



VETERANS FOR PEACE
HUMBOLDT BAY
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THE FOGHORN

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“Cutting Through the Fog of War”

Games Lure Recruits For ‘Real Thing’

by Windsor Johnson

A controversial Army Experience Center in a northeast Philadelphia shopping mall will soon close its doors after a two-year pilot program. With regard to its military outreach efforts, the multimillion-dollar facility has declared “mission accomplished,” but opponents question the Army’s version of reality.

At the center, teenage boys sit in a row of Army-green recliners facing flat-screen monitors. They square off in video war games like the popular *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare*. Once visitors register and prove they’re 13 years or older, they’re given free access to the facility’s array of war-themed games.

Army Experience Center spokesman Capt. John Kirchgessner says the center has proved more effective than traditional recruiting methods. Using technology to create a relationship with the public “is a much better way to share our Army story than to simply smile and dial and ask someone if they thought about joining lately,” he says.

The facility also houses three simulators: Apache and Blackhawk helicopters plus an armored combat Humvee. John Gallato, 18, and three of his 15-year-old friends sit atop the Army vehicle eagerly waiting for their mission to begin. With a lifelike machine gun in hand, Gallato says experiences like this will help prepare him for the future.



Staff members at the Army Experience Center in Philadelphia demonstrate the Humvee interactive simulator in 2009.

“I’m going to be killing people,” he says. “I’m actually joining the Marines and will be doing this in real life.”

When they get the green light, the four teens begin maneuvering through virtual war zones and shooting at targets while dodging bullets themselves.

Demonstrators have voiced opposition to the Army Experience Center in Philadelphia throughout the two years the pilot program has been operating.

These simulated war experiences have met with strong opposition. Combat veteran Staff Sgt. Jesse Hamilton says the Army has sanitized the horrors of combat.

“The heat, people screaming, blood, flies, horrible smells, smoke in your eyes stinging, sand — the list goes on and on — and they’ve taken all of that out,” he says. “What they’ve effectively left is what they consider to be the ‘fun’ part.”

Kathy Leary, of the BuxMont Coalition for Peace Action, says war is not a game. “We’ve heard kids come out of the Army Experience Center saying, ‘They’re really showing me what war is really like’ — and obviously that’s not what war is really like. There’s no reset button in war.”



VETERANS FOR PEACE RE-BUILDING THE GOLDEN RULE

Written by Fredy Champagne

In 1958, the 30 foot Ketch named the Golden Rule with a crew of four, attempted to sail from San Francisco to Hawaii to the Marshall Islands to enter the Atomic Bomb testing area. The ship and it's crew were protesting atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons were planning to sail into the bomb zone to stop the test. The crew was stopped by the US Coast Guard and arrested. The boat and crew were towed back to Honolulu and were tried and placed on probation. Captain Bigelow and his crew again set sail and were boarded again, and the boat was towed back to Hawaii by the US Coast Guard.

This historic boat was the forerunner of other famous peace boats such as the "Phoenix" and Greenpeace's "Rainbow Warrior I, II and III".

This boat was found half-submerged and abandoned by VFP Member and Cruise Captain Chuck DeWitt and salvaged by Leroy Zerlang. The boat is now lying on it's side in the sand at Zerlang's Shipyard, awaiting restoration and repair.

A committee of VFP members has been formed for the purpose of restoring this ship. Initial estimates to repair the hull and re-float the boat is \$7000. All repairs to be made at Zerlang's Shipyard. Mr. Leroy Zerlang has donated space in his shipyard for one year, making it accessible to work crews to lay a new deck, and begin work on replacing the cabin and interior. Total estimate to make the boat seaworthy is \$25000.

All sails, masts and gear are recovered, stored, available and usable.

Our VFP committee is busy preparing a new website for the Golden Rule project. Site to be hosted on National VFP website. Plans are underway to prepare a proper information flyer for a fund-raising campaign. Need a volunteer graphics person, anyone?

Goals: To sail this boat again in the pursuit of the goals of Veterans for Peace. We wish to use this boat to promote peace, oppose militarism in all forms, opposed nuclear weapons, and call attention to Veterans for Peace and our organization. A boat like this should be sailing, and become a living testament to those who bravely stood up in 1958.

