



Rogue Valley Chapter 156 News

Newsletter of Rogue Valley Veterans for Peace Chapter 156

Visit our website at: <http://rv-vfp156.org>

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Welcome to the very first issue of your monthly newsletter

VFP Chapter 156 has existed for a couple of years now, and we figured that it's about time that we had a regular newsletter to keep our members informed about our meetings, our activities and to learn more about each other. We plan to profile one member each month. This month we feature our **Chapter President Emmet Band**. We invite you to submit ideas and announcements to be included in future issues. Your monthly newsletter is edited by Allen Hallmark, with final approved by President Band.

Join us for our next chapter meeting, in Medford, at the home of Daniel Guy

Do plan to attend our next monthly meeting at **6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 2nd**. Chapter Vice President Daniel Guy will be serving something delicious to eat and drink at his home **at 3401 Creek View Dr., Medford, 97504**. Go to North Phoenix Road in east Medford, turn west onto Creek View Rd., which crosses N. Phoenix Road north of its intersection with Juanipero Way and south of the intersection with Barnett Road. **For better directions, call Daniel at 541-301-4546.**

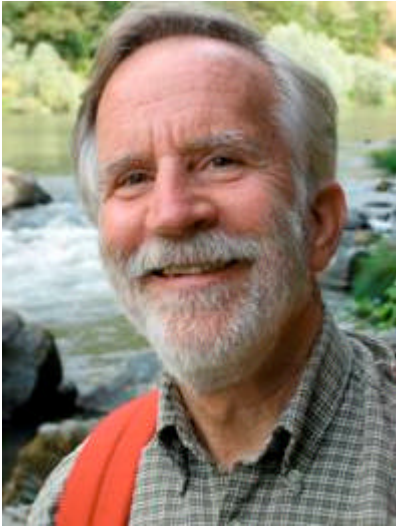
We'll be planning activities coming up in the next few months, including participation in the 8th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq rally & march in Medford, possibly sponsoring a stop on the "Mad As Hell Doctors" tour for single-payer health reform at the end of March, discussing a coffee party rally to counter Tea Party activities in Medford on April 15th and how to best support Bradley Manning, the soldier accused of leaking military information to Wikileaks.

If you live in Jackson County and have never attended one of our chapter meetings, this is an excellent time to get acquainted with our good group of vets and associate members. Of course, several us plan to carpool over from Josephine County as well. Our meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the homes of members.

Help us find a name for this newsletter!

We recognize that "Rogue Valley Chapter 156 News" isn't a very spiffy name. We know you can help us find a better one. So, bring your suggestions to Wednesday's meeting or email them to hallmark@mind.net. Thanks!

Spotlight on a Rogue Valley Vet: Emmet Band



I was born in San Jose, California, in 1946. My father, who was an excellent musician with perfect pitch, managed the Sherman and Clay music store there. When I was five or six we moved to Fresno where my father managed the local Sherman and Clay.

While in Fresno at the age of 14, I began volunteering with Crippled Children's Services, pushing the disabled young people to parks and the zoo in wheelchairs and such. (Editor's note: Emmet has spent much of his life helping developmentally and physically disabled people at home and abroad.)

During my teen years, we moved to Santa Rosa when my dad bought a combination hardware/liquor store called Bottles and Bolts. I graduated from Montgomery H.S. in 1964 and started at Santa Rosa Junior College the following fall with no idea about what I wanted to do. At this time I was also working at the Occidental Hotel in Santa Rosa.

In the fall of 1965 I came down with mononucleosis, lost my deferment and was drafted into the Marine Corps, much to my mother's alarm and dismay. My mother's older brother was in the Marine Corps in the second world war and didn't much enjoy the experience.

In January 1966 I entered boot camp at Camp Pendleton (near San Diego, CA) and by about June '66 found myself in Vietnam with the First Marines, First Recon Battalion, Alpha Company assigned to a small reconnaissance squad. While in Vietnam I went on some 63 missions in Vietnam and Laos and picked up a Purple Heart for being in the way of some shrapnel -- luckily, my injuries weren't serious.

The experience of Vietnam was an eye-opener and an opportunity to learn a great deal about myself. Our squad was very successful, suffering no losses for the first six or seven months I was in country. We would go out on "prisoner snatches" off-and-on and once pulled off the capture of a N.V.A. (North Vietnamese Army) captain.

At one point we were assigned a rookie lieutenant, who wouldn't listen to the more experienced among us. As a result, on one occasion three of us were in an indefensible position, and our corpsman (medic) was killed. A few weeks later our point man lost his legs because we were on a trail we had no business using. Shortly afterwards the lieutenant was shipped out to the MP's (a military police unit). At about this time the anger level among the squad members became incendiary and some members of the

squad took out a Vietnamese family and their water buffalo for no other reason than they had seen us. (Editor's note: Emmet said he didn't fire his weapon and was appalled by what he saw.)

