



VETERANS FOR PEACE
HUMBOLDT BAY
CHAPTER 56

THE FOGHORN

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“Cutting Through the Fog of War”

Veterans Village Humboldt at Incopah and the Patrick McCaffrey Foundation

By Marc Knipper

Hi all, we are currently focused on Wellsville, NY and I will have joined Nadia there and returned by the time you receive this newsletter. We had seven houses donated to the foundation there, unfortunately three of the seven houses are totaled, two will be completely demolished, while one will need to be stripped down to the foundation. I will concentrate on the other four and will get as much physical work done while there, and line out a crew to complete the job once I am gone, a colleague, friend of the foundation and Vietnam Era Veteran named Steve, with thirty years construction experience, will supervise. Our reasoning for focusing on the Wellsville site is we need a viable example of our vision to share with potential donors. A non-profit fund raising group named ORCA is working on raising funds on our behalf and urged us to do this. We thought that Wellsville was our best bet with ready to go structures, which was prior to Nadia's arrival and inventory with Steve of the houses; we were hoping to get the biggest bang for our buck there, twas not to be. We will have the four houses up and functioning very soon, and yet the focus has broadened to include Humboldt, as a viable Veterans Village chapter show piece. Therefore I will be in Humboldt for the rest of the winter to focus on Incopah. It is all very exciting and we look forward to serving our brothers and sisters returning from war, very soon.

We have focused our recent efforts on supporting Patti Toroni of Patti's Wagon, infamy. As many of you may know the health department paid Patti a visit, she has also been threatened with losing her VA benefits, all of which have little or nothing to do with facts or the law. It is completely legal to feed others, period. And working as an apolitical volunteer cannot affect service connected VA benefit awards.

Patti has chosen to play by the rules laid out by the health department of obtaining access to a certified kitchen where she can continue to prepare meals for houseless veterans and hungry houseless others, who slip through the cracks of, or avoid, other social services. Patti is fully supported by the Patrick McCaffrey Foundation and a member of our community. Therefore, the Veterans Service Committee and Veterans Village Humboldt have been helping Patti with referrals on, and funding for, the rent of a certified kitchen. We also continue to provide Patti with clothing and camping equipment donations for veterans. She is a member of the Board for Veterans Village Humboldt and our street outreach person extraordinaire.

Veterans Village Humboldt and the VFP Outreach Committee are planning a Community Round Table discussion in early October, with local veteran's service providers and other interested parties, to build community and share the vision of what Incopah intends to offer. How we may support others efforts and what would they like to see from us. All email lists we have access to, including this membership, will be informed and invited to attend. Special snail mail invites will be sent out as well, once we have secured and decided on a good date and location.

All for now, finally, able to practice peace with a smile with each mindful step I take, hillbilly style... ever forward, toward true peace and love, Marc B. Knipper for the VFP Veterans Service Committee and the Patrick McCaffrey Foundation.

Veterans Village Humboldt at “Incopah” Retreat and Wellness Center

By Marc Knipper

- * A Non Denominational, Spirituality Based Center
- * Alcohol and other drug free space
- * No Weapons
- * Must do one's best to get along with others
- * Smoking and campfires in designated areas only

We will be able to offer veterans retreat and wellness on the site once we have shelters and gardens in place sometime in spring 2009.

We are currently focused on logistical and fund developmen. Our focus will be on the most disenfranchised veterans, those who are houseless and with severe traumas. These veterans will be offered housing, food and clothing, and supervised wellness programs focused on their individual needs.

Program lengths for our guests will be from one to three months or more, to be assessed at intake and revisited throughout their stay.

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Veterans' Village....continued from page 1

Some veterans will stay on as caretakers and guides and participate in construction work parties on site learning green trade skills.

All veterans are welcome to return as guests at Incopah at any time for TBD (to be determined, by need and screening), times of stay.

Incopah will offer a variety of skill development curriculum at the center such as alternative energy and green construction, river and mountain guide, fire suppression, ceramics, beekeeping, and gardening/farming techniques.

Our intention is to become completely self sustaining, in time.

