

Some personal words . . . from some of the speakers and musicians who made the demo so interesting and inspiring.

(Opinions expressed in these articles are those of the authors. They are not necessarily the opinions of CAAB as an organisation.)

Michael McGowan

The election of Jeremy Corbyn, a lifelong campaigner for peace and for refugees, is an historic opportunity for Britain and the world.



A powerful statement of solidarity and support for Jeremy Corbyn for his work for world peace and for refugees was made by the former Labour MEP and international peace campaigner, Michael McGowan, the key note speaker at this year's "Independence from America Day" demonstration.

Mr McGowan described Jeremy Corbyn as a powerful resource for peace and co-operation who has attracted hundreds of thousands of young people to become involved in politics and work with him for world peace and world citizenship and a new kind of politics more co-operative, more caring, and more international.

Mr. McGowan said the election of Jeremy Corbyn, a socialist and an anti-nuclear weapon activist, is an historic opportunity for world peace, should be a matter of universal celebration, and an opportunity not be wasted but to be taken forward in the interest of all who share our planet.

Michael McGowan is a trustee of the Leeds project PAFRAS, Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers, and has worked along with Jeremy Corbyn with refugees from the Western Sahara who live in exile under canvass in the Sahara Desert.

He served as President of the Development Committee of the European Parliament, a member of the Foreign Affairs and Human Rights committees of the parliament, and Whip of Labour MEPS.

Dr Marcus Papadopoulos, Publisher and Editor of *Politics First*

On July 2nd of this year, I was privileged to have been able to give a speech at the main annual demonstration of the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases outside of RAF



Menwith Hill, a vast base housing a United States Air Force contingent and radar domes operated by the National Security Agency.

The landscape of Menwith Hill could not be more picturesque, with magnificent looking hills and valleys that seem, to the human eye, to extend forever. The extraordinary lush green look of the area is accompanied by a splendid natural silence - not withstanding strong winds! On observing the scenery, one cannot help but think, at first, that it could easily be 1455, instead of 2016. It would seem that man has not yet descended on what is one of the most naturally stunning parts of Britain.

However, man has, in fact, descended on the area around Menwith Hill, and it quickly becomes apparent to an observer that he or she is, indeed, in the twenty-first century, as opposed to the fifteenth century. Because this beautiful area is eclipsed by 33 radar domes operated by the NSA, contained in 2.21 km² of land, enabling the US Government to eavesdrop on any country in the world. It is believed that those radar domes can carry out two million intercepts an hour. While Menwith Hill is, officially speaking, a British military

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installation, the reality is that it is a potent tentacle of the US Government which has been used to extend American political, economic and military hegemony across the world, especially over the last twenty-five years. And in doing so, that tentacle has helped to destroy or paralyse numerous countries, causing tens of thousands of civilian deaths. That macabre list includes the former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Ukraine.

A sad and depressing fact about the reality of Menwith Hill is that its malignant nature (and even its very existence) is not widely known amongst the British public. (The same can, of course, be said of the other US military installations across the UK, such as RAF Lakenheath and RAF Croughton.) Few UK citizens are aware that countries have been, and are continuing to be, devastatingly targeted by American military installations operating on British soil. And few Britons are aware that because of those actions, British security and stability, itself, is being jeopardised. Furthermore, that threat to security and stability is being, literally speaking, paid for by the British public, as the servicing of all US installations in the UK falls, in part, to the British Government, meaning the British taxpayer. The irony could not be more saddening. Not one penny of taxpayers' money should be spent on the installations.

That is why I eagerly accepted an invite from Suzannah Iannazzo of CAAB, inviting me to the July 2nd demonstration to give a speech.

I was delighted to have spoken with so many people who turned out to attend the CAAB demonstration on that day. Their commitment to exposing the dangers of Menwith Hill - and other American installations in the UK - is one to be in awe of, and this was equalled by how peaceful the protest was, demonstrating that CAAB activists are true to their word when calling for peace in this world. Further to that, I learned that CAAB holds a

demonstration outside of Menwith Hill every Tuesday evening – this is dedication encapsulated.

Menwith Hill, and the rest of its like in the UK, played an instrumental role in achieving American global dominance in the 1990s, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and, with it, Russia's descent into meltdown (a descent that was only halted and reversed by the coming to power in the Kremlin of Vladimir Putin).

