



VETERANS FOR PEACE
HUMBOLDT BAY
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"Cutting Through the Fog of War"

INTERVIEW WITH MARK KNIPPER CONCERNING VETERAN SPIRIT AT INCOPAH

By Nezzie Wade

Nezzie Wade: Marc, can you tell us a little about your background and what has brought you to this veteran's project called Veterans' Spirit at Incopah?

Marc Knipper: I did four years in the navy on a nuclear submarine from 1975 to '79, right at the official end of the Viet Nam War and pretty much at the height of the cold war era. It was not much fun, and I felt like I was involved in a war time situation, and yet we never got credit for being involved in a war time situation. It was supposedly peace time even though we were involved with the Soviets and the cold war thing. So when I finished that, I attended school and got a Bachelor Degree in Fine Arts and ended up coming to Humboldt to get a Master's in Social Work. I had been working with different kinds of non-profits and a family services association in Santa Clara County before I moved up here. So I've been working with men around domestic violence issues and so forth, and a lot of those men were vets. And then I met a homeless man who lived under a bridge and he was a vet as well. So, after I came up here to go to school and then graduated with my MSW, I was very fortunate to get a job around the year 2000 with Street Outreach Services, and worked with Humboldt County Mental Health as the Veteran's Outreach Specialist. I was no where near, a Specialist at the time, but I sure learned a lot over that two and a half years of serving veterans that were living out on the street or in the bush, or just around. I learned a lot and gained a lot of compassion towards homeless veterans.

NW: When I first met you, you were working for a veteran's residential facility. Tell us a little about that, and how long have you been working with veterans?

MK: For at least 10 years I've worked with homeless or veterans with mental health issues, and I did that job with Street Outreach Services, but I got laid off. Then I got hired back to do the transitional living program for the North Coast Veteran's Resource Center. That work involved veterans who were living on the streets or living houseless and taking them into a transitional program and holding them where they were at, helping them to get their needs met by plugging them into different resources, connecting them to support systems and services. They can use the opportunity of being in the transitional housing to then get out of there and get their own house and move on with their education, get a job, or whatever. It's to support them and help them meet their needs so that they can get to a position where they can function on their own.

NW: So over these 10 years, you've lived up close and in person with many veterans working through their transition going from military to civilian life, but also through some of the roughest things they've had to live through. How did you come up with the vision for Incopah, or for Veterans' Spirit at Incopah? How did it evolve from what you had been working on?

MK: Well I didn't come up with the vision; I just hooked my wagon to Nadia McCaffery, who is the Director of the Patrick McCaffery Foundation. She started the foundation after the death of her son in Iraq, June 22nd, 2004. Patrick was shot and killed by the Iraqis he was teaching to be soldiers and police. So Nadia took a negative thing, loss of her only child, and tried to make a positive out of it. She thought about what Patrick would have done if he had returned, and that would be taking care of the soldiers that he had been with. So that's what Nadia has now devoted and dedicated her life to. She is working with several soldiers that served with Patrick; she has an ongoing relationship with them, and is working to help them get their needs met through the VA and other resources. Her vision is to have 1000 acres in each one of the 50 states throughout the USA that would provide a space for veterans and their families to come and be. That seems wide open and everything, but people need a place where they can be, Just Be, and then work through all the issues that come up from being involved in war. War doesn't just affect the veteran, it affects the entire family, and I believe it affects the entire culture. So what we are trying to do, what we intend to do, is to provide a space for veterans and their families to come and retreat, and heal, and get well. Learning how to manage the traumas that they've been through, so that the families and the veterans and everybody can get to a place where they feel good about who they are, and what they are doing, and where they have opportunities to do anything they want to do, is what we should all be able to do.

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Interview With Mark Knipper: Continued From Page 1

NW: Tell us how you got connected with “Incopah” and what its goals are, and then how “Veterans Spirit” is going to be an integral part of that.

