



The Trauma of Civilization for Our Species: War and its Victims

by S. Brian Willson, August 17, 2007

According to the US foreign policy oversight organization, “Just Foreign Policy,” the number of Iraqi deaths due to the US invasion and continuing occupation now exceeds **one million**. It is more than ten times greater than most estimates used in the US media. See <<http://www.justforeignpolicy.org/iraq/iraqdeaths.html>>.

This estimate is based primarily on the only valid scientific study conducted of violent Iraqi deaths caused by the US aggression. In its July 2006 issue, an article in the prestigious medical journal, *The Lancet*, estimated that over 600,000 Iraqis had been killed up to that time. But, of course the killing has continued at a sickening pace, and by using the Iraq Body Count as a guide for the rate of increase since July 2006, the new figure has gone beyond a million. [The study survey was done by Iraqi physicians and overseen by epidemiologists at Johns Hopkins University’s Bloomberg School of Public Health. The findings were published online October 11, 2006 by the British medical journal *The Lancet*].

Since the US-initiated war started on March 19, 2003, the number of Iraqi deaths average 18,868 per month, or about 629 per day!

Let us compare this figure with the US war and occupation of Southeast Asia from March 8, 1965, the date the US Marines landed at DaNang, through January 27, 1973, the date of the ceasefire (though there were some casualties after this date). It is generally believed now that more than 5 million Southeast Asians were killed due to the US aggression. In the 94 months plus 19 days of that inclusive period, March 8, 1965 through January 27, 1973, we find 1,740 Asians killed *per day*, nearly 3 times the already staggering Iraqi figure!

Now let us compare the death rate for the 37-month Korean War, where it is now estimated that another 5 million Asians were killed. During this conflict, we discover that 4,505 Koreans and Chinese were killed, *every day*—more than two-and-a-half times the daily figure for Viet Nam, Cambodia, and Laos.

One more comparison is in order. There is a general consensus that somewhere in the vicinity of 50 to 55 million people were killed during World War II. Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. Japan surrendered on August 14, 1945, Germany already having been defeated in May 1945. If we

take the figure of 52,500,000 dead during the war, and use the number of war days as 2,173, then we are staggered with 24,160 deaths *per day* over a nearly six-year period! This figure is well over five times the daily deaths from Korea. And this does not include all post-1945 radiation victims from the dropping of the enriched uranium and plutonium bombs on August 6 and 9.

Historians estimate 14,500 *major* wars have occurred over the past 5,500 years with the advent of civilization, claiming
See “War Casualties” on page 5...

PTSD Defined

by Paul Hibsichman, August 16, 2007

QUESTION: *Can a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder be caused by a traumatic situation existing over time?*

ANSWER: *Yes, according to the World Health Organization. No, according to US diagnostic criteria—the same used by the VA.*

QUESTION: *Does the VA have an official comment on these different systems?*

ANSWER: *Yes. It publishes a fact sheet to show that the US system is better, in its view.*

There is a great deal of research and original source material that has a high impact on veterans but is virtually unknown. Some parts of this information find their way into the media, often with considerable editorial twist. Others are picked up by “watch-dog” organizations and individuals engaged in the struggle to keep the vet informed. I want to join in the effort to inform vets about what is really going on behind the obvious and rather controlled dissemination of information.

Following up on the above questions and answers, the VA way of diagnosing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is based on “an event or events,” while the World Health Organization bases PTSD on “a stressful event or situation (either short- or long-lasting).”

The difference may not seem that significant at first.

See “PTSD Defined” on page 5...

Same Values, Different Tactics: Guatemalan Revolutionaries Now Struggle for Economic Survival

by Susan Stein, August 27, 2007

When the knock came as promised at our guesthouse door, it was just eight in the evening, yet our inclination would have been to retire early. We had spent several hours literally crammed into “chicken buses,” jostling and swaying through lush, curvaceous highlands west of Quetzaltenango, to arrive at a destination which we had only the day before read about on a flyer in a hostel. We had eaten a late lunch, followed a bit too soon by dinner, with a designated family in their rustic, cement-block home, and had more than our fill of tortillas and watery, sugared coffee to digest. But we had scheduled a “charla”—a talk—with an ex-combatant who would elaborate on the history of Santa Anita, or “Maya Civil,” the collective organic coffee and banana farm now hosting us.

