



# THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

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## ACTIONS ROCK VA.

It doesn't take much to freak out the VA bosses these days. And there's good reason for them to be running scared. They see the potential for the building of a fighting veterans' movement, and that prospect terrifies them.

In Boston members of VVAW who are just getting a chapter going in that area, passed out leaflets calling for vets to join a picket line and rally at the JFK Building (the home of the Regional VA Office) in Boston on November 11, Veterans Day. Talking about the traditional Vets Day, the leaflet pointed out "We don't see that vets, or anyone else, has anything in common with these annual farces. Our fight is 365 days a year."

When a couple of VVAW vets showed up at the site for the picket line, they were met by a mini-army of FBI agents, lining the hallways as if to repulse a major frontal attack. A junior VA bureaucrat came scurrying down to say that the VA Regional Director would be glad to meet with a delegation of five vets and, if the chapter wished, he would hold a news conference with VVAW members following their little chat. The Boston action was not large; in fact, only a couple of VVAW members were there, but the VA reaction showed that they understand what a building vet's movement can do.

Boston isn't the only place where the VA bigwigs are turning somersaults when they are confronted by the potential of a vet's movement. In Chicago, there was a small but militant picketline at the VA Regional Office on Veterans Day, pointing not only to the demand of vets for decent benefits but also speaking to the fact that we've seen one war and that we won't fight another rich man's war. Among the vets who spoke during the demo was one student/vet on the "work-study program," a VA program which pays students \$2.50 per hour but will not hire them (or other workers) to do the work fulltime. Not only was this vet on the work-study program at starvation wages, he wasn't even getting his checks for the money the VA owed him.

The following day several VVAW members went with this vet to see the Veterans' Service Officer, George Penn, refusing to be stopped by the various VA workers along the way to the boss. In fact the workers enjoyed seeing Penn in a position where he had to deal with vets

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PAUL ALLEN WITH VVAW CONFRONTS V.A. HEARING BOARD IN MILWAUKEE. ACTIONS LIKE THIS HAVE THE V.A. RUNNING FOR COVER.

## SAILORS FIGHT UNSAFE NUCLEAR SUBMARINE

Why work on unsafe submarines? That was the question raised by the crewmen of the USS Haddock, a nuclear submarine homeported at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Faced with unbelievably dangerous working conditions, little or no time off, and an average 80 hour work week, crewmen of the Haddock stood up to the Navy and won a victory important to sailors and GIs everywhere.

Beginning in late October, sailors of the Haddock who were also members of VRB or Out--Hawaii (an organization of sailors fighting for the re-enlistment bonus the Navy refuses to pay) started speaking out about the conditions aboard the sub. With the support of the VRB group and

VVAW, more and more sailors and their wives began coming forth around the struggle. The sailors kept saying they couldn't understand why they had let these conditions continue for so long (three years). During the discussions of the sub, the sailors would frequently joke about the dangerous conditions aboard the sub, then minutes of silence would follow when the seriousness of what they were saying would sink in. In more emotional minutes wives of the crewmen spoke of how it feels to never know if their husbands would return from sea and how the sailors would psych themselves up and be brave men and go to sea.

Through these and other discussions, the crewmen of the Haddock began to demand that the Haddock should not sail on November 6th under these unsafe conditions. There were major material discrepancies which made the boat unsafe for the crew; problems that would result in the death of the entire crew by radioactive contamination, drowning, suffocation and asphyxiation from just seven of the listed

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### CALL TO ACTION

**Demonstration  
Planned for July  
Bicentennial !** page 2

# Join Us on July 4, in Philadelphia! **UNITE FOR BICENTENNIAL ACTION**

On July 4, 1976, the eyes of the American people will be focused on Philadelphia where the Declaration of Independence was signed, as the nation celebrates its Bicentennial. The class that runs this country will be leading the flag-waving, painting rosy pictures about how good the American people have it, wallowing in the "glory" of past wars, preaching about our great "heritage of freedom," and how our democratic system should last for at least another 200 years.

Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) calls for people from all around the country to come to Philadelphia for July 4th to expose these ruling class lies and lay out the real demands of the people of this country: vets, workers, unemployed, students and all people who see the need to fight against the attacks coming down. We have carried the rich for 200 years; let's get them off our backs.

The Bicentennial hoopla is in full swing already and it's going to get worse. Red, white and blue fire hydrants, license plates, beer cans; Bicentennial minutes on TV; Revolutionary War leaders used to advertise everything imaginable. But behind all these quick-money schemes stands a public relations smoke-screen. The millionaires and their cronies who run this country are trapped in a real economic crisis; these parasites are trying to use the Bicentennial to cover up 200 years of exploitation and convince the people that we have the best of all possible worlds, so that their profit-making system can keep alive.

"We can get by this little recession problem; the American people only have to bite the bullet," some rich turkey will say. "We must sacrifice together. Yes, we've had some problems in the past, but if we pull together for the common good and the national interest, we can ride them out," some politician will preach. "No matter what difficulties we may have, we've got our freedom!"

We don't have a damn thing in common with these mouth-pieces of the rich. It's not our crisis; we're not paying for it, and all the red, white and blue speeches aren't going to change that. By "sacrifice together" the bosses mean that working people should sacrifice so the rich can increase their profits--and we aren't having any of that either. Their national interest and common good is for us to get ready to go to their war--even nuclear war--to protect the ability of American business in competition with their counterparts in the Soviet Union to continue to rip off the rest of the world. We aren't buying that at all.

The reality of 1976 is far from the glowing picture these politicians paint. Everywhere we look the rich bosses are trying to do anything to increase profits. Layoffs by the millions, frantic attempts at speed-ups, wage cuts, rampant inflation, growing unemployment; and while the rich try to squeeze every nickel of profit out of working people, they also try to slash social services which don't bring in their profits. For instance, they promised vets all kinds of benefits; but the GI Bill isn't enough to live on, and they're trying to cut that. Disability and pension payments are cut back; healthcare deteriorates further in VA hospitals; red tape multiplies in an attempt to discourage vets from getting benefits.

Two hundred years ago the American people won a great victory in gaining independence from England, but wealthy Americans replaced the British aristocrats in running the country (and today American sons are forced to be the "redcoats" in wars like Vietnam). For 200 years there's been fierce struggle in the US: the ending of slavery during the Civil War, the 8-hour work day, unemployment compensation, union shops; masses of Americans marched and fought for civil rights and to protest US aggression in Indochina. Vets fought for these victories and also fought for the rights of vets as in the Bonus March in 1932 or in the militant

battles of today. Not one of these victories was a gift from the rich to the American people; we had to fight them for any step forward we've made. Today, more and more vets are fighting and not letting them use us once and then throw us away.

The rich tell us that we should count our blessings and that we should be prepared to go off to fight another one of their wars; we say there's a war to fight, but that war is right here. **WE WILL FIGHT FOR JOBS!** Around us, we see roads that need fixing, housing which needs to be built, yet unemployment lines lengthen and benefits run out, all because work that needs to be done isn't a "job" unless it brings them profits. As vets we know we end up going to the VA for their sorry care because we can't afford better. The need for jobs confronts millions of the unemployed, vets and non-vets alike.

At every Bicentennial celebration some speaker is going to talk about the glory of past wars, with some American Legion commander all covered with ribbons nodding in the right places. Their system needs another war. But we fought one rich man's war; we know who makes the sacrifices in war, and it isn't the rich. That's why we say **WE WON'T FIGHT ANOTHER RICH MAN'S WAR.**

To take the demands of Jobs or Income Now, and No More Rich Man's Wars out to the American people, VVAW wants all vets to join us in Philadelphia on July 4, 1976. As The Veteran describes, VVAW chapters are working on campuses, at VA hospitals and offices, in workplaces, at unemployment offices to build the fighting vets movement. The Bicentennial demonstration will bring together all these local struggles, uniting chapters, other vets' organizations, and individual vets from across the country into a powerful force to expose the lies of the rich and put forward the demands of vets. And through the building of the demonstration, we want to see VVAW grow stronger around the country.

In July, 1974, VVAW sponsored four days of demonstrations in Washington, DC, climaxed by a march of 3500 people on July 4th. Vets from around the country joined in the actions; the militance and unity these four days built was a real spark to the struggle which followed. Much of the success of the demo came from vigorous support and building among other organizations who joined us in Washington.

VVAW says that the 1976 Demonstration should build on the gains made since 1974. There should be a massive joint action, built around Jobs or Income Now, and We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War, in Philadelphia on July 4th; we will also be planning other actions around specific demands of vets for the days before July 4th, and hope that other groups will also plan actions on those days.

We want the active participation of thousands of vets. The demo must be built nationwide. If you, your group or organization are interested in joining to build for the demonstration or have ideas to contribute, contact the VVAW National Office. There will be planning meetings and conferences in local areas.

VVAW wants to build a mass demonstration in Philadelphia on July 4th which will unite people to strike a mighty blow against the leeches who suck our blood. Vets need a movement which can fight for our rights and our needs. VVAW wants all vets to join with us to build that movement. Build the Fighting Veterans' Movement. Come to Philadelphia--Build the Bicentennial Demonstration!