We have volunteer and paid support from Psychiatrists, LC-SW's, massage therapists, yoga and other alternative therapy support.

We also have on board contractors, Design engineers, a legal team, street outreach services, and plenty of elbow grease, trucks, equipment and materials.

Upcoming; Round table discussion of all local veterans service providers and interested parties on what Incopah has to offer and how we may support others efforts, what would they like to see Incopah be?

We are happy to accept financial or material donations and volunteer support.

Donations can be sent to the Patrick McCaffrey Foundation, 3089 North Tracy Blvd. Suite 111, Tracy, CA. 95376. Please print Humboldt Chapter in the memo section of your check or pay pal donation.

Thank you.

'In Their Boots' Webcast Series Airs Story on Veteran Limb Loss, PTSD
<http://www.in.their.boots.com>

Beginning in July, in the days immediately before Independence Day, a riveting series called "In Their Boots" laced up and hit the Internet for the first time. It offers the nation's 99.5% of non-serving civilians an intimate portrait into the struggles and successes of our military families today.

Ever since its first webcast, host Jan Bender (an Iraq vet and Marine himself) and the Brave New Foundation team have been broadcasting a new live and interactive episode every Wednesday night at 4pm Pacific/7pm Eastern. Each week, viewers are invited to listen to the stories of Iraq and Afghanistan service and family members, learn about the groups and organizations that are helping them, and then called to help in some way as well.



In an episode episode ("War Scar"), which aired on August 27, 2008, we were introduced to Jerry Cortinas, "a Green Beret in the U.S. Army Special Forces from 1997 to 2004. The focused and challenging work of a Green Beret was what he knew and what he loved. While operating a rocket propelled grenade in Afghanistan in December 2002, the device malfunctioned and exploded, taking his left forearm and hand. Jerry could no longer do his job. He felt like an outsider in his own hometown."

Jerry's wife, Celina, paints a portrait of a strong (yet still made of flesh and blood and feelings and prides and hurts like the rest of us) Army wife, now faced with "the challenge of helping her husband adapt to civilian life and supporting him as he returned to his role as husband and father" to their two kids.

Lonnie C. Moore, a Program Analyst with the U.S. Army Warrior Transition Office, also appeared. The trailer:

Past episodes appear at the "In Their Boots" website and host Jan Bender's YouTube page.

"In Their Boots" series trailer:

About Episodes 5 and 6: "When [Army soldier] Domonique Tatum returned from Iraq he expected to be treated like a hero, instead he found himself homeless and suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress." Episode 5 includes interviews with Mary Tatum Chappell, Domonique's mother, and Floyd 'Shad' Meshad, Founder and President of the National Veterans Foundation, while episode 6 closes with Matt Randle, Institutional Outreach Coordinator of Vets4Vets.

Submitted by Jim Sorter

"The End of an Era"

VFP members Brian Willson, Becky Luening and Pedro departed for their new home in Portland on September the 10th. Brian commented that it was "sad, exciting and incredibly stressful" as they watched the last of their belongings get loaded up on to the moving van.



MEASURE F & J ENDORSEMENT FORMS

Nate Lomba requests a copy of the Measure F & J donation/endorsement forms be placed in the October Foghorn. Both forms must go in because election laws require that we keep the dealings of each measure separate.

I support Measure F the **ARCATA YOUTH PROTECTION ACT** Initiative

To protect the welfare of our youth, the People of Arcata Ordain as Follows:

No person who is employed by or an agent of the United States government shall, within the City of Arcata, in the execution of his or her job duties, recruit, initiate contact with for the purpose of recruiting, or promote the future enlistment of any person under the age of eighteen into any branch of the United States Armed Forces.

This initiative does not prohibit youth under the age of 18 from voluntarily approaching military recruiters if they wish to do so.

Enclosed is my donation in the amount* of \$ _____ .