MK: A friend who is also a veteran, I think he’s a Korean war vet, Jack Nounnan, introduced me to a gentleman he was calling William Karr, whom I’d known as Jeff. So I actually knew this guy Jack referred to, but I didn’t know I knew him at first. When I finally called Jeff, he told me he had lived with a man named Jim Haverslandt, a Viet Nam veteran who retreated to the Willow Creek area, bought himself 22 acres out there to find retreat and wellness for himself, and it worked for him. He was very generous and allowed numerous others to share his land and unfortunately it fell into disrepair and needs to be cleaned up and restored, which we are doing successfully. Jim’s vision was to share what he got out of being on the 22 acres at Incopah. He named it Incopah, which is an Indian name that Jeff could speak more clearly to, but it comes out of a Southern California indigenous language, and it means Mountain People.

Jim got a lot out of being on the property, and his vision was to share that with other people so that they could get well and healthy and feel better about who they are. Well, Jim passed away two years ago, and Jeff is buying the property, and he wants to go forward and make Jim’s vision a reality. Mary, who is Jim’s mother, also wants to see Jim’s vision become a reality.

When I met Jeff, my penchant was for veterans, and Incopah is about a retreat and wellness space for all people. So we started to discuss how we could make it work so that veterans could participate and be an integral part of Incopah Retreat and Wellness Center. We are calling ourselves Veterans’ Spirit because what we want to do is develop a space for veterans to come and get re-connected with their human spirit because they’ve lost their humanity by being in the middle of war, it seems to steal that from you, so we want to bring them back.

NW: How do you envision the lifestyle of a veteran and his family that are residing at Veterans’ Spirit at Incopah, what kind of healing things will be going on there?

MK: Talking about the vision being for vets and their families, and we are going to be able to do that at a few sites, we don’t see that as the way we’re going to start out with Veterans’ Spirit at Incopah. It will probably be focused on males, soldiers who are single and houseless or suffering from traumatic brain injury or post traumatic stress. We will bring them on because they are asking for an opportunity, and we want to bring them on and give them an opportunity to learn how to manage their traumas, and learn job skills, or other types of skills, specifically farming skills because we believe that working in the soil, or doing any kind of tactile-based therapies is really enriching and therapeutic for the individual. We’re going to be offering wilderness-based therapies and other types of things, as well.

Everything we do with the Patrick McCaffery Foundation and/

or Veterans’ Spirit, every site, is going to be alternative energy, off the grid, green buildings, all of these different things. So a veteran can come and have the opportunity to learn these skills, and also farm, we know there is a lot of healing that happens by farming and putting plants in the ground. What you do is you put a plant in the ground, and you nurture it, and it produces something, and so what we’re trying to do is take veterans and hold them where they’re at and nurture them, and they’ll produce something, something positive.

NW: What do you envision the time frame for a stay at Incopah to be?

MK: Well we’ve discussed that several times, and have used several different patterns, if you will, and what we’re looking at right now is each veteran would come, and we’d do an interview process and we’d talk about what Incopah has to offer now, and what we hope to offer in the future. We’d talk about the veteran’s interests, and what the veteran’s needs are, and how we might be able to meet those needs in a clean and sober space; you can’t have alcohol and other drugs going on because we feel you can’t heal if you’re doing all these other drugs. The VA is doing the best they can, but often times, unfortunately, their solution to post traumatic stress, or traumatic brain injury or any type of mental health issue is to medicate the individual, and medication doesn’t help a person learn to manage their traumas. It doesn’t help them learn how to live with what they’ve been through; it just medicates them, kind of stupefies them, and makes them not be angry and safe for the rest of the public. It’s almost like they are being medicated, as my friend Eli says, to keep them safe. But what we want to do is give veterans natural ways to stay safe. Those natural ways would be farming, working in the wilderness, leading rafting groups, doing all these different things. We have all kinds of people who want to volunteer with us and do things like yoga and all kinds of other options.