**JOBS or INCOME NOW!**  
**WE WON'T FIGHT IN  
ANOTHER RICH MAN'S WAR!**

## UNEMPLOYMENT

# STRUGGLE FOR JOBS OR INCOME GROWS



Detroit VVAW joins with UWOC and unemployed in demonstration demanding "JOBS OR INCOME NOW"

It's no secret that millions of people in the US today want jobs or some type of income to keep them and their families alive. Recent government figures claim that unemployment has dropped from 8.6% to 8.3% in the month of November. These figures are fine if you're a government bureaucrat who sits around and makes a living quoting them supposedly showing how things are getting better.

You don't have to be an economics expert to see through this government bull. Talk to the millions of people crowding into unemployment centers around the US. Tell them the unemployment figures are improving, they'll laugh in your face. One significant contribution to these phoney figures is the fact that there were 400,000 exhaustees in November; people whose unemployment benefits expired and who were unable to find employment. This figure is expected to double by March. These people were dropped from the "official" unemployment figures to present "improved" figures. We don't need this garbage, we need jobs! These are indeed hard times but they're also fighting times and working people, determined to fight, not starve, can't live on phoney figures and government lies.

Increasingly, people around the country are fighting back against these conditions and lies. One such national organization of employed and unemployed workers is the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee (UWOC). UWOC has been consistently demonstrating, picketing, and fighting for jobs or income now! An example of this fighting spirit occurred in late October in Detroit at the Conner Office of the Michigan Employment Security Commission. After leafletting and picketing outside, one UWOC member went inside to speak to the large crowd (300) in the office. After being ordered to leave and refusing, the office director sent out the security police to force him out. He refused and the unemployed workers began shouting, "That's

right! Stay!" As the guards kept pushing, more and more workers joined in shouting down the guards, until all 300 were involved. One after another, these unemployed workers stepped forward to speak about the need to unite and fight for jobs.

The manager of the office then threatened to shut down the office to which the workers shouted, "You better not try it." Oddly, the lines began moving faster. After about an hour, Detroit police arrived and arrested the UWOC spokesman, further outraging the unemployed workers. Seeing the anger of the workers, one cop said, "We can bring 600 cops over here" which further infuriated the workers. The MESC dropped the charges against the UWOC member.

Another demo was held on October 28th at Conners, inside and outside the facility. UWOC members carried banners and signs inside and circulated freely speaking to the workers about the demand Jobs or Income Now and the reopening of two closed unemployment offices. Speaking of the struggle ahead for Jobs or Income, one worker said, "It won't come like a cup of coffee all nicely stirred up with cream and sugar. It'll come rough-but it'll taste better that way."

In these and other UWOC actions across the country, many vets and VVAW members have made an important contribution. Particularly hard hit, younger vets face 15% or higher unemployment, with another 20% of Vietnam-era vets going to school on an inadequate GI Bill, in many cases because of the unavailability of jobs.

We need jobs with decent wages; we need decent health care; our children need better schools. We've got a lot to fight for, while the government tells us to sacrifice more. We won't sit by as they run this crap to us. What we demand is decent benefits and jobs.

## VICTORIES

*(struggles continued from earlier issues of The Veteran)*

### Milwaukee

Ted Streit, a Milwaukee vet whose disability rating the VA tried to cut, has emerged victorious. Spirited actions by the Milwaukee chapter of VVAW forced the VA to give Ted open hearings. The result of these open hearings was that instead of cutting Ted's disability, the VA actually raised it from 40% to 50%. Refusing to be bought off with this victory, the VVAW chapter fights on--see story about Paul Allen in this issue of The Veteran.

### Chicago

On January 25, 1975, an anti-police repression coalition demonstration in Chicago was attacked by the Chicago police. Though the police got the worse of the battle that followed, 7 people (including 3 VVAW members) were arrested and charged with assault. On October 15, all charges were dropped, after a series of postponements, hearings and similar harassment.

The prosecutor announced that the state wanted the charges dropped because one of the 7, Robert Oxley, was an undercover cop and they felt that he instigated the fight. The real reason why charges were dropped was because of the growing anti-police repression campaign in Chicago and the public support for the defendants.

# NEW YORK IN CRISIS



**WORKERS IN NEW YORK, LIKE WORKERS AROUND THE COUNTRY, ARE ORGANIZING TO FIGHT ALL ATTACKS; FOR INSTANCE THIS RALLY OF 1200 WORKERS ON MAY DAY (INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY) 1975.**

New York City is teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. Other US cities aren't far behind. It's a crisis of the whole damn system we live under. Already, all over the country, officials have been raising the threat of bankruptcy to cut city workers' wages, push layoffs, and a host of other attacks, including cutbacks in needed and inadequate city services. All this is their answer to the crisis.

In their efforts to cut their losses, various bankers and officials have made a big deal out of the threat of default. Default means NYC not paying their bills on time. The ruling class and its media have played this up, making it sound like the future of New York hinges on default or no default. Why? Because the only payments they are concerned about are what's owed to them--especially their banks--and they're scared that default would mean no payment.

For the people of NYC, default means about the same as no default. To avoid default, the city's bosses have launched an attack on them. Union contracts have been broken, tens of thousands of city workers have been laid off, city services cut back to bare bones, and the city put under control of a board of big bankers and businessmen. All this so bankers can protect their investments.

The recent passage of the NYC "bail-out" bill shows even more clearly that it's the people of New York who are being made to suffer the burden of the financial

crisis, default or no default. For instance the teachers' pension money has been turned over to the city. The bureaucrats are already demanding more layoffs and more cutbacks.

It's these facts which lie behind the campaign to blame the crisis on New Yorkers, saying "these people have been living high on the hog." But the people of the city in no way caused the crisis. For millions of New Yorkers, as for millions of people around the country, living conditions have been going from bad to worse. Unemployment mounts, housing decays, schools are overcrowded, garbage rots along the sidewalks, and taxes are the highest in the country. And this is what the politicians call "living high off the hog."

The people of New York City haven't made profits from the city. But someone has--the bankers and their corporate cronies. Their banks made billions buying bonds from the city and then collecting interest compounded on interest. Take for example, the Third Avenue elevated train in Manhattan, built years ago and later torn down. The banks are still collecting interest on the bonds.

So, the need of the people who run the system to get more and more profits is behind the New York City crisis. And it's the cause behind the vicious attack on the people of the city. The bankers and their class have found willing partners in the top union officials. These traitors to the workers they are supposed to serve

have done everything possible to misdirect the struggle of their own union members. When the layoffs hit, they practically fell over each other to come up with their own plans on who should be the first of their union members to be laid off. They went right along with a wage freeze, even though increases were written into their contracts. Lowest of all, union officials went along with Ford's "solution" and turned over another \$2 billion in pension money for bonds that no bank would touch. Not only do they invest the workers' old age security in a fiasco, they're willing partners in an attempt to blackmail the workers into giving up their demands for fear of bankrupting the city and losing their own pension money.

But the people in New York are proving in their struggle that they will fight any so-called solution which calls for massive layoffs and cutbacks.

Thousands of workers have answered the layoffs and speed-up with strikes, slowdowns, and many demonstrations. A militant example of this was the four day wildcat strike of sanitation workers. This strike only ended when the sanitation union chief handed over \$1.6 million in union dues to the city so that the workers could be rehired for a few weeks, and then laid off again. That struggle continues as the sanitation men slow down and refuse to do the extra work of their laid-off brothers.

Many people besides the city workers have been fighting the effects of the cuts. In some neighborhoods, residents have protested in front of firehouses threatened with closing. Large demonstrations have been held in front of hospitals threatened with closing, protesting the lack of adequate health care.

Students have also taken up the fight. On September 18, 5000 students demonstrated in front of Governor Carey's office. When the city said there would be no new admissions or transfers in the city college system next semester, one of the vets clubs said they would shut the system down if the ruling were not changed. The Board of Higher Education has now decided to cut off admissions or transfers for students--excluding veterans. But the people are not going to stand for that divide and conquer tactic either, so this struggle continues.

Working people--the vast majority of the people of New York City--have no interest in bearing the burden of the system's crisis or in supporting "solutions" like the one worked out between Ford and city officials. There is a clear answer to these attacks: To Hell with the Banks and Their Profits; Make the Bosses Pay; We Demand Jobs and Services!

# TV DISTORTS VETS LIVES

Did you ever sit down in front of the television and watch one of these police shows and all of a sudden see a guy in a field jacket shooting up dope, or robbing a bank or doing some other such thing? Well, he's the crazy, bug-eyed Vietnam veteran who's the latest in a long series of stereotyped villains on TV. Hardly a week goes by where you can't see a show that uses a vet with some kind of problem to get through another hour of "entertainment." And if the vet isn't killing his best friend over an ounce of heroin, he might be having flashbacks to the time in Vietnam when he burned a village which supposedly accounts for the reason why he can't relate to his wife or family.

It seems about the only time that TV shows how "well-adjusted" vets are is when they are portrayed as cops, like Starsky and Hutch, two Vietnam vets who become undercover agents. Since when are cops such well adjusted people? Who hasn't witnessed some kind of police repression, whether it's as bad as seeing somebody shot down in the street for doing nothing, or getting stopped for a traffic ticket, only to see a cop looking for a hand-out.