* If your donation is for \$100.00, or more, Federal elections law requires that you furnish the following information :

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Occupation _____

Make your check payable to: "Vote YES on Measure F Committee"
Mail your donation to: P. O. Box 4235, Arcata, CA 95518 - 4235

I wish to be an endorser of Measure F to protect Arcata's youth under the age of 18 from military recruitment. By endorsing Measure F, I understand my name will be used in public advertisements and on the "stoprecruitingkids.org" web site (please provide your name and contact information above).

Signature _____ Date _____ Telephone (for verification) _____

I support Measure J the **EUREKA YOUTH PROTECTION ACT** Initiative

To protect the welfare of our youth, the People of Eureka Ordain as Follows:

No person who is employed by or an agent of the United States government shall, within the City of Eureka, in the execution of his or her job duties, recruit, initiate contact with for the purpose of recruiting, or promote the future enlistment of any person under the age of eighteen into any branch of the United States Armed Forces.

This initiative does not prohibit youth under the age of 18 from voluntarily approaching military recruiters if they wish to do so.

Enclosed is my donation in the amount* of \$ _____ .

* If your donation is for \$100.00, or more, Federal elections law requires that you furnish the following information :

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Occupation _____

Make your check payable to: "Vote YES on Measure J Committee"
Mail your donation to: P. O. Box 1441, Eureka, CA 95502 - 1441

I wish to be an endorser of Measure J to protect Eureka's youth under the age of 18 from military recruitment. By endorsing Measure J, I understand my name will be used in public advertisements and on the "stoprecruitingkids.org" web site (please provide your name and contact information above).

Signature _____ Date _____ Telephone (for verification) _____



The Struggles and Rewards of the G.I. Hotline

By Mashaw McGuinnis

Imagine for a moment you are a young person who enlisted in the army or Marines in order to pay for your college education. You've done your tour of duty in Iraq, and received a serious back injury which will probably affect you the rest of your life. After your discharge from the hospital, you try to get used to the idea that prescription painkillers will be a part of your daily routine for the rest of your life. While you are waiting for the paperwork to be processed, which will give you a desk job, you learn that your unit is getting ready for redeployment. What a raw deal. But imagine your surprise when you learn that you are being redeployed with them!

Suppose your son or daughter has gone AWOL, and they are suicidal. A military doctor has prescribed anti-depressants for him or her and you are told to watch them closely. The police show up and take them into custody, but refuse to take their medication with them, and worse they won't tell you where your son or daughter will be sent. Who would you turn to for answers?

These scenarios are just some of the unnerving situations the volunteer counselors for the G.I. Hotline deal with regularly. Several times a day, anonymous calls come in from all over the country. Some are active military, some are veterans, and some are young civilians who have gone on delayed enlistment but changed their mind, fearing they've made the worst mistake of their life.

A private, quiet place for these types of calls is critical for the success of the G.I. Hotline and with the recent hibernation of the Redwood Peace and Justice Center, members of the Hotline found themselves scrambling for a new home. A quiet, unobtrusive place was crucial but with little income of their own, affordability was equally important. In Arcata's rental market that was a tall order.

The service that the Hotline provides is also a tall order, essentially extending support to individuals who find themselves trapped in the labyrinth of wartime military bureaucracy. This work naturally falls right in line with the Veterans For Peace goals.

Recognizing this, chapter 56 of VFP made a generous donation to the hotline of \$900. The contribution will help the Hotline maintain their constant presence on the other end of the phone line for those facing difficult situations, and nowhere else to turn. Just a few weeks ago the Hotline received a call from a Marine recruiter who after eight years realized that he could no longer continue his work, and believed that he might be a Conscientious Objector. Life changing decisions like these usually require many phone conversations and a lot of handholding.

As of this writing, Barbara Goldberg the senior member of the Hotline was working fast to find affordable insurance in time, so they can move by the end of the month and their counseling can continue uninterrupted. As more and more active service members realize their experience is not what their recruiters had promised, calls for counseling are on the rise. This means even more volunteers are needed to field their calls. Anyone wishing to give service by becoming a volunteer counselor can call Jon Reisdorf at 822-4595 for information about training.



Here Carol Pridgeon can be seen waiting patiently to move into our new GI Hotline office.