Thank you for your time and support. Fredy Champagne, VFP Chapter 022. Coordinator/Finance Coordinator, Jim Sorter VFP56

Our committee mailing address is:

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VFP Members Join Forces With Others to Launch Peace

by Mashaw McGinnis

It is especially uplifting when multiple groups and individuals work together to pull off a peace related event for the community. This year our Veterans For Peace chapter assisted the Buddhist Peace Fellowship (BFF) with the Unitarian Universalist's Social Action Committee, Humboldt Friends Meeting, the Arcata Zen Group, the G.I. Rights Hotline, W.I.L.P.F. to produce the best lantern ceremony ever! Rumor has it that almost 90 people were present. Alex Stillman facilitated the City of Arcata's sponsorship, which enabled the event to happen at Klopp Lake, the location which has become synonymous for the evening which honors victims of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings.

This year's unofficial organizer, Maggie Shaffer referred to herself merely as "the spider at the center of the web of communication". She is a regular part of both BPF and WILPF and worked extremely hard at pulling it all together. She was thrilled with the



VFP56 Member John McAlinn reads a poem at the Lantern Ceremony

success of the event and summed it up nicely: "What a crew, what a community. When all the people who work for peace and justice, work together, we can accomplish something as beautiful and encouraging as the lantern ceremony, and we can do other things as well". Isn't that the message we as peace activists want to send out to our communities?

VFP member John McAlinn, also an active Unitarian, teamed up with other UUs Ursula Osborne and Jack Munsee to give the important bon voyage push to the beautifully crafted lanterns at sunset. John expressed deep gratitude to Maggie for being part of what he called "this noble cause" and noted that he hopes for an even larger participation for their 30th Anniversary in 2012.

VFPers Martha Devine and Carol Pridgeon entertained audiences

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once again with the Raging Grannies satirical and poignant songs. Another talented VFP member, John Reisdorf has been hiding his musical talent at our monthly meetings, but treated everyone that evening with song as part of the McKinleyville Community Choir, directed by Naomi Faulkner.

And back for another encore from our first annual peace poetry contest were first and second place winners Natalia Nelson and Kona Orlandi from Arcata high. The young ladies read their poignant words about war and peace to a very impressed audience. Another Arcata



Peace Poetry Contest award winner Kona Orlandi reads her original poem at the 2010 Lantern Ceremony

High student, Ann Anderson gifted everyone with a lovely Japanese song.

Attracting the interest of the younger generation is crucial for these events, and to add extra “sparkle” to the whole affair was the dedicated involvement of one young man, Dylan Diemer. Approximately 12 years old, Dylan made many intelligent and practical suggestions at the planning meetings. He created “staff” vests with “Lantern Ceremony Volunteer” signs, helped many kids make lanterns on the plaza, passed out handbills and urged people to make a lantern and attend the ceremony. This time of volunteering often paves the way for future activism, so it wouldn’t surprise many if Dylan turned out to be a VFP member someday. The mixture of younger and older participants seemed especially meaningful this year, as if the elders are now passing the torch of peace to the next generation.

The entire ceremony was very special by anyone’s standards. The crowd was appreciative and attentive. The mood was gentle and thoughtful. It is always worth mentioning that events like this cannot happen without individual members stepping up and volunteering to help organize. It took a lot of hands to put the evening together, and it was obvious to the audience members that it was a labor of love for everyone involved.

Military Dog Comes Home From Iraq Traumatized

by Truthout

Dog comes home from Iraq suffering what military suspects is PTSD, but is now on mend.

Gina was a playful 2-year-old German shepherd when she went to Iraq as a highly trained bomb-sniffing dog with the military, conducting door-to-door searches and witnessing all sorts of noisy explosions.

She returned home to Colorado cowering and fearful. When her handlers tried to take her into a building, she would stiffen her legs and resist. Once inside, she would tuck her tail beneath her body and slink along the floor. She would hide under furniture or in a corner to avoid people.

A military veterinarian diagnosed with her post-traumatic stress disorder — a condition that experts say can afflict dogs just like it does humans.

