



*“Cutting Through the Fog of War”*

## Cindee's Request

*By Cindee Grace*

Are you a military vet for peace (or know of one) who likes to sing for fun? Can you sing a simple song like, “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”, on key?

If yes, I'd love you to sing along with other folks on my song “Making Peace” for my current music CD! My CD is about peace, nature and hope. Other local, non-pro singers I've recorded are ages 12-83.

Please call me and I'll tell you more. I'll gently let you know if you sing well enough. My song would be more peace-inspiring if a military vet for peace sang along with me and others. The recording will be done around your schedule.

Cindee 269-7044 (Eureka) or email [cindeegrace@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cindeegrace@sbcglobal.net)

**NEXT VFP 56  
MEETING**  
**Thurs., January 4, 2007**  
**7:00 PM**  
**Marsh Commons**  
**101 H Street**  
**Arcata, California**  
**707-826-7124**

## She Survived Iraq Then Shot Herself at Home

*By Greg Mitchell*

NEW YORK Her name doesn't show on any official list of American military deaths in the Iraq war, by hostile or non-hostile fire, who died in that country or in hospitals in Europe or back home in the USA. But Iraq killed her just as certainly.

She is Jeanne “Linda” Michel, a Navy medic. She came home last month to her husband and three kids (ages 11, 5, and 4), delighted to be back in her suburban home of Clifton Park in upstate New York. Michel, 33, would be discharged from the Navy in a few weeks, finishing her five years of duty.

Two weeks after she got home, she shot and killed herself.

“She had come through a lot and she had always risen to challenges,” her husband, Frantz Michel, who has also served in Iraq, lamented last week. Now he asks why the Navy didn't do more to help her.

Michel's story has now been probed by reporter Kate Gurnett in today's Albany Times-Union. It's headlined, “A casualty far from the battlefield.”

And yet, in many ways, not far at all.

Why did it happen? “Like thousands

of others returning from Iraq, her mental state was fractured,” Gurnett explains. “And it went untreated.” Within two weeks, Linda Michel would become a private casualty of war. Re-entry into the world of peace can be harder than deployment, experts say. Picking up where you left off doesn't just happen. ...

Women experience stronger forms of post-traumatic stress disorder and have higher PTSD rates, experts say. In response, the Veterans Affairs Department launched a \$6 million study of female veterans.

Seeking treatment -- seen by some as a weakness -- may be even tougher for women, who still feel the need to prove themselves to men in military service.

In fact, this past August, three veterans in New York's Adirondack region committed suicide within three weeks, according to Helena Davis,

*At least 30 percent of those who fought in Iraq or Afghanistan are now diagnosed with PTSD, up from 16 percent to 18 percent in 2004*

deputy director of the Mental Health Assn. in New York.

Michel has served under extremely stressful conditions at Camp Bucca in southern Iraq, a U.S.-run prison where guards shot four inmates dead in a 2005 riot -- and an episode of female mudwrestling drew headlines. Michel was treated for depression and prescribed Paxil, but they took her off that medicine when she

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returned home. Her husband was not informed.

"I just wish the Navy would have done some more follow-up, instead of just letting her come home,"

Frantz, who is on the division staff of the Army National Guard, told the reporter. "If somebody needs Paxil in a combat zone, then that's not the place for them to be. You either send them to a hospital or you send them home and then make sure that the family members know and that they get follow-up care."

He has pressed the Navy for answers: "Why wasn't she sent to a facility to resolve the issues? Not keep her in Iraq and give her some antidepressant medication and then just send her home. So those are the answers that I don't have. Which makes me a little angry because I know what is supposed to occur."

The *Times Union* carried another lengthy story on Sunday, by Dennis Yusko, on post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) and Iraq veterans. "The number of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans getting treatment for PTSD at VA hospitals and counseling centers increased 87 percent from September 2005 to June 2006 -- to 38,144, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs," Yusko revealed.