“Through violence you may murder a murderer, but you can’t murder murder.

Through violence you may murder a liar, but you can’t establish truth.

Through violence you may murder a hater, but you can’t murder hate.

Darkness cannot put out darkness. Only light can do that....

Difficult and painful as it is, we must walk on in the days ahead with an audacious faith in the future. When our days become dreary with low-hovering clouds of despair, and when our nights become darker than a thousand midnights, let us remember that there is a creative force in this universe, working to pull down the gigantic mountains of evil, a power that is able to make a way out of no way and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.”

Martin Luther King, August 1967



SOLDIER SUICIDES FOR 2008

WASHINGTON - Soldier suicides this year could surpass the record rate of last year, Army officials said Thursday, urging military leaders at all levels to redouble prevention efforts for a force strained by two wars.

As of the end of August, there were 62 confirmed suicides among active duty soldiers and Guard and Reserve troops called to active duty, officials said. Another 31 deaths appear to be suicides but are still being investigated.

If all are confirmed, that means that the number for 2008 could eclipse the 115 of last year — and the rate per 100,000 could surpass that of the civilian population, Col. Eddie Stephens, deputy director of human resources policy, said at a Pentagon news conference.

“Army leaders are fully aware that repeated deployments have led to increased distress and anxiety for both soldiers and their families,” Army Secretary Pete Geren said.

“The Army is committed to ensuring that all soldiers and their families receive the behavioral health care they need,” he said in a statement distributed at the press conference on National Suicide Prevention Week starting Sunday.

“Installations and units across the Army have been directed to redouble their efforts in awareness and prevention training and soldier care and support services,” Stephens said.

To try to stem the continually growing number of suicides, the Army already has been increasing the number of staff psychiatrists and other mental health staff as well as chaplains and bolstering programs both at home and at the battlefronts. Officials also are about to issue a new interactive video for troops and will be adding a new program on resilience to basic training starting in January, said Brig. Gen. Rhonda L. Cornum, an assistant Army surgeon general.

“There are no simple problems and there are no simple solutions,” Cornum said. “There is no program that has been shown to be truly effective at preventing suicides ... Success will be the sum of a number of smaller steps.”

As officials have said before, Cornum said the main

factors in soldier suicides continues to be problems with their personal relationships, legal and financial issues, work problems and the repeated deployments and longer tour lengths prompted by an Afghan war entering its eighth year and Iraq campaign in its sixth.

The Army has come under unprecedented stress as the main force in the two largely ground wars

Of the confirmed deaths so far this year, three soldiers were in the Army Reserves and four in the Army National Guard.

If the overall numbers continue through December as they have been, Stephens said, they would eclipse the 115 of 2007, 102 in 2006, 87 in 2005 and 67 in 2004.

The rate per 100,000 soldiers also has been rising and could be surpassed. It was 18.1 per 100,000 last year — the highest since the Army started keeping record in 1980. That compared to a rate of 17.5 in 2006 and 9.8 in 2002 — the first full year after the start of the war in Afghanistan.

The rate for 2008 has not been calculated, officials said, but if the trend holds, it would surpass the demographically adjusted rate of 19.5 per 100,000 for the civilian population, Stephens said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the suicide rate for U.S. society overall was about 11 per 100,000 in 2004, the latest year for which the agency has figures. But the Army says that when civilian rates are adjusted to cover the same age and gender mix that exists in the Army — a younger and largely male population — the civilian rate is more like 19.5 per 100,000.

The Army has come under unprecedented stress as the main force in the two largely ground wars.

The Marine Corps, the second biggest force in Iraq — and even younger and more male than the Army — had a rate of 16.5 per 100,000 in 2007, the last year readily available. The Air Force and Navy had rates of a little over 10 per 100,000, according to defense records.

Col. Carl Castro, director of military operational medical research for the Army, said that in addition to the many programs officials are trying, there needs to be a cultural shift in the military to get people to focus more on mental health and fitness.

“It takes some time ... to get a cultural shift,” he said “Some-

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Soldier Suicide Rate: continued from page 5

times they take decades.”

