



VETERANS FOR PEACE
HUMBOLDT BAY
CHAPTER 56

THE FOGHORN

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“Cutting Through the Fog of War”

VFP Member Profile: John Mulloy

By Dave Berman

As a member of VFP-56, John Mulloy has enjoyed chairing our monthly meetings for the past year or so. He really thrives as a member of the Veterans Education and Outreach Project (VEOP), which brings him into area classrooms to tell young people about the American empire and effects of war. His rich life’s experience makes him eager to share a seemingly inexhaustible number of compelling anecdotes worthy of a memoir.

At age 25, John learned he had been adopted at birth and was actually the bastard son of a still unconfirmed member of Congress. The father that raised him served in the US Army in WWII and Korea. In 1948, at age 3, the family moved to occupied Japan for two years, one of many temporary places young John would live. By fifth grade his parents divorced and his mother raised him in the Sacramento area until he finished high school and headed off to Pomona College in Southern California.

“I was a child of America,” says John. “I grew up fighting World War II in the back yard every day. If it wasn’t that it was cowboys and Indians.” Beyond the frequent relocation associated with being an army brat, John’s colorful career as an activist organizer has taken him to “every province and state in North America.” The most important part of his story, he says, is how he “came to consciousness.”

During his under grad years at Pomona with a minor in history. He was also in ROTC on his way to being commissioned to serve and bought into such prevailing theory that dangerous communism in Viet Nam. He was also bright enough to learn on his own outside the classroom. In fact, it was Life Magazine that brought John an epiphany at age 20, revealing as Smedley Butler put it, “war is a racket.”



na, John was a political science major in the Reserve Officers’ Training Corp. He wanted to be making something of his education, classroom. In fact, it was Life Magazine, revealing as Smedley Butler put it,

With a lot going for him, John was one of many in his class recruited by major war profiteer Bechtel. But with his expanding awareness about American imperialism, John began thinking about how to get off this track. He tried to quit ROTC but was denied. Efforts to fail only led to continued advancement. John was being prepared to command in battle. He increasingly saw the value of the training he was receiving, and an- gled to use it to fight the system from within.

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Assured of a deferment, after graduating Pomona John briefly enrolled in law school before switching to a Master’s program at American University in Washington DC. His instinctive outspokenness propelled him to positions of leadership within the peace movement. While becoming a very visible figure, he did not publicize his military ties. “I was definitely out there dealing with the masses about the military,” John explains, “but I dealt with the military one on one.”

This he did in his own unique way. Upon earning his Master’s in political science, John’s deferment was over and he was ordered to Viet Nam. Instead he wrote a letter refusing to go, and promising to keep working to overthrow the US government. For the next year he continued organizing and protesting, drawing attention from the FBI and being watched under COINTELPRO. When the army finally made its next move, John agreed to a private meeting with two officers, one who took notes and the other who conducted a four hour interrogation during which John was open and honest about his beliefs but mum about other people and organizations. At the end, the

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Profile John Mulloy: continued from page 1

questioner shook John's hand.

"More than anything, this conversation kept me out of Viet Nam and out of jail," John concludes. "I really remember going in there with a Rolling Stones song as my mantra – you can't always get what you want, but if you try, sometimes you get what you need." His questioner said he had heard every reason under the sun why people were trying to avoid the war. "But he said I was the only one who just told the truth." Another long delay followed this meeting before John was eventually allowed to resign his commission and receive a general discharge.

Throughout this entire era, John's emergence into the revolutionary political scene dovetailed with the free love, music and drugs counterculture. By the mid 1970's he had drifted more in this direction, making a lot of money trafficking Columbian weed through Florida and up the east coast. Eventually he bought property in West Virginia where he became a "back to the land homesteader." And marijuana farmer.