So a vet would come, and we’d do an interview, and it would depend on what your needs were as a veteran. Say you just came up here to go to school, and you have a dog, and you can’t get a place in town, and your money hasn’t come in from the GI Bill, and you need a place to stay, you could come and stay with us until

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**NEXT VFP 56
MEETING IS
SCHEDULED FOR NOV.
5TH, 2009 6:30 KATE
BUCHANAN ROOM,
HUMBOLDT STATE
UNIVERSITY**



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your GI Bill came in and you could get housing and so forth. We would help you in those ways, and help connect you with those resources. Say you have a traumatic brain injury, and there's more serious stuff, and you have a lot more serious stuff to work through, say you did three tours over in Iraq or something, and you're really having some hard times, then you would come stay with us and you would work through a program that would be created around your individualized needs. Every thing would be on an individual needs basis, so each individual would have a different type of program than another.

What we're thinking is that you could stay there up to three months, and it could always be re-negotiated. If you needed more than three months, and we had space, then you could stay on.

So a person could sign up for one month, two months, or a three month program, and we could extend that. And then if a person wants to be part of Incopah and help build it and work on the structures there, then they might be able to come on as staff. Eventually we hope to have them on as paid staff. Individuals could be guides for the adventure-based therapies, for the rafting programs and for all the other things that we'd be doing. They can also do ceramics, bee keeping and so forth.

NW: What do see as your capacity to serve? How many people do you think can be accommodated there?

MK: We discussed that, we thought we could take fifteen to twenty individuals at a time over that three month period of time. As one person exited, another person could come in. If somebody needed longer than three months then the next person in line might have to wait..

NW: What about those who have a greater need for physical care and for mental health care?

MK: That's something where we would provide them referrals to resources that are available to treat those types of issues. Individuals can go to the vet's clinic here in Eureka, and we are developing a relationship with K-T Net so that we can have transportation; we can transport them to the coast and they can go to the clinic, and/or we can transport them to the coast and they can go down to Fort Miley in San Francisco and go into a three month or six month program run by the VA. So those things are all available to them, and they would always have a place to come back to, or a place to be, so they wouldn't be living on the streets while they're trying to get better.

NW: What provisions would be available for the family? Are the vets free to come and go to visit their families, or could their families come and stay with them at Incopah for a period of time? You've been talking about single males mostly, but what if they had families, what kind of accommodations can be made?

MK: Ideally, we'll grow from here. Twenty two acres seems like a lot, but it gets small real fast, especially if you have families. Ideally, we would have a thousand acres in each of the fifty

states where families could come and just be, and then, as they felt like they were more a part of this new community they'd moved into, they would come in and we would provide resources for the needs of each individual in the family.

Ultimately, we will have a bed and breakfast, and we will have a retreat and wellness center, built out of straw bale alternative green building material on the land at Incopah at two different sites. The health and wellness center will be right by our garden that we just put in. Also, as much as we want people to come together, because that's a good thing, individuals need a place to be by themselves, so we wanted to nestle these little domes, or these little cabins if you will, in the surrounding woods. We've been researching and developing ways that we can build small cabins out of recycled materials, and we want to nestle these all up in the hillside so that each individual has their own space to go to, then they can come back and be part of the community. It would be completely supported, they would meet with me, or another counselor, on a regular basis and they'd be working a program.

The plan is to keep expanding, and just get more property, and as we deal with the individual male veteran, we will be providing resources and referrals to the family. There really is a desperate need for support of military families; they're kind of falling through the cracks.

NW: You have covered a lot of ground related to Veterans' Spirit and the services that will be provided for male veterans. What about our female veterans?

MK: I am glad you asked. Womyn warrior issues are more complex than other returning soldiers due to having to deal with a potential enemy from all sides, such as sexual harassment, verbal, physical and sexual abuse from their fellow soldiers and officers, often in a war zone. Military Sexual Trauma, (MST), is more than Incopah will have the capabilities to deal with at the onset. Currently it is another unaddressed psychological service unavailable through the VA. Our approach in the "here and now" is to move progressively forward with what we know and what is available, baby steps if you will. Although over time, as time and space can be made available and with proper on site supervision, therapies and counseling in place, we must, and will provide a space for "womyn only" wellness and healing retreats, along the same lines as the services provided to all, at Veterans' Spirit and Incopah Retreat and Wellness Center.