We pulled up three plastic chairs in the foyer of the somewhat dilapidated *hospedaje* (hotel), a two-story building with several guest rooms and a plumbed bathroom. Later we would learn this had been the owner’s home when the land was a private plantation. It was now sustaining the community’s budding eco-tourism project by providing simple lodging for international visitors.

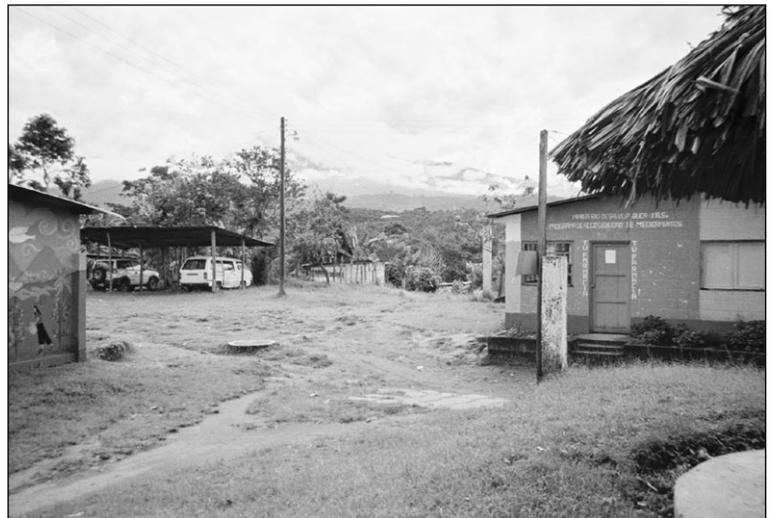
Rigoberto Agustín instantly disarmed us with his warm, vibrant and gentle character. Usually he spoke to larger groups, but seemed not in the least bit hesitant to talk with just the two of us. He obliged my request to pause periodically so that I could interpret the Spanish for my partner Tim. What did we want to know? he asked.

Rigo, the son of indigenous Mayan farmers, joined the guerrilla movement in 1970, at age 17, with convictions of bringing about economic and social justice, ending exploitation by Guatemala’s army-supported European elite government which has owned most of Guatemala’s land and extracted an almost feudal system of labor. A bit of history: In 1954, a CIA-organized coup overthrew Arbenz, the elected, socialist-leaning Guatemalan president who had nationalized the land holdings of US-owned United Fruit Company and redistributed uncultivated acres to landless peasants. CIA documents reveal that the overthrow was explicitly inspired by Arbenz’ socialism. Autocratic, repressive rule followed, which in turn led to the rise of insurgent groups who, minimally armed with mostly obsolete Soviet weapons, went into the mountains clandestinely and trained to target government installations as well as members of government security forces.

The Guatemalan government/army—Rigo describes them as one and the same—responded with a massive campaign of terror directed primarily against indigenous Mayan communi-

ties. It was almost impossible, Rigo explained, to find the rebels ensconced in the hills, thus the army chose to kill indiscriminately. Countless thousands of men, women and children were tortured and slaughtered as a means of dissuading others from supporting the revolutionaries; those killed were pronounced as having collaborated with the rebels. Fighting began in 1960 and lasted for over three decades. During this time over 400 Mayan villages were obliterated, including Rigo’s village of origin. Untold thousands of displaced war victims fled to refugee camps in Mexico. And in Guatemala, Rigo states that old mass graves of indigenous victims continue to be discovered to this day.

A combatant until the Peace Accords were signed in 1996, Rigo met his wife in the guerrilla movement, and their daughter, born in 1985, learned to shoot a gun by age six. When the agreements were signed between the revolutionary organizations and the government, it wasn’t that social equity had been achieved, rather that the rebels were exhausted and longed for a peaceful life. At a United Nations refugee camp, Rigo and



A view from the hill where the Santa Anita collective is situated.

over thirty other men discussed how to restart their lives. Like Rigo, many of them no longer had a home to return to. They decided they would obtain land and establish a collective coffee farm. Through the government’s Land Fund designed to resettle displaced populations, they were the second of four communities of ex-guerrillas to receive a loan. They found a long-abandoned plantation in total disarray but with fertile potential. Upon their arrival with their families in 1997, there were no houses, roads, electricity, water or schools for the 180 residents. Attention from international aid groups due to their

Continued top of next page...



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ex-combatant status inspired enough funding for them to build very basic homes, a schoolhouse, dirt roads, and a pharmacy.

