

Eyes Wide Open: The Human Cost of War

by Vicki Pratt, NFP Omaha Member

Row after row of combat boots. Tiny baby shoes. Worn sandals. Shiny dress shoes. These reminders of the human cost of war filled the lawn at Second Unitarian Church in Omaha

on Father's Day, June 18.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) compiled this traveling exhibit to open viewers eyes to the human cost of the war by asking them to imagine a living person in each pair of boots and shoes. The early display included combat boots for each U.S. military death in Iraq along with 50 pairs of civilian shoes to show the 50 to 1 ratio of civilian to military casualties. But as the U.S. death toll escalates it is no longer feasible to transport so many boots. The exhibit now represents only U.S. National Guard deaths.

Sponsoring organizations, Omaha Friends (Quakers), Nebraskans for Peace, Second Unitarian, and September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, set up the display and conducted a memorial service.

Each pair of boots is tagged with the soldier's state, rank, name, and age at death. Just like The Wall, families and friends look for their loved one's name and leave mementos and pictures.

After stops in Iowa the exhibit is now



Shoes represent the 50 to 1 ratio of civilian to military deaths

traveling through Minnesota, gathering more mementos, more stories, and tragically, more

boots. As two veterans of previous wars quietly paid their respects I heard one say "This is for all of us. It's not just about my war in Korea or yours Vietnam. These boots honor all of us and the people we left over there."



Empty combat boots fill the lawn at Second Unitarian in Omaha

Omaha Coordinator Resigns

by Amanda E. Flott, former Omaha Coordinator

I've been offered an incredible opportunity to work with Amnesty International USA Midwest Regional Office in Chicago. This is a position that I didn't believe I could obtain until many years into my activist future. As a result, I have jumped at the chance. This means that I will resign my position as coordinator for NFP Omaha, effective July 31st

Omaha Board

I've thoroughly enjoyed my time with NFP and the people with whom I've worked during the last eight months. I feel my experiences with NFP have been challenging and rewarding, and I feel very grateful for the opportunity to have learned skills that make me a better organizer and a stronger proponent for peace.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to have worked with such an historic and successful peace organization.

I look forward to hearing about NFP's future accomplishments, and I hope that I can participate as well in some of those activities. I wish Nebraskans for Peace and the Omaha peace community success in their pursuit of peace and social justice and I look forward to the opportunity to work with you again toward our shared goals of harmony and human progress.

I am privileged to have served as your Omaha coordinator.
Amanda E. Flott

What is NFP Omaha doing? PM 2

ANTI-WAR TASKFORCE

Anti-War Taskforce Updates
by Cary Vigneri, NFP Board Member

The Omaha chapter of Nebraskans for Peace recently instituted a task force dedicated to anti-war activity. In its short life, the task force launched three public demonstrations, has placed "US Out--UN In" yard-signs in front of the homes and businesses of several hundred Nebraska peace folk, and participated in Earth Day with a banner that read "End War - for Earth's Sake."

Anti-War

Virginia Walsh, a former member of both the Omaha chapter and the State chapter of NFP, who has recently resigned, provided much of the inspiration for the anti-war task force. Virginia's enthusiasm and organizational skills will be missed truly. I'm confident that her voice for social justice will continue to ring clear in our community.

The task force will meet several times in August. There will be informal sessions held at the Benson Grind Coffee Shop, 6107 Maple Street every Wednesday morning in August from 7:00 til 8:30 AM. The proposed meetings, starting August 2nd, are designed to seek out practical means to subvert the American culture of war. Coffee and snacks will be provided.

A potluck at Elmwood Park on Thursday August 31st from 5:00 til 7:30 PM will cap off the August strategy sessions. As the wars in the Middle East continue to morph into increasingly senseless barbarism, we must forge a workable plan to "ride herd on these cowboys." Bring your humor, your thinking cap and a couple of friends with some extra time in their lives to devote to building a force for peace.

