

Make a difference through Veterans For Peace

Join Veterans For Peace

We need all the support we can get. Who better to speak out against war and to help solve conflicts in a non-violent way than those who have faced war firsthand. Associate Members (non-veterans) are welcome as well. Veterans cannot do it alone. We need you to stand with in our efforts to end war as a means to solve conflicts.

If you are already a member, become active in your chapter. Chapter activities are where the rubber meets the road. VFP is growing and our message is spreading because of individual member and chapter activities. Positive change will not happen, unless we make it happen.

Call and write letters to elected officials

We need to get our message out and be heard. Fortunately, contacting elected officials is easier and more effective than most people realize. Visit their official websites and obtain the appropriate mailing address and phone number.

Elected officials say that a regular paper letter written by hand is highly effective in getting their attention, but the envelope and letter need to prominently include your ten-digit zip code so they can. Keep phone and email messages clear and concise.

Reach out to other veterans

There are other veterans in your area who feel the same way you do. Reach out to them. Use the VFP flyer to help describe our organization. Correspond with us if you are alone out there, and we will help put you in touch with others of like mind nearby. Talk with other veterans and listen carefully to their concerns. Personal contacts may well be the key to developing strong support networks within our military communities.

We want YOU!

Help us reach our goal of 2500 new members.



VETERANS FOR PEACE

Veterans Working Together For Peace and Justice Through Nonviolence. Wage Peace!

Spring 2008, Volume XVI

St. Louis First City To Formally Urge Congress To End Iraq War

St. Louis, Missouri's Board of Alderman voted in favor of passing Resolution 339 urging "cessation of combat operations in Iraq and the return of U.S. troops." Sponsored by Alderman Terry Kennedy, the resolution gained many co-sponsors and passed with 23 votes. Veterans For Peace Executive Director, Michael McPhearson, spoke to the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee in favor of passing this legislation. This makes St. Louis the first city in Missouri to "urge the United States Congress and the President to immediately commence an orderly and rapid withdrawal of United States military personnel from Iraq," as well as to assist the Iraqi people to rebuild and to redirect financial resources for war to address public needs within our cities infrastructure. There are over 280 cities nationwide that have passed similar legislation.

US Death Toll in Iraq Reaches 4000

4000
too many!

The deaths of four U.S. soldiers in a roadside bombing about 10 p.m. Sunday [March 23] in southern Baghdad pushed to 4,000 the number of American service members killed as the war enters its sixth year. The Associated Press count of 4,000 deaths is based on U.S. military reports and includes eight civilians who worked for the Department of Defense. An American military official in Baghdad said each U.S. death is "equally tragic" and underscored the need to keep up the fight.

Last year, U.S. military deaths spiked as U.S. troops sought to regain control of Baghdad and surrounding areas. The death toll has seesawed since, with 2007 ending as the deadliest year for American troops at 901 deaths. That was 51 more deaths than 2004, the second deadliest year for U.S. soldiers.

A spokesperson for VFP had this to say: "Just after passing the commemoration for the 5th year of the war and occupation of

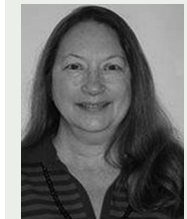
Iraq, we have watched the number of U.S. service people slowly rise. While Americans focus on Presidential politics and Hollywood happenings - men and women serving in Iraq are dying and over 33,000 have come home physically injured.

As veterans, we know the horrors of war. We understand the difficulties that our military service people have to go through when they return from war. We know that there are long battles with the VA for health care, families that have been torn apart from spouses serving multiple tours in Iraq, and trauma that goes unseen and untreated by what these men and women and witnessed and participated in.

As the 6th year of the war begins, we have to find it within ourselves to take bigger steps to end this war. We have to move beyond vigils and protest and into the mainstream public to convince them that this war and occupation cannot continue!"

VFP VP Arrested

Sharon Kufeldt serves as the Veterans For Peace Vice-President.



Daughter of a Marine from WWII and Korea, she joined the Air Force during Vietnam.

