

Military Resistance 14K5

[Veterans Day #1] The Meaning Of Life



From: Dennis Serdel
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: November 08, 2013
Subject: The Meaning Of Life

Written by Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade; United Auto Workers GM Retiree

The Meaning Of Life

**The middle aged Jewish man throws
bodies on a cart & then throws them
into a ditch in Auschwitz
He now believes there is no God
because God would not allow this.
In Paris only a few go to Notre Dame
because the others do not believe
there is a God anymore
Americans searching for
the meaning of life
but the pews are sparse & Catholic**

Churches are being closed as
the Tea Party religious Cult
like Jim Baker orders the members
to drink the poison
of No Social Security No Medicare
No Food Stamps No VA Disability
just knock them down to their knees
They fear the Atheists
who believe the Big Bang theory
as the Christians ask what became
before that &
they can Not understand
Nothingness &
the Belief of Nothingness
& Where we came from
& Where we are going
Instead building big Churches
or Egyptian After Life Pyramids,
Sun worship and
Ancestry worship where flags
fly on Veteran's Day
The Veteran gets one card that says
Thank You & your work for Peace
while he gets another Thank You
in a package with a framed
autographed picture of Country Joe
on the day the Wall was first opened
Another Vietnam Veteran says
he thought he was an Atheist
until his first fire fight
as blood drips down
the purple blue red stained glass
So there is some kind of Begging
& they think some kind of Heaven,
think some kind of Religion
to Die for in War
They think there is a reward
that is Promised for Sacrificing
their human life that just
goes to Nonexistence &
with no meaning to life
& Warriors die for nothing
except to defend their selves
as dirt & graves grow up to weeds
& sand that covers over graves
where Death is the Meaning of War
& Constant striving for Empire
by rich little men
as an Old Soldier asks just what the Hell
are we doing Here
what is the Purpose of

Man's Inhumanity toward man
Human Animals since day one
Incisor Teeth to rip flesh
inventions of the first War Tools
a Rock & then a Club
No different from an Atom Bomb
or Drone Warfare
Animal kind Humankind can't
seem to pass the Kindergarten Class
of War & Move on to a better place
where Veteran's Days are gone
& a New Human Condition
is Born & Living & Loving Life
is the Meaning of Life.

Written by Dennis Serdel for Military Resistance

MORE:

[Veterans Day #2A]
Kitty Wells & Roy Acuff

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pdpx20RRRyU>

[Veterans Day #2B]
Arthur Crudup

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CEqaof7adqM>

[Veterans Day #2C]
Martha Spencer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqEltkvVNUk>

MORE:

[Veterans Day #3]
Subject: Sgt. King Jeremy

[From GI Special, 11.11.2007]

[NOTE: Information that would identify the writer is removed to protect members of the armed forces and their family members. T]

From: [xxxxxxx; Ft. XXXXX]

To: GI Special

Sent: November 05, 2007
Subject: Sgt. King Jeremy

I am a soon to be wife of a soldier, NCO, that served in Iraq with King.

He is held in the hearts of many and did more than most in his life time.

I found your story while doing research. I am an artist being asked to come up with ideas, and many a tattoo is wanted in honor of King out of 8-10 CAV.

It was just as hard to read your account of that day as it is to hear the words of that day being retold from the man I love more than anyone.

I remember talking on the phone with my fiancé the day it happened, he was close to King.

I pray for Kings wife and daughter.

As I sit here while my love sleeps, and I read this, I thank god I can crawl in bed with him, kiss him, letting him know how much I love him.

I can't help but feel guilty, and very lucky at the same time.

Not everyone understands, I think you know what I mean by that.

Thanks again
[XXXXX]
Ft.[XXXXX]

REPLY From GI Special: Excerpts]

On reading your letter, I was reminded of another from a long time ago, written by Major Sullivan Ballou of the Second Regiment, Rhode Island Volunteers.

It's reprinted below, following the article on Sgt. King.

Your letter, and the one below written 140+ years ago, have in common a clarity and directness of expression, and a fundamental honesty and goodness, that confirms the view expressed from time to time that those who serve in the armed forces, and those close to them, are the finest people in America today.

