



VETERANS FOR PEACE
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CHAPTER 56

THE FOGHORN

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“Cutting Through the Fog of War”

WHERE’S THE BEEF?

By Jim Sorter

Here we go again! The rat race has begun! The vermin-encrusted rodents have begun their every four year cycle, crawling out of their holes to dupe the American people once again; trying to convince us that they are the answer to our national political and spiritual problems while we slide farther and farther down the sinkhole of savagery, idiocy and gloom! Sounds pretty ominous doesn't it? Well look around and see where I am wrong!

What kind of society have we created for ourselves where we have to select the best qualified political candidates from the worst possible choices available? When did we, as citizens, get so complacent that we arbitrarily gave up our right to sound political representation by the supposed leaders of a free society? When did we get so complacent that we would give up many of our Constitutional rights just so we could feel a modicum of safety in this ever increasing hostile world? Did 9/11 make us so frightened as a nation that we feel we need these clowns and their megalomaniacal ideas to protect us from the bad guys supposedly bent on destroying our way of life? Let's take a look at the field of supposed saviors of America to see where we stand on the world stage with influential politicians who can bring back the respect America once had as a nation.

Mitt Romney: The name should give you a clue as to his political clout. A Mormon lay minister who graduated from Brigham Young University in Utah, Mitt Romney earned more than \$42 million over the past two years, and paid \$6.2 million in taxes at an effective rate averaging 14 percent, according to documents provided by the Romney campaign. The tax rate that Romney paid both in 2010 and 2011 is less than what most middle-income Americans were required to pay, mainly because a majority of Romney's earnings were derived from investments rather than wages.

Mitt has refused to disclose his personal taxes for more than two of his past earning years, sheltering most in accounts in Switzerland and the Cayman Islands. Sound like an upstanding American with our interests at heart? As CEO of Bain Corporation, Romney helped to foreclose on many of the homes caught in the Freddy Mac real-estate scandal. He has blatantly stated that he does not care for the bottom poor in the U.S.

His statements about rising from the streets to become the man that he is, smacks of nepotism knowing his father was chairman and president of the American Motors Corporation when he resigned in 1962 to run, successfully, for Governor. Then he ran for the Republican Presidential nomination in 1968 but dropped out of the race just before the New Hampshire primary. He then served as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in President Richard M. Nixon's first term. This made Mitt a man of the people, rising from the streets on his own? Personally, I believe, Mitt knows nothing about what the average man and woman in America feels when they don't have enough money to buy food, pay rent, medical bills and keep their families fiscally sound. This elitist right-wing bigot would lead us further down a path of poverty if we succumb to his rhetoric!! “Let them eat cake.”

Newt Gingrich: Now there's a name that inspires awe and respect. Newt, in't that a kind of reptile? Newt Gingrich is smarter than you. Don't feel bad, he's smarter than the rest of us, too. Just ask him. This egotistical megalomaniac wants us to believe he is the man most qualified to lead us in the 21st Century, the man who wants to add another star to our flag! (Or would that be moon?)

Newt's resume reads like a Harlequin novel. He is a repeated adulterer with younger women, while each of his successive wives was seriously ill. He attacked mortgage lender Freddie Mac, while secretly getting paid \$1.6 million as a lobbyist for them. He ran up a half-million charge account at Tiffanys Jewelers for his latest, youngest woman (that we know of). He attacked Congress for gridlock when he personally led the destruction of Congress' civility and traditions in the 1980s as a “bomb-thrower” and evil genius tactician.

This two-time adulterer wants us to believe that his trysts make him more of a common man, cheating on a wife who was diagnosed with cancer and another with multiple sclerosis and advocating for open marriage privileges with the third. How trustworthy could a man like that

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be running the affairs of the United States? Oh, and did I forget his censure from congress which cost him a \$300,000.00 fine.

