



## Veterans for Peace Chapter 27

Minutes of the Meeting 8 February 2004, VAMC, Minneapolis

Members Present: John Varone, Todd Erickson, Wayne Wittman, Tom Chisholm, Doug Drews, Pat Reisinger, Harold and Louise Nielsen, Art Marty, Kim Doss Smith, Chante Wolfe, Lennie Anderson, Paul Schaefer, Jack Rossback and Marvin Davidoff.

President Varone gaveled the meeting to order at 1803 hours. Tom Chisholm read The Statement of Purpose and the usual introduction followed.

Please Note: Tom Dooley reported to sick call, was admitted on Monday, 2 February, treated successfully and discharged on Friday 6 February. His vital signs stable, special senses normal, appetite good, sleeping well and will report for duty in march. We welcomed back Pat Reisinger whose Valentine is pulsing even better than ever.

### AGENDA:

The agenda was reviewed and approved.

### MINUTES, DECEMBER

Neither the December nor the January Minutes have been mailed. Copies of those minutes were given to the President for his review.

The secretary will work with the office staff to improve reproduction and prompt mailing.

### NEW BUSINESS:

Next meeting, 14 March. Because Easter falls on 11 April, the meeting will be moved to Sunday, 18 April. Mother's Day is Sunday 9 May, the second Sunday and a meeting day.

The annual Independence Day Retreat will be moved to the following Sunday, 11 July rather than Sunday, 4 July. Discussion of location and contents of that retreat were not finalized but Paul Schaefer offered his pastoral site once again. Lennie Anderson, from Red Wing, offered to provide music since he is a musician and composer. Some members felt that VFP should take an active role in Independence Day activities including marching in parades. Others prefer family activities. Colleen Rowley, the FBI agent from Mpls and 9/11 whistle blower, named one of the Women of the Year by Time Magazine in 2002, will speak at Northrop Auditorium on the U of M campus 21 February.

The Peace Coalition here, around the US and the World is planing a protest on 20 March, the first anniversary of the the Iraq invasion.

Marvin Davidoff addressed the members with an impassioned review of the Longest Peace Protest in the known world-The Honeywell/Alliant Tech protest of 36 consecutive years beginning in December 1968. Those companies have been making antipersonnel bomblets and cluster bombs for more than three decades. Alliant continues to manufacture bomb

shells which deliver uranium rods. Depleted uranium, the residue of those bombs has a half-life of 4.5 million years, in effect, eternal irradiation, or perhaps damnation. All nations, friendly and foe want to buy from Alliant. The harvest of death from that company rained 90 million bomblets in Laos alone and an unknown astronomical number in Cambodia and Viet Nam. No action was taken by those companies followed a request to develop a method to clear the remaining millions of unexploded shells in all those countries. 12,000 deaths from accidental encounters with those bomblets have been reported since the end of hostilities in 1975. Alliant Tech denies the danger of DU to their workers or those who survive the reign of terror. Protesters at Alliant, arrested last fall were acquitted by their own testimony and defense based on the International War Crimes Trials that followed WW II, an unprecedented ruling by the Judiciary in Hennepin County and perhaps in the US.

Marvin asks that VFP, all citizens opposed to the current war, this administration and the corporate leaders of Alliant Tech, join him and the regular small band of protesters at a special rally and protest at the Edina Headquarters in May. The need is great. The numbers of protesters must be in the thousands to influence Alliant executives, the defense department and the media if we are to stop this insanity of death and terrorism. We must shine the bright light of Peace and Compassion on the darkness of mass produced human suffering, the effects of irradiation and death on all living things that inhabit our earth.

A motion by Wayne Wittman was passed as follows: VFP Chapter # 27 commends fellow member and nationally recognized Peace and Justice Activist, Marvin Davidoff, for his perseverance in calling to the attention of the USA, the horrors of war, particularly the dangers of modern weaponry. We applaud and endorse his nonviolent public demonstrations and forthcoming concert for the Phil Berrigan D. U. Coalition on Friday, 5 March at 1900 hours at the First Universalist Church, 3400 Dupont Avenue, Minneapolis.