NW: Your knowledge of the Patrick McCaffery Foundation connected it to Humboldt County, and along with Jeff's vision and Jim's legacy, this is something that is very likely going to be able to support not only military families from the area, but also families from outside the area. Just having a retreat facility available where the focus is on wellness and learning skills, and becoming part of the community in a very calming, healing way is extremely valuable. That can only add to the positive energy that is here in Humboldt County for alternative living and also for just general health. Now that the community has the chance to hear more about Veterans'

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spirit at Incopah, in what ways would you like the community to be engaged with what is going on there?

MK: Well, first, I'd like to say that I believe that in helping veterans and their families heal we are helping the community heal too; we're building a strong, tightly-knit community, which I believe we're going to need now and in times to come. What we need from the community is help and support. We need the community that has supported the troops overseas to support the veterans coming home. We need them to take people in, and try and understand that they've been through something that is possibly unimaginable for most, and to try and understand where they're at, where they're coming from, and that they just need our help. You can't go from being a citizen to being a soldier in a war zone, and then get shipped out of that war zone and dropped right back into the community and expect it to be okay! You can't, it's difficult, and you can't thrive. These poor folks, it's just so much for them to try and grasp, and they want so badly to be normareadl, and it's very difficult. So we do need the community's help and support.

NW: How do you see that help and support manifesting?

MK: Well, of course, we need funding, that's always the problem. And with the economy the way it is, it's probably not the best time to start a non-profit, but we really need to support and transition our soldiers coming home or we are going to have bigger problems in the future. So we need financial support, we need people's volunteer support; we still have a lot of work to do getting Incopah ready and up and running so we can start taking veterans on. Our goal is to take veterans on to the Incopah site as soon as possible, and that's why we've been cleaning it up; we've been working on getting the garden ready so we can feed them. We have to be able to provide a space, food, shelter, and support for the veterans. Those are the things we are working on. We've managed to establish a wonderful relationship with Humboldt Waste Management, who has taken all of those fifteen tons of trash at no cost to us, which has been wonderful.

NW: They will continue that relationship?

MK: They have continued that relationship, we're getting rid of a bunch of refrigerators and stuff, which all cost money to get rid of, and they are taking those for nothing, and so we really appreciate them. If anyone who lives out in Willow Creek, or goes out to that area at all, on your way home, if you wanted to stop by Incopah and take a load of trash to the coast, or take something to recycle, that would be a big help.

NW: So there is not only an inherent link with the veteran's services, local and beyond, because of the benefits and services available to all veterans, but also because of your experience working with the veterans' services locally and being more familiar with what is going on in the larger community.

MK: Right, I've worked really hard to establish a repoire with the veteran's services of Humboldt County, and Humboldt County has a lot of veteran's services for a rural county.

NW: Thank you for your work on this project and for bringing it to the attention to the community, Marc.

MK: It is my passion and my pleasure to work on bringing these services to our veterans and working with the members of our community to do so. I look forward to hearing from everyone.

To read this article in it's entirety as it appeared, and was printed. go to the Steelhead Special, Issue 51, Editor/Publisher Joe Shermis. For more information contact Jeff Karr at (707) 498 5010

Fundraising/Events/Media (FEM) Committee Report

By Dave Berman

10-23-09

Combining fundraising, events, and media into the FEM Committee may prove to be one of the best strategic moves of the year for VFP-56. With our successful barn dance and two-day yard sale in September, attention then turned to the November 3 Film Festival at the Arcata Theatre Lounge and November 5 open community meeting in the Kate Buchanan Room at HSU.

Of course, VFP-56 has been meeting on the first Thursday of the month for many years and the meetings are always open to the entire community and free to attend. What's different this time is the bigger venue, the greater visibility of the other events, and the on campus location giving us a direct link to the future of VFP – the young veterans enrolled in school. *....Continued on Page 7*

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Your Chapter (the VEOP Committee) is sponsoring a Peace Poetry Contest for high school students. A Peace Poetry Booklet will be published and a public reading will be held in Spring.

We need you to solicit advertisements to help pay for printing costs, et cetera.

We need you to hit the streets and contact businesses in the County.

We need you to step up NOW! to help make this a successful event.