The main reason why vets are being used as villains on TV is that the war in Vietnam was not popular here in the US. For a variety of reasons the Ameri-

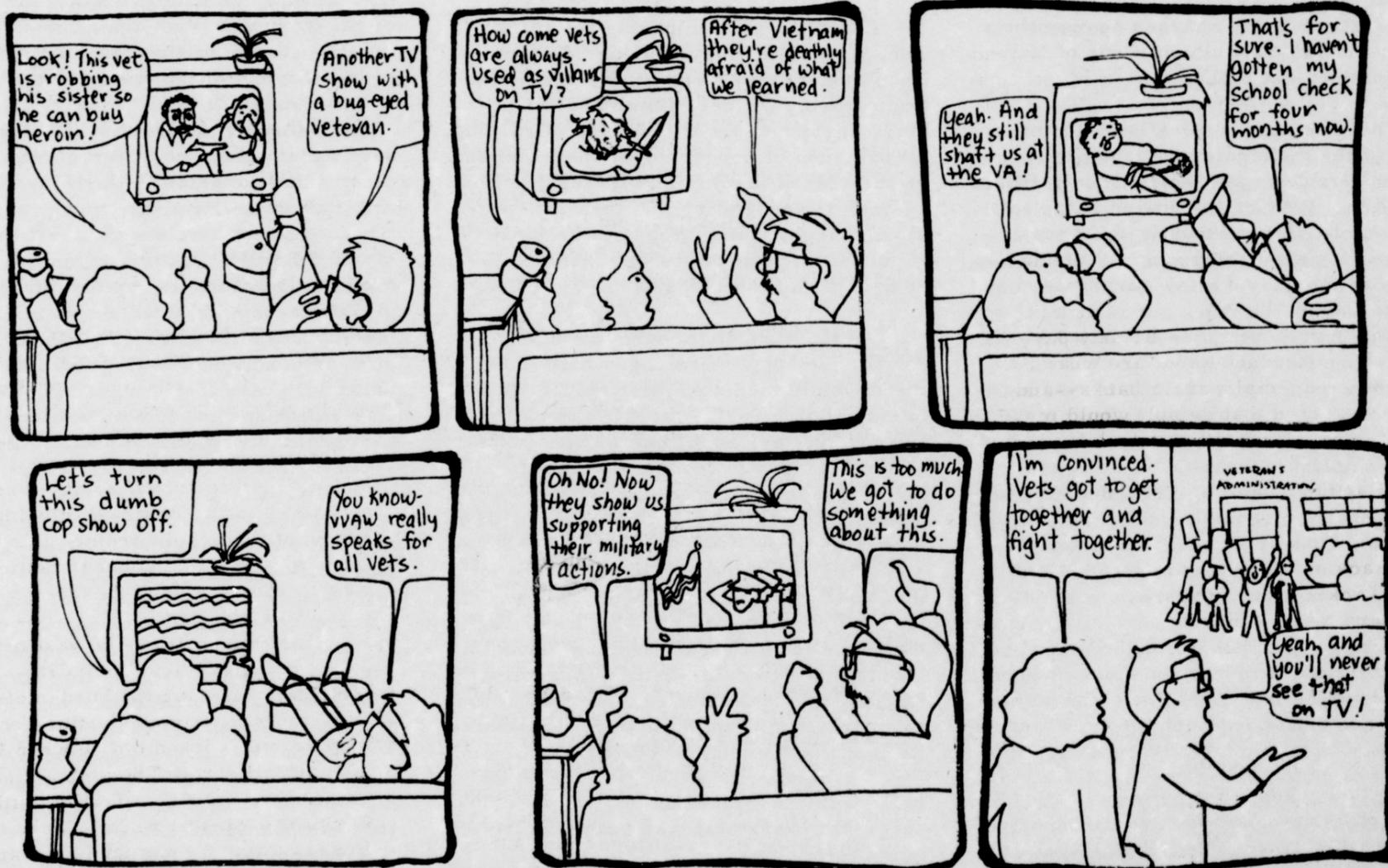
can people wanted the war to end. When it did it was in victory for the Indochinese and defeat for the US rulers. Because vets had the first hand experience of fighting in that rich man's war, they were able to come home and talk about what we were doing there; that the war wasn't being fought in the Vietnamese people's interests and it wasn't in the interests of the American people either. So the rulers of the country have to make vets look like they're crazy in order to try and make people think that vets can't seriously expose the first hand knowledge of what a rich man's war is all about. This is where TV comes into the picture. If the show portrays vets in either blatantly anti-social behavior, like taking heroin, or in more subtle ways, like having flashbacks to burning villages in Vietnam, they think they can water down the important views that vets have on rich man's wars.

It's true that some vets were addicted to heroin and that some vets do have flashbacks to Vietnam. In fact, the great majority of vets don't have these problems; even those who do are not, as TV tries to say, afflicted by a great sense of guilt. Instead, vets are striking out based on their sense of being used to fight a war for the interests of the rich and their class. Vets also took part in the massive anti-war demonstrations against the war in Vietnam, and were, in

fact, an important part of the anti-war movement. But you'll never see TV show that. They couldn't dare have a vet protest war, in a real way, going into the homes of millions of Americans. The Indochinese won the war and it was the system that lost the war; you'll never see that on TV either.

When vets on TV shows rob banks or sell dope to little kids or blow up buildings they are portrayed as acting against the system that they feel betrayed them. But vets don't see themselves just as individuals apart from the great majority of people or see the American people as the enemy. This is a far cry from the truth. Vets face the same conditions as most other Americans: unemployed, underpaid, living under the crunch of the system's economic crisis, and living under the threat of looming rich man's wars, in addition to facing the horrible treatment from the VA.

And, like the American people are fighting back more and more against the system, together, and not in senseless acts of individualism, vets are part of worker's strikes, picket lines, unemployment protests, etc. VVAW is a growing organization that has a proud history of fighting against the system. It's uniting veterans into a powerful fist against the rulers of this country in fighting against the shoddy treatment at the VA and against rich man's wars. TV shows are incapable of portraying vets in this way, because TV is owned and operated by the businessmen whose interests are self-serving. Building a powerful veterans organization won't be on your screens in the near future, but it is the only answer to the image shown on television.



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# SAILORS ORGANIZE

malfunctions. Of course, the Navy's position was and is that its nuclear subs are the safest vessels in the water. The experience of the crewmen of the Haddock and other nuclear subs proves this to be a flat-out lie.

Submarines, unlike surface ships, deteriorate quickly due to the operating conditions involved. The Navy does not provide adequate maintenance periods or funds to combat the problem of degenerating equipment. Instead, it spends its money on more and more weapons and new "improved" ships and submarines. For example, the Eisenhower and the Carl Vinson, two giant nuclear carriers like the USS Nimitz, are being built to join the fleet by the end of the decade. They are costing \$1 billion each! Meanwhile, the Navy lets the old boats deteriorate at the expense of the safety of the crews. Big business pulls the profits while the Navy deems the crews expendable.

As the unity and organizing on the Haddock increased, the crewmen and their wives kicked off their "offensive" by filing redress of grievance and article 138s against the conditions and the commanding officer of the sub. These actions are two of the limited ways the enlisted personnel can bring charges against their officers under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, (UCMJ).

They also began a leafletting campaign at the main gate of Pearl Harbor and the circulation of the redress petition aboard the Haddock to demand it not sail on November 6th without needed repairs. The petition drew wide support among the crewmen, including a few career seamen.

Under pressure the Commanding Officer of the Haddock gave in and granted the seamen an open hearing, calling a request mast on the subject of the sub's status. Commander Keith Garland paced and chain-smoked his way through the two hour meeting, pleading ignorance or outright denying that major safety problems existed. When confronted with concrete examples he rationalized the sub's condition by saying that no submarine is 100% safe, and being a crew member of any sub requires some risk. Garland stated the meeting was unproductive, as he dodged the primary issue of the lives and safety of the crew. Many among the crew were less than satisfied with the meeting for other reasons, remembering past breakdowns at sea and the disasters of the USS Thresher (sister ship of the Haddock) and the USS Scorpion, both of which sank at

sea losing their entire crews due to malfunctioning equipment.

The following day, at 6:30 AM, the angry crewmen, wives, and supporters, began leafletting and picketing the Makalapa Gate at Pearl Harbor again, carrying signs like: Safety Test Before Sea Test, Remember the Thresher and Your First Line of Defense is Sinking. They were met with heavy police intimidation from the Naval and Honolulu police. Refusing to be intimidated, the sailors were next confronted with a few "lifers" from the sub. The career Navy people, some of whom had agreed with the demands and signed petitions, tried to calm the sailors down and get them to go aboard the sub to "talk with the commander." To this the sailors replied, "We had our talk yesterday and we're not satisfied with the results."

Later the same morning the sailors went aboard for their assigned duty time. Upon arrival they were confronted by the Commanding Officer, Commander Garland, angry and visibly shaking. Dropping all pretense of concern over their demands he threatened them first with legal action against demonstrating and then with possible charges under breach of security regulations. Still the sailors refused to back off from their demands.

As the struggle aboard the sub continued, the supporters began notifying the Honolulu media of the struggle. In the midst of his threats, the CO was called away to the telephone; he was questioned by the top Navy brass and the media. When Garland returned, he had once again reverted to his "nice guy" approach. The struggling crew members began to sense a shift in the struggle toward their favor. In a final effort to destroy their unity, the CO took each sailor, one at a time, into his office for a pre-determined period of five minutes to calm them individually. Remaining firmly unified, each sailor took an average of 25 minutes to re-emphasize each of the demands as the CO sat by smiling, agreeing, and answering the phone calls from the higher-up brass, assuring them that everything was under control.