Santa Anita was USDA Certified Organic in 2003. The community joined the Fair Trade Organic market, so they are guaranteed a minimum price for their coffee crop and more direct connections to foreign buyers, avoiding the exploitation of middlemen. (The bananas remain local.) Nonetheless, workers are earning less than \$4 per day, and “rustic” would be a euphemism for the poor condition of their homes. Many members have jobs outside the farm, and that income enables them to pay the community’s basic bills. The coffee we drank with the family who hosted us for meals was extremely weak by “first world” standards and the added sugar seemed to give it most of its taste. While this may reflect a cultural preference, it seems more likely that they simply cannot afford to consume their own product.

Rigo describes the transformation from guerrillas to coffee farmers as necessitating a major shift in attitude—from that of combatants following comandantes, to community planners, land cultivators and business owners competing in a limited international market. The economic reality has been quite difficult. Supportive non-profits such as Café Conciencia have helped with micro-loans and community development, but survival is not guaranteed. Market prices have been low, coffee cultivation has faced challenges, and in 2005 Hurricane Stan brought the situation from bad to worse, with landslides and ruined crops. There has been no way to repay their loan as yet. Rigo remained optimistic that the government would not evict them, nor did he believe it seriously expected to be paid back by 95% of those who received loans through the Land Fund. However, they will have to present a strong case that they are increasing production, that this takes time, and that they are working ceaselessly toward that end.

Rigo expressed passionately that having land is nothing without hard work. He also shared that both he and his wife are politically active as leaders in human rights organizations. In fact, they were to travel for several hours to Guatemala City, leaving at one that morning, to arrive in time for a meeting—yet this did not keep Rigo from talking with us till 10:30

that evening.

We asked about PTSD—did symptoms affect the ex-combatants? Rigo’s opinion was that those who had fought in the government’s army were greatly affected by post-traumatic stress, because they had been inducted, brainwashed to hate, and trained (thanks in part to School of the Americas) to torture and kill non-combatants. He gave a recent example of an ex-army soldier from a small Guatemalan town, who had tortured, decapitated, and buried his family members—in precisely the same manner as the army had trained him. Guerrillas, on the other hand, were strictly volunteers who had gone into the mountains for cause and conviction. While they had willingly disarmed, their essential democratic values hadn’t changed, and to this Rigo attributed an absence of post-trauma symptoms in former guerrillas. Some of Rigo’s peers had even volunteered to join other revolutionary struggles, such as in Nicaragua. Loss and grief, however, were undeniably present—both Rigo and another member we spoke with appeared teary when recounting the fact that they had lost close relatives and friends in the war.

Santa Anita strives to reflect the values of the 36-year struggle that preceded it. Its Board of Directors must be 50% women at all times; all members are free to choose any (or no) religious or political affiliation; education and healthcare are provided for all residents. The commitment to organic cultivation reflects respect for nature. The means of struggle have changed—from arms to farming implements, business savvy and education—yet the challenge is no less tremendous. Rigo describes Santa Anita as an imperfect community which serves nonetheless as a model of what people can accomplish.

Rigoberto Agustín opened out his arms periodically as he spoke, as eager to express his ideas with us as he would be hours later at a political meeting in the city. One of his fingers was shot off by the army in the war; the rest extend toward the sky.

Susan Stein is an associate member of VFP Chapter 56. She and her partner Tim visited the Santa Anita community this August while traveling in Guatemala.

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Reggae Issue Stirs Debate

To whom it may concern,

Let's start with your first paragraph: the term fledgling organization...right—the Mateel Community Center is over 25 years in the being. Is that fledgling? I think not. Paid staff? No, not much. People Productions, in failing its fiduciary responsibilities, has caused the Mateel to close and lay off any paid staff.

You obviously don't know anything nor care about the truth to print what you did. I and Fredy Champagne are only two of thousands who worked for over 15 years for the Mateel at Reggae on the River. We were working for the Mateel. Not People Productions.

You obviously feel that it is politically correct for a hired company to not share its bookkeeping for over 20 years—particularly the last three years—of not paying per the contract to the Mateel.

You obviously don't realize that the Mateel produces events all the time—like the Benbow Fair—many years and oh my goodness—it was a “safe event.”