There have been lots of politicians scandals over the years. Some are lying, adulterous lechers (Clinton). Some are money-grubbing and corrupt (Santorum). Some are vindictive and dangerously authoritarian (Giuliani). Some are incredibly phony and change with the wind (Romney). Most have never served a day in the military service. But in 17 years, only one man has been able to combine every one of these moral failings into one, super-humanly despicable candidate: Newt Gingrich. It is amazing to me that a right wing Christian moral majority would even consider associating with him much less endorsing his bid for President. Just goes to show you how far we in America have sunk in our expectation for our leaders morals and potential for sound leadership.

Rick Santorum: What a piece of work this homophobic right wing teabagger is. Rick not only disparages gay rights as abnormal, aberrant behavior, but pledges, as President, to overturn all same sex marriages in the nation. Rick also sees the body of a woman as belonging to the Federal Government as he crusades to overturn Roe Vs. Wade. Women, as Rick sees them, are not able to ascertain what is best for them and if he is elected will impose the power of the Federal Government to dictate moral consciousness according to Santorum's mandates!

Rick's shady Senate history made him one of the biggest losers in Senate history. The voters of Pennsylvania failed to reelect him as a Senator by a whopping 18 points in 2006, the biggest loss of a sitting Senator since 1980. Check out the facts at: <http://santorumexposed.com/?p=133>

Three-time loser Libertarian Ron Paul has some good ideas but I think he goes too far with most of them. Of all the candidates running so far, I believe, that he has the most integrity and doesn't waver from his stated policies. You have to respect him for standing solid on his positions. I am afraid he would have us back in the dark ages if elected.

Which brings us to POTUS Obama. The 2008 "Yes We Can", Presidential candidate has shown us, "No We Can't", as President of the United States. Under his leadership he has plunged the nation further and further in debt, escalated the Bush fiascoes overseas, and has taken away more of our Constitutional freedoms than any sitting President in the past 50 years. Under his watch democracy is looking more and more like fascism.

For example by a vote of 93-7 the Senate in December 2011 approved the National Defense Authorization Act, Section 1031, a military appropriations bill empowering the government to designate any U.S. citizen within the country as a terrorist, and to have the military hold him indefinitely without trial and without the right to habeas corpus, the right to be brought before a court for a judgment on the

legality of one's imprisonment. Originally Obama said he would veto this legislation but recently he signed this bill into law suspending habeas corpus. Check it out at: http://www.journalinquirer.com/articles/2011/12/12/chris_powell/doc4ee6179b321e6127406122.txt

What's the answer to getting good, qualified, candidates to run for political offices? Possibly getting rid of Super PAC funding, repealing corporate personhood to level the playing field, having term limitations on political offices? I don't know. But I do know that if we wind up accepting the status quo we are going to slip further and further down into the abyss where, in the not to distant future, we will be wondering where ALL of our rights and liberties have gone. I can only hope that out there, somewhere, is a sane, intelligent, rational person who can help us overcome the greed and corruption of the people who would take America into the Orwellian world of 1984.

Human Rights Defender Howard Zinn Saluted by Veterans for Peace

By Mike Ferner

Veterans for Peace Board President Mike Ferner released the following Veterans for Peace Salute to Howard Zinn, the great American human and civil rights defender through his history lessons and exceptional writings:

The death of a loved one or someone significant in our life often leaves us saying, "There weren't many like him," or "She'll really leave a hole in this world." In the case of Dr. Howard Zinn, there was no one else like him and his passing will leave a hole we can only hope will be filled some day.

He was a longtime member of Veterans For Peace. The day before he passed, VFP received an email from Howard Zinn to confirm arrangements for June to film a video greeting for our 2010 convention. In an earlier exchange, Howard had written, "Of course my heart is with VFP, but I'm not free to come. Thanks for inviting me, and best wishes for a great event. Howard."

As a renowned historian, he made no attempt to appear objective, indeed he thought it impossible. In an opening section of "A People's History of the United States," he said he preferred "To tell the story of the discovery of America from the viewpoint of the Arawaks, of the Constitution from the standpoint of the slaves and the Gilded Age as seen by southern farmers."