"Then I got taken out by two DEA helicopters," John recalls as one amazing anecdote flows into the next. Leading his defense were the founders of NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws. At the time it was an open legal question whether overhead surveillance could lead to property seizure if no search warrant had been previously obtained. A concurrent case found this was allowable, prompting John to plead guilty and serve two years in federal prison where he viewed himself as a political prisoner of conscience, conducting himself as such by continuing to educate fellow inmates about American imperialism. It was nearly a harsher punishment as the dossier on his political work was portrayed as an extensive criminal background. Despite the temptation to challenge this, in retrospect, John believes his restraint spared him a longer sentence.

After returning to freedom, John settled in Bisbee, Arizona, a small border town of 8,000 where he again became an active community member, serving on four official city boards and committees. He painted houses and for a while owned a retail store that sold t-shirts and jewelry. On and off for about 20 years, John provided water and other survival means to people sneaking into the US from Mexico. With an informal network, during this time, the work of border patrol agents was also under the surveillance of John and his allies – their own version of international Cop-Watch.

Returning to California in 2004, John moved to Humboldt and quickly fell in with the VFP crowd after meeting Jim and Linda Sorter and joining in the public support at the time for Arcata to create a sanctuary for conscientious objectors. His story of resisting military service is certainly not one that can be reliably duplicated yet it is tremendously inspirational. It is integral to the essence of John Mulloy, and one of countless stories with which he will keep you rapt if you have the chance to get to know him.

At The Last Meeting

By Dave Berman

June's meeting was full of activity, using the full two hours and ending right on time at p.m.. Among the more exciting developments... The Media committee has been merged with the Fundraising/Events committee. What should it be called now? We're going to be busy so please consider volunteering to help with at least one upcoming event or project. With VEOP (Veterans Education Outreach Program) taking the lead, we're now planning our first Student Peace Essay contest. That will be one of many activities and events this fall. We are also working on a folk dance, a film festival, the annual yard sale, and at least one regular monthly meeting to be held at HSU. Watch for VFP-56 ads this summer in the Steelhead Special (featuring contributions by at least a half dozen members) and this fall in The HSU Lumberjack. While a member camping retreat sounds fun, it was decided that our schedule is too full right now, though if interest should emerge later it could be reconsidered. Nate Lomba requests help assembling some details of past VFP-56 events and achievements (to get in touch: nslomba@reninet.com). He also reported Stop Recruiting Kids Coalition is the new name for the group supporting Measures F & J. A federal judge has since nullified the will of our local voters so please contact Arcata and Eureka City Councilmembers to encourage their support for a legal appeal. Saving the best for last, we extend our warmest welcome to the four (yes, FOUR!) new members that signed up: Ernie, Gaye, Carl and Paula.

For volunteer opportunities, contact Dave at 845-3749 or manifestpositivity@gmail.com.

War Veteran to Obama: 'When Will it be Enough?'

23 May 2009

The national president organization Veterans for Peace, Mike Ferner has written an open letter to US President Barack Obama published below. VFP involves veterans from past and current US wars.

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**NEXT VFP 56
MEETING IS
SCHEDULED FOR
JULY 2nd, LABOR
TEMPLE, 840 E
STREET IN
EUREKA, 7:00pm**



War Veterans to Obama: continued from page 2

Its members “draw on our personal experiences and perspectives gained as veterans to raise public awareness of the true costs and consequences of militarism and war — and to seek peaceful, effective alternatives”.

Dear President Obama,

We write to you again, this time to say we are saddened to see that you now clearly believe in the tired, inhumane and unworkable assumption that violence will somehow work; that might makes right. But that is not the only thing we need to tell you. We are not just saddened. We are angry.

We are outraged by these actions, this practice of “death from above” you are ordering, causing the killing and wounding of hundreds of innocent people, as exemplified by the recent horrific attacks in Afghanistan.

When will it be enough, Mr. President?

What is the number of dead and injured at which you will say “this can’t go on”, the number at which you will decide it’s time to turn away from violence and find another way? This really is the question upon which everything else will turn how many bodies are too many?

