Viet Vets’ Welcome Home Sparks Controversy

By Richard Chamberlin

May 21-23 was the long delayed welcome home for Vietnam veterans held at Lambeau Stadium in Green Bay. Billed as “LZ Lambeau” it was a three-day extravaganza where Vietnam veterans could reconnect and receive the thanks from the public they were denied forty years earlier. About 25,000 people showed up. I came there with my baggage of disillusionment and doubt wearing three hats—Vietnam veteran, peace activist and free lance writer.

Three years ago I published a memoir called Hitchhiking from Vietnam: Seeking the Ox about trying to make sense of my life after Vietnam. I was still harboring a lot of resentment to my government. Though the names of the presidents changed my anger continued to simmer. I became active with the Madison branch of Vets for Peace to channel my rage against another war that should not have been fought and young men that did not need to die.

For the past three years VFP has set up the “Memorial Mile”, a display of tombstones in Madison parks to honor US soldiers who have died in the Iraq/Afghanistan wars. Last fall Wisconsin Public Television asked VFP to consider setting up the display at LZ Lambeau. We decided to go ahead with it only to learn in March that the plan been shot down for “security concerns.”

Although the event was being organized by Wisconsin Public Television some of us suspected that the corporate interests of many of defense contractors who were donating heavily to the event had influenced the decision to scrap the “Memorial Mile”. I was steamed. With LZ Lambeau we were expecting nothing more than a glorification of the military and a justification of the past (continued on page 5)
Our Statement of Purpose

- Increase public awareness of the cost of war.
- Restrain our government from intervening overtly or covertly in the internal affairs of other nations.
- End the arms race and eliminate nuclear weapons.
- Seek justice for veterans and victims of war.
- Abolish war as an instrument of national policy.

To achieve these goals, VFP members pledge to use non-violent means and to maintain an organization that is both democratic and open.

Editor’s Musings

By Richard Chamberlin

In this issue the reader can peruse two different perspectives of the LZ Lambeau welcome home to Vietnam veterans that took place May 21-23 in Green Bay. In talking with VFP members and others who attended the event, most disagreements involve whether the event was meant to be pro-war or pro-veteran. David Williams’ op-ed piece in this issue sees the event as a pro-Vietnam war rally while my article sees it more as an over due thanks to Vietnam veterans.

Both of us were at the event. Both of us rallied against the war which I did after returning from Vietnam. Both of us decry the powerful corporate influence of those who would try to rewrite history to their liking.

What exactly was the motivation of the event’s organizers i.e. Wisconsin Public Television, Wisconsin Veterans Museum, Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, and the corporate sponsors? I was not privy to the internal debates that occurred in planning this event but the result seemed to be a compromise. Plans to exhibit lethal modern weapons were canceled in August of 2009. Vietnam soldier’s peace symbol patches and early versions of Veterans For Peace flags were displayed in glass cases in the museum exhibit. The grand finale inside the stadium included music pleading for peace. Wisconsin National Guard troops marched onto Lambeau Field and saluted 1244 empty chairs representing Wisconsin troops who died in the war. Old war buddies embraced.

As the nation continues to bleed money and lives into the Iraq/Afghanistan wars will young people look at the tribute to Vietnam vets as an encouragement to enlist? Maybe some will. Yet others will be aware of the savagery, futility and disillusionment through recorded quotes and speeches by that war’s survivors. Is this the open salvo by right wing conspiracists to rewrite history so that Vietnam will become a “good war?” I don’t know.

Is it naive to believe that some people with lots of money would just like to thank Vietnam vets for their service? Is the attempt to separate the soldier from the war just another attempt to glorify it?

One of the wealthy sponsors, Don Weber CEO of Logistic Health Inc. is a Marine combat veteran who talked about his grueling Vietnam combat experiences in one of the Wisconsin Public Television’s documentaries. What was his motivation?

I don’t know. Do you?
Editor’s note: Below are condensed highlights of a speech given by Dr. Adam Schesch at Veterans for Peace Memorial Day 2010 commemorations at James Madison Park in Madison, WI. Dr. Schesch, who received his PhD in history at the UW-Madison, is a historian and research-analyst of post World War II guerilla wars. He prefaced his remarks by stating that the three principles the United States should always consider when going to war are: Americans should not be asked to fight and die in wars that aren’t really in defense of our people or the country, we should have clear and attainable goals, and any wars we engage in should be adequately funded.

