



VETERANS FOR PEACE
HUMBOLDT BAY
CHAPTER 56

THE FOGHORN

JULY
2013

“Cutting Through the Fog of War”

Colonel Found Guilty of Fraud, Fined \$300K

By Richard Sandza

Soldiers of all ranks have expressed outrage at the light sentence imposed on the former commander of 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, Col. James H. Johnson III.

Johnson, 48, pleaded guilty to 15 counts including bigamy, fraud and adultery and was convicted June 13 on two more counts.

The fraud counts stem from unauthorized expenditures of government funds, spent to “frolic” with his Iraqi mistress between 2008 and 2011.

A panel of five colonels in Kaiserslautern, Germany, sentenced Johnson to a reprimand and a fine of \$300,000 — or five years in jail if he doesn't pay the fine.

“Military justice is a joke,” retired Staff Sgt. John Mackes wrote to Army Times. “Different standards for enlisted and officers. If this was an enlisted soldier, you know he would have been hit with serious jail time. One standard for enlisted and another for officers. It makes me sick.”

Capt. Joseph R. Viguera added, “In one swift decision, the board made a mockery of justice and allowed a bigamist and a thief to retire with honor.”

The Army charged that Johnson racked up more than \$100,000 in unauthorized charges including unauthorized travel, cellphone bills and hotel and meals charges for him and his mistress while off duty.

The bigamy count was the result of Johnson's November 2011 marriage to his Iraqi mistress — while he was still married to Kristina Johnson, whom he married soon after he graduated from West Point in 1986.

Johnson re-married by proxy after producing a phony divorce certificate for his 1987 marriage. That first marriage is still working its way through the divorce courts.

Even Johnson's former colleagues disapproved of the sentence imposed by the colonels.

“As a member of Col. James H. Johnson's staff during his command of the 173rd BCT, I am appalled at the light sentence he received,” wrote Special Forces Lt. Col. Bo Stuart. “He was convicted of 15 counts, yet received no confinement and is still an active-duty colonel. His fine did not even cover the money he defrauded from the government and the cost of the investigation and trial. This is yet another egregious example of senior officers protecting their own. If Col. Johnson were an E-6 instead of an O-6, he would be in Leavenworth. This is an embarrassment to the officer corps.”

Lt. Gen. Mark Hertling, commanding general of U.S. Army Europe, issued a statement about Johnson's sentence, acknowledging that “many soldiers and senior leaders I've discussed the results of this case with are surprised with the sentence, especially given the guilty plea provided by Col. Johnson on the majority of the counts.”

“But none of us know what went on in the courtroom,” Hertling wrote. “And none of us know of the discussion that went on between the panel members.”

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“We should know, however, that our military justice system takes all factors of evidence, proof and mitigation into account, and we must keep faith in that system doing what’s right.”

Many who have looked at the sentence — including Kristina Johnson, the victim of the adultery and bigamy — say the sentencing panel must have weighed the impact of a harsher sentence on her and the two children.

Had Johnson been reduced in rank, or stripped of his rank and dishonorably discharged, he would have lost some or all of the benefits he and his family earned during 26 years of service. That would have left the family with no retirement, no health benefits and would have cut off Johnson’s daughter’s GI Bill college support.

“It seems like the jury cared more about the Johnson family than Colonel Johnson did,” Kristina Johnson told Army Times.

While she is glad that she will not lose the benefits, she said she believes the sentence “reinforces the notion that if you’re a colonel or a general, or your father is a general, or if you went to West Point, you can do whatever you want.”

Johnson’s father, retired Lt. Gen. James H. Johnson Jr., commanded the 82nd Airborne Division during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. The elder Johnson and Col. Johnson’s family were in the courtroom for the duration of the trial.

But, according to two people who were at the trial, the impact of a conviction on Johnson’s retirement was never raised in open court — by the prosecution or the defense. The prosecution asked the panel to sentence Johnson to dismissal and confinement for a period of “years, not months,” according to Stars and Stripes.

Johnson’s problems began in January 2011, when Kristina Johnson contacted Army authorities after she was denied health care — because the Army said she was divorced.

Johnson was relieved of command in March 2011. An Army investigation found he had misused Army funds to travel to see the mistress and had given her an Army cellphone — and that she racked up \$40,000 in charges.

Johnson was also accused of attempting to steer an Army contract to his mistress’ father and of hiring her father, an Iraqi who spoke no Afghan languages — to be his cultural adviser when his unit was in Afghanistan.