You know it is impossible to kill our way to a resolution, if for no other reason than every death and injury creates even more people willing to fight and die to remove us from their land.

We’ve been through this before, Mr. President, and I don’t mean that in a rhetorical way. We have indeed been through this all before — unlike most of the people in our country or in your administration.

We have seen and heard and smelled and felt what “death from above” actually means, not in a briefing report but right there in our hands and before our eyes.

We’ve seen the look in the eyes of the people we occupied. We felt their anger and their humiliation. We remember these things well, Mr. President, because they will not go away no matter how many years pass.

Veterans For Peace will continue to speak out against such crimes. We will do so along with the growing numbers of people who are telling you that by going down this road you are making a tragic mistake.

We no longer face the old question of “guns or butter”. Now the question is: will we completely destroy our economy with all that means, or will we step back from the brink and do what our humanity demands of us before the slide into moral and economic ruin is irreversible?

At some point, Mr. President, you will decide to turn away

from violence, to end these occupations. As we wrote before, we stand ready to assist you in any effort to find another way.

Until then you will find us in the streets.

From: International News, Green Left Weekly issue #796 27 May 2009.

Submitted by Richard Gilchrist

CONSIDER YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN VFP56

By Jim Sorter

We are desperately trying to collect past dues from members who have not paid in recent years. Your dues do not go to waste. We sponsor State legislation to get Depleted Uranium testing done on our returning soldiers, we use the funds to go into schools and give DVD’s and books to teachers and students to better inform them of choices they will have to make in their futures. We print up and pass out literature at special events to make sure both sides of the military problem are addressed, not just the pros. Our members go into schools from Del Norte County to Garberville telling personal stories about their terms in the service and speaking to students about alternative careers besides the military. We offer scholarships to those veterans who cannot pay for a membership in VFP56. We don’t want anyone who wants to join to not do so for lack of funds. We also run a GI Rights Hotline for those members of the military and their families who want answers to questions about alternatives other than military service. Sometimes it’s a call just to talk to a person who is sympathetic to their needs.

We cannot do this without your membership. Local dues are only \$10.00 per year and National is only \$25.00 per year. Surely \$35.00 a year is worth the satisfaction of belonging to an organization people recognize and support. I don’t know how many people come up to me daily who recognize the VFP logo on my hat and want to talk about our mission and what we stand for. They always leave impressed when I tell them of the things we do, not just on a local level but on a national level as well.

Please consider sending your membership in today or making a contribution to Veterans For Peace, P.O. Box 532, Bayside, CA 95524. Our treasurer will make sure the \$25.00 amount gets sent on to the National VFP Office. The \$10.00 local dues supports all of the above in our community.



Fun Fund-raiser V.E.O.P. Report: We Are Making a Difference

Save the date and shine-up your dancing shoes!

By Carl Stancil and Mashaw McGuinnis



Saturday, September 12, 2009 Humboldt Folk life Society and Vets for Peace will co-sponsor a Folk/Contra Dance at Arcata Vets Hall.

We'll need dancers as well as volunteers to take tickets, sell refreshments and help with clean-up. More info. to come in the next Foghorn.

"This is my grandfather" said the young Hmong girl, holding a very old photo of a young Asian man in military uniform. He was probably not much older than she was now, which was about 14. As I sat across from her in the school library on World History Day as a visiting veteran of the Vietnam war, she asked me if I had known him from all those years ago. "No" I said to her, looking at the worn picture. Her mother or father must have given her the picture to bring, knowing there would be at least one Vietnam vet speaking at the event. I wanted to say something to honor his memory so I added "It looks like he was a very important person". The 40 year old photograph and the girl's sincere question took me by complete surprise; I wasn't expecting something like that when I agreed to participate at Eureka High's annual event. That turned out to be one of many touching moments related to the day.