On December 1, President Obama gave a speech eerily similar to President Lyndon John’s spring of 1965 speech that started the troop build up in Vietnam. It laid out his goals and rationale for expanding the war in Afghanistan. However, the topics Obama left out are as important to Americans as what was included. The omissions were needed in order to make the case for an expanded war appear reasonable.

President Obama provided three basic goals for the build-up. First, the troop increase should enable the US to destroy Al Qaeda. Second, it should enable the U.S. to eliminate the Afghan Taliban as a threat to a pro-western government in Kabul. Third, it should stabilize a weak Pakistani government and prevent Pakistan’s nuclear weapons from falling into Islamic extremists’ hands. Previously President Obama had listed three other support goals: To seal the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, to protect Afghanistan’s population centers, and to drive the Taliban out of its main bases.

Let’s review the omissions one by one and then see what justification is left.

Facts on the ground.

Afghanistan’s physical geography makes Iraq’s look like a parade ground. A mountain range in central Afghanistan makes access from Kabul, the capital, to the ten other major cities possible only by traveling a 1400 mile “great circle” highway. The route must be protected at all times from constant land mining and Taliban toll outposts. A second mountain range, 75 + miles wide straddles the border with Afghanistan for 500 miles protecting infiltrators.

President Karzai has been called the “mayor of Kabul” for good reason. His regime, which just stole an election, is absent from the countryside outside Kabul, utterly corrupt, incompetent and submits to the same social mores that the Taliban support. Many provincial governors are warlords and most district towns have just enough police to provide the administrator with armed guards. Government services are non-existent. U.S. funded contractors pay 20% off the top to buy Taliban protection and only 10% of all aid reaches local people.

Afghanistan is a narcotics-state. It produces 95% of the world’s opium provides more than 50% of the Afghanistan’s Gross Domestic Product and is the country’s biggest employer.
Afghanistan’s ethnic/linguistic mess…. Afghanistan has 34 million people divided into nine major ethnic groups and Sunni and Shiite religious communities who speak five languages. The 42% Pashtun, who consider themselves Afghanistan’s natural rulers support the Taliban and are feared by most of the other 58%. Yet the U.S. bases its hopes on a national unity army which until recently had a 70% Uzbek officer corps ordering around a 70% Pashtun soldier force.

Obama dismissed ‘nation building’… at the same time ‘nation building’ is needed to gradually weaken over time the ethnic cultural behavior and tribal loyalties that fuel the Taliban. This is especially true for the Pashtun whose code of honor, the Pashtunwali, drives men’s treatment of women as subservient in every aspect of their lives. The Taliban are merely the ‘purifiers’ of a particularly local folk Islam which incorporates this code, not its creators. Without “nation building” this dense tribal social fabric and culture will continue.

The truth about the Taliban. U.S. intelligence agencies have long stated that the four major sources of Taliban funding are Persian Gulf Arab millionaires, the Pakistan military intelligence agency (the ISI), drug profits gained from providing protection for the drug trade, and protection money from US funded contractors (and now tolls on all civilian commerce using the national highways.) At the same time, no mention was made of the complete dependence of Afghan Taliban for modern weaponry on the Pakistan military-industrial complex and international weapons smuggling through Pakistan Ports…There were little or no efforts from 2002-2009 to cut these outside contributions because of the obvious problems it will cause with Washington’s so-called allies-Saudi Arabia, the Gulf Oil States and Pakistan.

“Breaking” the Taliban. Nothing was said about the obvious reply the Taliban will make to the Obama troop build-up. Like any competent guerilla movement, the Taliban simply melt away from superior forces. At the same time the Taliban will counter attack on soft targets the US can’t protect.

Obama’s lack of discussion of Al Queda and Pakistan was telling. Al Queda is located in Pakistan, not Afghanistan, and eleven other countries. The hunt for Al Queda could be a much cheaper targeted counter-terrorism operation or, in plain English, a police action, not a trillion dollar counter-insurgency action.

The rise of the Pakistani Taliban and religious extremism was a direct result of 60 years of corruption and bad government. Its lowland countryside is governed by a feudal landowning elite, its highlands by Pashtun and Baluchi tribal based leaders. The weaknesses of secular reform movements in Pakistan have allowed the growing social unrest to find outlets in regional ethnic liberation and Islamic revival movements.