“She showed all the symptoms and she had all the signs,” said Master Sgt.. Eric Haynes, the kennel master at Peterson Air Force Base. “She was terrified of everybody and it was obviously a condition that led her down that road.”

A year later, Gina is on the mend. Frequent walks among friendly people and a gradual reintroduction to the noises of military life have begun to overcome her fears, Haynes said.

Haynes describes her progress as “outstanding.”

“Pretty fabulous, actually,” added Staff Sgt.. Melinda Miller, who’s been Gina’s handler since May. “She makes me look pretty good.”

PTSD is well-documented among American servicemen and

Next VFP56 meeting will be held on Thursday, September 2nd at 7:00 PM. Meeting will be held in the Commons Room at 550 Union Street in Arcata.



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VFP Members and their families are cordially invited to attend.

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women returning from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but its existence in animals is less clear-cut. Some veterinarians say animals do experience it, or a version of it.

“There is a condition in dogs which is almost precisely the same, if not precisely the same, as PTSD in humans,” said Nicholas Dodman, head of the animal behavior program at Tufts University’s Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine.

But some veterinarians dislike applying the diagnosis to animals, thinking it demeans servicemen and women, Dodman said. He added that he means no offense to military personnel when he uses the term.

The military defines PTSD as a condition that develops after a life-threatening trauma. Victims suffer three types of experiences long afterward, even in a safe environment. They repeatedly re-experience the trauma in nightmares or vivid memories. They avoid situations or feelings that remind them of the event, and they feel keyed up all the time.

When Gina returned to Peterson last year after her six-month deployment in Iraq, she was no longer the “great little pup” Haynes remembered.

She had been assigned to an Army unit, and her job was to search for explosives after soldiers entered a house. The troops sometimes used noisy, blinding “flash-bang” grenades and kicked down doors, Haynes said, and Gina was once in a convoy when another vehicle was hit by an improvised bomb.

Back home at Peterson, Gina wanted nothing to do with people.

“She’d withdrawn from society as a whole,” Haynes said.

Haynes, who has worked with more than 100 dogs in 12 years as a handler and kennel master, said he has seen other dogs rattled by trauma, but none as badly as Gina.

Haynes and other handlers coaxed Gina on walks, sending someone ahead to pass out treats for bystanders to give her. They got her over her fear of walking through doors by stationing someone she knew on the other side to reward her with pats and play. They eased her farther into buildings with the same technique.

“She started learning that everyone wasn’t trying to get her,” Haynes said. “She began acting more social again.”

On a sunny afternoon last week, Gina dashed across her training yard, jumping over obstacles on command and deftly pushing a ball with her forelegs and chest. On a visit to a store on base, she trotted calmly down the aisles and sat quietly when a woman bent to pet her.

“She’s such a lovable dog,” Miller said, describing how the 61-pound Gina will lie in her lap. “I could literally hold this dog like a

baby.”

But Haynes said they’re careful not to let their affection interfere with good training. Treating Gina like a human — for example, comforting her when she’s frightened — can leave her thinking that her handler is pleased when she’s afraid.

“She’s just gorgeous and I love her, but you also have to balance it with — you have to do what’s right,” he said.

Gina has resumed some of her duties, searching cars for explosives at Peterson or other nearby military facilities. Eventually, she may be able to return to the kind of hazardous duty she did in Iraq, but that’s at least a year away, Haynes said.

“We’re not planning on doing it anytime in the near future because obviously, we don’t want to mess up everything we’ve already fixed,” he said.

Dodman said he doubts Gina can recover completely.

“It’s a fact that fears once learned are never unlearned,” Dodman said. “The best thing you can do is apply new learning, which is what (Gina’s handlers are) doing,” he said.

Haynes acknowledged that’s a concern, and although he hopes Gina recovers 100 percent he doesn’t know if she will.

“Anytime someone has that much fear about anything, then obviously it will be hard just to get it fixed,” he said.

“But, I mean, we don’t really have many other options,” Haynes said. “You can’t really give up.”