"At least 30 percent of those who fought in Iraq or Afghanistan are now diagnosed with PTSD, up from 16 percent to 18 percent in 2004", said Charlie Kennedy, PTSD program director and lead psychologist at the Stratton Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Of the 400 Capital Region vets in the program, 81 served in Iraq or Afghanistan, Kennedy said, and that number is growing. 'This kind of warfare is devastating,' Kennedy said. You don't know who is your friend and who is your enemy.'"

## STAND DOWN

by Mark Knipper

North Coast Stand Down 2007 is coming to the Ferndale Fairgrounds June 8th, 9th and 10th. We are having our first Steering Committee Meeting to get the planning going January 25th at 4 pm at the Goodwin Forum at HSU. All are invited. Come help us plan the next North Coast Stand Down event. It can only get bigger and better with input from interested and inspired parties i....including you?

In peace,

Marc Knipper

## Building a Culture of Peace

by Jacob Snyder

Thank you for inviting me to speak today. I'm Jacob Snyder, Quaker, member of InterFaith PeaceMakers of Anchorage. My talk, today is about Building a Culture of Peace.

Anyone who looks at the world today, can see that we are falling far short of our potential, as persons and as nations. My grandmother was born in 1901, and died in 2003. She lived 102 years, and in that span of time, one long lifetime, human ingenuity created the potential, to guarantee 3 meals a day for every person on earth. We can, if we choose to, feed, clothe, house, educate, heal everyone. The ability to do this is a new thing in human history. It may not quite be Heaven on Earth, it may not be the Kingdom of God that Jesus spoke of, but it would be a lot closer to it, than what exists today.

Why, do we choose not to? Why, instead, does the world choose to spend 3 Billion dollars a day, every day (and half that total by the United States), on

war and preparation for war? And it is not only money we are spending; many of our best scientists use their talents designing weapons; many of the best citizens of every nation, those who are the most self-disciplined and the most self-sacrificing, spend their careers in the military. Imagine what we could do, if all that money and talent was spent on life, rather than death.

In his book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn explained that change does not happen steadily and gradually. Rather, change, whether in scientific theories, or in culture or religion, tends to happen in sudden abrupt leaps, after long periods of stability. He called this process Punctuated Equilibrium. The stresses and unanswered questions, the vast gap between what we are and what we could be, have been steadily growing, through the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and the solutions cannot be found using the old methods. We must make the leap to a Culture of Peace, and we must do it soon. As Bertrand Russell said: **"Here, then, is the problem which we present to you, stark and dreadful, and inescapable: shall we put an end to the human race; or shall mankind renounce war?"**

When I talk about a Culture of Peace, the first objection is: "Yes, Jacob, this all sounds nice, but isn't it utopian?" I answer as Schoepenhauer did: **"All Truth Passes Through Three Stages: First it is ridiculed. Second it is violently opposed. Third it is accepted as being self-evident."** I answer as Gandhi did: **"First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."** I answer as George Bernard Shaw did: **"The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress, depends on the**

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unreasonable man.” Or unreasonable woman, I’d add. All plans for a better world, are at first seen as utopian.

If, in the year 1800, you had asked any educated practical man, what were the chances of abolishing slavery in the next 100 years, he would have laughed at you. He would have pointed out that every republic, every empire, every culture on earth, allowed slavery in some form, and always had, for all recorded history. He might have allowed that slavery could be ended, but only when people became angels. He would have said that slavery is a necessary evil, a part of the human condition. If he was narrow-minded, he would have told you that any agitation to free the slaves was against the will of God, against all order and security, and could only lead to bloody slave revolts. He could have quoted extensively from the Old Testament, to support this point of view. If he was broad-minded, he might tell you, the only realistic efforts, would be to reform slavery, by such things as advocating for laws to regulate the thickness and weight of the whips used on slaves, and banning knots in whips, so that less flesh was torn off with each stroke. Ameliorating the worst abuses of slavery was perhaps possible, but Abolition, utopian. And here is the key point: those who, in the year 1800, said it was a waste of time to work for the abolition of slavery, they had all the facts on their side. They had all history on their side. All logic. What did the Abolitionists have? All they had, was faith. Faith, that it is not inevitable, that men do evil to each other; Faith, in a God whose love is available to all; Faith, and an unflinching, unyielding determination. In the space of 100 years, slavery was abolished (at least formally), in every nation on earth. The utopians, the crazy dreamers, triumphed.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we will see the Abolition of War, the emergence of a worldwide Culture of Peace, and it will be done by unreasonable people of great faith. As Albert Schweitzer said: **“No ray of sunshine is ever lost, but the green which it awakens into existence needs time to sprout, and it is not always granted for the sower to see the harvest. All work, that is worth anything, is done in faith.”**

