



photo by John Harvey

For Pirate Mike  
by Sarah Menefee

frail bike pulling that small cart  
humble kit & caboodle  
a bit of supper & a bottle  
of spiritus  
  
comradeship  
and the lonely starry night  
  
thru every sphere  
where beauty love and peace  
marry justice forever and ever  
your odyssey

RIP Michael Clift - October 30, 2015



OCCUPY VETERANS SAN FRANCISCO'S mission is to encourage veterans of the United States military to stop taking their own lives with addictions and despair, and to instead take their lives back into their own hands, without depending on either government styled bureaucracy or on the Federal Government itself, which has exploited the soldier and continues to exploit the veteran soldier through many of the various so-called charitable or non-profit organizations.

With our Search and Rescue missions, we connect veterans first with themselves, and then with each other, using a buddy system model that fosters esprit de corps and unit cohesion.

We respect and honor each veteran's experience, with the understanding that no one war is worse than any other war, and that behind it all is the Military-Industrial Complex's need for a fresh Blood and Money harvest from each new generation of Americans.

Occupy Veterans is NOT a "grass-roots non-profit organization." It is, and will remain, a street level unit of disaffected veterans from all walks of life and many different campaigns dedicated to helping those brothers and sisters who have fallen through the supposed safety net promised to us by our Government.

Weekly PEACE vigils sponsored by CODEPINK, World Can't Wait and OccupySF Action Council, Wednesdays 5:30 - 6:30 pm, McKesson (BART) Plaza, Montgomery & Market Streets. Join us.

# Adopt Pirate Mike's "Odyssey for Peace"

Our esteemed friend and anti-war comrade **Stephen Michael Clift** died in a bicycling accident Friday, October 30. The Occupy SF veteran's second cross-country "March Across America for Homeless Veterans" was interrupted outside Groom, Texas. We urge constituents to step forward to continue his mission.

Clift, known to many of us as "Pirate Mike," was en route to deliver a Veterans For Peace flag to the family of Jacob George, in honor of the activist and musician's dedication to the peace and justice movement. (Struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder, George took his own life on September 17, one week after President Obama unveiled the new US military mission against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. He was 32 years old.)

The Beltram Peace Center 270 commended VFP "Nomad" Michael Clift's public awareness campaign last December, writing:

*Michael's journey will take him from the teargas stained streets of Oakland, California through the deserts of the Southwest where our indigenous brothers and sisters are fighting against mining corporations and struggling to preserve and protect their sacred lands and rivers and on through Texas and Oklahoma where he will act as a "force multiplier" in the struggle against tarsands and environmental degradation before arriving in Fayetteville to honor Jacob [George] on the eve of the new year, a year in which we foresee yet more struggle as we continue to "Wage Peace" against US Imperialism and corporate hegemony within the government and our communities.*

In his essay, "Re-Greening Veterans: An approach to Post-deployment Life and the Radicalization of US Armed Forces Veterans," Michael Clift asserts:

**There is never peace, anywhere, with the US government running amok from the sands of the Middle East to the cities of our own nation**

*With violent police crackdowns on peaceful antiwar demonstrations and movements, with unending racism and poverty, the only peace we can hope to achieve is within our selves, and we can turn this inner peace into outward expressions of love and beauty, and POLITICAL POWER.*

Expressing disdain for "armchair revolutionaries," Michael challenged us to breach our comfort zones, particularly when it came to the ongoing civil war between the police and civilians:

*The domestic terrorists are the cops that keep killing us and the politicians and judges that enable them to do so...*

*We do not need, nor can we ever hope to best the Police State in a contest of arms. Military veterans know this from the beginning and for that reason, many of them recede into the shadows of oblivion instead of coming together as organized groups to combat social injustice and war. There are indeed many such groups; the challenge is to draw in the homeless and radicalized veterans, the ones still in possession of the strategic faculties granted to them by the United States Military, and the ones who most need to refocus their lives through this type of work.*

**There is no escaping the fact that warfare is the sad, slow, suicide of humanity**

*People are "shocked" when tyrants order these crimes, yet for all time, all leaders have "killed their own people." It's what Empire does. It must consume itself when all else has been subjugated and acquired, when there is nothing left to eat but itself.*

**Question Authority, ruminated Pirate on his first "march" to Washington DC**

*It is time for the men and women who have returned home from the military to think about the role they played by supporting US militarism, and the opportunities to heal themselves from the damage they may have done or suffered...*

*Through the techniques of Direct Action and community organizing we can participate in the struggle to get our nation back on track domestically, and reduce the hellish footprint we leave wherever our abused and abusive military might has planted a flag in OUR name...*

**Everyone involved in the struggle for liberation has a part to play**

*Our participation is relative to our resources and our willingness to engage the police at street level. The State is extremely threatened by the movement; not by our ability to beat them militarily speaking, but by our stubbornness and our ability to reach the "average citizen" by embarrassing the State.*

In his "Presidential Proclamation for Workers Memorial Day 2012," Barack Obama declared:

*We are pursuing enhanced whistleblower protections that will reinforce every worker's right to raise their voice without fear of retaliation.*

The President was addressing factory conditions, but his pretense could equally apply to that lasting recourse for the disfranchised, employment by the US military.

*War is for poor people, Pirate observed. It is fought by poor people commanded by rich people to do their bidding and then kill each other...*

**What's a War Resister to do?**

*Veterans need to continue to stand up and decry these obscenities. We need to support the oppressed people in occupied countries, and we need to have the courage to stand up to our Government. We need to support whistleblowers and stand in unity with our brothers and sisters in jails, prisons and brigs around the world.*

*We need to remain respectful and mindful of those around us and denounce injustice, intolerance and violence.*

**Celebrate Mike's life  
Thursday, November 5th  
4 pm  
101 Market Street  
San Francisco**