Submitted by Jim Sorter

VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES SAY PENTAGON STATEMENTS ON WIKILEAKS AIM TO CLOUD REAL ISSUES

by VFP National

Our organizations represent veterans and military families. We have personally carried the burden of the war in Afghanistan, along with wars past. We are glad that the truth about the war is getting out to the public with the recent 92,000 documents on Wikileaks. Hopefully, this will inspire a massive outcry against this war that is wreaking so much destruction to our exhausted and demoralized troops and their families while draining our national coffers.

Obama administration officials are trying to spin events in their favor. Their words must be carefully examined. On the one hand, in an effort to

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On the other hand, some high ranking members of the U.S. military are trying to: 1) intimidate anyone else from doing the same thing and 2) turn public opinion against whoever leaked the current documents. Towards those goals, we are told that grievous harm will surely come to many Afghans and U.S. military personnel - if not now then certainly later.

A more damning statement could hardly be imagined than this one from Admiral Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "The truth is they might already have on their hands the blood of some young soldier or that of an Afghan family." While we certainly do not wish to see one additional person put at risk in this tragic, wrongheaded war, we must state the following as clearly as we can.

As veterans and families with members in the military, we consider statements like Admiral Mullen's to be nothing more than calculated attempts to turn public attention away from the real problem - the ongoing occupation of Afghanistan that has already caused the deaths and injuries of many thousands of innocent people all the while millions of Americans are jobless and face foreclosure or eviction.

This suffering in Afghanistan and this bleeding at home will continue as long as our troops remain in that country. Congress must stop funding this war. We must bring our troops home now, take care of them properly when they return and pay to rebuild the damage we have caused to Afghanistan.

Yard Sale - Glimmer of Hope Afghan School Project

by Judi Rose

Union Street Charter School families will be participating in a yard sale sponsored by Chapter 56 Veterans for Peace to be held on the Equinox Center for Education campus, Saturday Sept.18th.

Funds raised will be sent to teachers in Afghanistan to purchase school supplies for boys and girls in Kabul. If we raise enough money, as we did last year, we will designate some funds to supplement teacher's salaries.

This is a great time to clean out those overflowing closets and garages of neglected and abandoned, but still usable items. USCS families will be volunteering at the sale and VFP members are welcome to participate.

Last year several students had a great time and at the end of the day, felt a sense of accomplishment, selling yummy treats. Parents and students will organize a bake sale. VFP members are welcome to donate baked goods. Judi Rose can answer most questions about this non-profit collaboration and can be reached at rosebuds@humboldt1.com or 822-2142

Task Force: Military Suicide Prevention Efforts Inadequate

Tuesday 24 August 2010

by Barbara Barrett

Washington - A Defense Department task force devoted to preventing suicide in the military presented a grim picture of the trend Tuesday, with suicides rising at a near steady pace even as commanders apply various balms to soothe a stressed, exhausted fighting force.

The military has nearly 900 suicide prevention programs across 400 military installations worldwide, but in a report released Tuesday, the task force describes the Defense Department's approach as a safety net riddled with holes.

Last year, 309 men and women slipped through.

In 2008, 267 service members committed suicide. In 2007, the number was 224.

However, the task force also gave a message of hope: Prevention efforts can work, members said, and suicidal behavior after combat deployment isn't normal.

"Having any of our nation's warriors die by suicide is not acceptable — not now, not ever," said Army Maj. Gen. Philip Volpe, a physician and co-chairman of the Department of Defense Task Force on the Prevention of Suicide by Members of the Armed Forces.

Among the task force's findings:

The military doesn't have enough behavioral specialists and suicide prevention officers, and that those need better training.

Suicide prevention programs aren't streamlined across services.

Service members still encounter discriminatory and humiliating experiences when seeking psychiatric help.

Unit-level leaders especially struggle with how to assist the men and women under their guidance.

The numbers of suicides have increased almost steadily since the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan began, and task force members said Tuesday they were unable to pinpoint exactly why the trend continues despite prevention work being done so far.

"We don't have enough data to answer that question," said David Litts, a retired Air Force colonel and task force member.

But the task force found much to be concerned about. Volpe described a "supply-and-demand mismatch" that hurts a service member's ability to spend enough time back home to become reengaged with the community and their personal lives.

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The report suggests either growing the size of the military or reducing mission demand.

It suggests establishing a policy office under the Secretary of Defense to streamline suicide prevention programs.