Your letter gives good reason to publish again the article in memory of Sgt. King by Iraq veteran Justin C. Cliburn, 1st Battalion 158th FA Oklahoma ARNG, which you found in GI Special, along with your letter.

What you wrote is the finest letter of this war, so far, bar none. There are many troops and loved ones who will find their hearts lifted by your words.

Everyone who has served, or been close to someone who has served, will understand, and thank you.

Limitless respect,
T

**“Remember Jeremy King”
“A Soldier’s Death Isn’t Anything Like The
Movies. There Was No Patriotic Music;
There Was No Feeling Of Purpose. It’s Just .
. . Death.”**



[From GI Special 5H29, August 24, 2007]

07/25/2007 by Justin C. Cliburn
[Iraq Veterans Against The War] [www.ivaw.org/]
Branch of service: Army National Guard of the United States (ARNG)
Unit: 1st Battalion 158th FA Oklahoma ARNG
Rank: SPC
Home: Lawton, Oklahoma
Served in: LSA Anaconda: MSR Patrol, one month. Camp Liberty, Baghdad: PSD/IP
Training, ten and a half months.

When I was in Mrs. Riner’s junior English class at MacArthur high school, we were required to read a short story titled “The Radio.”

The premise was simple.

A couple in the 1930s were given a special radio that allowed them to hear all their neighbors’ conversations.

At first they were elated, but, ultimately, they were haunted by the miracle of their ability.

They could hear all the horrors of society that usually go unnoticed or are covered up and sterilized . . . and they couldn’t turn it off.

They couldn’t change the channel.

It took seven years, but I eventually went back to that story in my head and felt their horror.

August 24th, 2006 was a routine day for my squad in Baghdad.

We had gone to Traffic Headquarters and I had gotten to visit with Ali.

Business taken care of, we started to make the familiar trek back to Camp Liberty.

It was a hot day, over 120 degrees, and I stood up just a little higher than usual with my sleeves unbuttoned to let the air circulate inside my body armor and clothing. It had been a good day.

Back on Route Irish, we were on the home stretch when the call came out over the radio:

“Eagle Dustoff, Eagle Dustoff, this is Red Knight 7* over”

“This is Eagle Dustoff, over”

“Eagle Dustoff, I need MEDEVAC; my gunner has been shot by a sniper.”

The voice went on to recite the nine line MEDEVAC report and I marveled at how cool, calm, and collected he sounded.

My squad leader plotted the grid coordinates and found that this had occurred only a couple blocks away from one of our two main destinations on Market Road.

“Cliburn, go ahead and get down; someone might be aiming at your melon right now”, CPT Ray said.

Sergeant Bruesch concurred and I sat down, listening intently to the radio transmissions that I couldn't turn off if I wanted to.

Five minutes in, the voice on the radio was losing his cool.

“Have they left yet?! He's losing a lot of blood; we need that chopper now!”

In the background, you could hear other soldiers yelling, screaming, trying to find any way to save their friend's life. At one point, I swear I heard the man gurgle.

Ten minutes in, the voice on the radio was furious.

“Where's that fucking chopper!? We're losing him! He's not fucking breathing! Where the fuck are you!?”

Every minute to minute and a half the voice was back on the radio demanding to know what the hold up was.

Every minute to minute and a half the other voice on the radio, a young woman's voice, tried to reassure him that the chopper was the way from Taji.

She was beginning to tire herself; I could hear it in her voice. She was just as frustrated as he was.

All the while, there I sat.

Sitting in the gunners hatch, listening life's little horrors with no way to turn the channel.

No one in the truck was speaking.

The music was on, but no one heard it. There was just an eerie silence.

All I heard was the radio transmissions; I watched as the landscape passed me by in slow motion.

I didn't hear wind noise or car horns or gunfire or my own thoughts. I was only accompanied by the silence of the world passing me by, interrupted only by the screams of the voice on the radio.

At this point, I was as frustrated as I had been all year. Where the fuck was that goddamn chopper and why was it taking so long?! What if it were me?