Col. Johnson is not guaranteed his retirement as an O-6. When he applies for retirement, Army regulations require that Human

Resources Command review his personnel file “to see if there is any adverse information generated since the officer’s last promotion.” If there is — and Johnson’s record will almost certainly reflect his court-martial conviction — Army Regulation AR 15-80 requires HRC to refer the officer’s case to the Army Grade Determination Review Board, which is in the Office of the Secretary of the Army.

The AGDRB will review the record and recommend that the officer be considered for “the highest grade in which the officer has served satisfactorily.”

For Johnson, who was a colonel when his crimes were committed, that could mean he could be referred for reduction to O-5.

The final decision rests with the assistant secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

Johnson was promoted to colonel Nov. 1, 2007, and the actions for which he was convicted date to September 2008.

“There will be some who say the sentence was unfair, or that there is a different system between officers and enlisted,” Hertling said. “But those who say that were likely not there, and those who say that probably have little knowledge of what went on in the court. What we know is this: Col. Johnson was relieved and charged with crimes by his commanders; he pled guilty to some charges, and was found guilty of others, in our military court system; and he was sentenced by that court. Soldiers can debate or be discouraged by the sentence, but we must maintain trust in the fairness of our military judicial system.”

S. Brian Willson’s Guantanamo Fast Solidarity Statement - June 4th, 2013 My Personal Fast

I have been on a 300-calorie-a-day indefinite hunger strike since Sunday evening, May 12. As of today, having completed 23 days of fasting, I have lost nearly 21 pounds. My participation in this strike was prompted by the decision of 130-140 prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (where 166 total prisoners have been held, without charge or chance for trial, for as long as 10+ years) to embark on a hunger strike to protest their continued long captivity and tortured treatment. Since their fasting commenced, many have been forced with tubes rammed into their noses and down into their stomachs, causing bleeding and vomiting, while chained from head to foot in a chair. These men have not seen their families since being brutally snatched from their home communities beginning in 2001 upon directives from the U.S. government and its secret operatives, who are known to have freely handed out lucrative bounties to those

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who would finger someone, anyone. The continuing captivity and maltreatment of these prisoners is medieval, barbaric, sadistic, and grotesquely illegal according to both U.S. and international law. It dehumanizes all of us.

The Most Salient Question For me, the salient question is: What is the proportionate response when one knows his or her government has waged, for twelve years, and continues, a Global War OF Terror, committing on an ongoing basis the supreme international crime of aggression (Nuremberg) against a multitude of countries around the world, while participating in the associated war crimes

and crimes against humanity, murdering as many as two million innocent human beings, maiming and displacing millions of others, while torturing thousands, destabilizing regions for years, even decades to come? Meanwhile, domestic repression tightens the noose on any effective dissent. The 2001

Patriot Act eliminated Habeas Corpus for foreigners, as the 2011 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) eliminated it for U.S. citizens deemed by the President as "terrorists." Please tell me: What is the proportionate response to all this diabolical criminality and barbarity?

Though there may not be a simple answer, this is a most important question. I viscerally feel the pain of the Guantanamo prisoners. Each of these individual's odyssey began with being kidnapped, hooded, and continually shackled while being transported from one torture prison to another, until finally flown (hooded and shackled) to the U.S. gulag known as Guantanamo. The U.S. has acknowledged at least 100 of the prisoners were murdered during the torture process, before arriving at Guantanamo, ruling the deaths as homicides. The U.S. military prison at Guantanamo is located within a 45-square-mile parcel of land forcefully taken from the Cuban people in the 1898 (illegal) Spanish-American War.

Preserving my humanity requires me to do something, as I strive to express unmistakable solidarity with the pain and suffering of the prisoners who remain at Guantanamo. As Socialist Eugene Debs declared, "While there is a soul in prison, I am not free." U.S. Pattern of Imperialism is Entrenched

Since my birth on July 4, 1941, my country has overtly, militarily invaded dozens of countries at least 390 times, covertly interfering in other countries' sovereignty thousands of times, while bombing 28 of them. I personally witnessed grotesque atrocities against the Vietnamese people, and subsequently witnessed illegal and barbaric U.S. policies at work in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Haiti, Israel/Palestine, Iraq, Colombia, among others. Drones, our newest killing invention, have added another inherently destructive technology to the global murder arsenal, enabling the President to decide anyone labeled "terrorist" can be murdered with premeditation, any place, any time, such decisions being made at his whim, in secrecy, with no accountability. The U.S. is now a totalitarian state that has eliminated basic principles established some 800 years ago with the Magna Carta. Smart bombs and smart missiles are in fact

really dumb because they directly create more enraged enemies, endangering the U.S. American people. In my eyes, the U.S. President is a totalitarian monster no less than the worst monarchs and dictators in world history. The Gated Society: The U.S. love affair with incarceration, solitary confinement and torture