He believed history should "Emphasize new possibilities by disclosing those hidden episodes when, even if in brief flashes, people showed their ability to resist, to join together, occasionally to win. I am supposing, or perhaps only hoping, that our future may be found in the past's fugitive moments of compassion rather than in its solid centuries of warfare." Then, as only Howard Zinn can, he wrote,

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“The reader may as well know that before going on.”

From the spring in his step to the joyful, incisive wit of his words, few would have guessed his age. But at 87, his great heart, which clearly guided his remarkable intellect, finally stopped.

There may be others with great hearts and intellects to match, but Howard Zinn will be missed because he combined those with something much rarer: courage.

Some would point to his time in World War II as a B-24 bombardier, flying missions through the red-hot shrapnel of German anti-aircraft fire and Messerschmitt machine guns. Surely that is one kind of courage. It is tempered, however, by accepting that death can strike at any moment.

In his youth, Howard Zinn had the courage of a warrior. Over many decades as an adult he had another kind of courage that he practiced often, publicly and boldly, unfettered by the usual shackles of career ambitions, money or even social acceptance by one's peers.

This kind of courage, arguably the least common, Zinn frequently brought to bear in his lifelong mission of articulating uncomfortable truths and acting against injustice.

How else to explain this historian's ability to not only recognize the importance of the moment in the civil rights movement, but to encourage and join his students, eventually getting fired by Spelman College because they refused to participate as an institution; to speak publicly and early against the war in Vietnam when few with a safe job in academia dared; and most significantly, to fly into the hurricane of our most powerful myths and institutions by challenging “Three Holy Wars.”

In one of his last speeches he explained that these wars were not religious, but sacrosanct, “The three wars you cannot say anything bad about: the Revolutionary War, the Civil War and World War II.” Examining his treatment of just one, the Revolution, is to begin to understand the significance of his intellect and the depth of his courage.

Zinn said that according to population differences then and now, the equivalent number of deaths today would mean “Two and a half million people dying in a war to get England off our backs. Well, you might consider that worth it, or you might not.”

Challenging the customary tale of our revolution, Zinn pointed out that the year before Lexington and Concord, farmers in much of western Massachusetts drove the British government out without firing a shot.

“They had assembled thousands upon thousands around courthouses, around official offices they had taken over and they said good bye to the British officials.”

Further challenging the standard story, he observed, “Canada is independent of England aren't they? I think so. Not a bad society. They have good health care. They have a lot of things we don't have. They didn't fight a bloody revolutionary war.”

One problem he noted was we rarely take time to differentiate between various parts of the population “Because we don't think in class terms. We think we all have the same interests. We all have the same interests in independence from England. We did not all have the same interests.”

Perhaps most challenging, he asked, “Did blacks benefit from the Revolution? Slavery was there before; slavery was there after. No, we remained a slave society after the Revolution. Not only that, we wrote slavery into the Constitution. We legitimized it. It is always good if you want to get people to go to war to have a good document and have good words like life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness...Of course, when they write the Constitution it's not, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness...it's life, liberty and property. Have you noticed that difference? You should notice. You should take notice of these little things.”

Howard Zinn took notice of all those “little things.” He took them and, in the crucible of his intellect, forged a new story of how we came to be; a story that took great courage to articulate; a story that has the power to take us a long way down the road of freedom and peace.

Source: Veterans for Peace Board President Mike Ferner

Howard Zinn's documentary, based on his book *A People's History of the United States* premiered on December 13th, 2009 on the History Channel:

**Next VFP56 meeting will be held
on Thursday, March 1st 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.**



Update On Our Local Members

By Mashaw McGuinnis

This past year our chapter has seen a lot of changes. It was barely over a year since we gathered at Fred Hummel's memorial, and just this month, one year ago, we remember the passing of our beloved friend Guy Kuttner. When members get sick, go into the hospital or become housebound because of injuries, it's easy for us to lose touch with them. If members are not regulars at the monthly meeting, we often don't learn of their health challenges until too late.

In an effort to keep more members connected, this column will include information about our members who have been struggling with health issues.