Would I be waiting that long? Would this pathetic exchange be included in the newscast if the guy dies?

I was angry, upset, frustrated, and anticipating the next transmission in this macabre play by play account. Forget about TNT, HBO, and Law and Order: THIS was drama. This was heart wrenching.

Seconds seemed like hours; minutes seemed like days.

Finally, after several more non-productive transmissions where Eagle Dustoff attempted to reassure the voice, after twenty minutes and a few more frantic, screaming transmissions by the voice, the man's voice was calm again.

"Eagle Dustoff, cancel the chopper. He's dead."

. . . and that was that. The voice had gone from being the model for the consummate soldier (cool, calm, collected, professional) to the more human screams and frantic pleading for help to solemn resignation.

Now, the voice was quiet.

"Eagle Dustoff: requesting recovery team. We can't drive this vehicle back; we need someone to come get the vehicle and body. Over."

"Do you have casualty's information?"

"Yes. SGT King, over."

I sat in that gunners sling in a fit of rage that I couldn't let out.

I had to be a soldier; I had to keep my cool.

We all did.

I was so angry, I still am, about being an unwilling voyeur, forced to listen to the gruesome play by play of another soldier's life and death.

We had been told that the insurgency was in its last throes, that they were just a bunch of dead enders. No, not this day.

Today, SGT King was in his last throes, and I was there to listen to the whole thing, whether I liked it or not.

A soldier's death isn't anything like the movies. There was no patriotic music; there was no feeling of purpose. It's just . . . death.

I wasn't there physically; I didn't see him, but I was there.

Any sane person would have wanted to turn the channel. No one wants to hear the screams of a man losing his friend, but I couldn't turn it off. We were required to monitor that channel.

Either way, it didn't take long to become emotionally invested in it; was he going to make it? I hung on every word until I got the final, sobering news.

My truck was the only one in the convoy monitoring that net. When we got back to base, no else had heard it, and SSG Bruesch, CPT Ray, and I didn't discuss it. I don't think we ever did.

A few days later, I felt like I had to find out more about his soldier. I felt like I had lost a friend, yet I didn't know anything but his name and rank.

Looking back on it, I should have just let it go, but I didn't. Using the miracle of the Internet, I found out all I needed to know about the young man.

SGT Jeremy E. King was 23 years old. He was from Idaho, where he played high school football. He had joined the army to get out of Idaho and see the world.

He was one year younger than I was, and he was dead. He sounded like any of a number of teammates I played high school football with.

I've replayed that scene in my head more times than I'd ever want since that day.

I don't believe in fate or karma or any type of pre-destined events, but I often wonder what made that sniper hole up on North Market Road instead of South Market Road, where I often found myself.

I was fortunate enough in my time there to never have to call in MEDEVAC.

I didn't bury any of my comrades, but I will always remember what it was like listening to the miracle of modern communications, the radio, and for the first

time in my life being terrified, much like the couple in the story over eighty long years ago.

This August 24th, remember Jeremy King:

Sgt. Jeremy E. King, 23, Of Meridian Died Thursday In Baghdad.



Jeremy King

Wednesday, August 30 2006 @ 04:20 AM EDT

Contributed by: River97

Views: 621

Star Telegram -- KILLEEN, Texas - A Fort Hood soldier from Idaho has died in Iraq of injuries sustained when troops came under fire during combat, the Department of Defense said Friday.

Sgt. Jeremy E. King, 23, of Meridian died Thursday in Baghdad.

He was assigned to the 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 4th Infantry Division at Fort Hood.

MORE:

[Veterans Day #4] From Major Sullivan Ballou, Second Regiment, Rhode Island Volunteers, To His Wife, Sarah:

Major Sullivan Ballou of the Second Regiment, Rhode Island Volunteers, wrote the letter July 14, while awaiting orders that would take him to Manassas, where he and twenty-seven of his men would die one week later at the Battle of Bull Run.

July the 14th, 1861
Washington DC

My very dear Sarah:

The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days - perhaps tomorrow. Lest I should not be able to write you again, I feel impelled to write lines that may fall under your eye when I shall be no more.