To commemorate the 5th year of the occupation of Iraq, Sharon participated in a die-in outside Senator Diane Feinstein's office in San Francisco. Sharon was among the over 165 people arrested within the city.

Read more about VP Kufeldt's arrest and experience inside.

2007 Board of Elections Results.

Each One, Bring One Campaign - Help us reach our goal of 2500 new members.

Getting our message out; tips for contacting elected officials.

Board Of Directors

Elliott Adams
President
Sharon Kufeldt
Vice-President
Kenneth Mayers
Treasurer
Mike Ferner
Secretary
Frank Ackles
Ellen Barfield
Anita Cole
William Collins
Frank Houde
Patrick McCann
Michael Uhl
Wayne Wittman

Executive Director
Michael T. McPhearson

Our St. Louis Staff

Christine Brooks
Cherie Eichholz
Gabriela Inderwies
Nick Lyter
Betsy Reznicek
Chris Snively
Douglas Zachary

Contact Us:
Veterans For Peace
216 South Meramec Ave
St. Louis MO 63105
VOICE (314) 725-6005
FAX (314) 725-7103
veteransforpeace.org

Media Inquiries:
(314) 725-6005, ask for
Betsy or Gabriela.

Join us in Minneapolis/St.
Paul, MN for the 23rd
Annual Veterans For Peace
Convention, August 27-30,
2008. Visit our website for
more information about this
exciting event.

Winter Soldier: A Huge Success

MARCH 18, 2008

This last weekend, over 100 Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans spoke the truth about the war and occupation. The event was attended by hundreds of media, as well as military families and veterans from VFP and VVAW. Nate Goldschlag, member of Chapter 009 (the Smedley Butler Brigade), wrote the following: "I have just spent an amazing and intense 4 days at the Winter Soldier: Iraq and Afghanistan hearings in DC. Many brave veterans spoke the truth about what is happening, a truth that is censored in the mainstream corporate media. They talked about the Iraqis and they talked about themselves and how the war and occupation has affected them and in some cases destroyed them. One vet spoke of trying to kill himself. It was so moving and we cried and the U.S. population needs to see and hear this. Iraq Veterans Against The War's site (<http://ivaw.org>) will have archived video, but their website is down today. I *urge* you to take some time and view the following on Democracy Now, a voice of truth in the media and one of the few. Mainstream corporate media was pitiful, including National Petroleum Radio (NPR) which some people mistakenly think is different. But you can view it here, and Amy Goodman will be carrying excerpts all week.

One very good thing is that an AP report appeared in Army Times, Marine Corps Times, Navy Times, and Air Force Times. And Stars and Stripes did a pretty good piece. That will boost IVAW. But there is nothing like watching and seeing it as we did."

Veterans March Around The Nation

Veterans For Peace members in Washington D.C. lead protesters on a March For Peace. Tarak Kauff, an organizer with Veterans for Peace, said group leaders emphasized nonviolent civil disobedience to Wednesday's participants. His group carried with them a mock arrest warrant for President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney to be delivered during their protests to the White House and the Department of Justice.



2007 VFB Board Election

There were a total of 962 ballots received by the National Office. Of these there were: 1 spoiled ballot (voted for more than four), 85 were received from unidentified senders

Thus, there remained 876 valid ballots which yielded the following results:

Gary May 619 - Elected
John Varone 543 - Elected
Thomas Brinson 528 - Elected
Patrick McCann 484 - Elected
Lane Anderson 398
Dan Shea 340
George Johnson 276

The 85 unidentified when added to the 5th place holder's total falls short by one to the 4th place total. Therefore, the inclusion of any or all of the disallowed ballots would not have affected the outcome and we declare May, Varone, Brinson and McCann to be the winners. F Lincoln Grahlf acted as Primary Election Judge

Submitted by Mike Ferner
Veterans For Peace National Secretary

An Open Letter From VP Sharon Kufeldt

Dear Friends and Family,

There comes a time, when the heart is moved by compassion, to join the likes of Daniel Ellsberg and his wife, Fr. Louis Vitale, Ying Lee, and others.