What will a Culture of Peace look like? We are, today, so embedded and conditioned by our existing Culture of Violence, we can hardly imagine a world without force, or the threat of force.

But here is what it might look like:

- Living without fear.
  - A world where the concept of enemy is obsolete
  - A world where you are safe, because neither you (nor your nation in your name) have stolen from, or shamed, or neglected any Other, and therefore no-one seeks to harm you, and you need not spend vast sums and the lives of your children, to protect yourself from enemies, because you have no enemies
  - A world where everyone is assured, one way or another, of all the necessities of life
  - A nation that respects the sovereignty of all other nations
  - Communities where all relationships are based on mutual consent
  - Families where every child is loved, and none are hit.
  - A zero-tolerance policy towards killing, for any end, under any pretext
- A culture where the label Pro-Life includes being against the death penalty, against war, and against the extinction of other species.

**A culture where those who advocate force as the solution to any problem,**

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## Marsh At Sunset

*by Mashaw McGuinnis*

I saw crimson and fuchsia in the sky to-night,  
While the marsh chirped its lullaby and sang—  
Grateful was I, when evening birds took flight,  
For I knew on their wings, freedom sprang.

As cool damp air filled with burgundy wine,  
My heart did ache while her beauty unfurled—  
And I thought of my sisters in Palestine,  
Pondering sunset colors in their strange world.

Does golden orange fire in December skies,  
Fill their hearts like mine, with wonderment?  
Or do those colors give birth to fearful cries,  
For the imminent danger they must represent?

The evening light now turning golden and red,  
Reflects in muddy wrinkles stretched out at my feet—  
I see Iraqi mothers putting their babies to bed,  
In their own wrinkles, reflecting despair and defeat.

Are peaceful marshes at dusk save for only a few,  
With western sky’s light-show reserved for elite?  
Do my Darfurian cousins enjoy twilight’s hues?  
Can my Guantanamo brothers feel the mud on their feet?

Tonight jails are full, of my nephews waiting release,  
And to my nieces, justice means simply food and a bed-  
But my WILPF sisters, and my brothers, in Veterans for Peace,  
Keep working so we can all be free, and fed.

As we harvest our own colors, both muted and soft,  
We watch this year’s end now, in evening reflected-  
And send lovelight to those family members far off,  
For one evening, by love, we are all inter-connected.

*Mashaw is a member of the local chapter of WILPF*



## Already They've Forgotten!

by Fred Hummel

Though most people, other than pundits and conservatives, believe the recent national election was a referendum on the Iraq war, leaders of the Democratic Party seem to think otherwise. This past Sunday, Senate Majority Leader to be, Harry Reid of Nevada, announced he was willing go along with President Bush to send another 20,000 troops to Iraq with the proviso that it was part of a program to bring the troops home early.

OK, I don't have to tell you how stupid that sounds — send them over so you can bring them home. What purpose would they serve if you expect to bring them back in months other than to provide more targets for Iraqis and others opposed to the occupation. What could more troops actually accomplish in such a short time and how dedicated would they be knowing they'd soon be leaving.

It's time we gave the Democrats some backbone and remind them why they now have majorities in both houses. It's because most people in this country are fed up with a war that was founded on false premises and that is encouraging terrorism rather than ending it. Sending more troops at this time is only going to exacerbate an already untenable situation. A recent poll showed over 80% of Iraqis believed US troops are the biggest problem and over 60% believed it was OK to target them.