Our movement may be one of a few days duration and full of pleasure - and it may be one of severe conflict and death to me. Not my will, but thine O God, be done.

If it is necessary that I should fall on the battlefield for my country, I am ready. I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in, the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter.

I know how strongly American Civilization now leans upon the triumph of the Government, and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and suffering of the Revolution. And I am willing - perfectly willing - to lay down all my joys in this life, to help maintain this Government, and to pay that debt.

But, my dear wife, when I know that with my own joys I lay down nearly all of yours, and replace them in this life with cares and sorrows - when, after having eaten for long years the bitter fruit of orphanage myself, I must offer it as their only sustenance to my dear little children - is it weak or dishonorable, while the banner of my purpose floats calmly and proudly in the breeze, that my unbounded love for you, my darling wife and children, should struggle in fierce, though useless, contest with my love of country?

I cannot describe to you my feelings on this calm summer night, when two thousand men are sleeping around me, many of them enjoying the last, perhaps, before that of death -- and I, suspicious that Death is creeping behind me with his fatal dart, am communing with God, my country, and thee.

I have sought most closely and diligently, and often in my breast, for a wrong motive in thus hazarding the happiness of those I loved and I could not find one. A pure love of my country and of the principles have often advocated before the people and "the name of honor that I love more than I fear death" have called upon me, and I have obeyed.

Sarah, my love for you is deathless, it seems to bind me to you with mighty cables that nothing but Omnipotence could break; and yet my love of Country comes over me like a strong wind and bears me irresistibly on with all these chains to the battlefield.

The memories of the blissful moments I have spent with you come creeping over me, and I feel most gratified to God and to you that I have enjoyed them so long. And hard it is for me to give them up and burn to ashes the hopes of future years, when God willing, we might still have lived and loved together and seen our sons grow up to honorable manhood around us.

I have, I know, but few and small claims upon Divine Providence, but something whispers to me - perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little Edgar -- that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed.

If I do not, my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you, and when my last breath escapes me on the battlefield, it will whisper your name.

Forgive my many faults, and the many pains I have caused you. How thoughtless and foolish I have oftentimes been! How gladly would I wash out with my tears every little spot upon your happiness, and struggle with all the misfortune of this world, to shield you and my children from harm.

But I cannot. I must watch you from the spirit land and hover near you, while you buffet the storms with your precious little freight, and wait with sad patience till we meet to part no more.

But, O Sarah! If the dead can come back to this earth and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near you; in the garish day and in the darkest night -- amidst your happiest scenes and gloomiest hours - always, always; and if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it shall be my breath; or the cool air fans your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by.

Sarah, do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again.

As for my little boys, they will grow as I have done, and never know a father's love and care. Little Willie is too young to remember me long, and my blue eyed Edgar will keep my frolics with him among the dimmest memories of his childhood.

Sarah, I have unlimited confidence in your maternal care and your development of their characters. Tell my two mothers his and hers I call God's blessing upon them. O Sarah, I wait for you there! Come to me, and lead thither my children.

Sullivan Ballou

MORE:

[Veterans Day #5]



Tactical Painting:
From Soldier X to this Newsletter, from Iraq 4.25.05

POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE BLOODSHED

THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE WARS

MORE:

[Veterans Day #6]



MORE:

[Veterans Day #7]

Parable of the Old Man and the Young

[Thanks to Sandy Kelson, Veteran & Military Initiative Organizing Committee, who sent this in.]

So Abram rose, and clave the wood, and went,
And took the fire with him, and a knife.
And as they sojourned both of them together,
Isaac the first-born spake and said, My Father,
Behold the preparations, fire and iron,
But where the lamb for this burnt-offering?
Then Abram bound the youth with belts and straps,

and builded parapets and trenches there,
And stretchèd forth the knife to slay his son.
When lo! an angel called him out of heaven,
Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad,
Neither do anything to him. Behold,
A ram, caught in a thicket by its horns;
Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.
But the old man would not so, but slew his son,
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.