I live in a country that imprisons more than 2.5 million of its citizens on an average day in more than 9,000 jails and prisons, boasting the highest per capita detention rate in the world by far - 800 prisoners for every 100,000 people [Local jails: 745,000; state and federal adult prisons: 1,600,000; juvenile facilities: 141,000; and immigrant detention: 34,000 = Grand Total: 2,520,000 U.S. prisoners]. Rwanda has the second highest detention rate at 595; Russia comes in third at 568. The world's average per capita detention rate is 146.

More than 60 percent of U.S. prisoners are from racial and ethnic minority groups yet they comprise only 36 percent of the general population. The U.S., with 4.6 percent of the world's population, holds 25 percent of the world's prisoners. At least 80,000 of these, and as many 110,000, are locked up in solitary confinement in facilities for years such as continues at Pelican Bay Prison in California, and Angola Penitentiary in Louisiana, among dozens of locations. Being held in solitary for more than 15 days was determined in 2011 by the UN Special Rapporteur to begin devastating, often irreversible physical and mental ill effects, and is therefore considered torture. Force-feeding of prisoners on hunger strikes in the U.S. is also not unusual, itself another form of torture in violation of international law. Solitary confinement inevitably contributes to increased risks of prison suicides, of which hundreds are reported every year. Nine Guantanamo prisoners are reported to have died, and at least six of these deaths were suicides.

I studied the regular use of torture in Massachusetts prisons in
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Next VFP56 meeting will be held
on Thursday, July 11 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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1981, where force feeding of striking prisoners was common; as was the withholding of rights and privileges such as necessary medicine, mail, or winter clothing during cold weather; the imposition of hazards such as flooding cells, igniting clothes and bedding, providing too little or too much heat, and spraying mace and tear gas; inflicting physical beatings of prisoners filing prison complaints or litigation, of those protesting conditions using hunger strikes; and various forms of intentional psychological abuse such as arbitrary shakedown of cells and brutal rectal searches, ordering prisoners to lie face down on cold floors or the outside ground before receiving food, and empty announcements of visitors or family only later to say it was a joke.

During the Spanish-American war in the Philippines, President Teddy Roosevelt proudly defended water boarding torture as part of the arsenal of techniques to achieve “the triumph of civilization over the black chaos of savagery and barbarism” of the Filipinos, or “googooks”. The U.S. Marines used one of the first instances of air power and widespread torture to overcome a Haitian revolt of “savage monkeys” against the continuing U.S. presence there in 1920.” The word googoo morphed into “gook” as the derogatory term used by U.S. soldiers against the Vietnamese.

In 1931 President Hoover’s Wickersham Report (National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement) concluded that the use of torture (intentional infliction of various methods of pain and suffering) was “widespread” throughout the entire U.S. criminal justice system. The U.S. school of the

Americas has been teaching torture (“interrogation”) to Latin American military personnel since 1946.

Torture Is U.S. Policy.

Conclusion

Guantanamo continues a long U.S. tradition and pattern of domestic cruelty to its own prisoners, as it represents the continuation of the supreme international crimes launched by the U.S. beginning in 2001. This hunger strike intends to address this chronic pattern by affirming my mantra, “We are not worth more; they are not worth less”.

S. Brian Willson

UPDATE ON BRIAN’S FAST

By Becky Luening

As of Sunday evening, June 9th, S. Brian Willson has announced the end of the 300-calorie-a-day fast he managed to maintain for 28 days straight, but promises to continue to find other expressions of solidarity with the detainees at the Guantanamo Bay Detention Center. Over 100 of those being held at “Gitmo” have been on a hunger strike since early 2013 to protest their continued detention without charge or trial or prospect of release.

Brian intended to carry on his solidarity fast for a much longer stretch of time, but on the 22nd day of his fast he was struck head-on by an SUV while sitting at a stop on his handcycle, and the trauma sustained in that accident greatly speeded up the demise of his mental and physical capacity to maintain the fast.

