

Military Families **SPEAK OUT**

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

Newsletter – January, 2015

MFSO Chairperson Pat Alvise REPORTS

In the past few weeks MFSO has been flooded with buoyant calls wanting to share the good news that all of our troops are finally coming home. Even all of us who scour and read every bit of news we can find about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan had to do a double check. It seems all the Administration had to do was declare a formal end to the combat operations in Afghanistan and the general population was filled with joy about the end of the war. Sadly, it isn't.

True, there has been a major draw down from what at one time were over 100,000 of our troops. and that's a step in the right direction. Even so, we still have combat troops there now. About 10,800 will remain by spring. So what exactly are our troops doing? Is Iraq just a shell game of moving troops from Afghanistan to Iraq?

Most of our troops are on bases near posts in the southern and eastern regions of Afghanistan. With Taliban attacks on the increase and President Ashraf Ghani lobbying to slow down the American timeline to be entirely out by 2016, we have been told their mission is to defend those bases. About 4,000 others will continue to participate in operations, including those notorious and discredited "night raids," will advise and accompany Afghan ground troops and will assist Afghan forces with airstrikes. The U.S. has been authorized to use ground forces if there are more major threats.

Meanwhile, more U.S. troops will be deployed to Iraq to restart the war that was supposed to be over. Special operation troops are advising Iraqi commanders at joint operations centers to coordinate airstrikes against the Islamic State.

There is no timetable for how long the U.S. will

remain. Congress will not even weigh in on authorizing the continued presence, its constitutional duty. Your MFSO steering committee has been closely monitoring the situation to see when and if the Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) will come to the Senate floor for a vote. However, officials are saying that the U.S. might stay another three years. Watch for news and action on that.

MFSO Members Find Success Working with Others



December 6, Peace Witness

I have been joining the Quaker peace witness vigils on the first Saturday of each month. We are calling for US troops out of Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. I'm the woman with the sunglasses. In January, I had an MFSO sign.

Quaker Peace Witness

First Saturday of the month. 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.
NW Corner of 700 East and 2100 South
Salt Lake City, Utah

Please contact me at mk@ubercool.us if you or other military families live in or near Salt Lake City.

By Meherban Khalsa, MFSO, Salt Lake City



MFSO members Tina Lopez, Ed Garza and Pat Alviso educated local youth about what life is like in the military for our families at the local Veterans Day Parade. They used a game wheel and gave out prizes for those who correctly answered questions such as, “How many troops have died in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan?” and “What is PTSD?” Many youth visited the MFSO booth.

By Pat Alviso, MFSO, Orange County, CA



Teaneck Peace Vigil members have protested against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan for more than 500 consecutive Wednesdays at the National Guard Armory in Teaneck, NJ. MFSO, Bergen County, Veterans For Peace, Chapter 21 NJ, and area residents sponsor the vigil. Other groups co-sponsor some of TPV's other events and lobbying efforts. By Paula Rogovin, MFSO, Bergen County, NJ



MFSO Members Urged to Plan for DAYS OF ACTION

A coalition including United For Peace and Justice, Jobs Not Wars, MFSO, and many other organizations around the world, have issued a call for ACTION. World peace has never been a more urgent need for people and the planet. We urge MFSO members and friends to help plan or join actions on these dates. Here are some suggestions: rallies, marches, vigils, speak outs, forums, art exhibits and poetry readings, events in high schools and colleges, concerts, die-ins, reading of names of soldiers or Marines or civilians killed in the war.

Demands MFSO will emphasize:

No military action in Iraq and Afghanistan

Bring the war dollars home to our communities

Take care of our veterans.

February 15 - the anniversary of the day when millions of us around the world took to the streets in 2003 to protest the coming war on Iraq.

March 19 - the start of Iraq war.

April 15 - Global day of Action on Military Spending. Trillions are spent on armaments; the global arms trade needs to be curtailed.

April 26 - Peace & Planet Rally in New York City on the eve of the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference at the United Nations (No more nuclear weapons, war, or warming)
In 1982 one million people rallied for Nuclear Disarmament in New York City. The time has come to rally once again. The nuclear nations have not met their treaty obligations under the NPT and instead are embarking on a dangerous upgrading of nuclear arsenals despite all the known consequences of nuclear war: 50-100 bombs cause nuclear winter and will kill at least 2 billion people.

The MFSO Steering Committee will keep you posted about upcoming events. Please let us know of any actions planned for your area. Send an e-mail to Pat Alviso at mfso-oc@earthlink.net so we can spread the word. Let us know if you need any support in planning or publicizing your events..

Spring Rising March 18-21

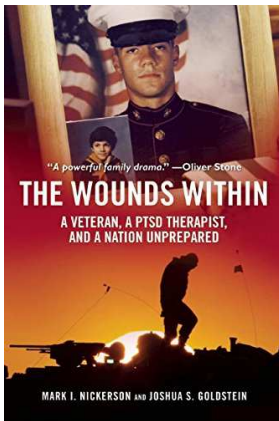
Washington, DC

a peace summit - demonstrations

Contact Dede Miller for details.

dede4peace@gmail.com

Book Release!



THE WOUNDS WITHIN: A VETERAN, A PTSD THERAPIST, AND A NATION UNPREPARED

by Mark I. Nickerson and
Joshua S. Goldstein

Available in hardcover or ebook at MarkINickerson.com
also on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and in bookstores.

