

VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR

NEWSLETTER

Number 42



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VVAW National Program

HERE IT IS!

Chapters should let us know as soon as possible how many copies they want; the cost to chapters is 10¢ each, plus the postage it costs us to send them out to you. We'll get them in the mail as soon as we know your orders.

As discussed at the NIC meeting, the Program is not another leaflet or another issue of The Veteran. It's specifically planned for people who show an interest in VVAW or who have questions--as it says in the program, it tells who we are, what we're doing, and why we're doing it.

In addition to your orders (and, of course, your money) we need three more things from chapters relating to the Program: 1) Criticisms and comments from chapter members. Although the Program is essentially the way it was presented at the NIC meeting, there have been some changes. 2) Comments or criticisms from vets the Program is given or sold to. 3) Ways in which the Program can best be used as a tool to build VVAW and build the fighting Vets Movement: we'll pass these ideas on to other chapters.

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NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The NSCM is scheduled for the 14th and 15th of February in Chicago. As decided at the NIC meeting, the NSCM is a building action for the July demonstration and should involve as many chapter members as possible from around the country. Work should begin immediately (if it hasn't already) to bring people to the meeting. Members of chapters should be mobilized--so should potential members.

This meeting is an opportunity to both build for the Bicentennial demo and to build VVAW. With the program, chapters should get together with any vets clubs they have contacted in the past, or make new contacts. Chapters should talk with

people about the idea of a Bicentennial demo, about the organization's Program, and invite interested people to the NSCM to help plan and build for the demo. The NO thinks there should be an opportunity for people to come to the NSCM as observers. That would mean they wouldn't participate in the specifically VVAW business, but as explained later in this newsletter, we don't see much time or energy being spent on such business at this meeting.

In addition to vets clubs or other vets organizations, people should consider getting together with vets who either have been in VVAW in the past (perhaps part of a chapter which is no longer in the organization, for instance) or who have expressed some interest in building a chapter. The NSCM is a way to bring these people together and push forward with them in building the demonstration and building VVAW. Most regional offices have at some time or another gotten letters from people in the region--they should also be contacted around the NSCM and the demonstration. A copy of the program and the last issue of The Veteran with the call to the demonstration are a good introduction to what we are doing.

The NSCM is a way for VVAW members and potential members to get a sense of what is going on around the country--a sense of a real national organization. It will also involve people in building for the demonstration, since people who come to the NSCM should leave that meeting as demonstration and VVAW organizers. To accomplish this, the meeting should talk about the reasons for the demo, the plans for the demo, and specifically about ways to build for the demo. Chapters should be talking now about all these things and bring their ideas and suggestions to the NSCM.

Build for the NSCM and building for the Bicentennial demonstration is all part of one long process, but it cannot stop there--building VVAW and building the fighting movement is the long-range goal. And that has to be remembered when we are working around the immediate actions.

The NO will be working with the Chicago chapter on an agenda for the meeting. Right now, we see only one organizational decision which must be made during the NSCM: the election of national coordinators. Two people now in the NO will be running for re-election: Ed Damato and Bill Davis. Several times in the past we've talked about or written about the necessity of having a full contingent of 6 national coordinators in order to bring off the demonstration in July; response from chapters has so far been zero. Chapters have to examine their own membership to find people who are able to come to the national office. We will do whatever we can to answer any questions about what it means to work in the NO. Finding people who can be nominated to come to Chicago must be done now.

Tentatively we see the NSCM beginning sometime around noon on Saturday, Feb. 14th, in order to give those people who spend Fri. night on the road a chance to recover. Meetings should be over by Sunday evening (approximately the same time schedule as the NIC meeting) giving most people time to get home before work on Monday. Also, in many states, Monday the 16th is a legal holiday. As soon as chapters have an approximate idea of the numbers of people who will be coming to the meeting, they should get in touch with the NO so that we can pass the information

along to the Chicago chapter to make the necessary arrangements. While the chapter will be trying to find as many homes as possible for people to sleep in, it will probably be necessary for some people to stay in the church where the meeting will be held, so people should come prepared to rough it. People with special requirements (childcare, special diets, beds, whatever) should let us know in advance.