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Disregarding the United Nations Charter and international law (in particular, the sanctity of internationally recognised borders of UN members), Washington, in 1991-1992, along with other Western capitals, recognised the independence of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia which ignited terrible civil-wars in

the latter two, destroying the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Menwith Hill was tasked with supporting, with intelligence and logistics, Croatian and Bosnian Muslim forces fighting against the Serbs of Croatia and Bosnia, respectively (the Serbs fought to try and keep Yugoslavia together and have historic ties to Russia). That support involved facilitating the arrival of the Mujahideen from Afghanistan to Bosnia in the period from 1992-1995, including Osama bin Laden (the Mujahideen had been trained by the US to fight against the Soviet Army in Afghanistan and had become a lethal force that the Americans could utilise to achieve geo-strategic objectives with). Alas, Islamic extremist fighters were brought to Europe by the Americans - and some have remained to this very day, as evidenced by a visit to Sarajevo or Zenica in the Muslim-Croat Federation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In 1999, the US, together with other NATO members, began a murderous 78 day bombing campaign against Serbia (or, as it was then, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), in support of the Kosovan Liberation Army, a terrorist and organised crime organisation, dealing in arms, drug, sex and organ trafficking in the Balkans and beyond. Like in Croatia and Bosnia, Menwith Hill provided intelligence and logistical support to the KLA but also provided aircraft and armaments which were used to bomb Serbia with, including dropping depleted uranium shells across the country, which has resulted in a massive surge in cancer rates amongst Serb people, principally brain, breast and colon tumours.

The 2003 US-led invasion, and subsequent occupation, of Iraq, was facilitated, to a large extent, by Menwith Hill having provided, amongst other things, intelligence information necessary for the invasion: the positions of Iraqi army formations, movements to and from Iraqi military bases and conversations between senior Iraqi political and military leaders, for instance.

In 2011, British and French military intervention in Libya, on the side of Islamist forces fighting against the Libyan government of Muammar Gaddafi, could only have happened with Menwith Hill's participation, having provided the British and French air forces with the whereabouts of Libyan military divisions and having provided to US battleships locations of where to fire their cruise missiles at in Libya.

Over the last five years, the US has been supporting Islamist terrorists in Syria fighting against the Syrian Government and the Syrian Armed Forces. Menwith Hill has provided, both directly and indirectly (in regard to the latter, through its regional allies of Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar), intelligence information to Islamist forces on the Syrian Arab Army and has helped to facilitate the arrival of weapons for the terrorists, such as anti-aircraft missiles and anti-tank missiles.

Then there is the case of Ukraine, which experienced a pro-Western coup, in February 2014, against its democratically elected leader so that the US could try and achieve a long-sought-after objective of bringing this former Soviet republic into NATO and the EU, thereby completing the encirclement of Russia, on its western borders, with NATO and EU member states. The hand of American intelligence played a crucial role in the coup and this was spearheaded by Menwith Hill, which provided sensitive information to Ukrainian nationalist/fascist organisations which were responsible for orchestrating violent demonstrations in Kiev.

The above cases are just some examples of the catastrophically dangerous role that Menwith Hill plays in the world. And all of the above cases have resulted in making this world a very, very dangerous one – from sidelining international law, to turning countries into failed or impoverished states, to supporting organised crime organisations and religious extremist organisations (resulting in inevitable consequences for ordinary people in Europe and the Middle East, for example), to provoking Russia, a military and nuclear superpower, which is very well aware of the activities of Menwith Hill, contributing to Britain being on Russia's radar, both literally and metaphorically speaking.

It is therefore clear that US military installations in the UK are not only a menace to global peace and security but also to the peace and security of Britain. That is why CAAB has such an important role to play in exposing to the British public the realities of installations like Menwith Hill, which are, through their actions, helping to bring terrorism and organised crime to British towns and cities (so, for example, it should not be forgotten that the Home Office revealed that 70 per cent of drug and sex trafficking in London is being carried out by Kosovan Albanians – the result of American support to the KLA).

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I unequivocally commend and support the aims and objectives of CAAB and urge the British public to take note of this organisation, to learn about it and to embrace it. After all, we are all UK citizens and so security and stability in our country is of paramount importance to us. CAAB is helping to lead the way in that endeavour, and I hope that as many people as possible can come together to join the ranks of CAAB.

Finally, I would like to thank Suzannah Iannazzo and her mum Patricia Iannazzo (as well as her two brothers Adrian and Edward) for the incredibly warm hospitality that they showed to me when I stayed at their home during the weekend of the demonstration outside of Menwith Hill. I made wonderful friends in Suzannah and Patricia and for this, I am very grateful to both of them. They are true comrades.

Veterans For Peace member John Bourton

Thanks to the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases for inviting me to speak on behalf of VFP. We are not alone in admiring your campaigning zeal and commitment over many years, not just at Menwith but across the country.

So who are VFP and why are we here?



VFP is an organisation all of whose members have spent time in the armed forces. If you ever ask yourselves "What have the Americans ever done for us?" well they gave us VFP! Founded originally in America during the Vietnam War some 40 years ago, VFP UK was set up in 2012 by Ben Griffin, ex SAS who refused to return to Iraq in 2005 and until his court injunction told how he had been involved with American Special Forces in extraordinary rendition. We now have some 300 members and many more supporters.