We of Chapter 22 Veterans For Peace resent your publicity in the papers without indicating it is your Chapter 56 and not our Chapter 22 which is local, and Carol wouldn't let us have a booth for years. We just wanted a stop-the-war booth, an information booth. We didn't care about making any money—only to stop young people from [being killed]. We were rejected for three years. Finally, when Boots took over we were given a slot, until the chess game—or chicken game—the Mateel had no money to put on the event—we were facing bankruptcy of our community center. And still are—three years with no funding to keep the doors open. Not because of misspent monies...Because contracts were not honored nor paid.

Also, you state over 75 to 80 people signed some ad. In actuality, there were 62 or 63. So, another untruth.

Again, we watched the dance between Carol and the Mateel. By then, because Carol misappropriated funds—ok let's say it was People Productions—and stole our equipment to put on this event—I mean you must not have heard a real word about what went on down here. Only wanting your Chapter 56 funding by allowing a thief to rape our community center. Incredible. Hope you enjoyed the festival.

Carol and PP didn't single-handedly build our community center and Reggae on the River. We, the people of the Mateel Nation built our community center and created Reggae on the River.

We of Chapter 22 DO NOT support Carol B., PP, Tom Dimmick, or Reggae Rising. We support our Mateel Community Center.

We hope in the future you will enlighten yourselves. And please distinguish yourselves in the news as Chapter 56.

Your VFP newsletter certainly was written with lots of big words—like ethical—excuse me, I see nothing ethical about your being at Reggae Rising. I see you twist words in your newsletter, too, I guess, to make your decision to have a booth sound honorable. Makes one wonder about the Chapter 56 and your newsletters. Incredible.

Please do use a press release in the future to distinguish your Chapter 56 and its ideals (as it is not our Chapter 22 and our ideals). I don't like confusion and the implication that Veterans For Peace Chapter 22 supports Carol and her company and her friends.

Sherry Champagne

Veterans For Peace Chapter 22

Peter responds...

Earlier this month, VFP56 sold our Mexican meal at Reggae Rising. Last year, our first year vending, we did the same with Reggae On The River. Until very late in the planning for this year's festival no one knew if there was going to be a Reggae, and if so who would produce it.

I was so pleased our worthy group was one of the few non-profit organizations accepted into the Reggae vendor family. This year we applied to and were accepted to vend by BOTH promoters—ROTR (Mateel Community Center/2b1 Producers) AND RR (People Productions). The Reggae Planners for VFP56, after member input at one of our meetings, decided to vend regardless of which group put on the festival.

As far as I know, our members support the Mateel Community Center (MCC). I know I do. Some may not know VFP56 vended food at Summer Arts & Music Festival 2007 at Benbow Lake last month. We were contacted by the MCC to help them by selling our dinner (they needed more meals, more real food). I personally have been a MCC member for all of the 13 years I was a Reggae volunteer, and continue to support MCC events. The Community Center is the hub of SoHum for many and responsible for many great events!

VFP56 has received verbal and written complaints from five or six people for our participation in RR. Two or three of this group were VFP56 members who brought their concerns to July monthly meeting and we discussed them. They suggested we were supporting something very controversial and, I believe, wanted us to back out. After hearing about commitments already made with cooks and butcher; kitchen and food orders; festival registration; crew organizing, and on and on, some of these and many from the meeting realized the reality was that we were past the point of no return in most respects. Consensus was to press on with our plans.

Beyond that, there was the information we had from trusted Reggae coordinators, all of whom favored working with Dimmick and PP. (See my article in the August 2007 *Foghorn* for details.)

Other community comments came from two members of VFP22 and one other email. With such deep community division about sides taken on this set of issues one can expect to hear disdain from the side other than your own. It is no surprise we did. With any opinion advanced, one would hope for tolerance of differing views.

I don't wish to perpetuate or deepen the divide by publicly arguing how culpable each set of players is. I invite those concerned with our decision to participate in RR to read (or for some writers re-read) my August *Foghorn* article.

The gist of that article was for the reader to be reminded that:

- The division in the Reggae community was deep;
- The division was perpetuated by undocumented statements from both sides; and
- When discussing these differences one should ask for the source of the information gotten, otherwise it's just more unsubstantiated talk.

Should this issue of the *Foghorn* include comments from others, let them speak for themselves.

Part of rising out of Babylon (intolerance, selfishness and greed) is to respect one another and strive for Unity.

Peter Aronson

Veterans For Peace Chapter 56



PTSD Defined ...continued from page 1

However, the VA expects the vet to define an actual event or events. There is nothing I have found in writing, but it seems that there is powerful need to keep a long-lasting situation out of the definition. War is a long-lasting traumatic situation, and, in theory, everyone in a combat theater could find cause for a compensation claim for PTSD.