### OLD BUSINESS:

John Varone displayed a diagram of the VFP office arranged for better utilization. Current clutter will be removed and retained records stored at a dry facility near by at \$52.00 a month. He will find and buy a new ergonomic computer desk unless one is donated or found from other sources. A motion to purchase additional dry storage at the above cited figure was made and passed.

Selling dog tags, suggested by Tom Dooley last month, was encouraged. Pricing and contents of the tags were discussed. The merchandise committee will investigate.

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

The Chapter does not have by-laws. This is not a major concern but the President discussed the issue with the National Office particularly in respect to forming an Executive Board. After discussion and approval, the Executive Board will consist of at least eight members including the officers, past presidents and Chairs of the Newsletter and Speakers Bureau. The VP will be the Chair of the Membership Committee with emphasis on recruiting new members. A Quorum must be present to rule on and vote at the Executive Board meetings. That rule can be met even if a few members of the Board are not present. Discussion followed. A few members expressed concern at such a structured change in our previously flexible conduct, but the majority felt that if we are to strengthen our organization and meet requirements for Grants, as an example, a stronger Executive is essential. The motion to accept this new concept of an Executive Board was seconded and passed without dissent.

The President and others expressed support for Veterans Groups, i.e. assisting veterans with problems including PTSD. Apparently, the VAMC is not aggressive enough in this special problem, but Pat Reisinger mentioned that The VA does in fact have several groups.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Copies were reviewed. Mr. Nielsen stated that the financial report should be produced using Quick Book Pro, software already installed in the new computer. That method will require the staff and Wayne Wittman to learn the program, but it will reduce the work and improve the results. However, Wayne's efforts for many years were rewarded in a motion to approve the report once again.

### **STAFF REPORT:**

Joe Johnson and Shiloh were not present.

### **NATIONAL VFP:**

Wayne and others attended the board meeting in Florida in January. This is his last year on the board. You are urged to seek membership on the board. NVFP endorses anti-recruiting efforts. The National meeting is scheduled for Boston, July 23-25, the site of the National Democratic Convention. Make plans now to attend the meeting in that city of history, art

and culture. Fly to Providence, RI. It is cheaper and less congested than Logan airport. Seattle has been tentatively selected for the 2005 NVFP convention.

### **MEMBERSHIP:**

FY 2003--413. FY 2004--280. We must send out renewal letters!! Please send in your dues ASAP. Our budget approaches \$80,000!

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

#### **Newsletter Committee:**

The committee will meet at Karla Caspari's home and office on 14 February. Karla is our Web Site Manager and graphic consultant. She works hard for her spiritual reward.  
[www.twincitiesVFP.org](http://www.twincitiesVFP.org)

#### **Canoe and Fund Raising Committee:**

Calhoun Square in January, \$600.00 and an equal amount at the recent Boat Show. We have been invited to display the canoe and sell tickets at Minnesota Canoe Association events. Plans will be made to bring the Twin Cities and the Duluth Chapters, and the canoe to the DFL State Convention in Duluth in early June.

#### **Speakers Bureau:**

Chante has completed a new brochure and passed it about for inspection and comments. She would like brief bios of those who will be taking an active role in speaking. She listed several locations that she and others have spoken recently and listed future assignments, principally schools at all levels. Chante mentioned that the National Counter Recruitment Organization will host a Convention in Philadelphia in June. She intends to participate and invites any member to join her. More information will be forthcoming. If interested, call the office. Once again the subject of honorariums was addressed. The new brochure does ask for but does not demand an honorarium. Expenses for speakers can not be dismissed as Marv, Harold and others reminded the members. Chante mentioned hers expenses for the past year and the honorariums she has received, far less than her expenditures.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 2025 hours.

**IF THE PRESIDENT WANTS TO FIND WMDS, HE MUST GO TO EDINA!**

— Marv Davidoff, 2003