We are a campaigning organisation who stand together in the belief that war is not the solution to the problems of the 21st Century. Our members have between them been involved in every conflict from D Day to the present day.

For more information go to our website: www.vfpuk.org

So why are we here today? Well I'll start with my own story. Back in 1972 when I was 21, in the middle of the so-called Cold War, I was sent on a Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Warfare course at Winterbourne Gunner, near Porton Down in Wiltshire. The course taught us to plan for Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical warfare back in the days of our so - called defence policy of Mutually Assured Destruction aka appropriately MAD. MAD was based on the notion that if 'They' bombed us, we could bomb them back. An eye for an eye. You destroy us and we'll destroy the world in retaliation.

Nuclear weapons are the ultimate weapons of mass destruction. They are illegal, immoral and no sane person would ever use them. So MAD was based on the premise that if an

insane foreign leader attacked us with Nuclear weapons then our sane leaders would respond in kind! I knew few members of the armed forces who took MAD seriously.

We played war games and with special templates, algorithms, tables and weather forecasts we plotted nuclear strikes on the UK and the likely consequences in terms of damage and downwind radiation. As we know now from Chernobyl we had no real idea of just how far and for how long radiation could travel and persist. But in our war games North Yorkshire was always a 1st likely target. Why? Because of the US bases here, in particular Fylingdales and here at Menwith Hill. The US early warning system based in the UK was designed to warn the Americans that ICBMs were headed for them. Note they weren't there to defend us and in fact made us a certain 1st strike target to knock out the American early warning system. Would we have been a target if they weren't here? You may well ask.

The Cold War is over, though the US are doing their level best to re-ignite it and present Russia as a real threat again. The ring of NATO bases surrounding Russia is in fact aggressive, not defensive and if Putin is paranoid who can blame him? And Fylingdales and Menwith Hill are still here and still make us an early target in any world conflagration.

The Tories are currently in disarray over Brexit and I have read that they are likely to bring forward the vote on renewing Trident in order to unite the party and cause further disruption in the Labour Party. (*AFTERNOTE: and of course this is exactly what they did!*) Especially as Jeremy Corbyn has been one of the few party leaders honest enough to say that he would not press the nuclear button even in retaliation, so blowing apart the whole MAD construct.

In truth, I cannot imagine any sane leader ordering the firing of Nuclear weapons as a retaliatory act - but I wouldn't have put it past Margaret Thatcher or Tony Blair! I do not believe that any sane leader would actually order a retaliatory nuclear strike despite what they may say to the contrary. What would be the point for such a vengeful act of mass murder? And I sincerely hope that even our most warmongering leader would never initiate nuclear war.

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We cycled here today past the Army Foundation College where the army trains children aged 16 -18 to be soldiers. Mainly infantry. The UK is the only country in Europe and one of fewer than 20 countries in the world which recruits young people at 16. Child Soldiers International have published a really good pamphlet called '**Soldiers at 16-Sifting Fact from Fiction.**' Please read this and share it especially if you know of any young person considering signing up. It can be downloaded from their website.

The army is desperate for recruits and has been pushing the militarisation of our society as a deliberate policy. Remembrance Sunday has been turned by the Royal British Legion into a celebration of soldiering - supporting our troops is a money spinner for many charities and a policy of supporting our troops without questioning what they have been ordered to do is a clear tactic to deflect criticism from our unjustified aggression in the past two decades.

A simple example of just how this policy has infiltrated our psyche - the European cup. You won't see a military uniform anywhere on any of the European pitches but in the UK you see them at rugby firing guns, at football and at Wimbledon. Normalising military presence continues with increased military visits to schools, in line with Michael Gove's policy of encouraging army cadet forces in state schools, and providing incentives for schools to do so, both by financial inducement and in affecting the Ofsted league tables.

Military adverts tell only half the truth: yes career; yes escape blighted communities where there are limited job opportunities. We call this Economic conscription. But on the other side of the coin: Higher proportion of ex forces in prison; Higher incidence of domestic violence; Higher numbers amongst the homeless and street drinkers; Higher incidence of mental health issues.

Not surprisingly, basic infantry training conditions basic instincts:- the normal response to danger is Fight or Flight but the army trains you to follow only the first response: Fight. Aggression is encouraged and compassion dismissed as a weakness. We become skilled at ways of harming people. In order to do so, we learn to hate 'Others', be they another regiment, another service, civilians, foreigners and so on. The army call it regimental tradition and building team spirit but we call it developing gang culture.

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And so in sum: VFP offers a unique perspective in that we have 'been there and done that' and we see it as our duty to spread the truth and combat the lie that soldiering is a noble calling that deserves public support. Violence is said to be the last resort of the exhausted mind, or an extension of policy by others means. We live in a warmongering country where military spending escalates, arms companies are one of our largest export industries, and a political willingness to use force, whether drones, bombs or boots on the ground, is now often a 1st option, not a last. And we are now international aggressors, not defenders. War is not a solution to the problems of the 21st century. We are proud to stand in solidarity with CAAB. Thank you for inviting us.