Ideas for the agenda, for subjects which should be covered, and for coordinators should be gotten in to the NO as soon as possible.

THE VETERAN

We still have some copies of the Dec/Jan issue; if your chapter can use more copies, let us know.

The next issue is planned, if we have the money, to be out in time for the NSCM (which will save us the cost of postage). That means chapters should be getting us information for stories and articles, should be thinking about letters to the Veteran, and should be giving us ideas for articles that people think are important for the February/March issue. We need photos. We need reports on actions. We need money. It won't be good enough to wait and bring these things to the NSCM; we need them no later than the 1st of February, and it's better if they are in earlier than that.

BICENTENNIAL DEMONSTRATION

The Bicentennial year is on and the propaganda barrage has officially begun. People are making Bicentennial plans. When the Milwaukee chapter called to find out about reserving a bus, they were told that the reservation and deposit had to be in within a couple of weeks because the demand was so great for the July 4th period. Chapters have to begin their arrangements and planning now, or be in trouble later.

This fact should serve to underline how short six months is. Chapters should be working out ways to build for the demo--many of the ideas for building for the NSCM are also ideas for building for July. Since there are consistent mentions of the Bicentennial in the straight media (like the moving of the Liberty Bell on New Years Day in Philadelphia), chapters should start incorporating these events into their leaflets and agitation, pointing out what the Bicentennial means to the people who run this country and what it means to vets. If chapters have ideas about articles for the next issue of The Veteran which will help you to build for the demo, let us know.

***** ON TO PHILADELPHIA *****

VA National Gripe Sessions

In the last newsletter we pointed out that the VA is holding national gripe sessions at regional offices around the country. We have gotten the further information that these sessions are not planned for the normal regional offices, but instead, one each in the 7 large VA regions around the country. The meeting for the entire Midwest is being held in Kansas City, for instance. They are planned for the 2nd and 3rd

weeks of January. Chapters should be on the lookout for information about them and plan to act on that information.

Iranian Patriots Murdered

A secret military tribunal, on December 31, announced the execution order for 10 Iranian revolutionaries. In fact, there were no trials; verdicts are assigned ahead of time through SAVAK (the Iranian secret police) under the direction of the Shah. More information on the situation in Iran and particularly about the US government's use of the Shah as its agent in the Middle East appears in the last issue of The Veteran.

Iranian Student Association chapters (ISA) around the country are planning actions around this newest escalation of the Shah's terror tactics, and will probably be carrying forward a continuing series of activities around this. VVAW chapters should get more information from local ISA chapters and do what is possible to support these actions.

Like some other organizations, ISA has recently been through a split in their organization. The VVAW National Office has held meetings with the national officers of the majority of ISA; we believe that their position is one which deserves our support and active assistance wherever we can. Some confusion arises from the fact that the minority faction is still calling itself ISA. If you should be in doubt as to which group you are in contact with, the national office of the majority ISA is P. O. Box 4000F, Berkeley, CA 94704. Their international section, which deals with relations with US organizations, is located at P. O. Box 14181, Houston, TX 77021. If there are further questions, please get in contact with us at the NO and we'll find out for you.

USS Haddock Update

As it appears in the last issue of The Veteran, sailors aboard the Haddock have carried on the struggle against an unsafe ship. Since the time the article in the paper was written, that struggle had pretty much died down, while some members of the crew waited to let the Navy deal with the many problems aboard that submarine. On a test cruise in early December, however, the engine room flooded (the result of one of the many discrepancies noted in the article) and the struggle again grew. There will be further information in the next issue of the paper, but in talking about the article and the struggle, VVAW members should underline the point that the Navy, because of the danger of war and because of their consistent preparations for that war, is in a position where they will spend billions for new subs and pay as little attention as they can get away with to the mechanical problems on the older ships. Even though these ships are unsafe, however, the US government tries to keep them out in the Pacific to carry out the political aims of the US government--and to hell with the people who are aboard the ships.