I know I don't have to tell you how bad it is in Iraq. But if we're serious about getting out of the place, we're going to have to make the Democrats get with the program. They have to be reminded over and over again that if they blow this chance to represent the will of the people, they'll go right back to where

they've been for the last six years, on the outside looking in.

So how do we do that? By nagging Thompson, Boxer and Feinstein over and over again. If you can send e-mail, it's a snap; your message can be a one-liner — 'Bring Our Troops Home Now' — or something similar and as straightforward. Save a copy of it so you can paste it into a note you send every week until they act like they understand the message. Send it to Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi, too. In most cases it's easiest to Google the name and go to their official website and use the e-mail form you'll find there.

We know Congress doesn't have the authority to call home the troops, that's the president's turf. But Congress does control the budget and can cut off or limit the funding for the war. Sure, doing so would create a nasty debate but that's what's been missing on this issue for the past four years. Let's put the whole thing out in the open and allow the public at long last to be part of the discussion. Without the open debate, Bush will suck his thumb for two more years and dump the problem on his successor. It comes down to this, we have two choices, either force the issue or keep counting the dead.

## About Face: Soldiers Call for Iraq Withdrawal

by Marc Cooper

For the first time since Vietnam, an organized, robust movement of active-duty US military personnel has publicly surfaced to oppose a war in which they are serving. Those involved plan to petition Congress to withdraw American troops from Iraq. A complete version of this report will appear next week in the print and online editions of *The Na-*

After appearing only seven weeks ago on the Internet, the Appeal for Redress, brainchild of 29-year-old Navy seaman Jonathan Hutto, has already been signed by nearly 1,000 US soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen, including dozens of officers — most of whom are on active duty. Not since 1969, when some 1,300 active-duty military personnel signed an open letter in the *New York Times* opposing the war in Vietnam, has there been such a dramatic barometer of rising military dissent.

Interviews with two dozen signers of the Appeal reveal a mix of motives for opposing the war: ideological, practical, strategic and moral. But all those interviewed agree that it is time to start withdrawing the troops. Coming from an all-volunteer military, the Appeal was called "unprecedented" by Eugene Fidell, president of the National Institute of Military Justice.

*The Nation* spoke with rank-and-file personnel as well as high-ranking officers — some on the Iraqi front lines, others at domestic and offshore US military bases — who have signed the Appeal. All of their names will be made available to Congress when the Appeal is presented in mid-January. Signers have been assured they are sending a communication to Congress protected under the Military Whistleblower Protection Act. The Pentagon is powerless to take official reprisals and has said that as long as active-duty personnel are not in uniform or on duty, they are free to express their views to Congress.

There are of course other, subtler risks involved. The military command exercises enormous power through individual reviews, promotions and assignments. But that hasn't kept a number of signers from going public with their dissent.

Navy Lieut. Cmdr. Mark Dearden of San Diego, for example, enlisted in

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1997 and is still pondering the possibility of a lifetime career. "So this was a very difficult decision for me to come to. I don't take this decision lightly," he says. But after two "tough" deployments in Iraq, Dearden says signing the Appeal was not only the right thing to do but also gave him personal "closure."

"I'm expressing a right of people in the military to contact their elected representatives, and I have done nothing illegal or disrespectful," Dearden adds.

Other interviews with active-duty soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen who have signed the Appeal for Redress reveal an array of motivations. Here are excerpts:

"Lisa" — 20 years old, E-4, USAF, Stationed at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii:

I joined up two weeks after I turned 17 because I wanted to save American lives. I wanted to be a hero like any American child.

I supported the war when I joined because I thought it was justified. Only after my own research and the truth coming out did I learn how wrong I was, how — for lack of a better word — how brainwashed I was.

Now I know the war is illegal, unjustified and that our troops have no reason for being there.

When I saw an article about the Appeal in the Air Force Times I went online right away and signed it and have encouraged others to do the same.