Publisher's Book Summary

As America's longest wars end, hundreds of thousands of veterans and their families struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The Wounds Within follows the iconic case of Marine Lance Corporal Jeff Lucey who deployed early in the Iraq war, battled PTSD after returning home, and set his family on a decade-long campaign to reform the Veterans Affairs system and end the stigma around military-related mental health issues. Their story is told uniquely from the perspective of Jeff's psychotherapist, Mark Nickerson, an internationally recognized expert on trauma treatment.

Driven by the family narrative, and by later case histories of Nickerson's veteran clients, the book explains PTSD and how it can be treated. With coauthor Joshua Goldstein, an award-winning author, Nickerson engages the big issues of America's attempts to cope with the millions of returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan – from belated reforms to overwhelmed military families to clueless civilians who can't get beyond "Thank you for your service."

The Wounds Within combines a moving and compelling human drama with national policy and a

clinical explanation of how to heal veterans' traumas. It will stand as a definitive account of PTSD in those who fought America's latest wars, and a much-needed source of information for their loved ones.

A few of the many endorsements:

"A powerful family drama and a reminder of the price veterans pay long after the fighting ends."

-- **Oliver Stone**, Director, **Platoon** and **Born on the Fourth of July**

"Kevin and Joyce Lucey are true American heroes. Their courage is an inspiration to us all."

-- **Paul Rieckhoff**, Executive Director and Founder, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA)

The MFSO Steering Committee applauds MFSO/GSFSO members, Joyce and Kevin Lucey, for their dedication and passion in the struggle to support active duty service members, veterans, and their families and their efforts to end the wars. We urge all MFSO/GSFSO members and friends to spread the word about The Wounds Within:

- post information on Facebook and other social media. See www.WoundsWithin.com or www.mfso.org for details.
- write a review for newspapers, journals, or blogs in your community or just send them information about the book.
- buy copies for your libraries in your community
- organize a book signing
- arrange for the authors to speak at a high school, community or other college. For info on Wounds Within Continuing Education Credits or to discuss offering the book in an academic course contact info@markinickerson.com



MFSO, IVAW, and VFP Reps Met With White House Officials

Last summer, the MFSO Steering Committee requested a meeting with President Obama regarding our opposition to US military action in Iraq and Afghanistan and our concerns about care for veterans and military families. We were, instead, invited to a meeting in August with representatives of the President and other members of the administration.

MFSO put together a team that included MFSO members Pat Alviso, Paula Rogovin, Mary Hladky, Tim Kahlor, and Ann Ambia, Gold Star Families Speak Out members, Joyce and Kevin Lucey, Veterans For Peace Executive Director, Michael McPhearson and VFP member Jan Barry, and Iraq Veterans Against the War members, Rebekah Lampman and Matthew Southworth.

Each of us made strong presentations. Assurances that the White House would continue to work with us have not come to fruition. However, all of us are well aware that continuing to lobby legislators, to educate the public, and to build local, national, and global mass actions is what is needed.

These are some of the requests and recommendations we submitted at the White House meeting.

REQUESTS

- Immediate cessation of all U.S. bombing of Iraq.
- No further escalation of military action in Iraq.
- End U.S. arming, funding and training of all parties to the conflict in Iraq.
- Begin the immediate withdrawal of all military personnel from Iraq.
- Begin the immediate withdrawal of all military personnel from Afghanistan.
- Do not sign a Bilateral Security Agreement with Afghanistan that would continue a US military presence or continue the practice of arming and training the Afghan National Security Forces.
- Urge President Obama to make time to meet with MFSO, VFP, and IVAW members to get an unfiltered perspective on issues impacting veterans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- We agree with President Obama's repeated statement there is no military solution in Iraq or Afghanistan. Bombing Iraq and a continued military presence in Afghanistan undermines the goal of a political solution needed for a stable Middle East. Stop intervening and funding these wars.
- Use diplomacy to work with regional and international stakeholders to reduce hostilities in Iraq.
- We can't afford to create more veterans for an already broken Veterans Administration system. Establish a forum so the VA can work consistently with MFSO, VFP & IVAW to improve care. These organizations can gather military families to speak directly about their experiences and provide constructive advice.
- The human costs of war have been enormous. So much suffering for so many military families and for what gain? Without war we can instead provide quality care for our veterans and for jobs, education, health care, and other services so urgently needed in the U.S. Our tax dollars are better spent at home building a brighter future for America.

Moral Injury and Soul Repair Conference

A Conference about Recovery from Moral Injury, Reintegration, and Resilience

Thursday, Jan. 29, 9 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Friday, Jan. 30, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m

Sponsored by Veterans For Peace

First United Methodist Church

2111 Camino del Rio South, San Diego, CA 92108

General Public Registration: \$125. Special Rate for Active Duty Military, Veterans, their Families, and Students or Low Income: \$50

Go to www.veteransforpeace.org for details.

Some of the speakers and workshop leaders include: Rear Admiral Margaret Grun Kibben, Chief of Navy Chaplains

Veterans of the Iraq War: Lisa Dunster (directs Compass Retreat Program) and Camilo Mejia, (author of Ar Ramadi: the Private Rebellion of Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejia)

Rev. Dr. Kristen Leslie, (traveled to Navy bases to teach chaplains how to minister to those with MST)

Dr. William Gibson (expert on post-traumatic stress and the neuroscience of PTSD)