**To help, please contact:
Jon Reisdorf at 707.822.4595
Carl Stancil at 707.616.6405 or
Nate Lomba at 707.269.0528**



Members and Family of the Military Your Government is Putting Your Health At Risk With Their Use of Uranium Weapons

By Peter Aronson VFP56 – DU/WMD Committee chair

U.S. Military and Department of Defense have been ‘testing’ solid uranium ammunition & bombs since the 70’s, and have been actively using them since Gulf War 1 in 1990. They like to say: “as far as we know, depleted uranium (DU) is safe”. What they don’t admit is what they already know to the contrary, by decades of their own studies.

A DU PRIMER –

- Depleted Uranium (DU) is a radiological agent, highly regulated because of known hazards.

- The U.S. used DU weapons in ground, air and naval operations even though DU meets the U.S. government’s definition of a “Dirty Bomb”.

- Contrary to their own studies implicating DU in drastic health problems, the U.S. government’s modus operandi is to claim DU is “safe as far as we know”. The same was said of Agent Orange].

- Troops & vets rarely know about DU - they are not trained, as required and don’t know they can & should be tested.

- The Department of Veterans Affairs DU Follow-Up Program implies they care about the health & safety of dedicated service members, the environment & millions of innocent non-combatants more than the military’s coveted weapons. The DVA, however, has been using flawed testing methods for 19 years. Uranium in any form is not sensed by humans, if not told about exposure, they won’t know.

Some Pieces of the DU Puzzle –

DU is highly regulated precisely due to its inherent properties and known risks to the health of humans and all living systems. Because DU is a radioactive, toxic heavy metal there are layers upon layers of state, regional, federal, and international laws and regulations in place for possession; sale; storage; use; or transportation of DU.

Cited below is conclusive evidence the government knew of health risks from internal exposure to DU before the Gulf Wars. Studies conducted by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) & National Academy of Sciences concludes the DoD and Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) failed their responsibility to both inform soldiers about the risks of DU, and test those with potential DU exposures who required testing by in-

place policy. Note: uranium is not sensed by humans, if not told about exposure, they won’t know. “Depleted Uranium is a low-level radiation alpha emitter which is linked to cancer when exposures are internal, [and] chemical toxicity causing kidney damage”.

Science & Applications International Corporation (SAIC) July 1990, Vol, 3-4. (govt contracted study) “Short term effects of high doses can result in death, while long term effects of low doses have been implicated in cancer.”

SAIC 1990, Vol 1, 4-12.

“Aerosol DU exposures to soldiers on the battlefield could be significant with potential radiological & toxicological effects.” U.S. Army Armament, Munitions & Chemical Command report, Kinetic Energy Penetrator Long Term Strategy Study, July 1990.

“Personnel in or near (less than 50m) an armored vehicle at the time these vehicles were struck by DU munitions could receive significant internal DU Exposures (i.e. those in excess of allowable standards).”

Col. Eric Daxon, Radiation Protection Staff Officer, US Army Medical Command, summarizing results of a Dec 1989 report from the Ballistic Research Laboratory, Radiological Contamination From Impacted Abrams Heavy Armor. Flisar, et.al.

“If depleted uranium enters the body, it has a potential to generate significant medical consequences. The risks associated with depleted uranium are both chemical and radiological. Army Environmental Policy Institute (AEPI), 1995.

“Depleted Uranium is more of a problem than we thought when it was developed. But it was developed according to standards and was thought through very carefully. It turned out perhaps to be wrong.”

Brent Scowcroft, former National Security Advisor to President Bush, from an executive summary: Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Illnesses, 2004 Report & Recommendations.

The 3 Government Accountability Office (GAO) studies initiated by Congress in the 90s concluded the pre-deployment safety training was NOT offered to ground troops, as required by regulation. Active duty troops and veterans simply DON’T KNOW if, where; when or how they may have been exposed...they’re kept in the dark by design.

In January, 1998, the U.S. Dept of Defense expressed its first & only admission of responsibility for Gulf War Uranium Exposures: “Our investigations into potential health hazards of depleted uranium point to serious deficiencies in what our troop understood about the health effects posed on the battlefield...Combat troops or those carrying out support functions generally did not know that DU contaminated equipment, such as enemy vehicles struck by DU rounds, require special handling...The failure to properly disseminate such

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Your Government is Putting DU Risks on You: Continued from page 5

information to troops at all levels may have resulted in thousands of unnecessary exposures.”