Peter Aronson and wife Micki were recently in Palo Alto while Micki stayed in the hospital for 35 days, getting more chemo, transfusions and related support.

The last time I heard from Peter they were excited about Micki being a good candidate for a stem cell transplant (SCT). They recently had an all-day consultation with Stanford's transplant team. It seems her sister is a match so Peter says they've already overcome a huge hurdle. Having similar genes, HLA type, and stem cells reduces the potential for a threatening reaction of graft (cells to donor) v. host (recipient) reaction.

The procedure will harvest stem cells from her sister and give the prepared cells to Micki. Once harvested, these cells will be given like a blood transfusion, and these cells know to find their way to the bone marrow where all blood cells are made. A successful transplant will result in a new source of non-cancerous blood cell colony that trump the old bad ones.

Peter sounded very optimistic and hopeful the last time I heard from him on the 16th. He said, "Micki is incredibly strong and doesn't complain a bit. Our sons take care of home base while we're gone." Peter stays with his 93 year old father in the home Peter grew up in (Palo Alto). He said the support has been fantastic, and they have the love and kindness shown to them by so many friends.

Linda Sorter had knee replacement on her right knee in January. She went to St. Helena to the Coon Joint Replacement Center. She is rapidly recovering and is going to return to St. Helena on March 2nd to get her left knee replaced. By this time next year she is hoping to be well out of the woods and returning to the Trinity Alps for backpacking excursions.

Jim Sorter still battles from Mycobacterium Avium Complex, (MAC) which he caught in Mexico while working with sea turtles. MAC is a bacterial infection which, if not cured, can destroy the lungs. He is on a heavy dose of antibacterial medications which is

helping to keep the infection in check. He travels to University of California at San Francisco every other month to get a prognosis on his recovery. So far the condition is stable and hopefully, one day, he will be back to backpacking with Linda in the Trinity Alps.

Bradley Manning Arraigned At Fort Meade

Feb. 23rd

Court Martial expected in early May.

Bradley Manning Support Network.

The US Army scheduled a formal arraignment hearing for PFC Bradley Manning, the accused WikiLeaks whistle-blower. The arraignment took place at 1:00 PM EST, February 23, 2012 at Fort Meade, Maryland, just northeast of Washington DC. While the hearing itself was brief, PFC Manning was present, and the proceedings were open to the media and public. Washington DC area supporters of the Support Network attended the arraignment.

Bradley's show trial will begin in earnest with this arraignment. This proceeding will set the dates for a series of hearings on pre-trial motions likely to occur in March and April. Finally, the arraignment will set the date for the full court-martial—which we currently expect to begin in early May.

If the Obama administration is the least bit concerned with providing even the appearance of a fair trial, they will allow Bradley's legal defense team to explore the critical issues at the heart of this case, including: President Obama's recorded unlawful command influence over the proceedings, the illegal and torturous conditions that Bradley was subjected to for nine months at the Quantico Marine Brig, the over-classification of all of the documents in question, and the lack of any harm to national security from the release of the documents.

So far military officials have blocked nearly every request by Bradley's defense team, led by Iraq War veteran David Coombs, for access to evidence and witnesses that could explore these core issues. During the Article 32 pre-trial hearing held in December, the defense was denied access to over three dozen critical witnesses (while the prosecution was allowed access to every one of two dozen witnesses requested). This allowed military officials to limit the hearing to little more than a discussion of mitigating factors related to Bradley's emotional health.

If Bradley had been a member of the US Marine squad that admitted to systematically murdering two dozen innocent Iraqi men, women, and children in Haditha, Iraq, he'd be walking free today. Instead, he faces the real prospect of life in prison for telling the truth.

The arraignment comes just after Bradley was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize by members of the Ice-

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landic Parliament. A blog post by MP Birgitta Jónsdóttir explained their rationale for the nomination:

“According to journalists, his alleged actions helped motivate the democratic Arab Spring movements, shed light on secret corporate influence on our foreign policies, and most recently contributed to the Obama Administration agreeing to withdraw all U.S. troops from the occupation in Iraq.”

