

# Military Families SPEAK OUT

Support our troops,  
bring them home now,  
and take care of them  
when they get here.

Summer, 2018

## Military Families Speak Out in the Poor People's Campaign!

By Pat Alviso, MFSO CA, MFSO National Coordinator and Mary Hladky MFSO MO and MFSO Steering Committee

Many of us in MFSO were very heartened and encouraged to see how MFSO, Veterans for Peace and About Face ( IVAW), collaborated to support the Poor People's Campaign, Phase 1, last May and June. The National Poor People's Campaign is a call for moral revival that supports Dr. King's vision to oppose the 4 pillars he identified that uphold the ills of society: Poverty, Racism, the Environment and the War Economy. Dr. Barber, the national organizer of the PPC today, laid out a plan that for 40 days we would confront each pillar by organizing direct actions at each state capitol, as was successfully practiced in South Carolina with Moral Mondays. An essential part of the campaign included a call for people to risk arrest. Over 35 states had actions that resulted in what has been recognized as the largest mass demonstration across the US with over 2,000 people being arrested across the country.

MFSO, VFP and AF focused on week 3-the week on militarism and the war. In California, 20 MFSO, VFP members and supporters were arrested in Sacramento for disruptions that resulted in the halting of the State Assembly while in session. To do this, it required weeks of coordinating at many different levels. Three vans of participants drove up from S. CA, while others drove many miles across the state to participate. With the help of Veterans for Peace LA and Orange County, we set up an

exhibit of crosses representing our troops who have been killed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to represent the countless innocent civilians who also died, the PPC Arts committee helped us build a clothesline of torn garments and a display of empty shoes. Many of our members held up posters of loved ones and set up informational booths-all on the capitol lawn! A speak out was held on the steps with MFSO members Tim Kahlor and Laurie Loving and VFP member Anthony Palacios among the speakers.

*Laurie Loving and Tim Kahlor speaking at the State Capital  
Photos by Jeff Merrick*



The goal of the direct action in Sacramento was to get our message heard and stop business as usual at the state capitol. MFSO members Tim, Laurie, Pat, Rossana and Arturo Cambron, Jeff Merrick, Kathleen Hernandez VFP Associate member and other VFP members and dozens of supporters boldly took up a whole section in the State Assembly. We held up posters of our loved ones who died due to war, suicide, substance abuse and deportation and interrupted the session by shouting the names of these victims of war and demanding the end of state tax breaks to those who support

war, that we bring the National Guard home from the border, stop the privatization of the VA and provide housing and support for veterans. Some State Assembly members stood up and applauded. We shut down the State Assembly but 21 people were arrested that day including MFSO members Laurie Loving and Pat Alviso, and Kathleen Hernandez.. They were kept overnight in the Sacramento jail, but all charges were eventually dropped.

All of this was made possible due to the generosity, hard work and masterful organizational skills of MFSO members Laurie and Russell Loving, who provided housing and meals, media outreach and leadership for two of the six weeks. What was accomplished is immeasurable - groups that had never worked together before organized an unforgettable message with a collaboration that all wish to continue implementing for Phase 2 of the Poor People's Campaign.

### **How Are We Supporting our Troops when 20 Veterans Die by Suicide Every Day?**

Excerpts from the speech given by Mary Hladky, May 20th in Jefferson City, MO at a Poor People's Campaign protest of militarism. Soon after Hladky issued this critique, she and 16 others blocked a street, were arrested, and were released.

I am Mary Hladky. My son, Ryan, was an Army Infantry Officer. During his deployment in Afghanistan, the troops experienced some of the highest death and injury rates of the war.

Today I want to talk to you about the war economy and the incalculable harm this obsession does to all Americans, and especially soldiers.

War drains the treasury of money. The Costs of War Project at Brown University says US wars over the past 16 years have cost \$5.6 trillion. Our officials justify this spending in the name of national security. There is little left, it seems, for the welfare of the people.

These same officials defend these massive expenses as part of "supporting the troops". But supporting

our troops should mean bringing them home and taking care of them when they return.

How are we supporting the troops when many military families need public assistance such as food stamps to make ends meet, while defense contractors rake in record profits?

There are 3 million veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. These soldiers have seen more combat than veterans of any other wars. Many have experienced moral injury – a violation of a person's moral values, core beliefs. The shame, guilt, and torturous remorse that becomes moral injury often results in suicide.

How are we supporting our troops when 20 veterans, from all wars, die by suicide every day?