The troop build up must be judged by the magnitude of the problem. In the brand new U.S. Counter-Insurgency Field Manual (2006) analysts argue that the troop to civilians ratio to achieve pacification (not nation building) is 20-25 soldiers per thousand civilians. With 34 million Afghans, this means 680,000 troops. But after the U.S. and NATO build-ups there will be just 160,000 effectives. The Afghan police force with a 25% annual desertion rate is considered utterly useless for [counter insurgency] operations.

(Continued on page 7)
and present interventionist policies of the US government.

In order to counter this impression, VFP was giving some workshops at the library and the Labor Temple in Green Bay. The first seminar began with a special screening of the documentary, “The Good Soldier,” which followed the experiences of five combat veterans from different generations. About 60 people showed up. Before the movie, Will Williams, a decorated combat veteran and member of VFP who had made several promotional spots for public TV told the audience that he had asked LZ Lambeau to stop using his name and image to promote it. “Going to war for corporate interests in not in the best interests of the country,” he said.

In 1966 I dropped out of college in my junior year and chose to enlist in the Navy rather than taking my chances with the draft. After boot camp I was assigned to Naval Construction Battalion-74. I made two deployments to Vietnam with the Seabees from 1967-68 where I worked as a storekeeper handling supplies.

At first I believed in the war, but later came to realize that it was a huge mistake.

I had planned to sell copies of my book at LZ Lambeau using two signs on iridescent paper stuck to my vest. One said “Vietnam Veteran,” and the other read “Buy my Book.” I planned to walk around with my Vets for Peace tee-shirt, Vietnam Service Medal, “Peace is Patriotic” button, and Seabees hat to see if anyone would stop to talk with me about my book—an experiment in marketing.

Will Williams... who had made several promotional spots for public TV told the audience that he had asked LZ Lambeau to stop using his name and image to promote it.

Saturday morning we got to LZ Lambeau and I put on my outfit. We began walking around. People who saw me coming averted their eyes after I looked at them and smiled. I walked on. We went over to large floor map of Southeast Asia that was crowded with vets who were writing their names and units on it. The area around DaNang where I had been stationed was full of signatures, but I managed to squeeze one in. I moved down the coast and found a spot near Chu Lai where I wrote my name and “MCB-74.” I looked around and my eyes settled on Quang Nai. Judi and I had visited the site of the My Lai massacre during its 40th anniversary in 2008. I looked at the bare spot where My Lai should have been. Over 500 Vietnamese civilians had been massacred by American troops there and I felt it deserved a spot on the map. I kneeled down and wrote “My Lai, site of the My Lai Massacre in 1968.” I got up and a woman was staring at me. “Thank you,” was all she said.

Next we checked out the military equipment display where Will Williams said there were modern machines of death. There was an ambulance with a red cross on it, some jeeps and a World War II vintage rocket firing piece but nothing modern. Later Will would view the same display and come to a similar conclusion. “Maybe they heard
we were coming and decided to tone it down,” he said.

A program called “The Deadly Writers Patrol: Writing That Gives Voice to the Vietnam Feelings” was being held in the Atrium. Writers were encouraged to bring a sample of their writings. I was late for the event but managed to read the part of my book about arriving in Vietnam. After the seminar I sold a couple books and talked with some vets who were trying to write memoirs but were having trouble dredging up their past. I offered some advice. Find something you were moved by and then expand on it.

Judi and I were both wearing Vets for Peace shirts but she had a newer one with a quote from General Dwight Eisenhower on it that read, “I hate war as only a soldier who has lived it can, as only one who has seen it its brutality, its futility, its stupidity…” a woman came up to her and said, “I read the back of yours shirt and liked what it said. Everybody here should have that on.” This and other comments got me thinking that this perhaps this wasn’t really a celebration of war. Later an Air Force veteran who noticed my shirt and said, “You know, I don’t think anybody here would disagree with you. We were lied into war by two Texans and that’s enough. Just don’t get in anyone’s face about it.” I said no, I wasn’t about to get in anyone’s face.

We scored some free tickets for the 7:30 pm tribute ceremony and took the elevator to the third deck. The stadium began filling up. On the field were 1244 white chairs lined up to resemble a cemetery. Each chair was for a Wisconsin veteran dead or missing from the war. A big screen atop the end zones showed the action down on the stage.