We have about 100 days to save Bradley from over 100 years in prison—learn more at bradleymanning.org

Hot Air From Iran Hides Its Weakness

By Eric Margolis | February 26, 2012

What kind of defense could Iran actually mount against an attack on its nuclear and military infrastructure by Israel and/or the United States?

First of all, discount all the TV pictures of Iranian missiles being fired and troops marching in review. They are designed to boost civilian morale at home. Ironically, Western media has used them to trumpet Iran’s alleged military threat. One major US TV network, NBC, even has a fixed logo on its reports from Iran; “Iran Threat.”

In reality, Iran, in spite of its 71 million population and oil wealth, is militarily quite weak. Islamic Iran has been under punishing US-led military and economic sanctions since its 1979 revolution, joining other sanctions targets North Korea and Cuba.

As a result, Iran has been unable to modernize most of its 1960’s/1970’s vintage military arsenal, much of which was supplied by the US and Britain to the Shah. Iran’s decrepit civilian aircraft fleet has also been punished by US-led embargos, resulting in numerous crashes due to worn-out equipment and lack of spare parts.

An estimated 45-50% of Iran’s small, obsolete air force is grounded by lack of spare parts or repairs. Iran’s pilots, who last saw action during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War, have critically little flying time. Iran’s air force lacks modern radars, communications or electronic warfare equipment.

The mainstay of Iran’s air force remains about 60 ancient US-built F-14 naval fighters, F-4 Phantom strike aircraft dating from the Vietnam era, and some old US F-5 trainers. Iran also has a grab bag of some 25 Soviet/Russian Mig-29’s, a similar number of capable SU-24 strike aircraft, and some 20 Chinese outdated F-7 fighters. The US -supplied aircraft all suffer from metal fatigue and are more of a danger to their hapless pilots than an enemy.

Iran’s bathtub navy has a few small frigates and three modern Russian Kilo-class submarines that are effective in shallow coastal waters. Iran’s sizeable numbers of Chinese anti-ship missiles on shore, at sea and carried by aircraft might score a few lucky hits on the mighty US Navy or oil tankers, so to could its ample supply of magnetic mines.

But any US assault of Iran, would open by surprise attacks from waves of cruise missiles and stealth aircraft against Iranian air bases, ports and communications hubs. Most of Iran’s air force and navy would be destroyed. Iran’s obsolete air defenses would be put out of action by missile and cyber-warfare attacks.

Iran’s primary method of counter-attacking would consist of commando raids against US bases in the Gulf, Afghanistan, Pakistan and, possibly, on Saudi oil installations. But no such attacks would prove decisive or alter the course of the conflict. Iran would be pounded until its attackers decided to cease fire.

Iran’s claim last week that it might launch pre-emptive attacks on potential attackers is not credible. Iran simply lacks any effective, long-range offensive capability to attack either Israel or put US bases in the region out of action. Its shorter ranged missiles could inflict some damage on US bases in the Gulf.

Iran’s medium-ranged Shahab-3 missile, of which Tehran is said to have a score, has offensive capability – but only if armed with a nuclear warhead, which US intelligence says Iran does not possess. Shrinking a nuclear device into Shahab’s small nosecone and ensuring it will survive violent g-forces and heat is a major technological challenge believed beyond Iran’s current capability.

Without nuclear warheads, the not very accurate Shahab’s are of little more use than Saddam Hussein’s laughably ineffective Scuds in 2003. Firing a few at Israel would immediately be picked up by the US early-alert satellite system, into which Israel is linked, and run the risk of triggering possible nuclear strikes by Israel.

Who knows if an incoming missile has a conventional or nuclear warhead? Israel might just believe its own propaganda about Iran’s alleged nuclear capabilities.

Iran could put up fierce resistance to a US-led ground invasion, but the Pentagon makes clear it has no such intention after the debacles in Afghanistan and Iraq. US air power will wage this conflict, if it comes.

Submitted by Jim Sorter



Saying No to Militarism

by Robert C. Koehler | February 24, 2012

No mail on Saturday, maybe, but small-town police get armored personnel carriers?