The lessons I took from all of this have to do with immorality of war and it's absolute cacophony. I also learned a lesson about our shared humanity and that war brings out the worst in many of us.

When I returned from Vietnam, I worked in the Basic Officers Quarters at El Toro (a Marines Air Base near Irvine, CA) until my discharge in December 1967, just before Christmas.

Once I returned home I enrolled in college with a new sense of direction and became involved in the peace movement and volunteered to do draft counseling in Santa Rosa, which I did from 1968 until the end of the draft in about 1972. At the height of our draft counseling efforts we had an office on College Ave. in Santa Rosa, one on the Sonoma State University campus as well as at a local church. (Editor's note: Emmet said he and the other draft counselors became very adept at working the system to keep many young men in their area from being drafted.)

I graduated from S.S.U. with a B. A. in Sociology. My friend, Mary, and I took out a student loan and went off to Europe for three months; and after returning to Sonoma County, I decided I wanted to spend more time in Europe so I enrolled in the University of Bradford (in Yorkshire, England) to earn my Masters Degree.

When I came back from the U.K., I got a job in a rehabilitation center working with post-stroke victims and shortly thereafter began building therapy equipment. That experience led to my getting a job that I kept for 30 years, managing a department of a state agency, building custom positioning equipment, orthopedic devices and other items to help folks with developmental disabilities. (Editor's note: Emmet worked for the Sonoma Developmental Center, a state-funded residential care center for the developmentally disabled before he retired in 2006 and moved to Grants Pass.)

I don't have any contact with the men I served with in Vietnam, although I have tried find two of my closest friends, but they seem to have dropped off the face of the earth.

I think the only residual effect I carried with me after my experiences in Vietnam was some anger. I remember my mother saying that I had become very angry, and I recall periodic outbursts of anger for several years and an emotional detachment or fear of intimacy and openness.

I joined **Veterans for Peace, again, after the invasion of Iraq**, which for me is another Vietnam. I wanted to get the word out about what war really does to people.

I believe the our local chapter of Veterans for Peace has enormous potential to dispel the myths about war and militarism. I find that the men and women who are members of our local chapter are both courageous and dedicated to continuing to work to bring our fellow service members home safe and sound.

Emmet tours Vietnam by bicycle in 2006

(Editor's note: After the interview with Emmet was over, he emailed your editor some photos of his bicycle trip to Vietnam and I thought his comments about the trip had to be in this newsletter.):

My trip to Vietnam was just wonderful, I would recommend it to anyone -- see Vietnam by bicycle -- it just doesn't work to be in a bus! There are so many stories that I would not be able to tell if I were in a motorized vehicle.

I met a gal from Wisconsin on a trip down the Rogue in 2005. We agreed that the Rogue trip was fun and that we should plan another trip. I told her that I had read that one could bike down the Ho Chi Minh Trail, so we made plans to see Vietnam by bike in 2006.

After a few phone calls and emails we decided to bike from Hanoi to Saigon with a side trip to Angkor Wat. We went with Rondonnee Tours, which is located in Canada, because their tour went North to South and because there was an add-on to Cambodia. When I got off the plane in Hanoi, I wasn't sure I was allowed to take pictures, so I was a little secretive in my picture taking....silly me! They love tourists!

There were 12 people in the group and we met in Hanoi for several days of walking tours and then headed to Ha Long Bay, a World Heritage site, on a junk. We visited the Thien Cung caves and did some kayaking on the bay and on Day Three we headed back to Hanoi by way of two sheltered workshops for the children of parents exposed to Agent Orange. If you look around my house you will see paintings and needle work done by the folks at the sheltered workshops.

The next day we took a plane to Hue where we started our bike journey. We rode from Hue to Da Nang, China Beach, Tam Ky, Quang Ngi, Que Nhon, up into the Central High Lands, to Da Lat and Pham Thiet and into Saigon. We spent four days in Saigon and then flew into Cambodia which was just spell binding. I have seen The National Geographic articles over the years on the wats, but to actually be there was really special. The whole trip took almost one month and was just pure joy except for one flat tire on my bike and one case of major stomach upset.



Here's Emmet, above left, on his bike trip in Vietnam

Allen Hallmark has volunteered to be the first editor of our newsletter. Allen, Vietnam veteran, is a former reporter for the Medford Mail Tribune (1976-86) and a retired criminal defense investigator for the Federal Public Defender's office and a charter member of Citizens for Peace & Justice and VFP Chapter 156. Send suggestions to improve the newsletter to Allen to hallmark@mind.net or call him at 541-474-0288.