Sgt. Gary" — 21 years old. US Army. Deployed with 20th Infantry Regiment, near Mosul, Iraq

I joined up in 2001, still a junior in high school. I felt very patriotic at the end of my US History class. My idea of the Army was that you signed up, they gave you a rifle and you ran off into

battle like in some 1950s war movie. The whole idea of boot camp never really entered my head.

I supported the war in the beginning. I bought everything Bush said about how Saddam had WMDs, how he was working with Al Qaeda, how he was a threat to America. Of course, this all turned out to be false.

This is my second tour, and as of a few days ago it's half-over. Before I deployed with my unit for the second time I already had feelings of not wanting to go. When in late September a buddy in my platoon died from a bullet in the head, I really took a long hard look at this war, this Administration, and the reasons why.

After months of research on the Internet, I came to the conclusion that this war was based on lies and deception. I started to break free of all the propaganda that the Bush Administration and the Army puts out on a daily basis.

So far in three years we have succeeded in toppling a dictator and replacing him with puppets. Outlawing the old government and its standing army and replacing them with an unreliable and poorly trained crew of paycheck collectors. The well is so poisoned by what we have done here that nothing can fix it.

"Lt. Smith" — 24 years old, 1st Lieutenant, US Army. Deployed near Baghdad:

I cannot, from Iraq, attend an antiwar protest. Nor could I attend one in the States and represent myself as a soldier. What I can do is send a protest communication to my Congressional delegate outlining grievances I feel I have suffered. Appeal for Redress gives me that outlet.

I am encouraged by the November elections, but still wary. We rushed into the war on false assumptions, and now we might rush out just as falsely. What troops need now is a light at the end of

the tunnel, not just for this deployment but for all deployments. Bringing everyone out this summer is too fast to be supported by our Army's infrastructure. We would hemorrhage lives if we do so. But so would we if we stay the course.

I am encouraged by politicians who

call for a withdrawal by the conclusion of President Bush's term in office. That seems a realistic timetable for me.

Mark Mackoviak — 24 years old. US Army. Recently returned from Iraq. Stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina:

I joined the Army on September 23, 2001. I had been out of school for a year when September 11 came around, and I was supportive of our action in Afghanistan. I wound up there a year later, and it was pretty eye-opening to see how people live.

I was also in Iraq for about a year, deployed near the International Airport, west of Baghdad. I was never that supportive of the invasion. I thought the media coverage of it was horrendous, really disgusting.

Just about everything I saw in Iraq reinforced my views that it was wrong. The point that really hit me was when the Asmara Mosque got blown up. I said, Wow, this is really a civil war.

I really enjoy being in the Army, enjoy the experience. I just happen to not support this war. I'm very open about that. My buddies either disagree with me or just pay no attention. But I get absolutely no hostility. None.

"Rebecca" — 26 years old. 101st Airborne, US Army. Just returned from Iraq. Stationed at Fort Hood, Texas:

I joined in 2004. I was trying to go into the human rights field, but it was very competitive. I was in need of health insurance, and the Army seemed feasible.

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Now it looks like I will be stop-lossed until 2010.

I had strong feelings about the war, against it, but I'm the type of person that wants to fully understand both sides of the argument.

My experience in Iraq confirmed my views, but it also gave me a more multifaceted view of things. I did see some of the good things being done, but it seemed like a Band-Aid on a gushing wound. Mostly I saw the frivolity of the missions, the lack of direction, the absurdity of the mission. You go out in your Humvee, you drive around, and you wait to be blown up and get killed by an IED.

About 40 percent of my unit were stop-lossed. Their first mission was to take down Saddam and his regime, and they seemed to understand that and agree with the mission to take down a ruthless dictator. Now they can't seem to understand why they are there, caught in the cross hairs of a civil war.

I think it is safe to say that the majority of soldiers are wondering what this grand scheme is that we keep hearing about from those above us but that is never translating down to the ground level.

Some politicians are starting to see that not only a majority of Americans oppose to this war. Now they see this very powerful statement of soldiers who have already been on the front line and who are still in uniform and are also opposed. None of them have been where we have been, none of them have seen what we have seen. It's time they do.