When a veteran is finally discharged out of the service, most think they leave their weapons behind. But I have come to realize that our memories and what we do with them can be the most powerful weapons of all. With two wars raging on, Stop-Loss sending our troops back for two and three deployments, and recruiters practically foaming at the mouth for our kids, our personal stories as vets can make the difference between their decision to enroll in college or enlist the military.

But how do we begin to bridge a generation gap when dealing with kids who get answers to homework questions from Wikipedia? What could five old farts like us possibly teach them when they have probably played more simulated war games than we can name? Understanding that real-life personal stories can do what movies and history books could not, Eureka High teachers knew what they were doing. First hand experience with war and conflict provide an intimate view of conditions never before addressed in conventional history curriculum.

Each one of us invited to be there that day was a veteran from a different war. The five of us, including Rich Gilchrist, Bill Thompson, Rob Hepburn and Frank Schmidt spent the better part of a day sitting and talking to freshmen students face to face about our memories.

Rather than have us taking turns speaking to a large anonymous crowd, each veteran was given his own table in the school library, with four or five chairs set up around each. The plan was to bring the students to each table in groups of four or five giving them ten to twelve minutes to ask their most personal and probing questions. These students were given free reign as to how personal they could get. They were allowed to ask us about PTSD, drugs, sex, and anything that pertained to our wartime experience. Though we could decline to answer anything we chose to, I think

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VEOP Makes a Difference: continued from page 4

we all felt these kids were deceived enough and felt they deserved the straight truth. The main reason I participated was because I was tired of seeing young people lied to by adults (as I had been 40 years ago).

The experience was gratifying, to say the least, to have so many young people asking questions about our military experience and personal memories, but imagine our surprise when lunch time came and we found ourselves being treated to a wonderful picnic! Some of the Hmong students had taken the time to prepare some traditional Vietnamese, Lao and Mexican food for us. The lunch break offered us more time to speak with everyone on a more personal level and student after student stopped by to thank us for taking the time to talk with them. We really felt honored to be a part of that.

Well if the story ended here, that would be just fine, but after a few weeks went by, a thick manila envelope arrived in the mail, addressed to me. As I opened it, a huge stack of hand written letters slid out into my hand.

After spreading them out, I saw many were addressed to me, but others had the four other vets' names on them. It looked as if every student there that day had chosen one of us to write to personally. You can imagine how I felt when I read "talking with you really got me thinking about the effects of



Essays sent to VEOP after visit

war", and "The part which really got me thinking was about the un-activated mines in Vietnam and Laos. That's awful!". The other vets reported similar letters, with the students expressing a deeper understanding of the tragedy of war.

But my grand prize of the whole event was the letter I received from a boy named Greg who, ironically wore a John Lennon shirt to school that day. His follow-up letter said "I am thinking of joining the Army when I turn 18, what do you think I should do"? You can bet I followed up on that one with a phone call to the Jennifer, the instructor and I will be put in touch with the inquisitive young man very soon.

There is something about the innocent and trusting eyes of a fourteen year old that makes you realize how vulnerable they are. How vulnerable we all were. As I read those letters I tried

to imagine how different things might have been for me in 1967 if I had sat face-to-face with a war veteran and had him share his true experiences with me. We owe it to those young people to speak our truth whenever we can, wherever we can. I am reminded of a quote by Robert Louis Stevenson, "Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant".

Update on "Glimmer of Hope Afghan School Project"

By Judi Rose

The money raised by the students and families at Union Street Charter School in Arcata has been sent to Kabul. It has been used to purchase school supplies as well as give a little extra to the families' of our teacher friends who have taken on the task of purchasing and distributing the supplies to over a thousand students in their schools.