By five that afternoon, radio, TV and the newspapers had spread the news of the struggle over all of Hawaii. With growing support for the sailor's struggle, the Navy had to move and move fast. Repairs began almost immediately, new crewmen were assigned to overworked groups, and the day off after duty was reinstated for sailors. The crew of the USS Haddock had won; the Navy had met their demands.

While overcome with joy, many of the sailors who participated in the struggle aboard the Haddock still have doubts as to whether the system really works. They feel that in order to insure this victory and future struggles, they must retain that unity which brought about this victory or the Navy will once again force them into the situations that threaten the lives and well being of the crewmen and others.

Conditions aboard the USS Haddock are in many ways no different than on other subs and ships in the Navy. Unsafe and inadequate living and working conditions are common throughout all branches of the US military. As veterans, we in VVAW understand and unite with the struggle aboard the Haddock since we have lived with and fought against these and similar conditions in the past. We also unite fully with a statement in a VRB or Out leaflet that read, "We will continue to fight--not in a war to protect the rich --but for all of us..."

All too often the American people receive little or no information on the struggle of GIs and sailors, but hear only of the large incidents such as the collision of the aircraft carrier USS Kennedy and the missile cruiser USS Belknap in the Mediterranean. Struggles such as that aboard the Haddock will become harder and harder to hide as GIs and sailors everywhere resist the daily military oppression. The fight on the Haddock serves as a great example to struggling GIs everywhere that unity in the face of seemingly overwhelming odds can indeed bring victories.

# VIETNAM AND ITS LESSONS



**CHILDRENS' MARCH IN LIBERATED SAIGON - JUNE '75**

This Spring, the Vietnamese people greeted the total liberation of Vietnam with the prolonged joy and enthusiasm that was inevitable after 20 years of struggle against US domination. Following the many large celebrations in the North and South of Vietnam, the Vietnamese people have begun the task of reconstructing their country and overcoming the problems created by the war.

With the liberation of Vietnam, large celebrations also greeted this victory in the United States, bringing thousands of Americans into the streets culminating a resistance to the war the likes of which this country had never experienced in its 200 year history. This resistance and rage, a movement that eventually reached all sectors of our society and that claimed the lives of students and workers alike, was a major contributing factor to US withdrawal from Vietnam and all of Indochina, a movement that contributed greatly to the total liberation of Vietnam. Not the least of that struggle was the contribution of the GI movement and Vietnam veterans, led in many cases by VVAW.

As veterans of that war, we have much in common, a wealth of experience to share with the whole country, a spectrum of rich and bitter knowledge that will be essential in the fight against future wars of US aggression, the fight for decent benefits for all vets, and the application of what we learned from Vietnam in the long struggle ahead for the American people.

Confronted with the contradictions and contrast of the Vietnam war, doubts among the American GIs grew rapidly as to how "just" the war was. Faking body counts daily, picking up our dead and wounded friends, hearing the broadcasts of great victories after seeing the bitter defeats, took a heavy toll upon the

minds of American GIs. As the war progressed the frustration and rage grew, many GIs took their minds off the war behind a smokescreen of dope, and some turned to measures of outright resistance and fragging.

Living and moving about in the areas controlled by the Thieu government, we saw the poverty and corruption that the majority of Vietnamese people lived under. From the sight of seeing those who dug through the American garbage dumps for food and refuse with which they constructed their housing, to the legions of prostitutes, peasant women forced from the countryside into the major cities by the US occupation and the Thieu regime, the living standard of the people was intolerably low. Apparent also to many GIs was the widespread support among the people for the liberation struggle as the peasants worked the fields and rice paddies openly by day and picked up the gun to battle the American invaders by night.

In sharp contrast were the areas won back by the liberation forces. Spoon-fed on propaganda by the US military command, American GIs were unaware of the vastly improved areas held by the National Liberation Front (NLF). In these areas the health and well being of the people became the primary consideration upon liberation. The establishment of clinics, free schools, efficient food distribution went hand in hand with reconstruction, reorganization of all industry and self-defense. These material programs in conjunction with social and cultural events that emphasized the proud history and culture of the Vietnamese people had an almost unbelievable effect as the Thieu forces were finally overrun and crushed last Spring.

Today, Vietnam is a country in a turmoil of reconstruction. The work of

rebuilding still faces many problems due to the rapid collapse of the Saigon Army and administration, whose machinery and projects depended heavily on American machinery and raw materials. This lack of material has led to massive unemployment throughout Vietnam.

However, with the Vietnamese working class taking the lead the revolution continues. Large numbers of textile, food, machinery, medicine, chemicals, tools, and other factories have resumed full production, including former American plants that have been nationalized, communication and transportation have been restored on a massive basis with ports, railroads, roads and airports being nearly totally repaired. Of major importance is the "land to the tiller" program begun in 1961 in the liberated areas, which is working towards returning the 10 million Vietnamese peasants to their land that they were forcibly removed from during the US occupation.

These programs and struggles in Vietnam stand in sharp contradiction to the expectations that American GIs in Vietnam were led to believe would occur if Vietnam was liberated. Deceived and used as cannon fodder in a rich man's war, Vietnam vets returned home to non-existent jobs, massive unemployment and a Veterans Administration that is totally inadequate, serving the interests of the rich that rule this country, instead of veterans.

With the American economy in crisis and crumbling, the rich are once again striking up the band to march us off to another war, probably the Middle East this time. Recently, the media gave an unusual amount of time to one of the biggest war criminals in the world, Richard Nixon. He said that this country needs a good war (like the one in Vietnam, maybe?) to bring the American people's morale and faith back up. What he really meant was he and the rich he fronts for need a good war to bring their profits back up and grow fat on.

The biggest joke is that they expect the American people to swallow this garbage after what we've learned from the Vietnam war. They expect us as veterans and working people to sit by as we watch our friends and children go off to war





# EDITORIAL

The VA has come up with a new tactic to deal with militant vets--kill them with kindness. A couple of recent examples of this new approach are reported in The Veteran; there have been stories of a vet wearing a VVAW button going right through a waiting room filled with 200 vets, confronting one of the bosses, and getting his problem dealt with immediately.

While we do not have access to the high-level memos being passed around the offices of VA chiefs, it does seem clear there has been a change in the way the VA will deal with VVAW. Nine months ago, the tactic was chemical mace--several demonstrations called by VVAW met with mace attacks from VA guards. Not only did that tactic get turned upside down (the guards ended up in worse shape than the vets) but it didn't stop a growing vets movement and in fact exposed the VA in front of thousands of veterans. Here was the VA attacking vets who demanded benefits, and that was an image that the VA sure didn't want out among the people.

So the change in approach. The VA figures that the easiest way to kill off a building vets movement is by taking individual cases (such as the Paul Allen case) around which there is militant action, and rushing them through; with the money the VA has to spend, they can easily afford to give in on a few cases, particularly when they think it's in their own interest.

VVAW is all in favor of this new approach; when we demand decent benefits for vets, that's exactly what we mean, and each vet who forces the VA to give him or her the benefits they have earned is another victory. At the same time, we recognize that this does not mark a change in the nature of the VA.

In fact what they hope is that by giv-

ing individual vets their promised benefits, they will keep them from fighting for decent benefits for all vets, for jobs or income now, and around the slogan we won't fight another rich man's war. Vets aren't bought off that easily; we know that these victories are the result of only one thing--militant actions of a growing veterans movement. Without that, none of these individual cases would have been settled; without the potential of the fighting vets movement, the VA would not have been scared into cutting some of the red tape for individual vets.

Neither are vets so affected with self-interest that they will fight only around their own individual cases. Vets see the need of winning those cases--often it's a matter of survival. But we also see the greater need of building the kind of veterans movement which will win even greater victories for all veterans.

The VA does not function in a vacuum; it is a part of an overall system which is in deep crisis. History teaches us that in its attempts to get out of the crisis, even temporarily, the system is headed toward another war. And the people who run that system see veterans as a powerful force. They know that vets who talk about their experiences in Vietnam and who point out whose interests that war was in, help to expose what the system is up to, and why. And that sort of obstacle to their plans is something that the people who control the country cannot afford. They will do whatever they can to keep the veterans movement from continuing to grow, whether it's FBI infiltrators, police repression, mace attacks, or giving in to the demands of veterans.

We of VVAW would much rather face "kindness" from the VA than mace, but whatever they use in an attempt to co-opt or disrupt the vets movement, we will not be stopped. We'll take the victories or the mace, and move forward.



## VVAW NATIONAL MEETING

"Build the Fighting Veterans Movement; Build VVAW" was the key slogan for the meeting of the VVAW National Interim Committee (NIC) held recently in Detroit. This group, made up of representatives elected by their chapters and regions around the country, has the job of summarizing what is happening in their areas and based on that, making decisions which will help VVAW grow and bring in more vets who want to unite to fight against the system. We've had a lot of experience with this system--we were sent off to fight wars for the benefit of the rich and, when we returned home, we found out that all their promises about good healthcare, decent education benefits, jobs were a bunch of lies. And that we have to fight to get what's been promised.