The following example illustrates the trouble the US system can create. I helped a Vietnam vet through the compensation process. He was a non-combat soldier assigned to a forward firebase. He found it difficult to sleep, never knowing if he would awake the next day. For example, one night, the hutch next to him evaporated in a rocket attack. He did not see much actual combat—just an odd fire-fight at the parameter. In his first few claims to the VA, he was turned down for lack of a specific traumatic event. He did try suicide while in Vietnam, but that did not count, and certainly, his general situation existing over a long period of time did not count.

Finally, he put together a simple claim based on his watching Vietnamese children poking the eyes out of Vietnamese dead. He had seen a lot, but this was one of the more graphic images he could come up with. That event and the reality that he met and exceeded every diagnostic symptom for PTSD earned him 100% disability for PTSD.

The significance of this difference in definitions is screamingly obvious when applied to the Persian Gulf. There is no front line. There is no safe place. There is no safe MOS (job category). If it were up to me, I would make anticipatory anxiety a reasonable cause for PTSD. According to my talks with people who were there, the soldiers and Marines who pushed towards Bagdad in 1991 and in 2003 were told to expect 25 to 50% casualties.

A corpsman told me that his command requisitioned all the sanitary napkins it could get from Germany because there was a major shortage of field dressings in '91. This may be an anecdotal story, but it still reflects the anticipatory anxiety carried by those troops who had to mount major attacks into the unknown.

True, few casualties resulted from either initial invasion. Accordingly, I suppose few of those involved actually saw a horrific event. Remember, the situation does not count.

Some of those in the initial invasion did not or will not end up with the symptoms of PTSD. Those that do end up suffering from the symptoms of this disorder will have to work at finding an event that will satisfy the VA's causal criteria.

The problem I am describing here stems from two different clauses in the two major diagnostic manuals in the world (DSM IV and IDC 10). There are two other problematic clauses in the criteria for PTSD in these manuals that I might try to address at another time. In the meantime, if anyone is interested, the VA has posted an attractive, simple fact sheet to

prove that there are no significant differences in the two manuals regarding PTSD. If anything, the VA fact sheet makes it clear that the IDC 10 definition is less attractive and potentially more problematic for US veterans. I have found this propaganda in quite a few websites. The main one is at: http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/ncdocs/fact_shfts/fs_icd10_ptsd_1.html?printable-template=factsheet.

Paul Hibschan, LCSW, a member of VFP Chapter 56, is a Vietnam era veteran who has been involved in the repercussions of the war since the late 1960s. He has decades of experience working with victims of trauma, including at the Eureka Vet's Center where he worked almost exclusively with Vietnam combat vets. He currently works in private practice as a psychotherapist.

War Casualties ...continued from page 1

the lives of at least 3.5 billion people. During the 20th Century about 125 million people were killed by actions of governments. Since the end of World War II, virtually all wars have been conducted in what have been described as "Third World" nations, with Iraq now considered an exception. The conservative English war historian John Keegan has stated that 50 million people have been killed by war since the so-called "First World" peace began in 1945 through the mid-1990s.

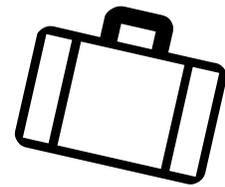
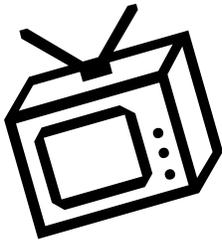
War emerged with the advent of civilization. Civilization has been severely traumatic for the human condition for more than 300 generations. It has been sustained by massive obedience to its vertical authority structures, whether described as inherited kingdoms, dictatorial despots, or elected democratic oligarchs. Part of that obedience has required subservience of labor for production and military roles to assure increased profits—primarily for the benefit of those positioned in the narrow portion of the apex of the vertical power structures.

We in so-called democratic societies seem to actually believe that our political structures represent the people, rather than power. It is time to drop that belief such that we might be enabled to become disobedient to power. Instead, we can choose to become personally responsible with all our relationships as they manifest in the communities where we live. As we revolt from obedience we may learn that we are totally capable of remaking ourselves into an earth community rather than a bunch of plundering consumers. Our lives, and the life of an inhabitable planet, depends on it, beginning right where we live. Let us globalize liberation in each of our communities. Why not make a leap into local self-reliant community where democracy is direct, i.e., radical. This is a fantastic opportunity for all of us to become awake and vital. Or, we can choose business as usual, and stumble off the cliff to a terrifying death below—omnicide.