A college friend of Sunny's has for the second year hooked up with our project in Arcata. Beth is a middle school counselor in Milliken, Colorado. Her group of students is called "Friends of Rachel" after Rachel Scott the first victim of Columbine (Milliken is about 100 miles from Columbine) The goal of their group is to start a chain reaction of kindness by welcoming new students, participating in service work, and raising money for important causes. They raised money by selling concessions at school events throughout the year. This year they raised \$1100.00 for the students in Kabul. Zarmina (a teacher) said girls will be the priority in distribution of the supplies purchased with "Friends of Rachel" funds. Hand written letters of good wishes from "Friends of Rachel" have also been sent to Kabul.



This Spring the 4th grade class at Union Street Charter School in Arcata created beautiful mini-murals titled "Fantasy Classroom" (which have arrived in Kabul)

.....and the project continues.....

Help!

By Nate Lomba

The Chapter is assembling a "List of Accomplishments." The list is incomplete at this time. We need your help "filling in the blanks." Here, in a nutshell, is what we have thus far:

Speaking engagements:

- Leuren Moret, Ph.D.
- Doug Rokke, Ph.D.
- Colonel Ann Wright
- Camilo Mejia
- Lt. Colonel Robert Bowman, PhD
- Fr. Roy Bourgeois
- Robert Gould, MD

Events and Presentations:

- My Name is Rachel Corrie (theatrical production)
- Uranium Radiation Poisonion: Scourge of the Modern Battlefield (informational program)
- "Sir No Sir" DVD at the Minor Theater

Legislation:

- California Veteran's Health & Safety Act of 2006
- Youth Protection Ordinances in Arcata and Eureka Veterans Education & Outreach Project (VEOP):
- Publish the Resource Guide
- Classroom presentations: Arcata H.S., McKinleyville H.S., Eureka H.S., Fortuna H.S., California Conservation Corps (Fortuna); >>> others? _____

Other activities:

- 4th of July Information Booth on the Arcata Plaza
- Memorial & Peace Gardens
- DVD "Boys To Men"
- Vigils for Peace
- G. I. Hotline
- Publish Foghorn Newsletter for members and public at large
- Vietnam Friendship Village
- North Coast Veterans "Stand Down"
- Iraq Water Project
- Fund Raising Efforts:
- VFP56 Rummage Sales
- Food Booths (Reggae on the River, 2006; Reggae Rising, 2007; Benbow Arts Festivals; and July 4th on the Arcata Plaza.

We know there are lots more events and activities that VFP56 has been a part of. Can you remember anything else? Especially lacking is information on Chapter events prior to August 2005 and between November 2007 and August 2008.

If you can think of anything – anything at all – please don't hesitate to bring it to our attention, however sketchy the details. We can then put it out to the members and perhaps fill in the missing information that way.

Thanking everyone in advance for their assistance.

Please contact 'Nate' Lomba at:

E-mail: nsloba@reninet.com

Telephone: 707.269.0528 (frequently "busy" owing to a dial-up connection)

Address: P. O. Box 3658 Eureka, CA 95502-3658

GOT STUFF?

(Washington, -AP) Mashaw McGuinnis, Chair of Obama's new Too Much Crap Committee, (TMCC) called for a sweeping, radical concept to help Americans rid their image of being too materialistic. During a press conference she outlined a reform that calls for Americans to donate their gently-used items to the annual Veterans For Peace yard sale. Republicans protested, saying "it's more American to have a lot of stuff" but the Veterans for Peace yard sale bill was passed by a sweeping majority.

The reform includes:

- Donating excess clothes, furniture, housewares and appliances
- Members volunteering two to three hours to assist at the yard sale
- Feeling good about yourself when you see that unwanted clutter gone
- Watching our VFP chapter's general fund grow

Press Secretary for John Schaffer, VFP Treasurer, released a report that stated money raised throughout the year goes into the general fund, which helped sponsored the Winter Soldier Hearings of 2008, the annual Peace March in Eureka, ongoing outreach to local youths and many more worthy causes.

Bill Thompson, Chair of the newly formed Willing To Store Crap Committee (WTSCC) has generously offered to store the donations at his place until the yard sale, which is scheduled in September. He can be reached at (707) 822-5847.