In addition to suicide prevention programs, the Pentagon also has been working to encourage troops to seek mental health care by reducing the stigma associated with getting help. Officials believe many who need help don't get it because they fear it will hurt their careers.

Officials last year also budgeted \$25 million for the “Strong Bonds” program, run by chaplains and aimed at strengthening personal relationships strained by long and repeated separations as well as other stresses.

Submitted by Jim Sorter

Veterans Find Relief at North Coast Stand Down

By Mashaw McGuinnis

The first weekend in October marks the annual North Coast Stand Down at Humboldt County's Fairgrounds in Ferndale. This fabulous event offers community members and businesses a chance to directly help homeless Veterans and their families.

When I volunteered last year, I was impressed to find not only representatives from the VA and local employment agencies but surprising things like a barbers providing complimentary hair cuts and shaves, free sleeping bags and even a fully functioning

DMV counter! There vets could receive an up-to-date permanent California I.D. Basic needs like showers, hot meals, clothing and shoes which most of take for granted can be a rare and a welcome relief to homeless veterans. Individuals can get those things and much more at the North Coast Stand Down.

The service I provided last year was as a Massage Therapist. I took my table and gave complimentary back, neck and shoulder massage all afternoon. I had the pleasure of working on all different types of people. Young, old, veterans and volunteers alike.

Every person I met that weekend seemed happy to be there and participate. By the end of my day I felt as if I had been the recipient, not the provider, of an important service.

You can be a part of this event and have a direct and positive impact on homeless veterans by contacting: director@northcoaststanddown.org Or call (707) 826-6191.

Army Strong? Ft. Hood Soldier Kills Commanding Officer and Himself

By Carissa Picard

Yesterday morning, a Fort Hood soldier (22) shot and killed his commanding officer (a 24 year-old Lieutenant) and himself in front of dozens of witnesses and police officers. Both soldiers were assigned to 1st Cavalry Division, a division that had just finished a fifteen month tour in Iraq last December and is currently preparing for its next twelve month tour this winter.

The facts surrounding this case are unclear. Some neighbors said he had been AWOL when his sergeant and lieutenant came to see him but the public affairs office said that he was on transitional leave and the visit was pertaining to stolen equipment. According to one eyewitness, the police were called when a significant amount of ammunition was seen through the blinds of the soldier's living room window. By the time the police got there, however, the soldier had stepped outside of his apartment to talk to his lieutenant. Once outside, he shot his lieutenant, exchanged fire with the police, and then shot himself. Autopsies are being performed on both soldiers.

I am extremely curious as to what kind of discharge this soldier was getting. I would be very surprised if he was not exhibiting “red flag” behavior prior to this visit; i.e., engaging in acts of misconduct or other self-destructive behavior signaling that he was a soldier in distress.

Ironically, last week the Army recognized National Suicide Prevention Week. The Army also has a “battle buddy” program/policy to combat suicide. Soldiers are teamed up in pairs and they are supposed to keep an eye on each other.

Despite these efforts, the number of Army suicides in 2008 is expected to surpass the number of suicides in 2007, continuing its post 9/11 annual record-breaking trend (with each new year breaking the record of the one preceding it). For the first time since the Vietnam War, soldier suicides are expected to exceed the civilian suicide rate. That being said, one needs to look not just at active duty Army suicide rates in general, but at combat veteran suicide rates in particular. Only about half of our soldiers have been deployed to a combat zone. Once a soldier is an OIF/OEF (Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom) veteran (i.e., served in combat in Iraq or Afghanistan), the chances of committing suicide increase significantly. VA Secretary Peake testified before Congress in May. Young male OIF/OEF veterans (18 - 35) are twice

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Soldier Kills Self & Officer: continued from page 6

as likely to commit suicide as their civilian counterparts and young female OIF/OEF veterans are three times as likely to commit suicide.