Let's take a moment -- in the context of these bitter times, and President Obama's recent austerity budget proposal -- to celebrate the questions the residents of Keene, N.H., are asking their city council about the kind of world we're creating.

First of all, the grotesque insult of "austerity" in the shadow of limitless military spending is destroying our national sanity. And the proposed cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, mental health services, environmental cleanup, National Parks programs and even, yeah, Saturday mail delivery are miniscule compared to the unmet social needs we haven't yet begun to address in this country, in education, renewable energy and so much more. But we're spending with reckless abandon to arm ourselves and our allies and provoke our enemies, and sometimes arm them as well, creating the sort of world no one (almost no one) wants: a world of endless war.

The official 2012 Defense budget of \$530 billion, and just a shade under that for 2013, leaves out an enormous amount of defense-related government spending. According to a recent piece in *The Atlantic*, when you add in the cost of our wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, our spending on nuclear weapons development (relegated to the Department of Energy budget), Homeland Security, veterans' medical care (inadequate as it is, but rising), military aid to allies (\$3 billion to Israel, for instance), and interest on the military's portion of the debt (projected to be \$63.7 billion in 2013), our defense spending almost doubles, to \$986.1 billion in 2012 and \$994.3 billion in 2013.

In the last 13 years, according to *Business Insider*, U.S. military spending has increased 114 percent. We spend more on the military than the next 15 biggest military spenders combined -- and more than all 50 states spend, in total, on health, education, welfare and safety. In 2007, some \$11 billion was simply written off as "lost" in Iraq, the *Business Insider* story notes.

And the military is, in effect, our 51st state, albeit one surrounded by barbed wire. "The total known land area occupied by U.S. bases and facilities is 15,654 square miles -- bigger than D.C., Massachusetts, and New Jersey combined," according to the article.

And beyond anything that appears on a ledger sheet, the unregulated military has carte blanche to spend the earth's resources and contaminate the planet. "The U.S. Department of Defense is the largest polluter in the world," Lucinda Marshall wrote at *Common Dreams* several years ago, "producing more hazardous waste than the five largest U.S. chemical companies combined."

This waste includes pesticides and defoliants (e.g., Agent Orange), solvents, petroleum, lead, mercury and, horrifically, depleted uranium and nuclear fallout. The military's legacy -- in Iraq, Afghanistan and Bosnia, where we have fought recent wars; on the tiny island of Vieques, off the coast of Puerto Rico, where the U.S. Navy tested weapons for more than 60 years; and in the Nevada desert and the Marshall Islands, where we tested our nuclear weapons above ground -- is cancer, birth defects and a devastated environment.

All to what end? "National defense" is perhaps the most cynical -- and effective -- lie in human history, commanding the quaking allegiance of the populace over and over again, justifying virtually any activity, devouring the planet's resources, and ever failing to deliver the promised peace, indeed, delivering only the conditions for the next war. Few things in today's world are more unsettling than the fact that "national defense" still owns the country's politics, its budget -- and the minds of far too many of its citizens.

Welcome, then, to Keene, N.H., a town of 23,000 people that, despite its low crime rate and general friendliness, was set at the end of last year to score a "tank" -- actually, an eight-ton Bearcat armored personnel vehicle -- for its police department, thanks to a nearly \$300,000 grant from the Department of Homeland Security.

When the news began circulating, the townspeople, instead of going along with the deal, actually stood up to the mayor and city council, not simply questioning the need for this military vehicle (even though it was "free"), but expressing concern that the militarization of the police department could harm their community.

An anti-tank petition garnered 500 signatures, and earlier this month more than 100 people, mostly opposing the tank, showed up at a city council meeting to speak their minds, according to the *Keene Sentinel*.

"This vehicle is continuing to fund the culture of war in this country, and Congress will continue to fuel the culture of war unless we do something," said Terry Clark, the lone city councilor to oppose the deal, as quoted in the *Sentinel*. "Do we want a militarized police force in Keene? We can take the lead and ask the council to rescind its decision, and have the courage to do what Congress does not."