One of the first steps the NIC took was the change of the name of the organization. We know that vets and other people look more at what we do than what we call ourselves, but the name of the organization is what's out front for people to see, so it's important that it be the best name possible. For the past couple of years, our name has been Vietnam Veterans Against the War/Winter Soldier Organization; the NIC decided to get rid of the last half of the name, so we are now Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

VVAW has a proud history of fighting against the Vietnam war, and for veterans. From a 1971 demonstration where Vietnam vets threw away their Vietnam medals on the steps of the Capitol Building in Washington, to seizing the Statue of Liberty, to bringing out thousands of people in July 1974 to march in Washington demanding decent benefits, amnesty, honor the peace agreements and kick Nix-

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There was a time, a couple of years ago, when VVAW began to forget about the fact that we were, to a large extent, made up of vets. We still talked about the war and how we were used, but we neglected the situation that veterans face when we get back to this country; a serious error. That was when we added the name Winter Soldier Organization. Since that time, however, our work has changed and we are in the midst of the struggles that we and other vets are carrying on. Dropping the name "Winter Soldier Organization" means that our name is now catching up with the work we are doing.

But the name doesn't mean that we're fighting only for Vietnam veterans. A World War I veteran, talking to a VVAW member, pointed out that he had been on disability since 1922, and that the only way vets were going to get anything was to get together and unite, just like the vets did under Hoover (during the 1932 Bonus March). We need that vet and all vets in VVAW also. And we need non-vets who want to join in the struggle with us and build the fighting veterans movement.

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## V.A. ON THE R

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## V.A. ON THE RUN

directly. The vet got his problem with late checks straightened out; another vet on the work-study program was promised a check within a week instead of the normal 21 days. And Veterans Service Officer Penn, under the watchful eyes of VVAW members, went around the waiting room, filled as usual with vets waiting for action on their cases, asking what the problem was and probably meeting more vets face-to-face in an hour than he normally sees in a month. In the following several days, VVAW members and their friends found that the normal VA red tape was cut and their problems, some of them long-time problems, were dealt with.

The case of the VA vs Paul Allen in Milwaukee is an even clearer example of the way that rotten institution is scrambling when confronted by angry vets. Paul is a Vietnam vet who spent 8 years in the Army and was wounded with shrapnel in Vietnam. After he was discharged in May '69, he got a 50% disability rating because of extensive damage to his right arm, wrist and fingers. Not until March of '75 did he know that he was eligible to file for a "Statutory Award for loss of use of limb." He immediately filed, but the VA, dealing from a stacked deck, denied him the award. In effect what they are saying to Paul or any other vet is that he should be able to live on \$208 per month and support three dependents on his 50% disability, and that he doesn't de-

In order to get out in front of vets exactly what we are doing to build the vets movement, the VVAW NIC discussed and then passed a program for the organization (this VVAW National Program will be printed and available in the near future). The program talks about the main things we are fighting around: Decent Benefits for All Vets, Jobs or Income Now, and We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War. The program identifies jobs as a vital demand for veterans--when we can't get work, that's when we have to rely more on the sorry VA healthcare system--and when we lose our jobs, we also lose our medical insurance. Many vets in school are there, trying to scrape by on the GI Bill, because they can't get jobs. All the cutbacks that the VA is trying to bring down on vets hurt a whole lot worse when vets can't work and jobs just aren't there. No jobs also forces some vets back into the military. And the economic system we live under, where everything is determined by how much profit it makes, is trapped in another one of its crises which means layoffs and speedups and cutbacks, and is headed toward another war to try to revive.

The VVAW program doesn't just tell about all the problems vets have--most of

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serve the added \$52 for the extra award. Even with the added money, the grand total of \$260 a month is well below poverty level.

On December 1st, 30 vets and workers picketed the VA Regional Office, demanding that Paul receive his Statutory Award and that it be made retroactive. In addition they demanded an end to all disability cutbacks, and an end to VA red tape. Inside the hearing, with standing room only, the VA asked all witnesses to step forward to be sworn in. Half the room stood up and approached the board in a show of strength and solidarity, to be sworn in. With this, the tone of the hearing was set.

Vets immediately began to rake over Dick Williams, a member of the hearing board. He was accused of making a phone call to Paul in which he tried to make a deal with Paul and to find out how many vets would be attending the hearing. Williams tried to deny it at first, but when he witnessed the just anger of vets that was unleashed at him, he was forced to admit that he did make the call. The VA knew that vets weren't playing games and are demanding that they receive promised benefits.

The VA Review Board then tried to use Paul's medical records as infallible proof that Paul could use his right arm. They read that he can pick up a dime or business card with his thumb and index finger, and that he could write with his thumb and middle finger. After hearing this line of bull, one vet called out "You can be rated 50% disabled by the VA and still be rated 100% disabled on the job market by the bosses." To prove what the vet said was not just idle talk, Paul testified that he had lost jobs at the Post Office, Goodyear, and General Motors because of his medical disability. The Board was constantly strafed by facts and questions that backed Paul's case and attacked the VA's disability cuts campaign.

The next step for Paul is to go in front of a board of specialists to be examined. This will take place in the second week of January and VVAW will be there. At this point in the hearing, the Review Board made their dash for the door knowing that the closing statements had concluded. To fill the vacuum, Mr Haney, the acting VA Regional Director, stepped in as the VA's trouble shooter. But all he got was a good round of buckshot. Paul noticed that Haney had a brace on his leg, and asked him to make a bet that he got not only disability but also the Statutory Award. Mr Haney didn't bet; his answer was yes, he draws both. This only underlines the way the VA interprets the Award--in a highly unsystematic way.

Once again, faced with united vets, the VA backed down; the VA not only fears the vets movement and its growth, but also the public exposure of the way in which vets are being treated. One more attempt to pacify vets has gotten the VA nowhere. (For VVAW comment on this VA tactic, see the editorial on this page.)

# ATTACK ON GI BILL CONTINUES

In one of the many attempts of the system to cut back on essential social services, the Ford administration last spring began an all-out attack on the GI Bill. By presidential proclamation he eliminated healthcare for non-service connected disabilities and education for survivors; and he proposed to eliminate the GI Bill for GIs enlisting after June 1, 1975.

This proposal met with initial heavy resistance from the defense department, much concerned with its ability to recruit. Some members of Congress with the same concern joined in the resistance. As the struggle grew, vets organizations including VVAW and GIs spoke out against the cutback. Meanwhile, "traditional" vets groups, including the leadership of the VFW, a pack of fools with their hands in the pockets of the rich and working hand in hand with the VA, stood by and nodded to the cutback when their strings were pulled.

To escape from public view, Congress retired behind closed doors; in early October, the House of Representatives voted to eliminate the bill and pass further responsibility to the Senate where it is still under consideration. At this time, the proposal is to end the GI Bill for anyone who enlists after Dec 31, 1975.

Young people, forced to enlist in the military due to lack of jobs will be wholly removed from the job market for several years; their chances of finding a job on discharge are small. And they will get no useful job training in the military. With the elimination of the GI Bill, education, either while in the service or afterwards, will be out of financial reach for many vets.

Fighting this GI Bill cutback is the same fight as the one for Decent Benefits. The GI Bill is not a privilege to be taken away at the whim of the rich but a right that vets have and will continue to fight for.



## GI BILL STRUGGLE

# S.F. State Vets Fight Late Checks



Hot air from the VA bureaucrats, red tape hassles, and continual late checks, has been the answer vets have gotten from the recruiter's promises of educational benefits. Vets have been getting the run-around this year just as they have in the past.

Vets haven't been taking this lying down. One example is the vets at San Francisco State. A group called Vets For Decent Benefits at San Francisco State was initiated by the local chapter of the Revolutionary Student Brigade and rank and file vets. This committee has been taking up the struggle against late checks and winning. The committee grew out of the anger of vets who discovered that their checks had been "lost", "delayed", or were "in process". For most of the vets this meant a delay of six to eight weeks for their first check, while the last day to pay Fall registration was only two days away.

Vets were forced to take money out of savings, or if they didn't have the money in the bank to get booted out of school for failure to pay required fees. At the same time the school's emergency fund went dry by the second day of school. On top of all this, with the economic crisis coming down on all of us and unemployment a lot higher for vets, those forced out of school would find no place to go. The local Vets Affairs Office answered this with the solution of handing out BankAmericard applications--which they graciously gave instead of assistance.

Seeing this situation, the Revolutionary Student Brigade put out a leaflet demanding, "Decent Benefits for All Vets", and "Checks on Time", which called for a meeting to get vets together. Thirty angry vets showed up for the first meeting, and brought out how in the past people had tried to deal with the VA alone as indiv-

iduals and had gotten nowhere. People agreed that what was needed was to unite as many vets as possible to demand their checks on time. As one vet at the meeting said, "We don't have to beg for anything, it is our right!"

The vets decided to confront the director with their demands. A small group went to his office. The director went through the same old contortions trying to bend the truth to say that late checks were just the problem of a few individuals--who themselves were generally at fault for the late checks. But the people didn't buy that and it was also clear that the vets there were speaking for more than just themselves, but for vets across the country. As people left, they made it clear that this was just the beginning. One vet told the VA director, "We'll come back if we don't get action. And next time you'll need 20-25 guards to stop us because it won't just be a dozen vets who'll come up here, but 50 to 100."

Immediately following the meeting, checks began arriving for the individual vets who had taken part in the action. In fact, that afternoon the director himself handcarried one of the checks to SF State.