A regular vigil in downtown Portland, Oregon (so far held in front of City Hall, at the corner of SW 4th and SW Jefferson), launched in tandem with Brian’s fasting action, continues indefinitely. Similar actions are being organized in communities nationwide to help raise awareness, keep the issue in the public eye, and keep the pressure on the Obama Administration to close the detention center sooner rather than later. To learn more, follow the nationwide campaign at CloseGuantanamo.net. Other good online resources include the Witness Against Torture website and the National Religious Campaign Against Torture.



*Canadian playwright Sean Devine joins S. Brian Willson and other Portland vigilers calling for the release of illegally held detainees and closure of the Guantanamo Bay Naval Detention Center. Sean is the author of a play about Norman Morrison titled *Re:Union*; the published version will include a foreword by Brian. Sean blogged about meeting Brian in a 6/12 post on the *Horseshoes and Hand Grenades Theatre* blog*



At least 2,109 US Military Deaths in Afghanistan Since 2001

Published June 25, 2013

Associated Press

As of Tuesday, June 25, 2013, at least 2,109 members of the U.S. military had died in Afghanistan as a result of the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001, according to an Associated Press count.

The AP count is two less than the Defense Department's tally, last updated Tuesday at 10 a.m. EDT.

At least 1,749 military service members have died in Afghanistan as a result of hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

Outside of Afghanistan, the department reports at least 124 more members of the U.S. military died in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Of those, 11 were the result of hostile action.

The AP count of total OEF casualties outside of Afghanistan is four more than the department's tally.

The Defense Department also counts three military civilian deaths.

Since the start of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan, 18,795 U.S. service members have been wounded in hostile action, according to the Defense Department.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

— Sgt. Corey E. Garver, 26, of Topsham, Maine, died June 23, in Zormat, Afghanistan, of wounds sustained when enemy forces attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, Fort Campbell, Ky.

— Spc. Javier Sanchez Jr., 28, of Greenfield, Calif., died June 23, in Sar Rowzah, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when his unit was attacked with an improvised explosive device while on mounted patrol; assigned to the Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, N.Y.

— Four soldiers died June 18, in Bagram, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when enemy forces attacked their unit with indirect fire; killed were: Sgt. Justin R. Johnson, 25, of Hobe Sound, Fla., assigned to the 10th Transportation Battalion, 7th Sustainment Brigade, Fort Eustis, Va.; Spc. Ember M. Alt, 21, of Beech Island, S.C.; Spc. Robert W. Ellis, 21, of Kennewick, Wash.; and Spc. William R. Moody, 30, of Burleson, Texas, all three assigned to 68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 43rd Sustainment Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, Colo.

Artists, Activists Unite at Bradley Manning Trial

By David Dishneau Associated Press

Fort Meade, Md. June 26, 2013 (AP)

Clark Stoeckley is Bradley Manning's most visible supporter at the soldier's court-martial. He arrives each day in a white box truck with bold words painted on the sides: "WikiLeaks TOP SECRET Mobile Information Collection Unit." The provocative gag even has a nonworking satellite dish and two fake security cameras on it.

Stoeckley, a 30-year-old art instructor at a New Jersey college, is among the more colorful of the 10 to 20 supporters who regularly attend Manning's trial, which resumed this week. The loose-knit group of mostly retirees or self-employed workers sits through hours of sometimes bland testimony at Fort Meade, a military installation near Baltimore. They take notes, make courtroom sketches or write blogs, posting their drawings and articles on websites designed to inform people about the court-martial and raise money for Bradley's defense.

They do so because they are united in skepticism of the U.S. government and the belief that Manning exposed wrongdoing by leaking hundreds of thousands of battlefield reports and State Department cables, as well as Iraq and Afghanistan war video.

Stoeckley, who teaches at Bloomfield College, is spending his summer sketching the courtroom drama, making colorful drawings of the Army private in his dress blue uniform; witnesses in their Army fatigues and Manning supporters in their black T-shirts with the word "truth" across the chest.

Stoeckley got involved after seeing a video Manning gave to the anti-secrecy website WikiLeaks. The video showed a 2007 U.S. helicopter attack in Baghdad that killed at least eight people, including a Reuters news photographer and his driver.

The Pentagon concluded the troops reasonably mistook the camera gear for weapons and that the journalists were in the company of armed insurgents. Stoeckley calls it a war crime.

"My immediate reaction was, 'This is the deal-breaker. This is what's going to end the Iraq war,'" he said.