Today, here and across the country, and all over the world, our voices declare our work for a more peaceful world, the hope of a movement; to realize that true security is not measured by the size of our military, but the welfare of our people.



*Just before the arrest of Mary Hladky, Michael McPhearson, and other activists  
Photo by Bennette Dibben, PeaceWorks*

### **Phase 2**

Now it is time to implement Phase 2 of the Poor People's Campaign. We are being asked to canvas in neighborhoods directly impacted by one of these pillars, tell them about the Poor People's Campaign and help them **register to vote** so they have a voice the crucial upcoming election. For MFSO that means getting into communities directly impacted by war. That would be places like VA hospitals, youth who are often recruited in community colleges, communities that have a large military

presence and military related organizations like the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Gold Star family groups. . We encourage all of our members and supporters to canvass these impacted communities, tell them about the Poor People's Campaign and help them register to vote. Anyone can pick up voter registration applications at their local post office.



## Trump's Military Parade - Cancelled! Armistice Day procession - still happening!

Nearly 200 groups (including MFSO) who advocate for peace and justice, were organizing a celebration of peace in Washington, DC, and across the country from November 9-11 in response to President Trump's military parade. This glorification of war, which would have cost millions of dollars, comes at a time when the United States poverty is growing and the social safety net is disintegrating. Many veterans and their families are suffering.

**Still happening - Sunday, November 11, the 100th anniversary of the Armistice that ended World War I. Veterans and military family members will lead a solemn procession to reclaim this day as a time to remember the human and economic costs of war and the preciousness of peace.**

Keep checking the Military Families Speak Out and Veterans For Peace websites [www.mfso.org](http://www.mfso.org), [www.veteransforpeace.org](http://www.veteransforpeace.org) and Facebook pages to see the details for Nov. 9-11.

**MFSO says:**

## **NO National Guard at the Border!**

Military Families Speak Out supports the action of governors of 11 states in denouncing President Trump's immigration policy of separating children from their parents at the southern border by pulling their National Guard troops from the border and announcing that they won't be deploying any more

of the state's military or will recall troops already sent. The states include Colorado, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia. MFSO does not want our loved ones in the military to be part of enforcing this inhumane policy.

We urge the governors of the remaining states to take a similar action and withdraw or recall their state's National Guard.



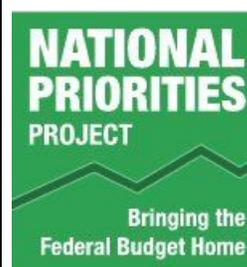
## **In My Opinion: Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke Uses "No More Blood For Oil" as an Excuse to Let Fossil Fuel Industry Exploit Our Public Lands**

By Paula Rogovin, MFSO NJ and MFSO Steering Committee

In July, Secretary of the Interior announced that the U.S. would open much of the coastline to offshore oil and natural-gas extraction as well as undo safety rules surrounding underwater drilling fracking, coal mining and methane emissions from oil and gas wells. At the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in February, Zinke announced a new mandate to maximize fossil-fuel production saying, "I don't want our kids to have to fight on foreign shores for energy we have here...public lands belong to the people and not special interests (environmental groups)" (*Rolling Stone*, 7/23/18. Mark Binelli)

As an environmental and an anti-war activist, I believe that government support of a rapid transition to renewable energy (wind, solar, geothermal, etc.) - not war, not use of public lands by the fossil fuel industry - is the answer.

*Paula is the co-founder of the Coalition to Ban Unsafe Oil Trains*



***Turn war dollars into spending for people's needs!***

For more information about the economics of the wars and military spending, go to:

[www.nationalpriorities.org](http://www.nationalpriorities.org)

## STOP THE DEPORTATION OF VETERANS!

by Robert Vivar, **Unified US Deported Veterans Resource Center** and MFSO Steering Committee

On August 1, the Unified US Deported Veterans Resource Center welcomed USMC Cpl. Robert Cano, another deported combat hero. The US DVR Center says that it is an injustice to discard those that should instead be honored for their service.. Our call is to LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND. Please help us support these forgotten



veterans by leaving messages of support for Cpl. Cano at: Unified US Deported Veterans on Facebook or supporting their families here in the US. (See below)

**The US DVA Center in Tijuana, Mexico provides the following help for deported veterans in California:**

- \*Assistance with citizenship applications
- \*Assistance for deported veterans to have their cases reviewed
- \*Colef, (Colegio de la Frontera Norte) in Tijuana sponsors focus groups for deported persons that are interested in obtaining information on re-validating their US education and furthering their education in Mexico. There are plans for at least two focus groups - one for US military deported Veterans and another for those working in Call Centers, since without a higher education, your progress in the workplace is very limited.