Following this action the committee invited the VA director, Fred Bradley to the campus for a hearing. This was to continue the battle and expose the VA for what it is.

Approximately 70 vets showed up. According to Bradley the problem was the mail service, the Kansas City office, Congress, or more often than not, it was the vets themselves! During the course of the meeting it was brought out that no matter how much Bradley tried to portray it as just a handful of cases at SF State, thousands upon thousands of vets are facing the same problems across the country.

## GI BILL STRUGGLE

# CINCINNATI VETS BATTLE VA 'OHIO PLAN'

Veterans at the University of Cincinnati are getting together to fight for the GI Bill benefits they were promised. The immediate point of attack is against a whole collection of new restrictions and late checks at the University, but this is only one part of the overall attack coming down on student vets across the country. And, as Cincinnati vets have learned, the VA is planning to pull some more tricks out of its sleeve in the near future.

The Veterans Upward Bound program at the University is the focus of the VA attack right now. The program, which came out of the struggles of vets for decent benefits, is supposed to help vets get their high school diplomas or to brush up on high school subjects in order to go to college and get the GI Bill. But vets in the program have been continually harassed; they've been thrown out of the program for more than 6 absences (despite the fact that many of these vets have to work in order to survive). Some vets were thrown out of school because they couldn't pay the entrance fee on time--and they couldn't pay it because their VA checks were late, or never came at all. Tutoring, which is supposed to be part of the program, just is not available.

When under attack, vets fight back. Meetings were held; a petition was circulated. When the administrators of the program found out that vets weren't taking the harassment lying down, the chief bureaucrat started coming to meetings and classes, to say that no one had been thrown off the program because of a few absences or late checks; in fact, he came to one meeting with dozens of checks in his hand. He promised an end to harassment and said that no one would be thrown out of the program because of late checks in the future. And he tried to pass off the same tired story vets hear everywhere: there's no money, so protests get us nowhere and we have to

be happy with whatever crumbs are thrown our way.

Vets confronted his lies, pointing to people who had been thrown out; when administrators tried to keep people from VVAW and from the Revolutionary Student Brigade from speaking at a large meeting, they were shouted down with shouts of "Let them speak, you turkey." Vets see that the only reason the administrator is making promises about no harassment is because vets organized to fight VA attacks.

But the VA has more plots and schemes to try to cut back on the GI Bill; after all, the system the VA is part of runs on profits, and when, as in the case of the GI Bill, there are no profits for the class that runs the country, then they want to cut their losses as much as they can get away with. A new statewide policy in Ohio is being planned--that attendance must be taken in any class vets are in, and vets will lose all benefits if they are absent over a small number of times. Changing courses or programs, incompletes, low grades, all mean losing the GI Bill. Plans include no credit (so no GI Bill payment) for courses over a certain size, or for courses taught by graduate assistants--and these make up a large portion of the courses offered in large schools. All of these attacks go under the name of "Satisfactory Pursuit of Education Objectives" policy; translated out of bureaucrateze, it means trying to force vets off the GI Bill.

Vets at the University of Cincinnati say no; if this pilot program gets going in Ohio, it will soon spread elsewhere. But the same fighting unity which grew around the Upward Bound struggle and forced a change in administrative policy, will also stop pilot programs. Another attack by the VA is being met by angry refusals and fighting counterattack.

## CONT. FROM PG. 8

### NIC MEETING

us know about them already. It talks about how VVAW is fighting the system to solve some of those problems. We know that one vet, trying to get his late check or fighting a cutback in disability benefits, can easily get the runaround from the bureaucrats, but that a group of angry and united people can fight and win--we've seen it happen around the country. The VVAW Program points at the sorry state of the Veterans Administration, but also shows that the VA is only a part of the larger system. And the Program talks about many of the specific demands that we--and all vets--have and which, united, we are going to fight to win.

The Program, in short, says that here's what the problems are, and here's what we're going to do about them. To be effective, we need all vets--who have the same problems--to join with us. The Program points the direction to go.

The NIC also talked about the Bicentennial celebration coming up next year (though some people see the chance to make a few bucks off it, so they've started it early). Remembering the success, the unity and militance of the national demonstration that VVAW sponsored in Washington DC on July 4, 1974, and seeing how the people who run this country are going to try to use the Bicentennial, the NIC enthusiastically decided to hold a national demonstration in Philadelphia on July 4th, 1976. (For more information on the demo, see page 2 in this issue)

We want every vet who can make it to get ready to come to Philadelphia with us and show up the politicians and their owners for what they are--bloodsuckers who live off the sweat and blood of working people, vets and non-vets alike. The NIC meeting closed with the understanding that we're out to build VVAW and to build the fighting veterans movement. Join us!



Chicago VVAW Veterans' Day demonstration at Westside VA





# FARMWORKERS VOTE, FACE NEW BATTLES

Years of struggle by California farmworkers entered a new phase this summer and fall, as they focused on winning elections for representation by their union, the United Farmworkers Union (UFW). The intense battles and widespread, militant support generated around the country, forced the California state government to pass a law conceding workers in the fields the right to vote for union representation.

The struggle, and the forcing of the law, was a major blow to the growers' schemes to ban unions altogether or to sign sweetheart contracts with the Teamster Union leadership behind the backs of the workers.

But the growers haven't thrown in the towel, of course, and they are trying to use the new law to blunt the sharp edge of the farmworkers' struggle. One of their tactics has been to tangle the farmworkers in a maze of courts and the newly formed California Agricultural Labor Relations Board (the Commission), getting the struggle out of the fields where the workers are strong, and into the courts, where, with laws and judges who serve the interests of the growers and their class, the growers are strong.

As of November 1, the UFW had won 141 elections as opposed to 91 for the Teamsters with 12 for "no union." While these results were a victory, and broke the grower-Teamster official sweetheart stranglehold, it was clear that the law by itself had not given the kind of total victory that some, including the UFW leadership, had promised. This has given rise to a lot of discussion among farmworkers. The following article takes up some important questions around the current phase of the struggle. It first appeared in The Worker for the Salinas and Pajaro Valleys, an important agricultural region in California.

When the growers barred UFW organizers from the fields, we filed depositions with the Agricultural Labor Commission and waited for them to take action. When the Teamsters carried guns into the fields and threatened workers, we filed depositions with the Commission and waited for them to take action. When the growers fired entire crews sympathetic to the UFW, we filed depositions with the Commission and waited for them to take action.

And what "action" can the Commission take? They can charge the growers and Teamsters with "unfair labor practices," which amounts to nothing more than what one grower laughingly called "a slap on the wrist."

As we twist and turn trying to find a legal way out of the web, the growers openly violate the law, safely hidden in their dark little holes, practically immune from punishment.

How did we get in this fix? Where did this law come from? What is its purpose? How can we free ourselves from these bonds so that we can move forward in our struggle against the growers?

The law came from our own struggle. It represents a defeat in the growers' strategy to destroy the UFW by bringing in the Teamsters as a company union. In 1974 we had more strikes in the fields of California than any other time since the 1930's. The growers were hurting. They decided to agree to this law that would grant farmworkers the right to vote for the UFW to represent them in negotiations. In exchange they hoped to move the struggle of farmworkers from the fields (where the growers could be badly hurt) to the courts (where the growers are pretty safe).

The growers are not the first members of the boss class to tie up workers' struggles in the courts. The bosses have been doing that for years. In the courts, their money talks. They always can win delays and postponements that make it very difficult to conduct winning strikes. That's why the miners just waged a furious struggle to keep the

right to strike over local grievances in their own hands, rather than turn those disputes over to some judge on an arbitration board. That's why the steelworkers are fighting a determined battle against the No-Strike deal. And that's why in the past farmworkers have torn up injunctions aimed at stopping our strikes.

Our strategy in the face of this new law should have been clear. Use it to win all we can, but never tie ourselves to it completely. As long as we depend solely on the law, the growers have us where they want us--caught in a web of depositions, injunctions, court orders, and legal maneuvers.

The leadership of the UFW walked right into the trap. When the law was passed they told us, "the race is won." Rely on the law, they lectured us, rely on our friends in the government. When things go wrong they tell us not to despair, the problem is only that the wrong people are administering the law. But the law itself, and the official UFW strategy of relying on that law, are never faulted. They tell us we are going to ride this law all the way to good contracts. It is the law that gives us power.

That is a lie. Our power against the bosses is our ability to withhold our labor and to stop others from working in our places. The strike is the main strength of our union, whether our strikes are called legal or illegal by some corrupt judge. Supposedly the great benefit of this new law is that once we win an election the bosses must negotiate with us or they are breaking the law. But when we wage successful strikes, the bosses must negotiate with us or lose their ass. And the bosses are more afraid of that than they are afraid of breaking the law.

Let's go ahead and win all the elections we can. But we must not let our struggle get tied up in a legal web. These elections are not shortcuts. We still have the struggle ahead of us for good contracts. No law can win that struggle for us. No liberal governor, nor friendly priest. We must win it ourselves.

Farmworkers will soon be involved in strikes to battle the growers for higher wages and better conditions. As in the past, the support of millions of working people and others around the country will help them win victory.

# Dhofar Fights

## Invasion



The New York Times/Feb. 7, 1975

Oman's troops, aided by Iranians, are fighting rebels in Dhofar Province.