Suicides are not the problem, however, they are a symptom of the problem: the Army does not put nearly as much emphasis on the mental health and well-being of its soldiers as it does on their physical health and well-being. Yet after waging seven years of ground warfare in Afghanistan and five years of ground warfare in Iraq, one would think that the military would realize that service member psychological stability is ESSENTIAL to unit readiness and troop morale—not to mention public safety.

The Army says that it appreciates the importance of mental health but as an advocate I have seen unit after unit choose to punish a post-combat soldier for misconduct rather than help that soldier get evaluated and treated for PTSD (as well as traumatic brain injuries). This is a choice that Commanders make and it is a choice that completely undermines the Department of the Army’s own messaging on the importance of good mental health. Nonetheless, this is happening at Army bases all over the country.

If we are going to continue to engage in these prolonged military conflicts overseas, then mental health care has to be made a priority. It has to be generously funded by Congress and aggressively utilized by the Department of Defense. If we don’t, then this won’t be the last time you will read a headline like this.

Carissa Picard is an attorney, a blue star wife, and a soldier’s advocate. She is also the founder and President of Military Spouses for Change.

Submitted by Carl Stancil

Vets For Peace Annual Yard Sale Succeeds Once More

By Mashaw McGuinnis

September 20th and 21st marked the Veteran’s for Peace annual yard sale, and proves once again that one person’s junk is another person’s treasure. Strategically situated in an ideal location for foot traffic, on 15th street in Arcata, between “G” and “H” Streets, this year’s event raised over \$1300. Not nearly as much as the last two years, but still a success according to Laura Simpson, the fundraiser’s main coordinator. “I think the lower amount was for several reasons” she told the

Foghorn. “We had less big ticket items than last year, and a somewhat smaller turnout. But I also think with the recent economic news people are just a lot more cautious about spending.”

John Schafer, the Veterans for Peace treasurer had no complaints as he happily accepted the money on Sunday evening. Though the event requires a lot of planning and people power, it still remains a favorite over the fast paced, sweat-drenched Reggae Rising food booth. The annual yard sale gives VFP members a chance to socialize and answer people’s questions about what Vets For Peace do. It’s a relaxed pace, and many VFP members stopping buy to drop off donations end up buying something as well.

Not only do fundraisers like this bring in revenue, but it helps members and friends are looking to get rid of excess goods but don’t want to see it wind up in the landfills. It’s a win-win situation for everyone. So mark your calendars for next September’s yard sale!



John Schafer happily accepts the receipts from Laura Simpson for the VFP yard sale held on September 20th and 21st.

ALL WHO AFFIRM THE USE OF VIOLENCE ADMIT IT IS ONLY A MEANS TO ACHIEVE JUSTICE AND PEACE. BUT PEACE AND JUSTICE ARE NONVIOLENCE...THE FINAL END OF HISTORY. THOSE WHO ABANDON NONVIOLENCE HAVE NO SENSE OF HISTORY. RATHER THEY ARE BYPASSING HISTORY, FREEZING HISTORY, BETRAYING HISTORY.

ANDRÉ TROCME





Veterans For Peace
Chapter 56
Phone 707-826-7124
Email: VFP56@aol.com
WE'RE ON THE WEB:
<http://www.vfp56.org>

LEADERSHIP TEAM
Rob Hepburn, Steve Stamnes
Steve Sottong, Linda Sorter
Jim Sorter, John Schaefer
Gordon Anderson

STANDING COMMITTEES
WU/WMD: Peter Aronson
General Store: Doug Smith
Media: Becky Luening
VEOP: Carl Stancil
Jon Reisdorf
VSC: Marc Knipper

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

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 turtldncer@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.

NORTH COAST STAND DOWN

North Coast Stand Down takes place this year October 3 through 5, at the County Fairgrounds.

There is a need for volunteers, starting noon October 2 through October 5, in four hour shifts. There is an overnight shift as well, 1900 to 0700.

If you can help at any time, call Kim Hall at 826 6191 or 845 4788, or the Redwood Vet Center at 444 8271. their web site is northcoaststanddown.org.

I just received a package in the mail, with hand out cards for participants and a volunteer sign up sheet and a veteran registration form.

Submitted by John Schaefer