\*Emergency housing and employment assistance  
**MFSO Members, Immigrant Rights Groups, and Friends: YOU can help the families of deported veterans still living in the U.S.:**

- \*Help with housing or legal aid
- \*Ask members of Congress to introduce legislation to keep the promise to veterans that they will not be deported.

\*We can put you in contact with families of deported veterans in these cities even if you don't live there:

Modesto, CA	Los Angeles, CA
Riverside CA	San Diego, CA
Phoenix, AZ	Chicago, IL
Las Vegas, NV	Brownsville, TX
Houston, TX	Ontario, Canada

You can help the families in many ways (depending on their needs), such as sending or bringing food, school supplies, and clothing, helping with housing, and providing legal aid. Your support and friendship will be welcomed.

If you are interested in helping the families of deported veterans, please email Robert Vivar: [dvsh.rob@gmail.com](mailto:dvsh.rob@gmail.com).

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### **MFSO Opposes Blank Check for War, Calls for AUMF That Limits President's Power**

by Stacy Bannerman, MFSO, Steering Committee

On May 16, there was an open hearing on a NEW Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF). MFSO asked Senator Robert Menendez, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to allow a MFSO member to address the Committee at the opening hearing and say NO to Another Blank Check for War. The Corker-Kaine AUMF, SJ Resolution 59, would give the president the power to send our troops anywhere in the world without congressional approval.

As Barbara Lee has clearly stated: "Rather than reining in the Trump Administration's blank check for war, the Corker-Kaine AUMF would continue all current military operations, allow any president to unilaterally expand our wars, and effectively consent to endless war by omitting any sunset date or geographic constraints for our ongoing operations. This legislation also further limits Congress's role in war making by requiring a veto-proof majority to block military action from the president.

**Let's heed the lessons of the last 16 years. We can do better than an AUMF that codifies and**

**expands our existing endless wars. We need legislation that restores limits on presidential war making and gets us closer to peace.”**

Menendez did not respond to our requests and while Senator Merkley (D-OR) filed a counter-proposal to the SJ Res. 59, there has been no subsequent hearing on the AUMF.

*Stacy is also the Founder & CEO, Women's EcoPeace, [www.womensecopeace.org](http://www.womensecopeace.org)*

## **Winnie the Pooh and War**

By Jan Barry

The wistful author of Winnie the Pooh and other children's stories was a morose war veteran trying to figure out how to amuse a lively young son. This bitter-sweet story is the focus of the 2017 film "Goodbye Christopher Robin." Viewers may be startled by scenes of cozy home front life suddenly exploding into battlefield mayhem and back to awkward family aftermaths.

Astute film reviewers alerted audiences that this is not a warm and fuzzy story. "A. A. Milne fought in the epic Battle of the Somme, in 1916, when a million men were killed or injured. It was one of the bloodiest battles in human history. Milne, already a playwright and a novelist, was among those wounded," The New Yorker's Robin Wright noted. "He went home shell-shocked, with all the haunting symptoms of what is today diagnosed as post-traumatic stress disorder, or P.T.S.D."

Hollywood Reporter reviewer Sheri Linden observed: "When a popped champagne cork or opening-night spotlight triggers flashbacks, he does his best to maintain a stiff upper lip." But Milne's flashback flinches at home and on walks in the woods make his preschool-age son, Christopher Robin, who prefers the nickname Billy, "as watchful and wary as he is hungry for paternal affection ... Billy is an old soul with a knack for empathy, skillfully talking his war-damaged father out of his occasional panic attacks."

Father-son adventures of creating playful tales involving a teddy bear and other stuffed animals

romping with a boy named Christopher Robin evolved into a wildly popular set of books. But Billy later resented his father for turning private moments of childhood glee into glaring fame that triggered brutal harassment in boarding school.

And Milne's wife savaged his plan to write a book denouncing war. "What'd we fight that war for? Nothing's changed," he shouts. "I've had enough of making people laugh. I want to make them see!" His wife retorts: "You know what writing a book against war is like? It's like writing a book against Wednesdays."

Milne's antiwar book, *Peace with Honour*, was eclipsed by the massive acclaim for the children's stories. His son, however, rejected the royalties from the Pooh books and insisted on fighting (and nearly dying) in the Second World War. In the end, Milne warily greets a battered young veteran who wearily trudges back home.