You win some, you lose some!

by Michael Gordon, Executive Director
Citizens For Equal Protection

On July 14th we found out that the three-judge panel of the Eighth Circuit of Appeals over-

turned the decision of Judge Joe Batalion to repeal Amendment 29-formerly Initiative 416.

The decision was interesting because the three-judge panel completely disregarded Batalion's rulings that focused on the second sentence of the amendment that bans domestic partnerships, civil unions or any other similar same-sex relationships. Their focus was primarily dealing with the issue of protecting "traditional marriage". The Rally

Anti-Bullying

Thanks to the combined efforts of a handful of dedicated individuals a rally was held on Friday, July 21st at the Capitol in Lincoln. We estimated over 700 people came to show their support. We were able to stretch hands almost all the way around the capitol! We want to thank Nebraskans for Peace for donating the use of the microphone and all members who attended.

Amy Miller, interim director of the ACLU announced that we would appeal the Eighth Circuit's decision. Anti-Bullying

We have been very busy this summer working on the anti-bullying campaign and Bullying Awareness Week scheduled the 24th -30th of September. We want to particularly thank Diane Perry, Dustin Ross, CFEP board members and Paul Olson, NFP State Board member who have dedicated a large portion of their summer to this campaign. Senator Gwen Howard, LD9 will be introducing a similar bill to LB627 in January. During the last session 30 students met with the members of the Education Committee. The anti-bullying bill was voted out of committee in a 6-2 vote. Like to Help?

If you would like to help with the Bullying Awareness Week or the legislation, give our office a call. 402-398-3027. Seriously Funny

It is time to mark your calendars for our fourth annual friend and fundraiser, Seriously Funny. This is a comedy show, silent auction with appetizers and cash bar. This year we will be at the Old Market Event Center located at 1015 South 10th St. in Omaha. Save Saturday, October 21 for a night of fun and laughter.

To reserve tickets, call our office at 402-398-3027.

Nebraskans for Peace Membership and Contribution Form

I want to BEGIN RENEW Membership (includes subscription to the Nebraska Report) \$35 Basic
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Donations to Nebraskans for Peace are NOT tax deductible because of our political activity. Tax-deductible donations CAN be made to the Nebraska Peace Foundation for our educational work. 941 "O" Street, Suite 1026, Lincoln, NE 68508, 402/475/4620

Fax 402/475/4624 nfpstate@nebraskansforpeace.org

Membership

(Continued from page 1)

Calls for Mideast Peace Negotiations

By Anne Else

The European Union and Vatican have denounced Israel's attack on Lebanon calling for immediate negotiations in lieu of warfare. The International Association of Democratic Lawyers noted "Israel has created a humanitarian crisis in Gaza, in violation of the Geneva

Human Rights

Conventions IV and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (War Crimes, Article 8). Israel's brutal retaliation against Palestinian civilians constitutes collective punishment against the Palestinian people in violation of Hague Regulations and the Geneva Conventions.... The actions by the Israeli army violate the U.S. Arms Export Control Act of 1976, under which military hardware sold by the US to Israel can only be used for defensive purposes or to maintain internal security."

Even though U.S., as well as international, law is being violated, Pres. Bush has backed the aggression of Israel against Gaza and Lebanon. U.N. Secretary Kofi Annan has called for a cease-fire. The National Council of Churches issued a plea for the U.S. to lead the way in pursuing negotiations for a just settlement. Bishop Mark Hanson of the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America wrote, "The escalation of the conflict moves the Middle East further away from a just and lasting peace. Continue to call on the international community and the U.S. administration to do everything possible to negotiate an immediate stop to the violence that has caused the killing and suffering of innocent people and to urge all parties to resolve the conflict through dialogue." NFP urges you to call your congressmen with this message.

Opinion Piece

By Stuart Williams

Anyone see the movie "Thank You For Smoking"? It shows how hotshot lobbyists and tons of cash can sell pretty much anything. It reminds one of miserable for the current conflicts around Israel/Lebanon. As the

Middle East

administration and media and Congress want us to believe, poor little Israel was just minding its own business when, the big bad terrorists attacked. Naturally, Israel had every right to devastate power plants and bridges and airports, to make life hundreds of thousands, to kill TEN TIMES their own number. They were just defending themselves, you see. Also (drum-roll please)...they have God on their side!