**AREA**—Between 82,000 and 100,000 square miles. Only estimates are available as the northwestern borders are unmarked.

**POPULATION**—1.5 million, according to Omani officials; 750,000 as of 1973, according to the United Nations; 600,000, according to unofficial estimates in Oman.

**LANGUAGES**—Arabic, the official language; English, Urdu, Farsi, and various Indian dialects.

**ECONOMY**—Agriculture, mainly dates, bananas, pomegranates, limes, peaches, apricots, oranges, melons, wheat, sugar cane and rice. Oil is the chief source of revenue, with exports in 1974 estimated at 105 million to 110 million barrels.

On October 16, Iranian troops with the active support of the British military invaded Dhofar Province in the southern part of Oman on the Persian Gulf. Landing operations were conducted under the cover of air, sea and land shelling of the area. This attack is another in a continuing attempt by the US, Britain and Iran to dominate and control the oil-rich area surrounding the Persian Gulf.

Dhofar Province has been 90% liberated from the tyrannical rule of the Sultan Qaboos by revolutionary forces led by the Peoples Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO). British and US support for these invasions has continued through the Iranian army headed by the Shah of Iran. Because of the wealth of resources in the Middle East, and the potential of these resources for controlling the economy of Europe, the US has a huge stake in keeping "its man" in the Middle East, someone who will further US interests there. The Shah is that US puppet. During the last five years the US government has given the Shah \$22 billion worth of military hardware, including fighter bombers.

The people of Oman and in Dhofar Province have lived under oppressive conditions for over 150 years since the Bri-

tish colonized the area. There is massive famine and starvation; living conditions are intolerable for the Omani people. Since 1968, the PFLO in Dhofar has introduced schools and hospitals, distributed land to the peasants, abolished slavery and recognized the role of women in society. Because of this the people in Dhofar support and are fighting for the end of the invasions of the Iranian military.

While the people of Dhofar are repelling the invasion, troops of the Iranian army have begun to resist the role they are being used for by the Shah. Last year 150 soldiers including 16 pilots refusing to fly missions against Dhofar were executed for their opposition to the Iranian attacks in Oman. In mid-September, the PFLO captured an Iranian pilot who exposed a lot of what was happening in the Iranian military. He said that the Iranian military command tells the Iranian soldiers that if they are captured they will be tortured and killed by having their heads chopped off by the Omani revolutionaries.

According to the pilot, he found this was all lies. When he was captured, the PFLO treated his wounds and nursed him back to health. During this time, the pilot was able to see first-hand that everything he was told by the Iranian military was untrue. He found the people "opposite to what I was thinking and what I was told."

At a press conference the pilot spoke and compared the situation in Oman to that of Vietnam. He said that the Iranian military command was predicting they would end the revolution within weeks or months. He said, "I confirm that the size of the Iranian forces in Oman will increase... America expected that it would be able to crush the revolution (in Vietnam) within four years, but the war continued for twelve years after which America came out defeated. I do not expect that we will come out with a result better than this."

This is a war between the just and the unjust,

On the one side there is the enemy of the masses equipped with the most developed weaponry and technique,

And there is on the other side, the steel-like determination of the toiling masses and the callused hands of the workers and the peasants.

The more you attempt to destroy us, the more you sink in the mire which you create for yourself.

Said Mohsen, An Iranian Martyr

## IRANIAN STUDENTS UNDER ATTACK

The Iranian Student Association (ISA) is finding itself the target of repression by various government agencies, in close cooperation with the regime of the Shah of Iran. The ISA is a nationwide group of Iranian students in the US who actively oppose the Shah and the role of the US in the Persian Gulf. Because of their continual militant actions against the Shah and in support of the liberation struggles of the people of the Middle East they have become a threat to the Shah. On a recent trip to the US, the Shah was met everywhere he went by ISA demonstrations.

As the movement against the Shah increases, his regime becomes more desperate and has openly outlawed "legal" political opposition. In August, the Shah resurrected the "Black Law of 1310" with provisions that any Iranian involved in objections to the government would be sentenced to 3-10 years in jail, and an Iranian involved in leading a demonstration or organizing opposition to the Shah would be executed.

Also in August, the ISA held their annual convention in Chicago. Immediately following the convention, the ISA began getting increased harassment, directly linked to the repressive laws passed in Iran and the close ties between the Shah's regime and the US government. Incidents of harassment include one ISA member having his house broken into finding his files were tampered with. ISA members have had their cars dented during the night and others have been beaten in alleys.

Recently in Houston, Texas, the ISA held a demonstration in support of the struggle in Oman and of the 150 demonstrators, 110 were arrested.

The most blatant case of repression against the ISA occurred in Jefferson City, Missouri when 27 members were arrested and charged with felonies. After the arrest, the mayor of the city held a press conference and stated that he would ask that these students be deported to Iran, (where they would face the brutal repression of the Shah's regime). Shortly after this announcement the mayor received a letter from the Iranian ambassador to the US thanking him for this cooperation with the Shah. The letter stated that the Shah would personally be pleased and would thank the mayor.

As a result of this incident, public support for the Iranian students is growing throughout Missouri and Oklahoma. People have rallied around the student's fight, seeing this case as typical of how the US government tries to intimidate people into silence. ISA and its supporters will continue to fight until all deportation threats are ended and until intimidation stops. The ISA will also continue to actively oppose the Shah's regime in Iran, the rulers of the US who prop up his dictatorship and support the liberation struggles of the people in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf area.

## JAPANESE DELEGATION MEETS WITH VVAW

# ABOLISH A&H BOMBS

On December 2nd, a delegation of Japanese peace activists, representing a broad spectrum of the Japanese people including educators, religious leaders, students and trade unionists met with VVAW and other organizations in a people-to-people solidarity meeting in Chicago.

The Japanese activists are travelling throughout the US and Canada to bring their struggle against A&H Bombs before the American people. Also, they will meet with the Secretary General of the United Nations in order to urge the UN to take action on their demands: Outlaw the use of Nuclear weapons under all circumstances, completely ban A&H bombs now and forever, and withdraw all troops and nukes from abroad. These demands embody the essence of the Hiroshima Appeal adopted at the 21st World Conference Against A&H Bombs in July, 1975.

The December meeting in Chicago, also attended by the Iranian Student Association, the US-China People's Friendship Association, the Revolutionary Student Brigade and Asians United, centered around US-Japan people's friendship and solidarity and the need to unite in our common struggles against US foreign intervention and aggression.

Beginning with a history of the US-Japan people's joint support for the struggles of the Indochinese people, the five member delegation broadened their discussion to speak of the Japanese struggle against the US military in Japan today.

Mrs. Shizuko Takagi, Secretary General of the Osaka City A Bomb Sufferers Association, spoke of her experiences as a student in Hiroshima at the time of the Hiroshima bombing on August 6, 1945. Describing the inhumane conditions of living during and after the bombing, Mrs. Takagi emphasized the fear that continues to this day as second and third generation descendents of the A Bomb victims are



Mass rally during GENSUIKYO 21st WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST A&H BOMBS

still suffering or dying from the radiation after effects.

Of major importance to the delegation and the millions of Japanese people they represent is the presence of the US military in Japan. The statements, made earlier this year, of the government that the US would not hesitate to use tactical nuclear weapons in the event of hostilities in Korea, alarmed the Japanese people with their implications.

The US and Japan governments have a treaty that bans nuclear weapons from Japanese soil. If, in fact, a nuclear strike occurred against Korea, it would be launched from Japan, because the US does store nukes in Japan in spite of the treaty. As a result such a strike would precipitate a

war in which US bases in Japan would be attacked. The Japanese people fear that such a conflict could result in a nuclear war. As most US bases are located near major population centers, they feel that once again their cities would feel the effects of nuclear bombs. The Japanese visitors said that if this did happen, the Japanese people would pour out into the streets in the millions opposing US aggression.

VVAW, in saying we won't fight another rich man's war and supporting all struggles against US military presence and aggression around the world, fully supports the goals and demands of this Japanese delegation in their struggle to remove the US military from Japan and abolish all nuclear weapons.

again. They expect our cheerful cooperation as the US and Soviet Union try to redivide the world like a big pie. With the heat on in the Middle East, this year's "technicians" in the Sinai are no different than the "advisors" in Vietnam 15 years ago, an attack upon whom the US government would use as an excuse to open another war in the Middle East.

We got a bellyfull of the war in Vietnam, learned a lot from it, and we don't like the taste it left in our mouths when we came home. If these rich punks want another war somewhere in the world they'll have to fight it themselves, we won't! We'll fight against that war here at home, taking up the struggle against US aggression abroad, in the same breath as we fight for our jobs and a decent way of life.

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## Vietnam Lessons



Milwaukee VVAW unites with National Guard before Veterans' Day parade

# LETTERS TO VVAW

THE VETERAN WELCOMES LETTERS, COMMENTS AND CRITICISMS. PLEASE WRITE TO US. ALSO, IF YOU HAVE ANY POETRY, DRAWINGS OR STORIES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN THE PAPER, SEND THEM ALONG.

To VVAW:

With the most sincere gratitude of the Vietnamese people for your precious support and assistance to our just struggle for a peaceful, reunified, independent, democratic and prosperous Vietnam.

Vietnam Committee  
for Solidarity with  
the American People

Dear Veteran,

I'm writing in regards to the conditions at the VA hospital at Allen Park, Michigan. You might want to use this in your newspaper.