Kimo Williams and his group the Kimotions lit up the stadium with Jimi Hendrix’s “Purple Haze” and “Foxy Lady.” Williams used to play his guitar in Vietnam. Someone suggested he get a band together and play for some of the units in the field. He said they sent him out with an M-16 and a Stratocaster and told him to use each one in the appropriate situation.

Kimo’s wife Carol performed a number she had written called “Empty Boots.” It went, “Don’t give us empty boots, don’t make more empty boots, we are weeping for our empty boots.”

For the first time I choked back a tear. That was followed by another veteran named Rockie Lynne with a country western song that went, “I want to thank you from my heart, want to say the words we should have said, it’s been too long overdue I want to say thank you.” I teared up and felt a lump in my throat.

After the show was over and we were walking to the car a young man shook my hand. “Thank you for your service,” he said. In the past I would think, “Yeah, you mean thank you for my dis-service.” Now I came to realize that it didn’t have anything to do with actual war. It had to do more with the appreciation that we did what many others did not. We said, “Yes we will serve for better or for worse.”

We deserved better from our country. We deserved to be sent somewhere to do some good. We deserved careful reflection from our leaders before risking our lives. We didn’t get that. So to that man who shook my hand I said the only thing I could say.

“You’re welcome.”
Warrior Summit Helps Vets Who Survived War Survive the Peace

By Lt. Col. Fran Wiedenhoeft

The Madison Warrior Summit which took place June 16th and 17th is part of the Wisconsin Warrior Summit series, the first of which was the Milwaukee Warrior Summit in the fall of 2009. The Summit’s are organized by the Wisconsin Warrior Project which is a partnership of community groups, nonprofits, nongovernmental agencies, veterans and family members. Their stated purpose is to “help the veteran and their family who survived the war to survive the peace.”

The event is set up like a seminar or conference, but in actuality is so much more. The day started out with a special presentation by Verona native Kyle Housmann-Stokes. Housmann-Stokes is a graduate of the USC School of Cinematic Arts who has used his time in service to fuel some powerful short cinematic productions and used his art to help him deal with his own emotional journey and PTSD post deployment. Over the course of two days he showed two short works; Now and After: a PTSD autobiography, and Kapisa, a short drama of life in Afghanistan. Both pieces were incredibly moving, but I think the most important aspect of his work is his ability to so closely and accurately portray the inner workings of the human mind and soul post deployment. If there is any hope of civilian members of his audience understanding what the veterans’ life is like, it will be by looking through his eye in these films.

The Summit also included a panel with inspiring testimony from veterans and family members. It was intended to help the members of the audience, in the variety of professions represented, understand from first hand accounts exactly what the issues are for veterans and families. Those sharing their stories included veterans of the most recent wars as well as Vietnam Veterans, who after many years found the help they needed to augment their own strength and finally overcome many demons which had plagued them in the intervening years.

I attended the PTSD session hoping to learn what new information and treatment was available and what types of recommendations were currently being made. Although no new veterans with PTSD are a good thing, the recent return of large numbers of veterans with PTSD has allowed for a great deal of research. Researchers have been able to identify specific areas of the brain and specific chemicals in the brain and blood stream which are affected in people with PTSD. They are working to target treatments and medications to these sites to treat PTSD more selectively. In the mean time, large multicenter VA studies have shown that certain medications coupled with ongoing therapy give veterans currently in treatment the best relief.

Probably the most unique thing about the Summit is the mix of professional whose business it is to work with veterans in various capacities, and the veterans and their family members. To have the vets and families right there with the professionals, listening to the same presenters and of each other allows for a open dialogue which has the best chance for helping professionals to understand where veterans are coming from and what they need. This myth busting and exchange of ideas in and of itself could go a long way in helping the veteran “survive the peace”.

See the video “Now and After” at: www.kylehs.com/films/nowafter/flash.html

(Dr. Adam Schesch-continued from page 4)

Even to accomplish Obama’s more modest goals, using the military’s best analyst’s formulas, the effort would require 350,000 Western soldiers… it took 190,000 + Western troops in Iraq, with only 25 million people, to restore relative quite during the 2008-2009 Bush surge.

The past U.S. relations with the Afghan people poison their belief in today’s promises. First, we backed the Taliban’s political ancestors in the anti Soviet fight of the 1980’s then we abandoned Afghanistan in the 1990’s…after many promises; this was followed by new promises of President Bush and subsequent abandonment…

Obama’s war must be challenged. It is either just a ploy which will cost many American and Afghan dead and wounded to say “we did all we could” …or it is the first installment on an 8-10 year war with at least 350,000 American troops and a…trillion dollar tab.