Wilfred Owen (1893-1918)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

It is a two class world and the wrong class is running it.
-- Larry Christensen, Soldiers Of Solidarity & United Auto Workers

**“Guns, Rifles And Munitions
Are Excellent Servants Of
Order, But They Have To Be Put
Into Action”**

**“For That Purpose People Are
Needed”**

**“And Even Though These People Are
Called Soldiers, They Differ From
Guns Because They Feel And Think,
Which Means They Are Not Reliable”**

**“The People Seize This Moment To Go
Among The Ranks Of The Soldiers And
Convince Them, Face To Face, To Come
Over To The People’s Side”**

A dictator enjoys no moral support; on the contrary, he runs into obstacles every minute; around him forms a network of contradictory influences and recommendations; orders are given and then withdrawn; confusion grows; and the government’s demoralisation spreads and deepens at the same time as it feeds the self-confidence of the people

**From: “After the Petersburg Uprising: What Next?” (Munich, 20 January 1905) by
L. Trotsky [Excerpts]**

As the soldiers file by on their way to the scene of ‘military action’, people will shower them from the windows with thousands of brief but fervent appeals; the troops will encounter passionate words from speakers on the barricades, who will take advantage of the slightest moment of indecision on the part of the military authorities; there will also be the powerful revolutionary propaganda of the crowd itself, whose enthusiasm will be transmitted to the soldiers through exclamations and appeals.

Moreover, the soldiers have already been affected by the prevailing revolutionary attitude; they are irritated and exhausted, and they loathe their role of executioner.

They tremble as they await the malicious command of their officer.

The officer orders them to open fire — but then he himself gets shot down, maybe as a result of a previously agreed plan, maybe just in a moment of bitter resentment.

Confusion breaks out among the troops.

The people seize this moment to go among the ranks of the soldiers and convince them, face to face, to come over to the people's side.

If the soldiers obey the officer's command and let loose a volley, the people respond by throwing dynamite at them from the house windows. The result, once again, will be disorder in the ranks, confusion among the soldiers, and an attempt by the revolutionaries — through appeals or by having the people mingle directly with the soldiers — to convince them to throw down their arms or bring them with them as they join up with the people.

If this fails in one instance, there must be no hesitation in using the same means of fear and persuasion again, even with the same units of troops.

Ultimately, the moral authority of military discipline, which restrains the soldiers from following their own thoughts and sympathies, will break down.

Such a combination of moral and physical action, inevitably leading to a partial victory of the people, depends more on organised and purposeful street movements than on arming the masses in advance — and this, of course, is the main task of the revolutionary organisations.

By winning over small units of the army, we will win control of larger units and eventually of the whole army, because victory over one part will give the people weapons.

Both during the Great French Revolution and again in 1848, the army, as an army, was stronger than the people.

The revolutionary masses triumphed not because of the superiority of their military organisation or military technology, but because they were able to infect the national atmosphere that the army breathed with the germs of rebellious ideas.

Of course, it makes a difference for the to and fro of street battles whether the range of a gun is only a few hundred sazhen or several versts, whether it kills a single person or hits tens of people, but this is still only a secondary question of technology when compared to the fundamental question of revolution — the question of the soldiers' demoralization.

'Whose side is the army on?'

That is the question that decides everything, and it has nothing to do with what type of rifles or machine-guns may be used.

Guns, rifles and munitions are excellent servants of order, but they have to be put into action.

For that purpose people are needed.

And even though these people are called soldiers, they differ from guns because they feel and think, which means they are not reliable.

They hesitate, they are infected by the indecision of their commanders, and the result is disarray and panic in the highest ranks of the bureaucracy.

A dictator enjoys no moral support; on the contrary, he runs into obstacles every minute; around him forms a network of contradictory influences and recommendations; orders are given and then withdrawn; confusion grows; and the government's demoralisation spreads and deepens at the same time as it feeds the self-confidence of the people

The Origin Of The Golden Rule: [Those Who Have The Gold Make The Rules]

By Frederick Engels 1887. Source: Marx and Engels On Religion, Progress Publishers, 1957

The world outlook of the Middle Ages was substantially theological. The unity of the European world which actually did not exist internally, was established externally, against the common Saracen foe, by Christianity.