Annual report of the Office of the Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Defense for Gulf War Illnesses: Jan 8, 1998: p29.

TESTING FOR EXPOSURE TO DU

As indefensible as it is to ignore required pre-deployment safety training; fail to offer available protective gear; or implement in-place procedures for managing DU contaminated equipment, the DU testing fiasco is even more troubling.

In July of 2008 a National Academy of Sciences report offered a severe critique of Pentagon policy stating that the “Dept of Veterans Affairs (DVA) & military are using a flawed test to determine DU exposure”. Their test is unreliable >6months after exposure, for most.

Since service members don’t know if or how they may have been exposed, they don’t know enough to request screening or testing. They’re not told that anyone eligible who asks, must be tested.

Flawed testing methods may produce false-negative results. Flawed data can be used to support the theme, “As far as we know, DU is safe”.

Skeptics of the DVA’s DU Follow-Up Program believe the entire VA testing program (flawed test; too few tested, failure to report all cancers) is an elaborate & successful plan to continue the use of these superior munitions by suppressing vital data. Their agenda, I believe, is to do this to sustain their use of the phrase, “As far as we know, DU is not a health risk”.

Consider this duplicitous government position - While we’re told “DU is safe”, the Dept of Homeland Security & Nuclear Regulatory Commission share a common definition of a “dirty bomb”

“A ‘dirty bomb’ is one type of a “radiological dispersal device” (RDD) that combines a conventional explosive, such as dynamite, with radioactive material.”

The NRC defines DU as a “radiological material”, and DU munitions are solid uranium dispersed by a conventional explosive. DU munitions meet their definition of a “dirty bomb, or RDD”.

USING AN RDD IS AN “ACT OF TERROR”, as defined by the DHS.

“A RADIOLOGICAL INCIDENT is defined as an event or series of events, deliberate or accidental, leading to the release, or potential release, into the environment of radioactive material in sufficient quantity to warrant consideration of protective actions. Use of an RDD is an act of terror that produces a radiological incident.”

Department of Homeland Security – Protective Action Guides

for Radiological Dispersal Device (RDD) – Preparedness Directorate 1660-ZA02.

Members & family of the military –

* If you served in duty areas where DU was used, consider private or DVA testing for DU.

* You may have been exposed to an unknown amount of DU with unknown consequences to you and your offspring.

* Be cautious – learn more about DU issues.

* DU is the new “Agent Orange”, in that your government is more interested in military advantage than it is with your health, and that of innocent bystanders.

* If you want access to official DoD directives, or the DVA DU Follow-up Program check here:<http://www.pdhealth.mil/du.asp#pad>

* Look here for extensive review of what DU is/used for/modern applications/ethical issues.Depleted Uranium:Ethics Of The Silver Bullet Iliya Pesic <http://www.mindfully.org/Nucs/2005/Depleted-Uranium-Ethics9may05.htm>

* Health Effects of Low Level Radiation: <http://www.llrc.org/health/healthpage.htm>

* Dan Fahey Document Library: Reliable source & critical commentary on government documents; problems with VA testing & compliance with military regulations <http://www.danfahey.com/DanFahey>

* Radiological toxicity of DU K. BAVERSTOCK, C. MOTHERSILL & M. THORNE (Repressed WHO Document) <http://www.mindfully.org/Nucs/DU-Radiological-Toxicity-WHO5nov01.htm>

Our VFP chapter 56 is focused on delivering a DU OUTREACH message to servicemembers who should already know about the hazards of DU. We are actively seeking testing options.

Despite the DVA’s use of an inferior testing method, those tested will be on their DU registry. This means they may be re-tested with the ‘best’ test, if the DVA is pressed to use it. Entitlements may be offered with future data correlating DU with GW Syndrome, so we recommend using the test currently offered by the DVA.