On May 30th, my brother entered the hospital for treatment for a fractured pelvic bone. Earlier, he had been discharged from the VA hospital in Memphis, Tenn. I was told then that his condition wasn't so bad that he couldn't stay at home with plenty of good care. I went and brought him home about two weeks after he was discharged and he could get around with the aid of a walker. But the pain was very bad. He was suffering from malnutrition. He told me he was afraid to go in the VA, afraid for his life. He told me that medication they gave him caused him to be drunk and confused.

When my brother entered the hospital in Allen Park, he could walk with a walker. He had some detraction in his legs from not being able to use them. He had had emphysema for the past eight years and was receiving a pension from the VA.

On the fourth day, he had one of the hospital aides call the family to come out. We found him barely able to sit on the side of his bed, with no PJs on, just a pair of shorts he had worn the day he entered the hospital. There was urine all over the floor, and it was two o'clock in the afternoon. He was so confused, as if he was drunk. He was placed in an isolation room; about four o'clock that same afternoon his breathing was so bad it seemed he wasn't going to make it. My other brother, my sister, and I kept trying to get the head nurse to get a doctor to see him. We were told the doctor had seen him that morning and that his doctor was in a meeting. We waited an hour and asked the nurse again to call a doctor. We were then told his doctor had gone home ill.

We then went to see the chaplain who called the head nurse on that ward; by that time the second shift had come on. It was about seven o'clock that evening when finally a doctor came in to see him. He was then sedated. We were allowed to stay until eleven that night; he wasn't even given an IV feeding he was able to eat, or fluid he was able to drink. He remained in that condition another seven days before he was taken to intensive care. He spent three weeks there and seemed to pull through the most critical part. He then was sent back on the 1013 ward next to an open window with the sun on him and a draft. I complained to the head of nursing; they then sent him to 4C; he spent four days there and died on July 4th, 1975. We were told so many things. We think he got pneumonia from negligence.

I have written our Congressmen, Senator, and the President. But they told one lie after another. They had the VA investigate his care, but they would have to take the doctor's word.

He had the same amount of IV the day he died that was in the bottle the day before; the needle was in the vein, but the IV wasn't going. Many of our men are afraid to go into the VA--they fear for their lives. Some are very ill and really need healthcare. It's a national disgrace that we have to stand by and watch our boys that paid this price for our country go through with such poverty that they have no choice but go to these VA hospitals. My brother's name was Rex G. Henson, VFW.

Sincerely yours,

Dear Veteran,

I am tired of seeing hospitalized veterans neglected because of the understaffed hospitals. I have seen too many veterans die because of the cutbacks in personnel at VA hospitals. Veterans deserve first class hospital care, not the kind of care I see everyday.

A lot of problems are blamed on the workers. But the workers are underpaid and overworked. They do all they can to make the hospitalized veterans comfortable. I would like to point people in the right direction--the fat do-nothings in Washington are to blame.

I am tired of seeing veterans mistreated. I am speaking as a veteran and as a VA hospital worker.

A frustrated hospital  
worker

VVAW,

I'm a veteran who is attending college. As usual this semester I'm having problems with late checks. It is now the

middle of November and this month's check is late. At the beginning of this fall semester my first check for September was over a month late. I went to the Veterans Counsellor and the Vet Rep on campus but got no results. I then went down to the VA and saw somebody in the contact office. These are a few of the things the VA contact Counsellor told me:

"It was my fault that my check was late because I had two files."

"I should not depend on the VA check in the first place."

"The GI Bill was never intended to pay for college tuition."

"What was I complaining for? My check was only a month late, and he had people whose checks were over 8 months late."

"You young veterans are all the same--rabble rousers; you're always complaining and never want to work; you want everything given to you."

When I told the counsellor that my records were never lost and there weren't any delays when I was sent to Vietnam, he replied: "I was back in the big one, kid; I've got more time overseas than you had in the Army."

This was not the first time I've had problems with the VA. I also noted that this wasn't an isolated incident; a large number of other vets at my school are also hurting from late checks and unconcern from the VA. I wasn't able to buy any books for my classes for the first month of school. Lots of other vets are married and have families to feed and no check to do it with.

Keep Up Your Good Work,  
A New York City Vet

PS: The change over in last month's paper was great; it's really starting to speak to the needs of the veteran.

To The Veteran,

First of all I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for what I think is the best paper "in dealing with the struggle against imperialism" that I have ever read. It is not too often that I get to read a paper such as yours. For the simple fact is that I am in the military, the Marine Corps at that. And if I may say so myself I have never seen, smelled, or heard so much bullshit in my poor life....

Keep Up the Fight for the Righteous  
Fight Back, Brothers,

A Soldier for Peace

# VETS' DAY 1975



**VETERANS' DAY '75 NEW YORK CITY**

Veterans Day, 1975, came and went almost unnoticed by the majority of American veterans. The closest most vets came to celebrating "their" day was watching the traditional ceremonies and parades (where they still are held) on the evening TV news. In many cities and towns around the country, the city fathers paid their lip-service to vets--there were some parades, with a few American Legion posts, maybe a reserve unit, and a couple of high school bands; the watchers were mostly the relatives of the marchers. Or, as in the VA hospital in Detroit, there was a flag-raising ceremony in front of the hospital; few vets came out.

But in a number of cities across the land, VVAW did come out, and pointed to the reasons why most vets weren't interested in Veterans Day, 1975. Vets don't want parades--we want jobs. Vets don't want to glorify wars of imperialism, like in Vietnam--we want to fight like hell to prevent their next one. And we're not interested in the pious speeches of various politicians at wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery--we want to see some of the promises made to vets carried out instead of being talked about.

Chants which echoed through the streets of New York City on November 11, Veterans Day, underlined the real demands of vets: "Jobs or Income from the bosses/ We're not paying for their losses." "VA says benefits, we say rights; they say wait awhile, we say FIGHT."

The New York City demonstration wasn't the largest that the chapter has held

on Vets Day, but that did not lessen the anger of vets or dampen the spirits of the demonstrators. Since the bosses kept vets at work on the 11th, the chapter took the march to vets, into the NYC garment district where thousands of workers, many of them vets, were at their jobs.

There, hundreds of workers came out of the shops to greet the marchers, taking leaflets, joining in the chants, and some leaving work to join the march. Meanwhile, the American Legion was putting on its annual farce, telling the world that vets have "got it made," that vets and other workers should keep on carrying the crisis that the bosses have created, and rallying behind the "issue" of 1,800 MIAs who, according to them, are still unaccounted for in Indochina.

The New York Times tried to portray the two demonstrations as young vets vs. older vets by saying there was a noticeable absence of young vets in the Legion's farce; what they didn't dare tell was the high degree of unity between young and older vets, between vets and workers of all nationalities, on the VVAW march. One window washer said, "This is what I've been looking for," and left a store window half done to join in the march, bucket, pole and brushes and all!

The cops tried to intimidate the marchers by revoking the permit for their rally site the night before the demo (the original site was across from the Legion) and turning out a huge force of cops, but VVAW wasn't stopped. The rally was held at a different site, but with impact: truckers slowed down to listen to speeches,

more workers came out of shops, and more people took leaflets telling the truth about the way this system screws over vets and how VVAW is organizing and fighting back against these attacks.

A high point in the rally came when a worker from Outlaw, a rank-and-file organization of postal workers, talked about the formation of an area-wide workers' organization of workers from different industries, being formed to push forward and lead the fight in winning bigger and better victories over the rulers who are trying to vamp on us.

Following the speakers, the march moved toward the American Legion rally, where their speaker was babbling their particular brand of Americanism, but was met with a militant chant of "Ford, Ford, we say no, Middle East war, We won't go!" From there the marchers went to the regional VA building.

In Detroit, the chapter appeared at the official parade--a couple of reserve units, high school bands, and floats. In a leaflet handed out to the people watching the parade, VVAW, after talking about the danger of another rich man's war, said, "If the people who now run this country think they can use us up in their wars, treat us like trash as GIs and vets, and then recycle us into another war for their profits in the Middle East, they are living in a dream world. Veterans Day to us is a day when we show the rats that rule this country that we refuse to accept the rotten conditions and treatment forced on veterans, and that we won't be murdered for their profits again."

Among the bystanders was a GI, recently returned from Germany; the following day he called the chapter to say, "I was in the Army--and I believe everything that you say in the leaflet."

Actions took place in Long Beach, California, also at the VA hospital, and at the VA in Chicago, a picket line outside the Regional Office spoke to the VVAW demands. One vet coming out of the office took the chapter's bullhorn to tell the people how he is starving as a result of waiting for his GI Bill check for four months. Expressing his anger and outrage, he joined in on the picket.

In Milwaukee, some 50 vets and supporters marched alongside the "traditional" parade on October 26th with banners and leaflets which exposed the way vets are used and then thrown away.

The demonstrations VVAW held on Vets Day 1975 were not as large as they have been in the past. The reason is that chapters did not fully understand the importance of taking out the demands of veterans in building for the actions. We should have gone to veterans by the thousands at work, at school or at the VA more consistently than we did. But, unlike the American Legion who shows its face once or twice a year, VVAW is in the streets all year around, building, fighting and winning, and the demonstrations should have reflected this.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT VVAW CONTACT:**

**new address**

**LOCAL**

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P.O. Box 20184  
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or call**

**(312) 651-1583**