The unity of the West-European world, which consisted of a group of nations developing in continual intercourse, was welded in Catholicism.

This theological welding was not only in ideas, it existed in reality, not only in the Pope, its monarchistic centre, but above all in the feudally and hierarchically organized Church, which, owning about a third of the land in every country, occupied a position of tremendous power in the feudal organization.

The Church with its feudal landownership was the real link between the different countries; the feudal organization of the Church gave a religious consecration to the secular feudal state system.

Besides, the clergy was the only educated class. It was therefore natural that Church dogma was the starting-point and basis of all thought.

Jurisprudence, natural science, philosophy, everything was dealt with according to, whether its content agreed or disagreed with the doctrines of the Church.

But in the womb of feudalism the power of the bourgeoisie was developing.

A new class appeared in opposition to the big landowners.

The city burghers were first and foremost and exclusively producers of and traders in commodities, while the feudal mode of production was based substantially on self-consumption of the product within a limited circle, partly by the producers and partly by the feudal lord.

The Catholic world outlook, fashioned on the pattern of feudalism, was no longer adequate for this new class and its conditions of production and exchange.

Nevertheless, this new class remained for a long time a captive in the bonds of almighty theology.

From the thirteenth to the seventeenth century all the reformations and the struggles carried out under religious slogans that were connected with them were, on the theoretical side, nothing but repeated attempts of the burghers and plebeians in the towns and the peasants who had become rebellious by contact with both the latter to adapt the old theological world outlook to the changed economic conditions and the condition of life of the new class.

But that could not be done.

The flag of religion waved for the last time in England in the seventeenth century, and hardly fifty years later appeared undisguised in France the new world outlook which was to become the classical outlook of bourgeoisie, the juristic world outlook.

It was a secularization of the theological outlook.

Human right took the place of dogma, of divine right, the state took the place of the church.

The economic and social conditions, which had formerly been imagined to have been created by the Church and dogma because they were sanctioned by the Church, were now considered as founded on right and created by the state.

Because commodity exchange on a social scale and in its full development, particularly through advance and credit, produces complicated mutual contract relations and therefore demands generally applicable rules that can be given only by the community — state-determined standards of right — it was imagined that these standards of right arose not from the economic facts but from formal establishment by the state.

And because competition, the basic form of trade of free commodity producers, is the greatest equalizer, equality before the law became the main battle-cry of the bourgeoisie.

The fact that this newly aspiring class's struggle against the feudal lords and the absolute monarchy then protecting them, like every class struggle, had to be a political struggle, a struggle for the mastery of the state, and had to be fought on juridical demands contributed to strengthen the juristic outlook.

But the bourgeoisie produced its negative double, the proletariat, and with it a new class struggle which broke out before the bourgeoisie had completed the conquest of political power.

As the bourgeoisie in its time had by force of tradition dragged the theological outlook with it for a while in its fight against the nobility, so, too, the proletariat at first took over the juristic outlook from its opponent and sought in it weapons against the bourgeoisie.

The first elements of the proletarian party as well as their theoretical representatives remained wholly on the juristic "ground of right," the only distinction being that they built up for themselves a different ground of "right" from that of the bourgeoisie.

On one side the demand for equality was extended so that equality in right would be completed by social equality; on the other, from Adam Smith's proposition that labour is the source of all wealth but that the product of labour must be shared with the landowner and the capitalist the conclusion was drawn that this sharing was unjust and must be either abolished or modified in favour of the worker.

But the feeling that to leave this question on the mere juristic "ground of right" in no way made possible the abolition of the evil conditions created by the bourgeois-capitalistic mode of production, i.e., the mode of production based on large-scale industry, already then led the major minds among the earlier socialists — Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen — to abandon entirely the juristic-political field and to declare all political struggle fruitless.

Both these views were equally unsatisfactory to express adequately and embrace completely the working class's desire for emancipation created by economic conditions.