"The House at Pooh Corner stands in a glade between two dark shadows – the aftermath of one war that had just finished and the dread of one coming," Frank Cottrell Boyce, the film's screenwriter, wrote in The Guardian. "No one who fought in the first world war knew it was the first world war. On the contrary, they had been told that they were fighting the war that would end all wars. It must have been with the most bitter irony and failure, then, that Milne's generation watched their children march away to a war that they had been told would never happen."

*Jan Barry is an environmental journalist and U.S. Army veteran of Vietnam. He's done investigative reports on health effects of Agent Orange distributed by The Associated Press, New York Times, other newspapers and Internet websites.*

### **JOIN MFSO!**

If you have a loved who has served or is currently serving in the military, please join MFSO. Contact Pat Alviso at [mfsooc@earthlink.net](mailto:mfsooc@earthlink.net). Find MFSO at [www.mfso.org](http://www.mfso.org) or at Military Families Speak Out on Facebook or call our office at 565-579-3980.

**Donations are welcome.**

## Torment

By John Fenton

As squalls roil the Irish Sea  
The torrent hammering the roof  
The wind stealing everything  
One waits for the certain conclusion

The end arrives  
Smiles revive  
Church Bay beckons  
All will be bright

Sails unfold and billow  
Public houses set up outdoors  
Gardens welcome consideration  
Inhabitants wander charming views

Life is once again grand  
In one of the beautiful spots  
That you can find  
Tucked away from the tourist track

For most but not me  
The fury inside  
Does not ebb and flow  
Like the tides

Thoughts of my son  
And his death rage on  
His image with me every instant  
As I had feared

Maybe I was too assured  
Believing that time would  
Accomplish that one goal  
A single moment of serenity

*John's son, Marine Sgt Matthew Fenton died on May 5, 2006, from wounds suffered in Iraq. A former member of the Teaneck Peace Vigil, John now lives in Ireland.*

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Our hearts go out to families of Reymund Transfiguracion, Christopher Celiz, Joseph Maciel, and James Grotjan, killed in Afghanistan and Iraq this summer and the many service members who have died by suicide.

## Stay Involved!

Military family members, please work with groups in your community to protest U.S. military involvement in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, and Syria. Check with United For Peace & Justice to see or post additional actions. [www.unitedforpeace.org](http://www.unitedforpeace.org). Media coaches are available to help you get your action media coverage.

### Ongoing vigils:

**Long Beach, Orange County, CA: Fridays.** 7-9pm. 2nd and Nieto in front of the Chase Bank in Belmont Shore. MFSO with the Long Beach Area Peace Network  
**Huntington Beach, CA: Sundays.** 12 noon. At the foot of the Huntington Beach Pier. ENOUGH campaign.

**Orange, CA: 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday** of every month. 5:30-7pm. Chapman and Glassell (in the Traffic Circle) in Orange. MFSO and Code Pink. Signs provided

**Seal Beach, CA: Last Wednesday** of the month. 5-6:60 pm. in front of the globe at Leisure World. Senior Patriots for Peace

**Los Angeles, CA: Sundays.** 6am-4pm. Just north of the Santa Monica Pier, under Bubba Gumps on the beach Arlington West

**Huntington Beach CA: First Sundays.** Arlington West Memorial 7:30am to 3:30pm. 6th and PCH. Arlington West

**Teaneck, NJ: Wednesdays,** 4-5 pm. National Guard Armory. 1799 Teaneck Rd. Teaneck Peace Vigil. MFSO, Bergen County, Veterans For Peace, Chapter 21 NJ.

**Leonia, NJ: Sundays,** 4-4:30 pm. Broad Ave. and Ft. Lee Rd. Leonia Peace Vigil Group.

**Yellow Springs, OH: Saturdays.** corner of Xenia Ave & Limestone.

**Missouri – Kansas City: ‘Patriots for Peace’ Demonstrations.** Tuesdays, 5-6 pm. 63rd and Ward Parkway (Median Strip on South Corner) Kansas City, MO. Contact: [schwartzkatz@sbcglobal.net](mailto:schwartzkatz@sbcglobal.net)

### MEETUP with MFSO at the Veterans For Peace Convention. Aug.23-26

Thursday, Aug.23. 3:30 pm. MFSO workshop, led by Bill Scheurer, MFSO SC

Saturday, Aug. 25. 10:00 am. MFSO brunch for military families