DU MUNITIONS offer 2 threats

1. Toxic Heavy Metal
2. Radioactive



Free, Confidential Assistance Available at the G.I. Hotline

By Mashaw McGuinnis

Frustrated over watching younger vets get the runaround or being told outright lies by the military, counselors on the G.I. Rights Hotline help their younger counterparts navigate through all of the B.S. It is one way our members assist other vets. Helping those who are recently discharged or even still on active duty is something many vets wish they had received when they were serving. Being misled by overeager recruiters, harassed by superiors or being denied benefits they rightly deserve are just some of the issues the counselors help with. Hotline counselors are not paid; they do what they do because they care. Unlike the recruiters who got the service member into the military, the hotline counselors do not get commissions or bonuses. They don't want one man or woman who has served to be treated unfairly.

Many enlisted service members are dumbfounded when they have serious injuries and they learn they are being redeployed for the second, third or even fourth time. It's a relief to know that someone with real military experience can answer questions, make referrals and share stories of others who have faced similar obstacles. Frequently the intervention of an experienced person can get the person the medical attention they need often keeping the injured service member from being unfairly redeployed. It's just a matter of knowing who to talk to, what forms to get in place, and how to go about it. The fact that the hotline's calls are completely anonymous make it easier for the service members to be frank about their situations.

Many callers contact the hotline who have gone AWOL/UA, are frightened, and don't know what to do. According to Carl Stancil a Navy veteran, and one of the hotline counselors, there are many options and consequences for each. "It's not a cut and dried situation" he said, "although the military would like for young recruits to believe that. It keeps them scared, and the hotline counselors help them separate fact from rumor. There are options for the person who has gone AWOL but they may not know what they are".

When vets return and are faced with a labyrinth of paperwork in order to get medical benefits from the V.A., the hotline counselors like to cut through the red tape. "It's appalling that a person who has served their country and returned needing medical care, only to be forced to deal with multiple phone calls, interviews and forms" said one counselor. "And many of us on the hotline have been through it ourselves. Since we are a not government agency, vets get one-on-one attention when they call us. We talk to them as long as they need to talk, and many times, we'll give the caller our personal cell phone number to help get things straightened out".

One of the most disturbing calls on the hotline is from the person who is experiencing harassment. Both men and women experience various forms of harassment from fellow recruits and their superi-

ors, and don't know where to turn. It is not unusual for the callers to express feelings of fear and hopelessness. Some are suicidal. At the hotline the callers learn their rights under military law and ways to approach those situations that the military may not reveal to them. "It's not just a matter of 'suck it up soldier' as they would lead you to believe" says Stancil "there are real and legal steps to take to protect yourself, and we'd like service members to be prepared by knowing their rights and having accurate information".

The G.I. Hotline receives calls from frightened parents and spouses of enlisted members as well. It is not uncommon for callers to express fear that their loved one may do harm to themselves or others, after returning from deployment. There are networks in place around the country, which are designed to support the service members, veterans and their families. The counselors have been well trained to cope with whatever kind of request or complaint they receive. The important thing is that they want you-the vet, or service member to know you- have a support system. You are not alone!

** If you or someone you know is in need of the G.I. hotline's services, go to: www.girightshotline.org or call (877) 447-4487.

Fundraising, Events/Media: Continued from Page 4

We know there are many veterans in Humboldt who share our vision of a peaceful future, who want to educate young people about the realities of war and alternatives to joining the military, and who are willing to devote time and energy to serving fellow veterans and the community at large. This is what Veterans For Peace is all about, through our public speaking in local classrooms to staffing the GI Rights Hotline, and from our advocacy of testing soldiers exposed to depleted uranium to our support of Incopah, an adventure therapy retreat for those with PTSD.

If what I'm saying here speaks to you, then please make it a dialog, whether you are a veteran or not (as a non-veteran, I am personally an associate member of VFP-56 and just as involved as anyone else in the group). Tell us your story and let's figure out how we can help each other achieve these shared goals. Join us November 3 and 5 for two great community events, and if you can't be there then contact me and we'll go from there: 707-845-3749 or manifestpositivity@gmail.com.

Wage Peace!