Janet Russell for East Lancs. Clarion Choir

East Lancs. Clarion Choir were pleased to participate again in the celebration of a hoped for Independence from American Militarism this year. In the five years plus that we have attended, we have heard some great speakers and listened to some wonderful music.



Because most of our members are either self-employed or retired, we have been able to attend on whatever day the 4th July fell. It was interesting Declaration Day was on Saturday 2nd this year, which meant at least one of our stalwarts, Joan West, could not attend as she was at a CND conference. That's the thing about activists, they tend to have fingers in many pies, and weekend days are at a premium! However, it does seem sensible to have the annual meet on a weekend day, and it will probably allow

more people to come.

As usual, the speakers were well worth listening to, and Veterans against War were particularly effective. Their experience in active service gives them sharp insights into the horrible insanity that is war. They stood before us telling us about the damage that we do by sending our young people off into combat, and the ineffectiveness of war as a solution to any problem. I also love the fact that there are usually local musicians who play at these annual gatherings, like Catherine Warr from Leeds who played this year. It is important to encourage young artists, who are developing their skills, to tackle the political as well as the personal in their songwriting, and listen to them alongside other established musicians and singers, such as Roy Bailey and Seize the Day, who played for us a few years back.

I remember visiting the women's camp on the A59 with my sons when they were very young, and taking cake and buns, and realising what an interesting story the opposition to this base has produced, not much of which is widely known. It would be useful to put out a short history of Lindis Percy's activity around the site, and publicise all the work she has done over the years. There is a very useful book, *Surveillance, Secrecy and Sovereignty, How a Peace Campaign Challenged the Activities of a US Bases in Britain* by Margaret Nunnerly, but an A4 sheet of "highlights" or "turning points" might be a great awareness raiser for those less able/willing to devote time to a whole book. Most importantly, it would be useful for people to know what the current situation is, especially if financial or any other kind of help is needed. Perhaps this could be included in next year's programme?

The issue of this American base connects with so many other issues in society, not just about war, the arms race, about spying and whistleblowing, but also about injustice, power imbalance, and inequality in our society. When East Lancs. Clarion Choir puts together a set of songs for this event, we try to make some links with all the issues that have been occupying our minds since the previous year, and with songs we have sung for various campaigns we have supported in the previous months. Like many people interested in progressive politics, we are really concerned that the beautiful areas we live in are threatened by fracking, and that our government still proposes to build nuclear power stations based on a mixture of old and untried technology to produce our energy, when renewable energy has already proved itself to be equal to the task. For us these issues sit right alongside issues of peace, justice, and equality mentioned above.

For the past two years I have enjoyed reading out the declaration, along with Peter Kenyon, and this year David Hedley, and the assembled company. It is an honour to be asked to do this, and I know that all the members of East Lancs. Clarion Choir, including Moira Hill, who also read the declaration for two years, are fully behind the statements it makes. I find it very moving that the whole company speaks every third paragraph together (almost like another song). It is a bonding experience to vocalise those beautifully written thoughts with all our voices together, out in the elements (and we've had some fair old elements, over the past few years!!) looking out at the beautiful countryside as we voice them.

Many thanks to Lindis Percy, who did the work of organising this event for so many years, besides all the other campaigning work she does with such courage. Now we have to thank the new committee who bravely took over the task of taking this event forward to new potential for informing and raising awareness. Here's to the 2017 Declaration of Independence Day at Menwith.

Janet Russell, (song leader for East Lancs. Clarion Choir)
August 6th 2016

Catherine Warr



I was very grateful to CAAB for letting me perform at Menwith on the 2nd. Together with the speakers, choir, and compere, I was glad to offer some entertainment during the event.

People often forget the power of music. All through history it's been a medium for political and social self-expression and change. The laments of the Jews under slavery in Egypt, the folk songs of the farmers watching their land eaten up in the eighteenth century, the women of Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp as they sat on the muddy floor singing "You Can't Kill the Spirit" as they were dragged away and man-handled by the police.

I believe that we are all given certain abilities and skills which aid us best. I may not have the stubborn determination to stand outside the gates of Menwith every Tuesday evening, or the tree-like patient tenacity of Lindis Percy with her seemingly never-ending court cases, or even the steady hand and artistic skill to draw on the upside-down American flags which line the hedges and roadside whenever there is a demonstration. But I do have one thing – and that is a love of music and song, and a desire to share these songs with whoever may listen.

In the words of the Quaker Stephen Grellet, who managed to articulate my thoughts and feelings better than I ever could, "I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good,

therefore, that I can do or any kindness I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it for I shall not pass this way again.”