Nezzie Wade Interviews Marc Knipper on Veterans' Spirit a Division of the Patrick McCaffrey Foundation

"In Homage to the Fallen by providing a space to heal the survivors."

Veterans Spirit..... read all about it, the latest news regarding the progress of Veterans Spirit and Incopah Retreat and Wellness Center, in the upcoming Steelhead Magazine.

Contact Persons; Jeff Karr

Phone: (707) 498-5010

or Marc Knipper mknipper@veteransvillage.org

A Continuing Battle

By Kristi L. Nelson

Monday 05 February 2007

Don't try fighting post-traumatic stress disorder alone, urges retired Knox soldier. Sometimes, when he's driving down the street, Jullian Philip Goodrum smells diesel fuel and, just for a moment, his mind flashes back.

He's again in Iraq, driving in an Army convoy in under equipped and ill-maintained vehicles, with no radios, maps or heavy-duty ammunition.

When Goodrum feels his mind going in that direction these days, he has a quick trick: He grabs a little bottle of lemon juice from the glove box and squirts a shot on his tongue. "My mind reacts; it brings me back," Goodrum said. "Something that simple. It's amazing."

Since leaving Iraq in 2003, Goodrum - like many soldiers - has been gradually overcoming the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. He's struggled with deep depression, sleeplessness, nightmares. He has "flashbacks," times when his mind unwittingly takes him to places he doesn't want to be. Like watching as a British military convoy runs over a small Iraqi girl, killing her. Since they're told insurgents sometimes put children in the road to stop convoys, he said, military leaders "really get put in moral and ethical situations."

Shortly after Goodrum returned to Knoxville, his three-year relationship with his fiance ended, another "casualty of war," he said. Though she tried to be understanding, he said, spouses and partners of military personnel just aren't equipped to deal with the mental crises that sometimes arise with a return from combat.

But 2003 also marked the end of another important love relationship in Goodrum's life: his 16-year military career. Goodrum's records up to 2003 show an exemplary military career. The son of a veteran of the Korean War, he joined the U.S. Navy at age 18, for money for college. When he'd served his time, he transferred

to the Army National Guard while attending the University of Tennessee. In 1999 he was commissioned as an Army officer. He was deployed during the Persian Gulf War. Now 36, he has received awards, including the combat action ribbon and a 2001 "Officer of the Year" award for the 176th Maintenance Battalion. He withstood high pressure as a gunner's mate in the first Gulf War, when the Navy battleship on which he served was fired on by an Iraqi missile. Coming up through the ranks, the junior officer had a reputation for being a "soldier's soldier": He took care of his men. But with his last deployment, to Kuwait, Goodrum couldn't always do that - and he blamed the Army. "There is no greater honor and privilege than leading soldiers into combat," Goodrum said, "and there is no greater burden than being responsible for human life."

Goodrum was "cross-leveled" into a unit he had no experience with. He didn't know the soldiers' capabilities. He felt the upper leadership wasn't there, the soldiers were ill-trained. And he knew for a fact that they were ill-equipped, being sent on what they dubbed "suicide missions" with no radios, maps or heavy weaponry, in trucks that were neither armored nor well-maintained. Such "incompetence" from the top down, Goodrum believed, resulted in the death of a soldier from his unit, 22 year old Sgt. Kenneth Harris, who was killed when the truck he was riding in - which was in shoddy shape, Goodrum said - was in an accident.

Goodrum was Stateside at the time, seeking medical treatment for a physical injury, and he decided Harris' death warranted a complaint to his state representative, William Jenkins. Later, he was quoted in a United Press International article about appalling conditions at Fort Knox, Ky., for the soldiers in "medical hold" there. That article sparked congressional investigations of the treatment of injured soldiers at two bases. "I don't question why we go to war; I take my orders and go," he said. "But I do expect that if a soldier's injured serving his country, he should be taken care of."