**WE WILL BE KNOWN FOREVER
BY THE TRACKS WE LEAVE.
Chief Dakota**





**Veterans For Peace
Chapter 56**

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

LEADERSHIP TEAM

**Rob Hepburn, Steve Stamnes
Steve Sottong, Jim Sorter,
John Schaefer**

FOGHORN EDITOR

Jim Sorter

STANDING COMMITTEES

WU/WMD: Peter Aronson

Richard Gilchrist

General Store: Doug Smith

FEM: Mashaw McGuinnis,

Dave Berman

VEOP: Carl Stancil

Jon Reisdorf

VSC: Marc Knipper

**NOVEMBER FILM
FEST**



**ARCATA THEATER
NOVEMBER 3, 2009
6:00 PM**

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.

VFP Rummage Sale: A Successful Comedy of Errors

By Mashaw McGuinnis

“Rummage Sale” sounds so innocent, bringing to mind blue-haired church ladies and baked sales. But pulling off a successful rummage sale is serious business. It separates the fundraiser grain from the chafe, so to speak. Requiring long days, heavy lifting, morning to night haggling with buyers... The task of holding back the pushy early birds is a talent all its own, akin to body guard work at rock concerts. Perhaps our members’ early military training gave them the discipline required to pull off our biggest fundraiser, because it’s definitely not for sissies.

It may surprise people to know that of all the fundraisers we do, our annual rummage sale is always the biggest money maker, and this year’s sale was no exception. But this year’s event contained as much high jinx as money earned and the volunteers looked like a patient list in the medical ward. John Schaefer, our noble truck driver, hobbled around on crutches, only weeks after a knee surgery. Nate Lomba came prepared, with a back brace so strong it would’ve made Scarlet O’Hara wince. But Nate suited up and showed up like a trooper. Bill Thompson was limping by time everything was loaded up into the truck Friday evening, (though we all pretended not to notice). Carl Stancil one of our most dependable and physically fit members, just happened to have a shoulder injury which prevented him from doing much carrying. Mashaw McGuinnis was so exhausted from battling Lyme disease, she almost had to be carried home halfway through the first day. By midday Saturday we were eagerly anticipating the arrival of our youngest and fittest member, Dave Berman.

Injuries aside, the weekend was long and full of surprises. Someone generously donated an extremely large (and moderately ugly) sofa and loveseat. We were doubtful a buyer existed for such a unique set and over the course of the weekend there was much debate about how to get rid of it. Finally by Sunday evening, we were slightly desperate so when a person made an offer, with the

condition that VFP delivered it we jumped at the chance! There had been a vicious rumor that we would have to pay money to dump it somewhere, so we figured we still came out ahead.

One overeager customer showed up Saturday in a motorized wheelchair, carrying his annoyed feline passenger. He found it impossible to curtail his bargain-shopping habits, and quickly proceeded to overload his chair with irresistible \$1 items and got stuck in the gravel. The feline found this situation even more annoying, causing her to repeatedly yowl loudly. VFP member Doug Smith happened to be present that day. But more importantly, Doug was a member who had no injuries. Doug quickly snapped into action and maneuvered the chair back and forth until it was freed up.

The event proved to us that changes brought about by modern technology have even trickled down to rummage sales. Several television sets were donated for the sale this year, which in the past were always proven money makers. But times have changed, and with everyone streaming on their computers, T.V.s are not such a hot item anymore. Several ideas were discussed as to what to do with them, including the idea of charging people a dollar for the pleasure of swinging a sledgehammer at the television. This appealed to many members, but we weren’t sure the public would go along with it and besides none of us had thought to bring a sledgehammer. In the end, we priced them all low enough that buyers couldn’t resist so we managed to unload them all.

By far the best part of the annual rummage sale is the camaraderie we share with each other. Visiting with members we haven’t seen in a while, and hearing about the activism they are doing is always a pleasure. Old friends coming together and talking about whatever unbelievable shenanigans our politicians are trying to pull, while snacking and teasing each other. That element makes all the work worthwhile, and reminds us that we are not alone in our quest for peace. This year our chapter earned close to \$1800. Almost enough to make our treasurer, John Schaefer dance with joy. But since he only has one good knee, he’ll have to put it off until next year.