We cannot afford the blood and money of a war without a rational purpose. We must demand an end to the Afghan war and an immediate withdrawal. Photo by Phil Fransen

Correction: In the last issue it was incorrectly reported that Sid Powell died 2/22/10. He actually died in 2009.
LZ Lambeau: A Deceptively Packaged Pro War Event—Commentary from VFP Member David Williams

On May 21-23 Wisconsin Public Television, the Wisconsin State Dept of Veterans Affairs, the Wisconsin Historical Society and various veterans groups co-sponsored a Vietnam “Welcome Home” at the Green Bay Packer’s Lambeau Field, replete with exhibits of Vietnam-era war equipment, a vast collection of Vietnam veterans’ photos and stories, sales of memorabilia, expected flyovers of military aircraft, continuous live music performances, and public speeches and ceremonies. Spectacularly staged in the heart of politically-conservative “Packerland”, the three-day extravaganza was preceded and accompanied by a statewide wide media blitz by WI Public TV and Radio which gave it an overtly super-patriotic, pro-military, and pro-war spin. As the website of one area TV Channel framed it: ‘The event is LZ Lambeau, where LZ stands for ‘landing zone.’

Organizers say the event provided an opportunity to show Vietnam veterans the gratitude that was lacking when they came home in the 1960s and ’70s.” Attendance on Saturday alone was estimated at upwards of 25,000.

In thanking the Vietnam veterans for “defending their country” a careful effort was made by the sponsoring authorities to exclude any antiwar voices from this treatment of the Vietnam War and its legacy. Veterans For Peace was initially included in the sponsorship and Vietnam combat veteran Will Williams’ voice was used in media promotions. As the event neared, however, Will was denied inclusion among the speakers at the event and VFP was not allowed to have a VFP table during the three days. A planned installation at LZ Lambeau of the famous Veterans For Peace Memorial Mile of thousands of headstones representing U.S. personnel killed in Iraq and Afghanistan was canceled on the pretext of “safety” concerns.

...a careful effort was made by the sponsoring authorities to exclude any antiwar voices from this treatment of the Vietnam War and its legacy.

This silencing of any antiwar voices--along with the continued mantra of expressing a public “gratitude earlier lacking” to the Vietnam vets--conveyed an implicit but clear suggestion that those Americans who opposed the Vietnam War were to blame for ingratitude shown to the vets, and that far from being a monumental disaster brought-on by misguided U.S. policies the Vietnam War was a worthy and honorable endeavor which should be commemorated.

Nowhere was there any acknowledgement that the U.S. government, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and state and local governments have been derelict over all these years in caring for the wounded and traumatized Vietnam veterans--to the extent that postwar suicides of Vietnam veterans have been double the number of the 58,000+ killed in combat and Vietnam vets are a large part of U.S. homeless from the end of the war to the present. Nowhere was there any serious commemoration (and apology for) the more than three million Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians slaughtered during the 15-year U.S. involvement by the U.S. military.

Rehabilitating the memory and lessons of the Vietnam War from a “lost” war which should have never been fought to an honorable war which was not properly appreciated at the time is necessary for eradicating the last vestiges of the “Vietnam Syndrome” and building public acceptance for massive and prolonged U.S. military involvements in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Under the mendacious guise of “thanking” them, the badly-used Vietnam vets are now being used by the same military-industrial establishment which perpetrated the Vietnam War to prepare for more Vietnam-style wars of intervention.

Can it be surprising that massive funding for this gala was provided by major defense contractors in Wisconsin such as Oshkosh Defense Industries and Tommy Thompson’s Health Logistics Inc. of La Crosse? Oshkosh Defense Industries was rumored to have planned to display several specimens of their latest all-terrain combat vehicle. And beyond promoting today’s military-industrial complex and wars there was simply lots of money (as Will Williams has repeatedly pointed-out) to be made off the vets, their families, and friends at the event itself from the sale of T-shirts.
and other memorabilia, beer, brats, and rides in a Vietnam War-era helicopter at $100 per passenger. After withdrawing from co-sponsorship of LZ Lambeau Field, Veterans For Peace Chapter 25 undertook an energetic campaign about the pro-war and pro-military message carried by the event. In the days before LZ Lambeau a press campaign organized by Buzz Davis and joined-in by other Vietnam-era and combat veterans was able to get op-ed pieces and other statements into Green Bay and other newspapers. Will Williams spoke on the Joy Cardin show on Wisconsin Public Radio and to other media the week of the event. Workshops were held at the Green Bay Labor Temple facilitated by event. In that

We must forge a public campaign to tell the truth about the Vietnam War...