In contrast, the Bearcat was defended by the government sales manager for Lenco, the vehicle's manufacturer, as quoted in *Huffington Post*: "I don't think there's any place in the country where you can say, 'That isn't a likely terrorist target.' ... If a group of terrorists decide to shoot up a shopping mall in a town like Keene, wouldn't you rather be prepared?"

The residents of Keene have so far said no to the fear peddlers. May their stand give all of us the courage to do the same.

About author Robert Koehler, an award-winning, Chicago-based journalist, is an editor at Tribune Media Services and nationally syndicated writer. You can respond to this column at koehlercw@gmail.com



Relatives Mourn Soldiers' Deaths in Afghanistan

The Associated Press

Sunday, Feb. 26, 2012 | 3:07 a.m.

A sister of one of two U.S. military police officers killed in the violent backlash in Afghanistan over the burning of Qurans at a U.S. base says relatives of both men are devastated by their deaths.

Amanda Meland, the oldest sister of Cpl. T.J. Conrad of Roanoke, Va., who was posthumously promoted to sergeant, said he had spoken recently about the violent protests. Conrad, the father of a 7-month-old baby, deployed to Afghanistan in January and was to have celebrated his 23rd birthday on March 6.

"You see it on TV, you see it in the movies, but you just never expect it's going to be your family or your soldier," she told The Associated Press after being advised of Conrad's death.

The bodies of Conrad and Sgt. Joshua Born, 25, of Niceville, Fla., both assigned to the Army's Fort Stewart in Georgia, were returned Saturday to the military mortuary at Dover Air Force Base.

On Thursday, an Afghan soldier turned his gun on foreign troops, killing the two American soldiers, during a riot outside a U.S. base in Nangarhar province, officials have said.

Rising anti-American sentiments in that country over the Quran burnings have resulted in two more American deaths since: two U.S. military advisers, a lieutenant colonel and a major whose names were not immediately released, were found dead in their office with shots to the back of their heads. It is still unclear who shot the men inside a heavily secured wing of Afghanistan's Interior Ministry, or if the attacker had been apprehended.

On Saturday, white-gloved military teams somberly lifted the flag-draped cases bearing the remains of Conrad and Born from an arriving plane at Dover Air Force Base before transferring them to the mortuary.

Contacted by AP, Meland said Conrad was in good spirits Wednesday when she and other relatives last spoke with him via Skype. She added: "... He did say that things were starting to get crazy from the backlash."

Conrad wanted to make the military his career, planning to reenlist and hoping to be stationed at Fort Eustis, Va., to be closer to family, according to his sister. Meland also said he was hoping to have another baby.

Meland said Conrad's widow, Holly, was not at the couple's house when military officials initially came to notify her of his death. "They had come earlier, but she was not there. She had actually just mailed out his birthday package," Meland explained.

Born's relatives could not immediately be reached.

Days of protests in Afghanistan prompted that country's president on Sunday to appeal in a televised address to his compatriots for calm.

More than two dozen people, including the four U.S. troops, have been killed since Tuesday, when it first emerged that Qurans and religious materials had been thrown into a fire pit used to burn garbage at Bagram Air Field, a large U.S. base north of Kabul. President Barack Obama and other U.S. officials apologized and said it was a terrible mistake, but the incident has sent thousands into the streets in Afghanistan.

Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind. War will exist until that distant day when the conscientious objector enjoys the same reputation and prestige that the warrior does today."

John F. Kennedy





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Chapter 56**

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LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

VFP56 DUES NOW DUE

Members,

January 2012 started a new year for collection of VFP Humboldt Bay Chapter 56 membership dues. Dues for VFP56 are \$20.00 per year.

Please make your \$20.00 check out to VFP56 and send it to: Veterans for Peace, P.O. Box 532, Bayside, CA 95524, attention John Schaefer.

Membership dues are used during the year to sponsor special events and activities which support our message of peace. Without you we could not accomplish all that we do to make this world a better place.

DUES ARE TAX DEDUCTABLE

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