

Action Report

Subject: Memorial Day Writer's Project (MDWP)

Activity: Poetry, Prose and Song on the Mall

Date: May 28, 2003

Location: Washington, DC

(behind the sidewalk facing 20th Street and Constitution Ave.)

It rained Memorial Day weekend, but not while the MDWP was on the Mall in Washington DC. In fact, the sun appeared Monday afternoon. It was nice to feel its warmth. This year, there was no mud and we kept reading as the tens of thousands of Harley's rode by--thanks to dry tent floor and a battery-powered sound system.



This year brought several new faces. **Joe Finch**, (USA) helicopter pilot from the 25 Aviation Battalion based in Chu Chi, charmed us with the escapades of daring daylight requisitions from the PX using a UH-1 and sling. Joe is the author of "*Angel's Wing.*" A fine read. **Nancy Morrey** (from Canada) sent us several great poems to share. Thanks Nancy.

Ray Campbell (tour guide for the Jimmy Buffet bar circuit) braved the cloudy weather and presented a charming method for solving our traffic problems and reducing the number of SUV's on the road. Ray read several poems inspired by his brother as well as a tribute to John Lennon and a take off on an infamous Ginsburg poem.

By popular demand, **Cliff Bernier** brought his talented harmonica and played "*Nha Trang Blues*" and a new composition "*A Rainy Day in DaNang.*" At least that's what I call it. Cliff is playing with a popular jazz group in Alexandria. We gave **Jonathan Myer** (USAF- FAC) a good workout both days. Thanks Jonathan, it's always good to hear the tales and factual stories you bring us from the days you flew an O-1E near the DMZ. Jonathan has several CD's available and I recommend all of them. Oh, and get this: VVA 227 member, **Bruce Waxman**, paid us a visit and read a poem he composed. Congratulations Bruce! You prove that lawyers can write simple, understandable heart-felt, poetry. **Datrinne Baker** (a seasoned veteran) read some of her new knockout work and got the chance to practice for her feature appearance at Barns and Nobel tonight in Bowie.

Lad Carrington (our Harley buckaroo) came up from North Carolina to ride in Rolling Thunder and read a new poem to remind us of the heroes of Viet Nam. It has already appeared on the Internet. The man in black, **Sam Hurst**, leader of the oldest poetry venue in the Washington area, stopped by long enough to read several poems and again gave us his dynamic presentation of "*Why Wage War on the Children?*"

Frank Crowson, WWII veteran (South Pacific) and Korea reminded us of the "big show" and told us a story about his wife through the stirring poem "*Last Child out of Nanking.*" **Bruce Curley** (USAF) brought his son and read several new poems as well as one of our favorites "*Future Dust.*" Bruce brought a list of servicemen and women who

did not return from Iraq. We read their names throughout our second day of readings. **Briah Conner** (USMC) read several new poems sent to him by our friend Clyde Wray (who by the way just got married). This is starting to sound like a gossip column.

Dolf Droge (another man in black, this one 6' 8") entertained us as he always does with his political insight and wit. This year **Cathy Solomonson** was accompanied by Tim, her Seabee brother and Tim's family. Tim also plays a talented harmonica. I saved **Mike McDonell** and his wife, Suellen, for last. Their son got married Memorial Day weekend and they made it a point to be with us. Thanks guys. Our man Ed Henry was on a plane bound for Korea. And special mention, **Stephen Scholes** and his wife joined us both days. Many of you may remember the touching letter Steve wrote to his best friend who saved his life in Vietnam and whose name is on the wall. Things are looking brighter for Steve and we are proud to call them our friends. Thanks for everyone's support and participation. Until next year. God Bless.