**BUILDING A CULTURE**

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are condemned from every pulpit, from every talk show, from every editorial of every newspaper, just as anybody who

today advocated slavery or apartheid, would be condemned.

- Governments where the Dept. of Peace has a larger budget than the Dept. of Defense (which used to be called the War Dept. in a less euphemistic Age)
- Schools that teach the principles and methods of peace, just like they teach reading and writing, and for the same reasons, because these are core skills everyone is expected to learn and use, in a civilized society
- Scout troops that give badges for learning the techniques of tying knots and building fires and also for learning the techniques of nonviolent conflict resolution.
- A world with a variety of religions, all of which worship a God of Love, a God of Peace
- Not merely a God of endless rules or harsh justice
- And certainly not any bloody tribal War God

Living without fear. Imagine that.

So. How are we going to get there from here; how are we going to make the changes, and break the bad habits of millennia? There are a few simple Good Rules. I really have nothing new to add. Everything I could say, has already been said. The Good Rules are the same, whether we are speaking of relations between people, or groups, or nations. They are the rules we teach to 5-year-olds, and then somehow forget ourselves. Our rules for conduct must flow from a reverence for life; love as the basis for all action; what the early Christians called Agape; what Gandhi called Ahimsa. This idea you can find in the Sermon at Benares, spoken by Buddha 26 hundred years ago. You can find it in the Sermon on the Mount, and the Bhagavad-Gita, and the Koran. You can find it in the words of Gandhi and King. You can find it in the principles of the Enlightenment, in the words of

Jefferson. The sanctity of life, the protection and cherishing of life, is at the core of every system of religious or secular ethics. We all know this is the right way to live, and we've known it forever. The problem is, doing it.

So, again, how do we start? It begins with a long look in the mirror. Peace is a verb, not a noun. It is a method, a way, a technique, a life-style. You can't teach anything you don't know how to do yourself. This is a constant personal struggle, which is never completely successful. I can look at my own actions, and say, "Last week, I didn't treat my wife as I should. Last month, I forgot that rule. All last summer, I failed to remember that basic principle." If I am honest with myself, I can recognize daily failures, to meet my own standards. That's OK. I understand I am not an angel, and never will be. 50 million years of evolution inclines me (and you): to respond to stress with Fight Or Flight; to form dominance hierarchies with an alpha male at the top; to form packs (which we call nations; which establish territories that are defended by tooth and claw). We can rise above all that, but only by paying attention, only by living a conscious life, only by striving to do better as a daily discipline.

And if we are at least modestly successful, in placing peace in our hearts, then we'll be ready to build peace in our families, and the world. Imperfect instruments though we are, we cannot afford any longer, to sit passively in front of our TVs, waiting for CNN to announce, the angels have come down and established the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, for us.

George Fox said, in 1656, "**be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and**

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## BUILDING A CULTURE.

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**to them; then you will come to: walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone”**

Building a Culture of Peace will be a long slow slog, a 100-year Lamb's War, a HeartsAndMinds struggle for the soul of America. Resistance will come, in part, from those few people who materially benefit from violence. But the most difficult problem, will be to overcome the apathy and resignation, the despair, of good-hearted people, who do not feel any personal involvement, or who feel effort is useless, and so, when they see evil, look away, and do nothing.

Martin Luther King, in his 1963 Letter from Birmingham Jail, said,  
**“In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churchmen stand on the sideline and mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard many ministers say: “Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern.” And then King asked, “What kind of people worship here? Who is their God?”**

I felt like that, when I was standing at the entrance to Elmendorf Air Base, on 11/14/05, protesting a pro-war rally being held on the base. As I stood there, in the snow, with my sign saying “War is not the answer,” I saw a line of busses go by, heading onto the base, bringing crowds of people to cheer for war. On the sides of the busses, were the logos of churches. As I watched them, I thought, “OK. I understand there are churches that believe the heresy of Crusaderism, the heresy first popularized by the Emperor Constantine in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century, the heresy that says you can do a holy deed with a sword. But, where are

the busses from the peace churches, bringing crowds of people to rally and cheer for the other point of view?” There were none. What kind of people worship here, in Anchorage? Who is their God?