Hour-and-a-half it was clear that Will was widely-recognized in the crowd from his media interventions and other speaking-out. A near-constant stream of people came-up to thank him or to at least acknowledge his presence, while many people simply stared (there was only one brief incident involving overt hostility by another Vietnam vet). He also ran into old friends from veterans' affairs including another Black combat vet from his old Wolfhound Army division in South Vietnam who he hadn't seen since that time.

After Will and I walked out of LZ Lambeau and I went back to the Green Bay Labor Temple (with the understanding that Will and Dot were headed back to Madison) I later learned that Will had decided to return to LZ Lambeau, where he remained far into the night, walking and talking among that vast assemblage with his antiwar and peace message. The work of Will and other VFP members in publicly speaking-out about the LZ Lambeau pro-war and pro-military extravaganza and Will's presence at LZ Lambeau enabled an antiwar message to get out to huge numbers of people in Green Bay and across the region. And it is possible that the eventual non-appearance of the Oshkosh Defense industries combat terrain vehicles was due to the criticism of this by Will in the days leading up to the event.

A few days after LZ Lambeau, Wisconsin Public Radio reported that in view of its success similar “LZ” events are being planned for other states. Now that the pro-war and pro-military Establishment has put the Vietnam War back on the public agenda with the aim of re-writing history and preparing for more Vietnam-style U.S. military involvements. We must forge a public campaign to tell the truth about the Vietnam War and the antiwar movement of that time and its relevance to the new U.S. wars of today and tomorrow. Such an educational outreach campaign should involve those who served in South Vietnam, other military veterans, “veterans” of the Vietnam antiwar movement, and a new generation of peace activists, so that the tragic legacy of the Vietnam War cannot be used to promote new Vietnam-style U.S. military involvements.

These views are those of David Williams and not necessarily of Veterans for Peace.

[This summary was written on assignment for the Madison Socialist Potluck Newsletter by VFP Associate Member David L. Williams. For more details on the LZ Lambeau event and related work of the VFP contact Buzz Davis at dbuzzdavis@aol.com, Will Williams at cuchi66@centurylink.net, and Green Bay native Paul Wozniak at paul.riverhistory.wozniak@gmail.com, or David Williams at dvdwilliams51@tds.net]
VFP Protests Army Parachute Drop at Middleton High Pep Rally

by Buzz Davis

At the end of May, Vets for Peace members were informed that the Middleton High School was planning an all school assembly/pep rally the afternoon of Wednesday, June 2nd at which the U.S. Army Golden Knights parachute team was going to conduct a drop.

The school district billed it as an assembly to recognize students who had made significant achievements which included taking responsible risks.

Steve Blank and the TAME (Truth and Alternatives to Militarism in Education) were scheduled to do a protest event and Vets for Peace decided to help them.

We sent an email May 29th to the school board, school superintendent, high school principal and assistant principals asking that they cancel the military part of the event. There was no written response.

Monday, May 31 VFP and TAME issued a press alert stating: “Schools are required by federal law to allow military recruiters recruit in the schools. But this is going too far. The parachute drop Wednesday is designed to impress students with soldiers’ braveness and toughness. It is unfair that the students, who believe we should work harder to create peace than we do to fight wars, will be forced to sit through a pro-military display of power designed to encourage youth to join the military. Citizens should call the school district and demand the jump be canceled.”

The superintendent called to explain that there was to be no recruiting.

Tuesday a press conference was conducted on the front lawn of the school and was covered by all three Madison TV stations, the local newspaper, two radio stations and the WI State Journal. Steve Blank spoke as a Middleton school parent, Buzz Davis for Vets for Peace, David Hoppe as a retired school counselor and Jane Jensen, of Military Families for Peace, spoke representing loved ones of military members.

On the day of the drop about 25 persons participated in the protest which all the students and faculty saw as they left the high school to walk to the athletic field for the pep rally.