Good company all. My personal mission this day was to experience the first stages of civil disobedience. I wanted to sit - or actually lay - in the street with a gathering of others - for a few minutes to explore the edges of this phenomenon. It was a photo op for my friends the Raging Grannies who were mourning the dead. Mourning Granny Sharon who is a dead veteran and lying in the street at noon in front of Senator Diane Feinstein's office.

My intention was to get up and leave when the police announced that anyone who did not want to get arrested must leave now. I believe I was awake and conscious and listening for the entire time for this message. I did not hear it. After a time it became obvious that either it was not given or I had missed it.

I sat up, found myself and the others surrounded by a circle of police with batons standing nearly shoulder to shoulder

"As we walked out of the jail, I realized that somehow I felt more free than before." --- VFP Vice President Sharon Kufeldt

around us, facing inwards towards us. Looking up at all of those batons and uniforms was quite an experience. It was clear at this point that we could not leave or that would be resisting arrest. So I pulled out my Native American Flute and began playing Taps for the "dead" around me and those really dead in Iraq and Afghanistan. My flute was blessed in India by Sri Amma.

As I played taps, we were taken one by one from the circle and arrested for exercising our rights as citizens to non-violently protest the actions of our government. We were causing no harm to people or property. They began on the far side of the circle from me. I played a long time. I was a bit fearful of tapping the moisture out of my flute as it might be seen as a weapon. I continued playing with a wet flute until it made virtually no sound at all. I rested and began again after some minutes. This sequence happened many times.



Eventually it was my turn. The officer walked up to me, I put my flute away in my backpack. He told me I was being arrested and asked me to rise and come with him. I did. I handed him a flower which he threw on the ground. He carried my pack. We walked with him holding me by the arm over to be processed. Asked for my ID, I gave my VA card, another officer asked if I received money from the VA. A strange question. I said no. Then they applied the white zip handcuffs. I was photographed with the officer. After a bit I was placed in a locked cell in a van with 2 other women, we had seating for 2. The youngest crouched on the floor. Neither women had heard the command to leave or be arrested. One of the women had come with her husband and daughter who had also been arrested. The other cell in the back of the van was filled with six other women. One who had resisted arrest and had been roughly treated.

We were driven away and sat in some driveway for a long time. Although the cuffs weren't really tight, My shoulders were burning and my hands were numb well before we were taken out of the van. Eventually they moved the van again and we were called by name and taken out. Finally we were given the opportunity to use the port-a-potty. We were placed in open pens behind the station. Some folks arrested earlier were being out processed. They were taking elders first, 90, 80, 70, 60. I made my way to the front and was cited and released. I am to report to court on May 7 at 8am. Several policemen called out that they'd see me at 5pm. I laughed. As we walked out of the jail, I realized that somehow I felt more free than before.

I walked back to Civic Center with Daniel Elsberg, Fr. Vitale, Ying Lee, another vet named Christopher who had a cane and a few others released at the same time. I first met Daniel Elsberg in Washington DC five years ago this weekend... the weekend we began "shock and awe." He had just been released from jail to join us at Operation Dire Distress. I marched beside him that day and had dinner with him that night with his grandson and two Vietnam Nurses, one, Joan Duffy, who has since died of cancer from Agent Orange.

At 5pm I joined the rally in Civic Center, stood onstage as we called for all veterans to join us, and then the march of tens of thousands through the Mission. I sat on the VFP sound truck draped with a flag, held upside down, and holding a sign 4,000+. Our truck was playing Taps on the loudspeakers. It was easy to keep a somber face after my earlier journey. There were many, many, many photographs.

I am writing this at 4am on the first day of spring. The full moon is outside the window. I was treated respectfully and relatively gently. It's been 12 hours now since the cuffs came off and the marks are still faintly there. I can only imagine those who aren't treated so well, not to mention those in Guantanamo. I am grateful for drugs... tylenol and motrin, dispensed by my dear friend and nurse who welcomed me to his home with chocolate cake and a shoulder rub, hot shower, and a listening ear.