But his outspokenness appeared to make Goodrum an enemy of the Army. When he began experiencing mental problems consistent with PTSD, he couldn't get treatment. When he sought treatment at a civilian psychiatric hospital in Knoxville, the Army took away Goodrum's paycheck and insurance and, even though his doctor was in communication with the military, declared Goodrum AWOL - Absent Without Leave - an offense punishable with up to six years in prison.

Goodrum said it was only after he went to fill a prescription and learned he no longer had insurance that he found out the Army was charging him with desertion. What followed were weeks in lock down at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, months of legal wrangling and \$40,000 in legal fees that Goodrum said culminated in the Army retiring him at the rank of captain and letting him retain his insurance.

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**Veterans For Peace
Chapter 56**

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WE'RE ON THE WEB:

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Jon Reisdorf**

VSC: Marc Knipper



LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

If you would like to submit an article, opinion, comment or response to anything you have read which might interest the members of VFP-56, please e-mail it to turtldnccer@aol.com, in word format, or mail to Jim Sorter at 1762 Buttermilk Lane, Arcata, CA 95521. Submissions will be included on a first come basis until the newsletter is full. Late arriving submissions will be archived for future issues.

“True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring ... A true revolution of values will lay hands on the world order and say of war, ‘This way of settling differences is not just.’ This business of burning human beings with napalm, of filling our nation’s homes with orphans and widows, of injecting poisonous drugs of hate into the veins of peoples normally humane, of sending men home from dark and bloody battlefields physically handicapped and psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice, and love. A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.”

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (excerpted from his speech, *Beyond Vietnam: A Time To Break Silence*, Riverside Church, New York City, April 4, 1967)

A Continuing Battle: continued from page 7

But feeling betrayed by the Army - once his “family,” he said - contributed to his depression and other mental problems. Now, four years later, he’s made progress, he said, thanks to hard work and psychotherapy. He’s learned to talk to himself, remind himself he’s in Knoxville, not in Iraq. He tries to be more social, not isolate himself. He’s sleeping better. He avoids watching the news. Still, he worries about his fellow veterans; everyone who returns from Iraq, he said, has at least “a touch of PTSD,” even if it’s just during the first few months of readjustment.

Dr. Catherine Zook-Bell, who treats Goodrum at Bearden Psychological Center, said she thinks she should be treating more veterans for PTSD. There’s quite a stigma attached to mental illness, especially in the military, she said. People are embarrassed or afraid” to get help, she said. But PTSD “is a normal reaction to an abnormal experience.” Yet, unlike in the days Vietnam veterans were told PTSD was something they’d have to suffer with for the rest of their lives, treatment is available - and it works, she said.

Zook-Bell treats PTSD in three stages. First is helping the client build coping resources and understand what’s happening to him or her. This includes wiping out “self-defeating” behaviors (alcohol or drug abuse, for example). Next is working through the trauma, helping the person process what happened. Last is rebuilding and moving on with his or her life: “You can decide what direction you want your life to be from now on,” she said. But treatment takes time - and recognizing symptoms, she said.

Goodrum warns fellow veterans, “Do not let an unseen injury develop into a ‘walking wounded’ casualty of war.” “Per G.I. Joe, ‘knowing is half the battle,’ he said. “Obtain medical knowledge and become familiar with symptoms of PTSD. Seek out qualified medical providers for medical support or readjustment support in your area that specializes in PTSD. PTSD is a risk of injury during service in a combat theater of operations. Have in place a course of action to implement if you begin to experience symptoms of PTSD or (have) readjustment concerns.” And, he’s sad to say, don’t depend on the military to take care of it. Goodrum is full of stories of military personnel who tried - and failed - to get mental-health services through the Army. “I would never, ever have believed it, if I hadn’t witnessed it myself,” he said.

Submitted by Jim Sorter