Again the media was there. The peace activists distributed over 700 military op out of recruiting forms specifically designed for Middleton high school by Steve Blank. Many students and faculty said thanks.

During the rally most of the time was taken up by the military announcer describing the plane, the jumps, etc. At the end of the pep rally the military announcer invited students down to the field to meet their recruiters. We got our point across.

The parachute jump was a military recruiting event regardless of whether the school administration wished to pitch it as. The Golden Knights had jumped at a Janesville high school June 1st and it is likely to do it again somewhere else.

The Golden Knights are part of the military recruitment command. The Department of Defense will spend $10 billion this year on military recruitment at K-12 schools, post secondary schools and shopping centers. In 2006 the US Department of Education spent about $38 billion on K-12 public schools. What lopsided priorities our nation has.

Get videos on the news reports at these sites:
2010 MATC Scholarship Awarded by Chapter 25 to LaFollette Student

By Paul McMahon

The second annual Veterans for Peace MATC scholarship has been awarded to senior Sean Wenkman of LaFollette High School. He received the award at the Memorial Day peace rally at James Madison Park (see photo) with David Giffey presenting a celebratory check.

This year Chapter 25 directed the $1,200 scholarship to Madison LaFollette in order to offer more students the opportunity to enroll at Madison Area Technical College. In addition, three scholarships of $300 each were also awarded to winning seniors at River Valley, Dodgeville, and Richland Center high schools.

Last year’s MATC scholarship was awarded at Madison East.

Sean completed a winning essay on the subject “Why Can’t Peace be Achieved through War?” In his essay he emphasized the importance to our human sameness, not our differences, and concluded that “we must see each other as connected, not standing alone in the world.”

Sean intends to begin his studies this fall in the liberal arts transfer program, which allows credits earned to transfer to a four-year institution to complete a baccalaureate degree.

Members of the scholarship committee are David Giffey, Joel Garb and Paul McMahon. The committee publicizes the program, coordinates with the schools, reads the essays and determines the winners.

Chapter 25 extends its deep gratitude to all those who contribute to the scholarship fund as well as to our educational efforts in general. The awards are possible only through such generous support.

Scholarship program extended to two more rural schools

In rural southwestern Wisconsin school districts, the Veterans for Peace scholarship program was extended in 2010 to include Dodgeville and Richland Center high schools.

In the River Valley School District, Spring Green, this was the third year VFP awarded a scholarship to a graduating senior. The recipient was Kim L’Herault, Arena, who plans to study speech communication or journalism in college at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The scholarship recipient in Dodgeville was Carin Frank. She was presented with a $300 check from Veterans for Peace Chapter 25 by member Joel Gaalswyk, Spring Green. Carin plans to study international relations at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with the intention of entering law school as a post-graduate student.

Zachary Hamilton was the scholarship recipient at Richland Center High School. He plans to study chemistry and Spanish at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, with the intention of obtaining a doctorate in pharmacology. VFP member David Giffey presented the scholarships during 2010 awards programs at River Valley and Richland Center high schools.

— David Giffey
Opinion

U.S. Empire Going the Way of Ancient Rome

Our country is in the process of repeating the mistakes of another country at the time of a transition from a republic to an empire. The ancient country is the Roman state in what is now Italy in the first century A.D. The U.S. is repeating all of the same mistakes involving a loss of democratic rights, moving toward an outright military dictatorship. Another factor involves the construction of a vast empire with Rome as well as U.S. being supposedly the leading power. Endless warfare in order to build the empire is a common feature of empires.

It took approximately 1,000 years to bring about the destruction of the Roman Empire. The U.S. Empire will more likely than not, not last as long as the Roman form. Due to information technology as well as many other forms of technology, things will develop much more rapidly. The people of the world will not allow this barbarity to continue on for anywhere as long as the ancient empire lasted. The fact that information travels quickly is crucial in understanding what could possibly develop as far as international resistance to empire. Already, there are numerous examples of resistance to empire occurring in Iran, Venezuela, Pakistan, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

John Carey

Veterans for Peace
P.O. Box 1811
Madison, WI 53701

Upcoming Events

Veterans for Peace National Convention- Portland, Maine
August 25-29 at the Holiday Inn by the Bay Hotel and Convention Center

Fighting Bob Fest is being held at the Sauk County Fairgrounds, Baraboo, WI on September 11.