But it didn't end the war and the video became evidence that led the military to charge Manning with 22 counts, including espionage, computer fraud and aiding the enemy, which carries a potential life sentence. There's no question Manning leaked the information, but he says none of it put troops or the government in harm's way.

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On Wednesday, about 50 sympathizers attended and heard from a former State Department official who testified about access to diplomatic cables. About 30 supporters were allowed in the courtroom and the others watched a closed-circuit video feed from a trailer outside the courthouse.

The government has been moving quickly through its case, presenting evidence from more than 60 witnesses in just 10 trial days since it started June 3.

Manning's supporters are mostly anti-war and have a history of civil disobedience. They identify with groups such as Courage to Resist; Veterans for Peace and the Center on Conscience and War.

They try each day to fill the 20 seats reserved for the public and media in the small courtroom, and have done so most days. They protest just outside the Fort Meade gates with "Free Bradley Manning" signs before the testimony begins at 9:30 a.m., then they enter the base, leaving behind their signs, buttons and anything with Manning's name on it. Those things are banned inside the courtroom.

At lunchtime, they eat pizza, sub sandwiches and other fast-food at the nearby PX, talking about everything from the trial to their personal lives. Some say they have grown close.

"We talk about news items, what's happening this weekend, where somebody's appearing at a church or some kind of gathering," said Bill Wagner, 75, a retired NASA research manager who takes notes during the trial.

He estimated he had been to about one-third of the court-martial over the last 18 months and now has a new group of friends and email correspondents, including a couple from Michigan and attorney Michael Ratner of the Center for Constitutional Rights.

"I retired and had a lot of friends at work. To some extent, that's supplanted it or replaced it," Wagner said.

When court recesses for the day, sometimes as late as 7 p.m., Wagner heads home to his wife in Rockville, about 20 miles away.

Leah Brown, a Washington bookkeeper and peace activist, said the Manning supporters haven't caused much of a stir at the fort, even wearing their "truth" shirts at the PX. She says she already knew some of the activists from other events, but has also met new friends.

"Everybody I meet there is there for a good reason. They go there because they really care about what happens to Bradley Manning personally and about what it means to all of us in the future if the government succeeds in what they're trying to do to him," she said.

Bradley Manning Support Network campaign organizer Emma Cape said the group has several thousand supporters on the East Coast and she's trying to persuade more of them to show up. So far, nearly 20,000 people worldwide have donated more than \$1.1 million to Bradley's defense fund.

Pentagon Papers leaker Daniel Ellsberg and Princeton professor Cornel West have attended some of the court-martial. Other big-name supporters, including film directors Michael Moore and Oliver Stone, and actors Russell Brand and Roseanne Barr, have left the daily court-watching to supporters who live nearby.

Debra Van Poolen, an artist and activist, may be one of the most determined sympathizers. She said she pedals her folding bicycle three miles from home to a commuter rail stop, rides the train about 12 miles, then either catches a carpool ride or bikes five more miles to Fort Meade.

"It's been logistically challenging," she said.

Put Away The Flags

Remembering Howard Zinn on July 4.

*Submitted by Peter Aronson, Written in 2006 by Howard Zinn,
distributed by the
Progressive Media Project*

On this July 4, we would do well to renounce nationalism and all its symbols: its flags, its pledges of allegiance, its anthems, its insistence in song that God must single out America to be blessed.

Is not nationalism -- that devotion to a flag, an anthem, a boundary so fierce it engenders mass murder -- one of the great evils of our time, along with racism, along with religious hatred?

These ways of thinking -- cultivated, nurtured, indoctrinated from childhood on -- have been useful to those in power, and deadly for those out of power.

National spirit can be benign in a country that is small and lacking both in military power and a hunger for expansion (Switzerland, Norway, Costa Rica and many more). But in a nation like ours -- huge, possessing thousands of weapons of mass destruction -- what might have been harmless pride becomes an arrogant nationalism dangerous to others and to ourselves. Subscribe to The Progressive.

Our citizenry has been brought up to see our nation as different from others, an exception in the world, uniquely moral, expanding into other lands in order to bring civilization, liberty, democracy.

That self-deception started early.

When the first English settlers moved into Indian land in Massachusetts Bay and were resisted, the violence escalated into war with the Pequot Indians. The killing of Indians was seen as ap-
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 proved by God, the taking of land as commanded by the Bible. The Puritans cited one of the Psalms, which says: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee, the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the Earth for thy possession."

