified as pornography might not meet the typical definition of the term, however. In the Pacific Air Forces command, the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition and Maxim were included in the porn list. The database noted that such magazines, as well as Playboy, are “readily available for purchase at AAFES.”

The Air Force found 3,987 examples of “unprofessional” items, including so-called “doofer books” maintained by squadrons that contain inappropriate content, and in one case, pubic hair in a log book kept in an office at Air Force Global Strike command.

The most wide-ranging category covered 27,598 “inappropriate/offensive” items. It included sexually suggestive posters in public areas, obscene cartoons and more than 200 images of aircraft nose art, some dating to World War II. Air Force Special Operations command removed several examples found in the interior of its aircraft.

“We don’t want to paint over the Memphis Belle,” said Air Force spokesman Maj. Joel Harper. But, he added, commanders had broad discretion to decide what crosses the line.

“You’re going to have folks view this in different ways,” Spencer, the Air Force vice chief, said. “I don’t view this as being politically correct. I see it as making sure our airmen are respected.”

Nancy Parrish, president of Protect Our Defenders, a support and advocacy group for victims of military sexual assault, charged that the inspection doesn’t represent the true environment at Air Force bases. Sources told Protect Our Defenders that word about the inspections leaked out before the early December sweep, she said.

That fact “intentionally or unintentionally provided service-members the time to hide the content, and the opportunity for commanding officers to not find anything,” Parrish said. “The sweep was executed by commanding officers who had an incentive not to find anything that would reflect poorly on the command climate they are charged with maintaining.”





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LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

VFP56 DUES DUE

VFP56 DUES FOR 2013 CAME DUE ON JANUARY 1ST. LOCAL CHAPTER DUES ARE \$20.00 PER YEAR.

CHECKS CAN BE MADE OUT TO VFP56 AND SENT TO P.O. BX 532, BAYSIDE, CA 95521.

THANKS FOR YOUR PROMPT ATTENTION. WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT TO CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO ERADICATE THE EFFECTS OF WAR THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

Veterans For Peace
Chapter 56
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