The demand for the full product of labour and just as much the demand for equality lost themselves in unsolvable contradictions as soon as they were formulated juristically in detail and left the core of the question — the transformation of the mode of production — more or less untouched.

The rejection of the political struggle by the great Utopians was at the same time the rejection of the class struggle, i.e., of the only form of activity of the class whose interests they represented.

Both outlooks made abstraction of the historical background to which they owed their existence; both appealed to feeling: some to the feeling of justice, others to the feeling of humanity.

Both attired their demands in the form of pious wishes of which one could not say why they had to be fulfilled at that very time and not a thousand years earlier or later.


The working class, who by the changing of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode was deprived of all ownership of the means of production and by the mechanism of the capitalist mode of production is continually engendered anew in that hereditary state of propertylessness, cannot find an exhaustive expression of its living condition in the juristic illusion of the bourgeoisie.

It can only know that condition of life fully itself if it looks at things in their reality without juristically colored glasses.

But Marx helped it to do that with his materialist conception of history, by providing the proof that all man's juristic, political, philosophical, religious and other ideas are derived in the last resort from his economic conditions of life, from his mode of production and of exchanging the product.

Thus he provided the world outlook corresponding to the conditions of the life and struggle of the proletariat; only lack of illusions in the heads of the workers could correspond to their lack of property. And this proletarian world outlook is now spreading over the world.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?



CHANGE WE CAN BEREAVE IN

Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the email address if you wish and we'll send it regularly with your best wishes. Whether in Afghanistan or at a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to injustices, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: Military Resistance, Box 126, 2472 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025.

VIETNAM GI: REPRINTS AVAILABLE

Vietnam GI

January, 1969

Free to Servicemen

"... he threw his rifle at his Commanding Officer.."



WHEN HAWKS RETIRE

All of us who've had our "free" trips to South Vietnam and Korea shouldn't feel guilty about accepting such "gifts" from the Government. Lots of hawk politicians are taking Government trips too. Of course, their trips are a little bit different.

Take Senator Edward V. Long (D-Mo.), the Senate Judiciary Committee highest ranking member in January who was appointed by graft scandals. The good Senator decided that as a last sacrifice to his country he would give himself TDY to Europe. The crates say to "get forward information on forest and military assistance programs." Doubtless, that's why he took his wife along.

Of special interest was his visit to

Switzerland, which neither gets US aid nor wants any. It doesn't really make any difference, since as soon as Senator Long returned from his "fact-finding mission" he returned from the Senate, charging our Congress with all his "facts" (mostly on alcoholism and rizzo habits).

Going to and from Europe Long traveled on Senate funds, but while on TDY status, he economized by using US military aircraft, cars and chauffeurs to get around. The Pentagon ordered the red carpet rolled out around the world. Nothing too good for a retiring hawk politician. As the saying goes, in America we're all equal... only some are more equal than others!

As we go to press we learn that the government has finally agreed on the shape of the table and seating arrangements for the Paris talks. How that everyone is seated and comfortable, maybe we can escape further "harrowing throughs."

The great fact is that while the government hawks are living in Paris, thousands of our buddies are still dying in Nam. In fact, since they began talking last May 7,000 GIs have been killed in action.

Talks or no talks, the only solution is to get the hell out of Nam, immediately. Stop talking and start bringing us home.

The next issue of VGI will discuss the Paris talks in greater detail. By that

time you don't like the war and figured out why. This guy is a Platoon SGT with the years in the Green Machine, and over a year in Nam, mostly in long range recon with Charlie Company, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, VGI speaks to him while he was on leave writing his second Nam tour. Since he doesn't ETS until 1973 we've left out his name.

VGI: How did you feel about the war when you went over there. Did your feelings change?

A: When I first went over there, I thought it would be a great thing to go to, and a great new experience of being in war. I really thought it was going to be something different. But then I got put on some of those patrols and I got to see the people and get to talk to the people. This was the big thing that finally changed me. I finally saw that it wasn't worth while, and that they actually don't want our help because it actually isn't help.

VGI: Did you have any contact with the Vietnamese, with the people?