When the English set fire to a Pequot village and massacred men, women and children, the Puritan theologian Cotton Mather said: "It was supposed that no less than 600 Pequot souls were brought down to hell that day."

On the eve of the Mexican War, an American journalist declared it our "Manifest Destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence."

After the invasion of Mexico began, The New York Herald announced: "We believe it is a part of our destiny to civilize that beautiful country."

It was always supposedly for benign purposes that our country went to war.

We invaded Cuba in 1898 to liberate the Cubans, and went to war in the Philippines shortly after, as President McKinley put it, "to civilize and Christianize" the Filipino people.

As our armies were committing massacres in the Philippines (at least 600,000 Filipinos died in a few years of conflict), Elihu Root, our secretary of war, was saying: "The American soldier is different from all other soldiers of all other countries since the war began. He is the advance guard of liberty and justice, of law and order, and of peace and happiness."

We see in Iraq that our soldiers are not different. They have, perhaps against their better nature, killed thousands of Iraq civilians. And some soldiers have shown themselves capable of brutality, of torture.

Yet they are victims, too, of our government's lies.

How many times have we heard President Bush tell the troops that if they die, if they return without arms or legs, or blinded, it is for "liberty," for "democracy"?

One of the effects of nationalist thinking is a loss of a sense of proportion. The killing of 2,300 people at Pearl Harbor becomes the justification for killing 240,000 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The killing of 3,000 people on Sept. 11 becomes the justification for killing tens of thousands of people in Afghanistan and Iraq.

And nationalism is given a special virulence when it is said to be blessed by Providence. Today we have a president, invading two countries in four years, who announced on the campaign trail in 2004 that God speaks through him.

We need to refute the idea that our nation is different from, morally superior to, the other imperial powers of world history.

We need to assert our allegiance to the human race, and not to any one nation.

Howard Zinn, a World War II bombardier, was the author of the best-selling "A People's History of the United States".

AFGHANISTAN CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

Associated Press

The war in Afghanistan continues taking and destroying lives, both due to the direct consequences of violence and the war-induced breakdown of public health, security, and infrastructure. In 2004, life expectancy was measured at a mere 42 years; moreover, 25 percent of children did not reach the age of 5. The first half of 2011 saw the most intense fighting since the early part of the war and more lives have been lost as a result of war than when the Taliban was in control.

Civilians have been killed by crossfire, improvised explosive devices, assassination, bombing, and night raids into houses of suspected insurgents. Unexploded ordnance from previous wars and from US cluster bombs continue to kill even in the absence of fighting.

Hospitals in Afghanistan are also treating increasing numbers of war wounded, including amputees and burn patients. The war has also inflicted invisible wounds. In 2009, the Afghan Ministry of Public Health said fully two-thirds of Afghans suffer mental health problems.

Afghanistan was poor and vulnerable before the war that began in 2001; its population remains poor and vulnerable. The general immiseration of the Afghan population is in part due to and exacerbated by past conflict. The prior wars and civil conflict in the country have made Afghan society extremely vulnerable to the indirect effects of the current war.

The war related indirect deaths in Afghanistan are caused by many factors, including disease due to lack of clean drinking water, malnutrition, and reduced access to health care. Environmental disasters, such as drought and floods, make living in war zones more difficult, and create what the humanitarian relief community calls "complex emergencies."

Nearly every factor that is associated with premature death — poverty, malnutrition, poor sanitation, lack of access to health care, environmental degradation — is exacerbated by the current war. While Afghanistan has benefited from investments in health care that may ameliorate some of the effects of war, claims of significant strides in health and healthcare have been called into question. (Text updated as of February 2013)





**Veterans For Peace
Chapter 56**

Phone 707-826-7124

Email: VFP56@aol.com

WE'RE ON THE WEB:

<http://www.vfp56.org>

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

**Rob Hepburn, Steve Stamnes
Steve Sottong, Jim Sorter,
John Schaefer, John Mulloy
Jane Riggan, Ernie Behm**

EDITOR OF FOGHORN

Jim Sorter

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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 turtldncr@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.

NOTICE

**JULY VETERANS FOR PEACE
HUMBOLDT BAY CHAPTER 56
MEETING WILL BE HELD ON
JULY 11TH AT 500 UNION STREET
AT 7:00 PM DUE TO OUR REGU-
LAR MEETING DATE FALLING
ON JULY 4TH.**

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