To counter such propaganda, a few questions are in order:

- 1 Do we really want ANOTHER war in the Middle

Answer: A: R. Buckminster Fuller, New Yorker, Jan. 8, 1966 US architect, engineer, futurist, philosopher and inventor (1895 - 1983)

East, especially considering that the current one is not going so swimmingly?

- 2 Doesn't the Bible say if you live by the sword, you shall die by same?
- 3 Is an Israeli life worth that of ten Arabs?
- 4 Why is it a "kidnapping" by one side and an "arrest" when done by another?

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A few facts:

- Hamas had observed a 16-month cease-fire until its raid of June 27. Meanwhile, Israel never stopped its campaign of assassination and intimidation, firing thousands of artillery shells into Gaza alone and killing a number of civilians.
- Hamas and Hezbollah were both created BECAUSE OF Israel's actions/atrocities. The last time Israel invaded Lebanon, approximately 30,000 Lebanese and Palestinians were killed/murdered, the vast majority civilians.
- The key areas of conflict remain a viable Palestinian country, an equitable Jerusalem, justice for Palestinian refugees. Israel is stonewalling (literally!) on all of them.

A dirty little secret: after Congress had cutoff military aid to the fascist government of Guatemala, guess who the CIA and Pentagon turned to? Israel.

The tragic reality: a people who were brutalized and traumatized are now brutalizing and traumatizing another.

Dana Bainbridge will serve as Interim Coordinator

Beginning August 1 I will step in as interim coordinator to see the Omaha chapter through this time of transition. During this time I hope to help rebuild the Board and continue to support the work of taskgroups and members who express their voices for peace through NFP. Please call:

- A: If you or someone you know is interested in serving on the Board or in getting involved in a particular aspect of the organization
- B: If you know of a group or organization that would like someone from NFP to speak
- C: All of the above and whatever!

Our number is 453-0776 – you are NFP



Peace Matters Committee:

Editors: Amanda Flott and Cary Vignari
Layout: Carol Windrum and Tim Fickenscher

April Calendar of Events

Sunday, August 6th, (Time?)

Candlelight Vigil to honor those who died at the hands of US atomic aggression against Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and those who are currently being sacrificed to the cruel greed of international weapons-makers. We'll gather at 72nd and Pine Street.

There is parking in the northwest corner of the mall, near the Donut Professor and Joey's Seafood. We'll walk east and south, past the Scott Center, the War-Planning Think Tank Center and up to the new dormitory area on Shirley Street. Bring candles with glass shades or other wind protection, torches, flashlights, drums, flutes, and musical instruments designed for mournful music. Bring signs and banners appropriate to the occasion. And bring your family and friends. **"Never again!"**

August 11 - September 16, 2006 Nuclear

Dichotomies: An Interpretive Installation
Curators and Artists: Tim Guthrie & Ken Guthrie
Opening Reception: Friday, August 11, 2006, 7:00 ? 10:00 p.m. Links: www.timguthrie.com, www.kenguthrie.com

August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 Anti-War Task Force Strategy

M e e t i n g s, Benson Grind, 6107 Maple Street. 7:00 AM - 8:30 AM

August 31st, Potluck for Anti-War Task Force, 5:00

PM Elmwood Park at the picnic table area closest to UNO. Look for a banner that reads "End War--for Earth's Sake!"

Dear readers: What would you like to see in Peace Matters? Send ideas, letters or articles of 100-300 words (subject to editing) to Amanda Flott, NFP Omaha Office / PO Box 34823, Omaha NE 68134; tel 453-0776; e-mail nfpomaha@nebraskansforpeace.org.

NFP-Omaha Office
PO Box 34823
Omaha, NE 68134
402/453-0776 Fax 551-4011
nfpomaha@nebraskansforpeace.org.

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Question: Who said, "Who said, "Either war is obsolete or men are."?"