BOOK TALK WITH DAVID BARSAMIAN

Monday, September 17, 7-9 pm: David Barsamian, host of Alternative Radio, will talk about his new book, *Targeting Iran*, at Northtown Books, 957 H Street, Arcata. Find out what is really going on behind the scenes in the latest push for more war. Co-sponsored by the Humboldt Greens and the Humboldt Branch of Women's International League for Peace & Freedom.



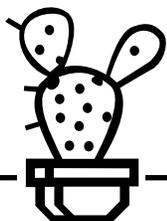
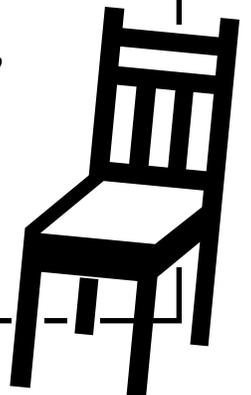
VFP56 Rummage Sale September 22 & 23

Veterans For Peace Chapter 56's second annual rummage sale will be held on Saturday, September 22 and Sunday, September 23 from 10am to 5pm at the vacant lot on 15th Street between G and H Streets in Arcata. Organizer Laura Simpson is looking for folks willing to commit to blocks of time to help out each day. Anyone wishing to help—with selling on either Saturday or Sunday or with pricing previous to that weekend—should call Laura to sign up. Help will also be needed to move everything from storage to sale site.

Donations of STUFF are being accepted as of September 1st. Please call Laura to arrange drop-off.

*Help us make this a successful fundraiser
for the ongoing work of Veterans For Peace!*

Call Laura Simpson at 839-7624



ON TRACK: The Brian Willson Story

A new, Nevada Shakespeare Company original work-in-progress



PHOTO: JOCK McDONALD

S. Brian Willson dancing, 1988.

A multi-media performance event
in the life of S. Brian Willson

DURING:
9 pm

**CANCELLED
FOR SEPT. 1-2**

**HOPEFULLY TO BE PERFORMED
AT A LATER DATE—STAY TUNED!**

WITH

Sun., Sept. 2nd

preceded by an 11 a.m. group
from Arcata to Blue Lake, followed by
led by Brian on his 3-wheeled hand-cycle

September 1, 1987–September 1, 2007

After 20 Years: Remembrance, Reflection & Recommitment

VFP Chapter 56 member Brian Willson will be gathering with many others from Nuremberg Actions and the greater community for a commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Navy assault that took his legs on September 1, 1987. The gathering at the tracks at Concord Naval Weapons Station will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, September 1.

This will be an opportunity for:

- Remembrance
- Reflection on the meaning of that day and the Nuremberg actions in which people blocked trains and trucks carrying bombs and munitions to kill Central American brothers and sisters for over three years, and
- Recommitment to the work still ahead!

For questions or directions, please call David Hartsough at 530-659-7499 until August 31 or call David's cell phone on September 1st: 415-359-8343.

If you cannot attend, but would like to send a reflection to be shared with folks gathered at the tracks, please send your reflection to David at email davidhartsough@igc.org





**Veterans For Peace
Humboldt Bay
Chapter 56**

Phone: 707-826-7124
Email: VFP56@aol.com
http://www.vfp56.org

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Rob Hepburn, Steve Stamnes
Judi Rose, Linda Sorter
Jim Sorter, Steve Sottong
Gordon Anderson

STANDING COMMITTEES

**Weapons of Mass
Destruction/DU:**
Peter Aronson

General Store: Doug Smith

Media: Becky Luening

**Veterans Education and
Outreach Project:**
Carl Stancil & Jon Reisdorf

LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

If you would like to submit an article, opinion, comment or response to anything you have read that might interest the members of VFP-56, please email 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.

- Views of the Veterans Memorial Garden -



PHOTOS: ROB HEPBURN



The plaque reads: "THIS MEMORIAL DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF THE ARCATA VETERANS WHO HAVE SERVED IN VIETNAM AND KOREA."



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

Next VFP 56 Meeting

Thursday, September 6, 2007

7:00-9:00 pm

Marsh Commons

101 H Street, Arcata

Info: 707-826-7124