Jean Paul Sartre said: **“It is not right, my fellow-countrymen, you who know very well all the crimes committed in our name. It's not at all right, that you do not breathe a word about them to anyone, not even to your own soul, for fear of having to stand in judgment of yourself. I am willing to believe that at the beginning you did not realize what was happening; later, you doubted whether such things could be true; but now you know, and still, you hold your tongues.”** Sartre was speaking in 1961, of acts committed during France's colonial war in Algeria, but he could have been an American of conscience speaking today.

I ask each of you, every person here, to make a personal commitment to peace. I ask you to commit yourself, to try, today, and tomorrow, and again the next day: not to hit for any reason, not to hate for any reason, and not to support anyone else's hitting or hating. I ask you to study peace, in your families and churches. I ask you to pick a peace-making activity, something doable and visible, something that spreads the message of peace, in a peaceful way, to the uncertain and apathetic. And once you've chosen, then, commit, to spending some time every week on that activity. Put it on your calendar; make it a habit. Ask others to work with you. Being a PeaceMaker, helping build a Culture of Peace, will soon become, what you do, and who you are. Be one of those unreasonable people, of great faith.

*Jacob, a colleague of Carl Stancil's, is a counselor on the GI Hotline in Anchorage, Alaska.*

**REALITY!**

*by Richard Gilchrist*

The number of US service personnel that have died in Bush's Iraq War approaches three thousand and in the Afghanistan engagement, the number is near three hundred. At our last VFP meeting, I suggested that we hold a vigil or something when the number reaches three thousand in Iraq. I was rebuffed because of all the Iraqi people that have also died in the conflict.

The pragmatic reality is that we have to move the American people to take action to end the war. It is sad, but I don't think that most Americans are interested in the number of Iraqis who have been killed.

Until the people in this country rise up in protest, the war will continue...

We have to make the American people think about the killing. If we can get the public thinking of our losses, they may eventually think in terms of the total loss. Vietnam didn't end because the people gave a damn about the Vietnamese; Americans did care about AMERICAN body bags coming home. I'm not saying that was right, but that is the reality of the situation.

We can't depend upon the Democrats to bring the occupation to a conclusion. Too many of them are in bed with big business. Some of the Democrats are already onboard for sending more troops to Iraq this spring! They certainly aren't pushing Bush to bring the troops home this spring!

The peace movement has to generate a ground swell of protest that will reach across the country and shake the halls in Washington DC. The politicians on both sides of the aisle have to be forced to follow the lead of the people.

We want out of the ongoing killings in Iraq and we have to make that crystal clear to those in DC.





**Veterans For Peace  
Chapter 56**

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WE'RE ON THE WEB:  
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**WU/WMD: Peter Aronson  
General Store: Doug Smith  
Media: Becky Luening  
VEOP: Carl Stancil  
Jon Reisdorf**

# LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

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

## VETERANS FOR PEACE CHAPTER 56 RETREAT

*by Jim Sorter*

VFP-56 is planning a retreat during the month of January to get together for camaraderie, food, drink and to strategize together on ways we can become more productive as an organization. A preliminary date and time for the retreat is January 27<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 AM. We will be gathering at 1821 Buttermilk Lane in Arcata, (*Sunny Brae exit to Buttermilk Lane and then one-half mile up on the right side of the road.*)

Please bring a food dish, utensils, etc. for a potluck prior to the meeting. (*Wear WARM socks as we will be shoeless, in order to protect the hardwood floor!*)

We heartily hope all members will join us for friendship and input on the directions we wish Chapter 56 to pursue in 2007 in order to get the message of peace out to our community.

Veterans for Peace  
Chapter 56 Humboldt Bay  
P.O. Box 532  
Bayside, CA 95524