A: There was a place called Ben Son and for a while I was assigned down at the bridge there. This is where I lived, ate, slept, drank, everything. There were houses right next to my bunker, we had an officers' mess and we gave everybody else addresses. We explained to the people what the addresses were and they got all shook up about the whole thing, "well, they got addresses too."

VGI: What was it like, living there?

A: We lived with them, we stayed out there with them. They used to really go for the little treats in the cation packs, the gum and the cation cigarettes and everything, and in fact they'd bring back bananas. There was this one girl, her name was—I can't think of her name now—I had her picture but I lost it. This one girl, she really stands out in my mind because she used to come over and bring us beer every day and in turn, all she expected from us was the empty boxes of cations, that's all she wanted, the empty boxes. But then we started putting little things in the empty boxes and told her we wanted her to have them.

VGI: What would she want with the empty boxes?

A: I don't know, the Vietnamese people, they could take an empty box of nothing and make something out of it. She made me a soaplet which she had made out of a cation tin. She had pounded it out with a nail and a hammer. It had a little badtha on it and I wore it all the time. I actually got to feel naked after I lost it.

But yet, later on, during the Tet holidays, the Viet Cong came in and burned out half of the village, and the women naturally went in panic. In order to keep them, the VC took this girl and they cut off her breasts. She was brought up to the hospital and soon she died.

VGI: Did the brass give you any stink about living with the Vietnamese?

A: The incident when I almost got into trouble was, there was a convoy of about 12 to 14 trucks. I think it was. We had a whole bunch of plywood on it and we took this plywood over to a village chief in Ben Son. He was one of

the sergeants. We dropped off something like 14 sheets of plywood. Naturally, when we got back, there was one truckload of plywood missing, and they asked where it was. They later found out that I had given it to this village chief, not for my own good relations with him, but because there was a house when we didn't get recognized at our observation point, and they brought us food. So we gave them something else in return.

interview

VGI: What are some of the things you saw and did that led you into doubting in the middle of Nam not to fight anymore?

A: Well, I saw things when COL Bill Fisher, when he would tell his men to dismantle those personal-carrying flame-throwers, take them out on a company deep and put them back together once they got out. We went into a village and told them, "Are there any Viet Cong here?" The village chief naturally said "No" because he knew that if he said yes, he didn't know what'd happen to him. Then COL Fisher said, "Well, if there is any Viet Cong in this village, we'll show you what's going to happen." He got one of his flame throwers up to the house, he didn't check to see if there was anybody in it or not. Later we found out there was a woman in there who was real sick, she couldn't move or anything. She was burned to death. It was terrible. And seeing guys being carried in on ponies. A full-grown man weighed about two pounds after he was brought in as a sack of raw flesh or something like that.

VGI: Did you see any other incidents like this?

A: There was this little village just out of Ben Son where we brought out rice and got our rice. It's not pretty, it's really true. It was just this small village, maybe 16 or 17 houses. It was a "gray to white" village, all and on there'd be Viet Cong waiting the area. No hospitals at all, they'd just go in there to be resupplied. Yet one day, they found out that VC were coming into that village and they called "Pull!" "Pull!" came over and loaded the whole village down. I think maybe three people lived out of the whole thing. One was a little baby about two years old whose mother and father was gone.

One of the guys out of school this kid, this little two year old. He took this kid real close. When we went to R and R we brought him back toys and trucks and things like that. It was really something, because they don't get too many trucks over there. We'd round up a few damn trucks and stuff like that from Hong Kong. They were really surprised to see the new toys. I mean, the toys they play with, old cation cans and stuff like that are their toys. They're a fortunate people. It was just here on compulsory to see them, to get to know them. They're really great.

VGI: How do you think they feel about us?

A: This one incident—I know of the letter one north Vietnamese who was down south wrote to his brother in the north who was intent on coming down

Continued on page 8

Edited by Vietnam Veteran Jeff Sharlet from 1968 until his death, this newspaper rocked the world, attracting attention even from Time Magazine, and extremely hostile attention from the chain of command.

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