The report also recommends working more closely with military family members and improving communications between unit-level leaders and the men and women under their care.

The report found suicide investigations aren't now standardized. Task force members recommended learning more about suicide victims' last hours and days.

But mostly, the task force said, the military must look at mental health and well being as part of an overall approach to fitness — one that includes social, physical, spiritual and psychological wellness.

Individual installations are developing their own programs to combat suicide.

As of July, the Army's Fort Bragg, N.C., for instance, had four confirmed suicides, with two others under investigation. The base had six suicides in 2009, 13 in 2008 and 10 in 2007.

Another Army base, Fort Campbell, Ky., reported 14 suicides in 2009, 12 in 2008 and nine in 2007. Of the military's branches, the Army has the highest number of suicides: 160 soldiers killed themselves in 2009.

Fort Bragg has begun using role-playing scenarios to train soldiers on how to help friends in despair.

Bonnie Carroll, an advocate for military survivors and co-chairwoman of the task force, said Tuesday she found hope watching young Marine recruits in training at Parris Island, S.C. There, she said, recruits are being told they should be as quick to call in support for personal problems as they would for air support during combat.

"And who's your front line?" Carroll asked. "Your buddy."

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Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it.

Mark Twain

Delayed Justice In Lauterbach Murder Sends A Message To Female Soldiers That The Military Does Not Have Their Back

Gender-Based Violence, Militarism, Misogyny, Rape, Violence Against Women Add comments

Aug 25, 2010

This week's conviction of former U.S. Marine Cesar Laurean in in the 2007 brutal murder of Lance Cpl. Maria Lauterbach and her unborn child almost three years after the crime was committed is long past overdue. In August, 2008, Ret. Col Ann Wright wrote about the case as but one example among many of misogynist violence in the military,

Lance Cpl. Maria Lauterbach

Marine Lance Cpl. Maria Lauterbach had been raped in May 2007 and protective orders had been issued against the alleged perpetrator, fellow Marine Cpl. Cesar Laurean. The burned body of Lauterbach and her unborn baby were found in a shallow grave in the backyard of Laurean's home in January 2008. Laurean fled to Mexico, where he was captured by Mexican authorities. He is currently awaiting extradition to the United States to stand trial. Lauterbach's mother testified before Congress on July 31, 2008, that the Marine Corps ignored warning signs that Laurean was a danger to her daughter (testimony of Mary Lauterbach to the National Security and Foreign Affairs Subcommittee of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, nationalsecurity.oversight.house.gov/documents/20080731134039.pdf).

I asked Wright via email for her take on the mind-boggling amount of time it has taken for justice to be served in the Lauterbach murder,

"I think it is very important for women of the military to know why it has taken this long to have a court-martial on such a high visibility case, which included extradition of Laurean from Mexico where he had fled after he murdered Maria Lauterbach and her baby, burned and buried their bodies. For women in the military who are a part of the 92% of women who file rape charges and never have their cases even brought to a court of justice so that their pleas can be heard (only 8% of military rape cases ever come to trial in contrast to 30% of allegations in the civilian sector), it is no glimmer of hope that the verdict in this high profile case has taken so long."

Indeed, this is just another in a much to long list of ways in which the military continues to send the message that women who serve in the military are at more risk of being harmed by their fellow soldiers than by any enemy and that contrary to the expectation that every soldier has, that their comrades have their back, for women, it is decidedly not so.

Submitted by Mashaw McGinnis





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Chapter 56

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LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

If you would like to submit an article, opinion, comment or response to anything you have read which might interest the members of VFP-56, please e-mail it to turtldnccer@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.

OCTOBER FOGHORN

Due to my vacation schedule, the October issue of the Foghorn will not be published. Linda and I are traveling to Ireland, Scotland, Morocco and on to France where we will be welcoming our eighth grandchild, a girl I am told, by my proud son and daughter-in-law. We will be gone from the 14th of September until the 21st of October. Any articles submitted during this timeframe will be archived and published in the November issue.

Thanks for all of your great articles and support during the 2010 season of the Foghorn. We will miss all of our friends and look forward to seeing you again in November.

Veterans For Peace
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